

# Defend the Palestinian People!

**No UN Imperialist  
Intervention!**

**For Workers Revolution  
Against Zionist, Arab  
Capitalist Regimes!**

NOVEMBER 30—Nearly 300 Palestinians have been killed in the “Al Aksa Intifada” which began two months ago. The 1993 “peace accord,” brokered by the U.S. in the wake of the last uprising, is exposed as a bitter and bloody hoax. Today, Israel’s rulers are dispensing even with the rhetoric of “peace” and “autonomy” as they unleash tanks and helicopter gunships against Palestinians and order troops to shoot at the heads of children.

As pogromist rampages by fascistic “settlers” target Palestinian farmers to prevent the reaping of crops and drive them off the land, Israeli government spokesmen are mooted a plan for “unilateral separation.” Israel would formally annex a huge part of the West Bank and Gaza Strip where the settlers are concentrated, while permanently sealing off the Palestinian ghettos, even cutting off water and electricity. Arab day laborers whose wages account for one-fifth of all income in the Occupied Territories would be denied access to their jobs in Israel. *This is a plan for strangulation and starvation of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories.*

The potentially genocidal “final solution” Israel’s capitalist rulers have in store for the dispossessed Palestinian Arab people underscores the inherently chauvinist character of the Zionist state, which was founded upon the brutal suppression of Palestinian national rights. In the course of the 1948 “War of Independence,” 800,000 Arabs were driven out of Palestine—their land stolen, their homes demolished, their lives destroyed—to be warehoused in squalid refugee camps



Israeli troops fire on Palestinian youth in Gaza Strip.

AFF

throughout the region, where their children and grandchildren were born and remain to this day. Only 150,000 remained in Israel, with the Palestinian population of cities like Jerusalem and Haifa reduced from over 70,000 each to barely 3,000.

These remnants of the Palestinian nation within the 1948 borders, today numbering a million, were nominally made “citizens,” but are denied a whole range of social benefits and excluded from a whole range of jobs. Some 80 percent of remaining Arab-owned land has been expropriated by the regime. Today, heavily armed Israeli cops with attack dogs stage Gestapo-like night raids on Palestinian homes, breaking

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## Palestinians...

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down doors and destroying furniture. Hundreds of Israeli Arab "citizens," among them children, have been arrested and beaten—many held without bail—on suspicion of joining protests in defense of their besieged compatriots in Gaza and the West Bank.

Conditions in the Occupied Territories are far worse. Average annual income has plunged from nearly \$4,000 in 1987 to barely \$2,000 (compared to \$25,000 in Israel), while unemployment ranges up to 40 percent. As a result of the "peace process," wrote correspondent Amira Hass in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* (18 October), Israel has been able to "double the number of settlers in 10 years, to enlarge the settlements, to continue its discriminatory policy of cutting back water quotas for three million Palestinians, to prevent Palestinian development in most of the area of the West Bank, and to seal an entire nation into restricted areas, imprisoned in a network of bypass roads meant for Jews only." **Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops and settlers out of all the Occupied Territories!**

### Arafat Calls for UN Intervention

As Palestinian youth with little more than rocks and slingshots confront the blood-drenched Israeli military juggernaut, desperate Palestinian protesters in the Near East and in the diaspora overseas have appealed for "international intervention" to protect the population of the Occupied Territories from the Zionist killing machine. Now Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat is explicitly calling for the United Nations to send in a 2,000-strong "peacekeeping" force, a demand raised at a Palestinian solidarity demonstration of tens of thousands in Rome on November 11.

Israel and its American imperialist patron have no intention of allowing a UN intervention. But Palestinian militants must have no illusions in Arafat's cynical appeal to this instrument of the imperialist robber barons and butchers. In 1982, faced with constant Israeli bombing raids over Beirut, Arafat likewise begged for imperialist intervention to protect Palestinian refugees and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters in Lebanon. U.S., French and Italian "peacekeeping" troops moved into Lebanon to *disarm* the PLO militants, overseeing the transfer of many to Tunisia.

With the PLO fighters gone, in September 1982 Israeli troops surrounded the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in West Beirut and Israeli defense minister Ariel Sharon let

loose the fascistic Lebanese Christian militias for a 36-hour orgy of killing, rape and torture. More than 2,000, mainly women, children and the elderly, were slaughtered, shot at close range. For the next eleven years, Arafat took refuge in Tunis, returning to Gaza after signing the U.S.-sponsored "peace" accord which turned the PLO into enforcers of the Israeli occupation.

Canadian imperialism has long postured as a "humanitarian influence" in the UN. In November, Canadian diplomats voted in favor of several UN committee resolutions mildly critical of Israel, against U.S. and Israeli opposition. This provoked a howl of outrage from the Zionist Canadian Jewish Congress in the middle of the federal election campaign. But Palestinian militants and supporters of Palestinian national rights must have no illusions that the Canadian government is less of an enemy of the neocolonial masses than the U.S. Canada participated fully in the UN-authorized terror bombing of Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War, and today helps to enforce the murderous sanctions that have killed one and a half million Iraqis, mostly children and the elderly.


Ottawa's tut-tutting of Israeli outrages is a reprise of the good cop/bad cop routine the Canadian imperialists regularly act out with their senior partners to the south. Today the Liberal government is attempting to position itself to be able to offer diplomatically acceptable "peacekeeping" troops to serve as security guards for Israel, should Zionist butchery alone be insufficient to quell the Palestinian struggle. What UN "peacekeeping" means was shown in Canada's "blue helmet" murder mission in Somalia in the early 1990s, where Canadian UN troops tortured and murdered black youth who fell into their racist hands. **No UN imperialist "peacekeepers"! All U.S., Canadian, British and other imperialist forces out of the Near East! Down with the bombing and blockade of Iraq!**

### For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The forced population transfer of all Arabs from the Occupied Territories, and perhaps from within Israel itself, has long been a rallying cry of the Zionist right. But it originated with the Zionist "founding fathers." The head of the

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# SPARTACIST CANADA



**Newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste  
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## TROTSKYIST LEAGUE/SPARTACUS YOUTH CLUB EVENTS

Toronto

**TL/SYC Forum**

**Defend the Palestinians!**

7:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 17  
International Student Centre, U of T  
33 St. George St. (just north of College)

**SYC Class Series**

**The Fight for Revolutionary Marxism**

7:00 p.m., alternate Wednesdays starting January 31  
First class: **Anglo Chauvinism and Canadian Capitalism**  
First class at International Student Centre, U of T  
Phone (416) 593-4138 for readings and other class locations.

Vancouver

**SYC Class Series**

**The Fight for Revolutionary Marxism**

6:30 p.m., alternate Wednesdays starting January 10  
First class: **Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism**  
All classes at Room 213, Student Union Building, UBC  
Phone (604) 687-0353 for readings.

# Young Spartacus

## SYC Protests Secret Police Recruiters at UBC

On 19 October about 20 students held a militant protest against a recruitment meeting for the CSIS secret police at the University of British Columbia. The demonstration was initiated and centrally built by the UBC Spartacus Youth Club who postered the campus with organizing leaflets reading "No Cops on Campus!" Students rallied outside the meeting holding placards including "CSIS Targets Refugees from Right-Wing Terror!", "CSIS Built Neo-Nazi Heritage Front—Smash Fascist Terror!" and "1917 Russian Revolution Smashed Tsar's Secret Police!"

The SYC invited representatives of other left groups on campus to help build and address the rally. Garth Mullins of the Democracy Street organization did so, only to jokingly complain about being turned away from attending the CSIS recruitment session. The representatives of the International Socialists and Socialist Action chose to stand on the sidelines of the rally even as the SYC and other protesters chanted, "No CSIS recruiters at UBC! All cops off campus!"

We print below a leaflet issued by the SYC for the protest.

\* \* \*

On Thursday, October 19th, the sinister Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) plans to hold an "Info Session" on campus. They are here to recruit a new generation of spies to harass, intimidate and repress any and all opponents of oppressive Canadian capitalism. The Spartacus Youth Club, a revolutionary socialist youth organization allied with the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, calls on students and working people to come out to expose and protest CSIS's dirty deeds on behalf of the ruling class who run this country. Be there at the northwest corner of the Wesbrook building at 5:30 on Thursday to protest CSIS! Cops off campus!

CSIS is central to the federal government's campaign of deportations against immigrants and refugees, which saw as many as 5,000 thrown out of Canada in 1999 alone. In the name of "combating terrorism," CSIS scapegoats whole immigrant communities—Sikhs from India, Tamils from Sri Lanka, Algerians, Iranians, Iraqis—setting up refugee claimants for detention and deportation. The real terrorists are the racist Canadian capitalist state, who expel these refugees to face torture and murder in their homelands. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations to death!

CSIS's dirty work includes building Canada's largest and best-organized fascist organization since the 1930s, the Heritage Front. In the early '90s, CSIS paid out tens of thousands of dollars to its "informant," Grant Bristow, who, together with would-be führer Wolfgang Droege, set up the

Heritage Front in Toronto and expanded it through organizing drives in Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver and Victoria. Skinhead gangs organized by these Hitlerites repeatedly carried out attacks on immigrants, gays and Jews.

CSIS was created in 1984 after some of the RCMP's illegal covert campaigns against Québécois nationalists, black activists and others came to light. In one of the more infamous incidents, RCMP agents burned down a barn in Quebec to prevent a meeting between the Front de Libération du



SC photo

UBC student newspaper, the *Ubyyssey* (24 October), reports SYC-initiated protest against CSIS secret police.

**THE UBYSSEY**

Students protest CSIS seminar



Québec and the American Black Panthers. In October 1970, the Trudeau government used the War Measures Act to stage an army/RCMP occupation of Montreal and arrest nearly 500 left-wing nationalists and labor leaders, underlining how Canadian capitalism's state repression has long been wielded in Quebec to defend the oppressive, Anglo-chauvinist status quo. We Marxists advocate independence for Quebec in order to combat Anglo chauvinism and break the workers in both English Canada and Quebec from their respective nationalist illusions, thus clearing the road for class struggle against capitalism.

Throughout the 1980s, CSIS targeted leftist and labor organizations with surveillance and harassment. This was a domestic reflection of the imperialists' campaign against the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, which ultimately resulted in capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR and East Europe, a historic defeat for the working class internationally. The "Cold War" continues today in the bourgeoisie's drive to overthrow the gains of the

(continued on page 12)



no credit

Canadian army in streets of Montreal, October 1970. Liberal prime minister Trudeau (right) ordered military occupation under War Measures Act.

## Quebec: 30 Years After the "October Crisis"

*The death of Pierre Trudeau in late September saw an outpouring of flag-waving chauvinism, as bourgeois politicians and the media in English Canada saluted the former prime minister who "kept Canada together" and "stopped the separatists." In francophone Quebec, in contrast, the reaction was far more muted. There, Trudeau is recalled as a bitter opponent of Quebec's national rights who was not shy about "using the sword" (as he once put it) against Québécois nationalists as well as the left and labor movement.*

*The following presentation by Spartacist Canada editor John Masters deals with Trudeau's October 1970 imposition of the War Measures Act, which was aimed at quelling widespread social struggle in Quebec. It was first given at a Toronto Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste public forum on September 30, and has been edited for publication.*

\* \* \*

On an autumn night in the early 1970s, more than 7,000 soldiers, many in armored cars, took over the streets of a major city somewhere in the Americas. Military patrols surrounded government buildings and went door to door rounding up nearly 500 leftists and union leaders. They were held in prison, incommunicado, as the government suspended civil liberties under martial-law legislation. Government spokesmen spoke darkly of an "apprehended insurrection," of armed uprisings and plots aimed at overthrowing the local rulers and establishing a provisional government. They warned that 3,000 or more terrorists were armed with rifles and had enough dynamite to blow up the heart of the city.

Was this a CIA-backed military crackdown in a U.S. neo-colony in Central America? Was it a plot by generals in Chile, Bolivia or some other Latin American country? No, it happened here in Canada, in Montreal on October 15 and 16, 1970, as the federal Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau moved to crush the growing struggles for national and social

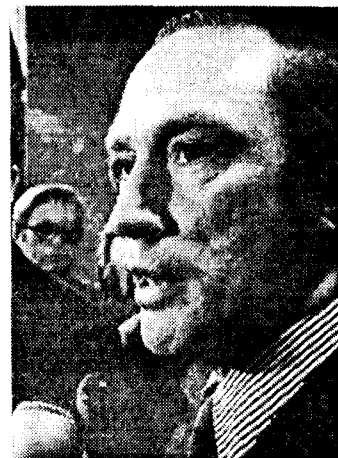
rights which were shaking Quebec society.

Of course there was no insurrection going on. There were no thousands of terrorists, no massive stockpiles of rifles or dynamite. There were only a couple of small cells of the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ—Quebec Liberation Front)—fewer than a dozen people—who had kidnapped the Quebec deputy premier and a British trade official. Moreover, thanks to police informants, the government knew who had staged the kidnappings and where they were holding their captives—indeed, they may have had foreknowledge of the events. Yet they deliberately chose not to arrest or negotiate with the handful of FLQ members. Instead they unleashed massive state terror against the entire Quebec left and an increasingly restive labor movement.

The "October Crisis" of 1970 starkly revealed the real nature of bourgeois democracy. It showed how this is in fact a disguised dictatorship of the capitalist ruling class. It showed how democratic rights like free speech and assembly exist only at the sufferance of the rich owners of industry and commerce. And it showed how the army, the cops and the courts are core components of the capitalists' state—an institution whose whole purpose is to uphold the ruling class and its profit system against workers and the oppressed, against any perceived threat to bourgeois rule.

The events of 30 years ago also illuminated a fundamental fact about capitalist rule in this country: how it is rooted in the national oppression of the francophone Québécois population. Everywhere around the world, capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by a tiny band of profiteers. But the capitalists cannot maintain their rule through repression alone. They keep the working class down by *dividing it against itself* on national, race and religious lines, thereby crippling its ability to wage anti-capitalist struggle.

The way they do this varies greatly from country to country.



Mitchell/Canadian Press

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**Down With Anglo Chauvinism—For Quebec Independence!**

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In the pre-1917 Russian tsarist empire, for example, dozens of minority nationalities—Ukrainians, Poles, Azeris, etc.—had their national rights trampled, their languages suppressed. Great Russian chauvinism served as an ideological prop for the tsarist regime. Only the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky was able to unite the various nationalities in revolutionary struggle by forthrightly opposing chauvinism and upholding the self-determination of nations. This was crucial to the success of the October 1917 workers revolution which smashed tsarist rule and created the world's first workers state.

Today in much of Europe, the bourgeois rulers whip up racism against immigrants in order to divert the working class away from the real, capitalist enemy. Their attack dogs are the social-democratic and Labourite governments which rule most of Western Europe—Tony Blair's Britain, Jospin's France, Schröder's Germany—which are tightening laws against immigrants and staging mass deportations. In the United States, the bedrock of capitalist rule is the oppression of black people, enforced by both the Democratic and Republican parties. A legacy of slavery, this deep racial divide is the crucial factor retarding class consciousness among the American working class.

Here in Canada, the capitalists divide and rule over the workers by fomenting racism against immigrants, Native people and other minorities. But most crucially, they utilize Anglo chauvinism to shore up their rule. The special oppression of francophones began after the Conquest of New France in 1759-60, continued through the forced assimilation policies instituted after the defeat of the 1837-38 *patriote* rebellion, and was codified in Confederation 30 years later. It was carried through much of the 20th century in league with the Catholic Church hierarchy, which worked with the English overlords to keep the French-speaking Québécois in subservience. It was this oppression which fueled the tumultuous struggles in Quebec of the late 1960s and early '70s.

Much has, of course, changed since then. The English Canadian rulers have lost much of their clout in Quebec, the power of the church has been broken, and an indigenous class of Québécois capitalists has emerged, seeking to become "masters in their own house," the primary exploiters of the Quebec working class. Class and other social struggle in Quebec has been dampened, as the misleaders of labor tie the workers to the bourgeois nationalist Parti Québécois government.

But the Quebec national question remains the shaping question of Canadian politics to this day. This was seen in the rise of the Reform Party bigots (now the Alliance) starting a decade ago, which was heavily based on opposition to supposed "privileges" for the French. It was seen in the frenzied English Canadian chauvinism which helped produce the narrow defeat of the 1995 sovereignty referendum. Most recently, it was seen in the Chrétien government's Supreme Court appeals against Quebec's very *right* to self-determination, and in the so-called "Clarity Act," which seeks to all but outlaw this basic democratic right.

Just as was the case for the Russian Bolsheviks in the tsarist "prison house of nations," a correct approach to the Quebec national question is essential for those who would lead a struggle for socialist revolution against the Canadian capitalist state. As in the '60s and '70s, there is today a deep national divide pitting English-speaking workers against

their Québécois brothers and sisters. In fact, with the steady assimilation of francophone minorities in English Canada and the decline of the anglophone minority in Quebec, this divide is in many ways deeper than three decades ago.

As the rulers in Ottawa, joined by the NDP social democrats, wave the Maple Leaf flag and foment bigotry against the Québécois, the historically militant Quebec workers have been driven into the arms of their own bourgeois nationalist exploiters. We Trotskyists advocate *independence for Quebec*, in order to cut through this national divide and bring the real *class* issues to the fore. This is the way to break the workers from the grip of chauvinism and nationalism and lay a basis for joint struggle against all the exploiters and oppressors.

The events in Quebec 30 years ago helped to radicalize a whole generation of youth in this country. In Quebec this went deep into the working class, as we shall see, but it also happened in English Canada. My own case was typical. As a high school student at the end of the 1960s, I became radicalized around two issues: opposition to the U.S. imperialist war against the Vietnamese Revolution, and solidarity with the struggles of Quebec workers and youth against Anglo chauvinism. I got my first lesson in the workings of the bourgeois state in May 1970 when I was one of about 100 protesters arrested on an antiwar demonstration outside the U.S. consulate. Five months later, the radical "New Left" newspaper I worked on published the FLQ's manifesto to express solidarity with these left-nationalists against the Canadian state in the midst of the October Crisis.

Today we are seeing something of a renewed radicalization among youth, as shown in the large demonstrations in places like Seattle, Windsor and Prague. These are very heterogeneous affairs. At worst, as in Seattle, they have been dominated by the national chauvinism of the labor bureaucracy, which whipped up opposition to so-called "global" capitalism in order to uphold *American* capitalism as a supposed model for the world. In Windsor last June, the dominant force was the *Canadian* labor bureaucracy, which sought to channel protest into protectionist campaigns to defend "Canadian jobs" and "Canadian values."

Nonetheless, many of the youth joining these protests are animated by opposition to the crimes of imperialism as they perceive them. Some identify vicariously with past struggles like the Cuban and Vietnamese Revolutions. But even here, protests against the domestic crimes of the imperialist ruling classes are little in evidence.

Thus, the overwhelmingly white anti-"globalization" protests in the U.S. have had little or nothing to say against the grinding oppression of the black population. And in Canada, opposition to Anglo chauvinism and defense of

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## Quebec...

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Quebec's national rights is simply not seen as an issue. There is no sense of identification with past struggles against the Canadian state, as in Quebec in the late '60s and early '70s. Even among would-be radical youth, there is an implicit acceptance of the lie that the Quebec national question is irrelevant to social struggle today. But the fight against capitalism starts *at home*. Defense of the national rights of the Québécois is an essential starting point for those who would bring the crucial class questions to the fore in the struggle to overthrow Canadian capitalism.

### National Oppression and Social Struggle

So let's go back to the late 1960s. The 1970 October Crisis followed several years of growing leftist and labor agitation in Quebec. There's an article in *Spartacist Canada* No. 120, "Nationalism and Class Struggle in Quebec," which deals in depth with the events of the 1950s and '60s, especially the emergence of a militant Quebec working class. I won't repeat the material here, but merely try to give a flavor of the protests of the 1960s.

Beginning in the early part of that decade, a section of the Quebec elite sought to break the stifling hold of the church and create a modern, educated society in which they, not the English, would be the top dogs. But this attempt at modernization opened the floodgates for widespread social protest. Up to this time, few Québécois youth were able to get anything beyond a high school education, if they even got that much. The small number who went to college either had to learn English to attend well-endowed English universities like McGill, or else attend clerical French institutions whose "classical" education largely meant studying Latin, ancient

Greek and Thomist religious philosophy.

Quebec's French-speaking workers earned on average 40 percent less than English-speaking workers in Ontario. Unemployment was twice as high. The bosses were overwhelmingly English, and workers weren't even allowed to use French to address the foreman. Instead they were told to "speak white." Francophone housewives trying to shop in downtown Montreal, then as now an overwhelmingly French city, couldn't get service in their own language.

The first significant demonstration of the '60s was in 1962, when a few hundred students gathered outside the Canadian National Railways headquarters in Montreal to protest CN's failure to hire a French Canadian vice-president. Hardly the most radical of causes, but within a few years the targets and the demands were starting to change. In October 1964, the cops violently broke up a demonstration in Quebec City against the English queen, Elizabeth II. This has gone down in history as "le samedi de la matraque"—the Saturday of the Nightsticks.

Left-nationalist organizations began to flourish: the first FLQ in 1963, the Mouvement de Libération Populaire (People's Liberation Movement) in 1965, the journals *Parti-Pris* and *Révolution Québécoise*, the Front de Libération Populaire (People's Liberation Front) in '69 and more. International events had great impact on the growing radicalization: solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution, with anti-colonial revolts as in Algeria, with the black struggle in the United States.

The May-June 1968 general strike in France, which began among students and spread deep into the working class, posing the possibility of socialist revolution in the heart of Europe, had a huge impact. In October of that year, students at Quebec's new junior colleges, the Cégeps, went on strike, occupying buildings, staging mass rallies of up to 10,000 demanding an end to repression in the education system, a new French-language university and jobs for youth. The government and college administrations expelled the student leaders, shut down their newspapers and banned public assemblies.

Parallel to this was a growing militancy among the working class. The former Catholic-run union federation secularized and grew rapidly. One of the first big strikes was by teachers in 1967; it was crushed by the government. But the number of strikes kept growing. By 1968, ever larger sections of the union movement were beginning to make common cause with the students, joining demonstrations against repression, for worker and student rights, against anglophone privilege.

Taking the lead was a rather unlikely section of the working class: Montreal taxi drivers. Faced with terrible pay and even worse working conditions, they began organizing a union. The name they chose was interesting: the Mouvement de Libération du Taxi, or Taxi Liberation Movement. They sent spokesmen to support the striking Cégep students. Then students joined the taxi drivers to demonstrate against a scab limousine company named Murray Hill, owned by a rich English businessman. Limos were overturned and set on fire, while molotov cocktails were hurled at scab buses.

Similar protests bringing together radical students with sections of the labor movement continued for a full year, until the authorities moved to ban demonstrations. Among the members of this Taxi Liberation Movement were Jacques Lanctôt and Marc Carbonneau, who went on to form the

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Libération cell of the FLQ. It was perhaps apt that they used a taxi to kidnap British diplomat James Cross in October 1970.

Many of the protests during this period were directed against symbols of anglophone privilege. Against the historic discrimination against the French language, demands also began to be raised for “Québec français”—essentially, a unilingual French Quebec. A lightning rod for this was the Quebec government’s Bill 63, which allowed for English-language schools wherever there was sufficient demand. Unions, students and the nationalist left united in huge protests against this legislation—30,000 in Montreal on October 29, 1969, and even more in Quebec City two days later.

Here we see the *contradictions* of the growing struggles in Quebec. While opposition to national oppression served as a spur to radicalization, the dominant forces involved posed it as a question of French versus English. But the English weren’t just the rich capitalists: there was also a minority of English-speaking workers, who understandably wanted to be able to keep sending their kids to English schools.

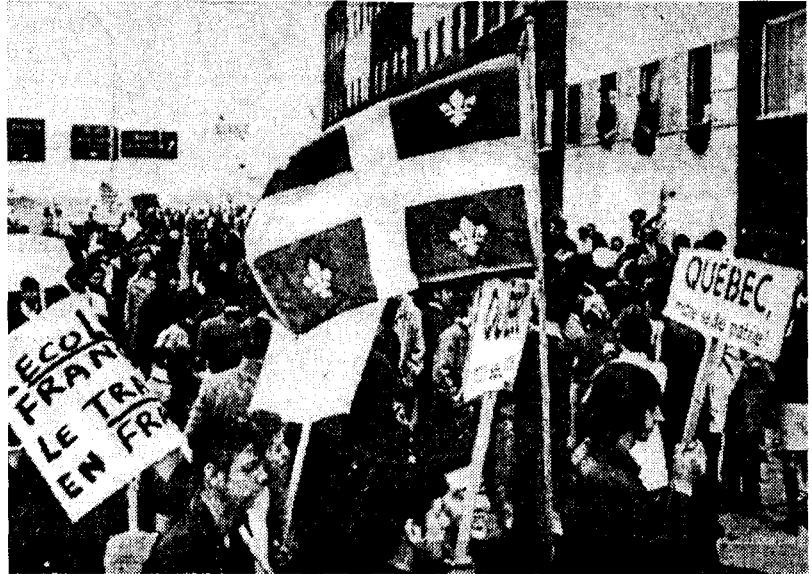
More to the point, the flashpoint of struggles against Bill 63 was the Montreal suburb of St-Léonard, which was heavily populated by Italian immigrants. They also wanted English-language schooling for their children, since this would provide vastly better opportunities for employment, including elsewhere in Canada. So there was a nasty polarization pitting Québécois workers and students against an immigrant population which was just as poor and downtrodden. At one demonstration in 1969, pitched battles broke out between French and Italian youths.

The Marxist program on the language question is *equal language rights for all*. Against anglophone privilege, it was vital to champion the right to be educated and work in French. But calls for privileges for *any* language—including the language of the oppressed Québécois—serve only to heighten tensions among the working class and act as a barrier to struggle against the capitalist ruling class.

The linguistic struggles in the late 1960s showed how, in the absence of revolutionary Marxist leadership, even the most militant Quebec workers remained trapped in the framework of nationalism. But nationalism is a *bourgeois* ideology which says that the main division is not class but nationality. It is counterposed to socialist *internationalism*, the idea, as Marx said, that the workers of the world must unite.

It is no accident that this same period saw rapid growth for the bourgeois nationalist Parti Québécois, which was founded in late 1968. The PQ, which of course advocated Quebec independence, was at the same time hostile to militant workers struggle. Its leader, René Lévesque, once famously commented that he would “rather live in a South American banana republic” than in a Quebec dominated by the “ranting and raving of labor leaders.” Nonetheless, the PQ began to win support from sections of the labor leadership as well as left nationalists, and won nearly a quarter of the vote in the April 1970 elections, which were won by the Liberals under Robert Bourassa.

At the same time, however, the massive social and class



1969: Nationalist demonstration in Montreal suburb of St-Léonard demands French-language education.

Labor Challenge

tensions in Quebec society kept on bubbling under the surface. The bourgeois rulers were fully aware of this. An editorial in the *Montreal Star* shortly before the elections evoked images of the Provisional Government of Aleksandr Kerensky, which tried to shore up tottering capitalist rule in Russia in 1917. While acknowledging that PQ leader Lévesque was an honorable man, the *Star* worried that he could prove to be the “Kerensky of the Quebec revolution,” giving way to the inevitable Lenins and Trotskys waiting in the wings.

### What Was the FLQ?

On October 5, the FLQ kidnapped British trade representative James Cross, and the October Crisis began. So what was the Front de Libération du Québec? A group of that name first emerged in 1963, planting bombs at federal government buildings and in mailboxes in the rich English district of Westmount. Its members were arrested and the FLQ largely disappeared.

Three years later, a second FLQ emerged under the leadership of Pierre Vallières and Charles Gagnon. Vallières was a well-known Quebec intellectual, a former associate of none other than Pierre Elliott Trudeau. When Trudeau resigned the editorship of the magazine *Cité Libre* in 1964 in preparation for going into federal politics, it was Vallières who replaced him. But while Trudeau was a hard opponent of Québécois national aspirations, who went on to use the full force of the Canadian state to uphold the Anglo-chauvinist status quo, Vallières moved sharply to the left. His book *Nègres Blancs d'Amérique*, which traced the long history of oppression of the Québécois and called for revolutionary struggle to overthrow not just the English oppressors but the entire capitalist system, became a widely influential left-nationalist manifesto.

Vallières and Gagnon were arrested in 1966 in New York. Extradited to Canada, they were charged with sedition, armed robbery and manslaughter and held without bail for four years before finally being released in 1970. Throughout these years, FLQ bombings became ever more frequent. By

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## Quebec...

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1969 they averaged once a week. Now the targets were, for the most part, carefully chosen symbols of capitalist oppression: the Montreal stock exchange, army installations, RCMP offices, strikebound factories. Repression was severe. One FLQ member, arrested for the stock exchange bombing, was sentenced to life imprisonment *124 times over*.

Throughout its existence, the FLQ was a small group, or series of groups, largely isolated from the broader social struggles in Quebec society. While they were often viewed as heroes—like Latin American-style urban guerrillas *à la Québécoise*, or the Black Panther Party in the United States—their strategy and tactics were ultimately ineffectual. Some of their targets (like the mailbox bombings) were, moreover, random, and endangered the lives of innocent people. Marxists would condemn such actions. For the most part, however, the FLQ targeted symbols of oppressive capitalism—actions which, from the standpoint of the proletariat, were manifestly *not* crimes.

The Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky best expressed the Marxist attitude to left-wing terrorism in a 1939 article titled "For Grynszpan." When Herschel Grynszpan, a Jewish youth who shot a Nazi official in the German embassy in Paris, was put on trial, Trotsky wrote:

"We Marxists consider the tactic of individual terror inexpedient in the tasks of the liberating struggle of the proletariat as well as oppressed nationalities. A single isolated hero cannot replace the masses. But we understand only too clearly the inevitability of such convulsive acts of despair and vengeance. All our emotions, all our sympathies are with the self-sacrificing avengers even though they have been unable to discover the correct road."

These words apply equally well to the FLQ's actions in October 1970. Following the abduction of British diplomat Cross, an FLQ communiqué denounced him as a "representative of the ancient racist and colonialist British system." It set out a series of demands: the release of 23 FLQ political prisoners, half a million dollars in gold bars, the publication and broadcasting of the FLQ's manifesto, and the reinstatement of *les gars de Lapalme*, a group of militant truck drivers recently fired by the Post Office.

The Trudeau government flatly refused to negotiate. It acceded to only one demand, allowing the FLQ manifesto to be broadcast and published on October 8. Trudeau's lieutenant Gérard Pelletier told reporters that this would benefit the government because the manifesto was "stupid" and would repel the Québécois population. But the opposite happened.

Read in a monotone on Radio-Canada, the manifesto said that "what is called democracy in Quebec is, and has always been, the democracy of the rich." For effect, the second "democracy" was in English, just like the words "big boss," "cheap labor" and "money maker" elsewhere in the manifesto. It went on to warn that the rising class of Québécois capitalists were no real alternative to the English overlords, stating:

"Make your revolution yourselves, in your neighborhoods, in your workplaces. And if you do not make it yourselves, other usurpers, technocrats or others, will replace the handful of cigar-puffers we now know, and everything will be done again. You alone can build a free society."

In the aftermath, a Liberal MP in Montreal took a poll in his riding and found that the vast majority of youth *sup-*

*ported* what the FLQ had done. Even among the older generation, opposition to the FLQ's tactics was mixed with widespread support for their aims. A CBC interviewer took a survey in front of a French Catholic church at 11:00 on a Sunday morning—just about the most conservative francophone constituency you could imagine. He found that while condemnation of the FLQ's acts was almost universal, half the people he spoke to expressed sympathy with what was said in the manifesto.

For their part, the executives of the Montreal and Laurentian CSN unions expressed unequivocal support for the manifesto. Montreal CSN president Michel Chartrand spoke for many when he said: "Who's scared of the FLQ? Are the workers terrorized by the FLQ? Are the students terrorized by the FLQ? The only people afraid of the FLQ are those who should be afraid—the power elite" (*Last Post*, November 1970). At the University of Quebec, virtually the entire student body went on strike in support of the FLQ's aims. A third of the faculty walked out too. Several Cégeps and even high schools also closed down.

Two days after the broadcast, another FLQ cell kidnapped Quebec deputy premier Pierre Laporte, a notoriously right-wing member of the Bourassa cabinet who was widely rumored to have close ties to the Mafia. Four days later, a group of Québécois "moderates" including René Lévesque called on the government to meet the FLQ's demands in order to save Cross and Laporte. Trudeau's response was to denounce "weak-kneed bleeding hearts," invoke the War Measures Act and send in the troops. Even as the army entered Montreal, 3,000 students were gathered at the Paul-Sauvé arena for a rally, chanting "FLQ, FLQ" with their fists in the air. Within hours this chant would be illegal and hundreds would be in jail. The FLQ responded to Trudeau's provocation by announcing that Pierre Laporte had been executed; his body was later found in the trunk of a car.

For the past few days the newspapers and TV have been full of eulogies for Pierre Trudeau, including for his supposedly "courageous" actions in October 1970. Here's a headline in the *Globe and Mail* (30 September): "How Trudeau halted the reign of terror." "Thirty years later," it reads, "the clearest image remains that of a defiant prime minister standing his ground. The War Measures Act was drastic, but it worked." But Trudeau didn't "halt a reign of terror" and the War Measures Act did not "work."

Trying to justify the army occupation, Trudeau's Quebec spokesman Jean Marchand raved that "those who are well protected behind the Rockies or even in the center of Toronto don't know what is happening in Quebec right now." Conspirators had "infiltrated all the vital places of the province of Quebec, in all the key posts where important decisions are taken." There were tons of dynamite, detonators, electric circuits for setting off bombs, thousands of rifles and machine guns and bombs. "For whoever knows the FLQ right now," said Marchand, "whoever knows this organization well cannot do otherwise than recognize that the provincial state of Quebec and the federal state really are in danger in Canada."

This was ludicrous, and the government knew it. The army occupation and round-up of leftists and labor leaders was not aimed narrowly against the FLQ, but against the left as a whole. FLQ leader Pierre Vallières was arrested, but questioned for only *two minutes*. The same is true for Robert Lemieux, the lawyer who had acted as negotiator for



the FLQ. Charles Gagnon, another FLQ leader, wasn't questioned at all. Meanwhile labor leaders, artists, leftists of all persuasions were rounded up and held incommunicado.

Two months later, with the army still in the streets and all protests illegal, the government finally made a deal with the FLQ's Libération cell allowing James Cross to be freed while the kidnapers were flown to Cuba. At the end of December, members of the Chénier cell which abducted Laporte were arrested and thrown in prison.

Soon after, show trials for "sedition" were staged for people arrested under the War Measures Act. The trials were a farce, and became the focus for new, widespread protest. When labor leader Michel Chartrand was told he had been charged with "seditious conspiracy between 1968 and October 1970," he defiantly turned to the judge and said: "That charge should read since 1938." In the upshot, almost all the charges were thrown out.

For their part, the FLQ militants convicted of kidnapping and murder were sentenced and imprisoned, including members of the Libération cell after their return from Cuba. Throughout the 1970s, while most self-professed leftists abandoned their cause, the Trotskyist League continued to demand freedom for these class-war prisoners.

### The Necessity of Revolutionary Leadership

Far from dealing a body blow to leftist struggle, Pierre Trudeau's "October Crisis" served to increase the social polarization in Québec. Within a year, the center of struggle had moved to the working class, beginning with the *La Presse* newspaper strike. Then in May 1972, the Québec proletariat staged the most deepgoing proletarian struggle in Canadian history, a spontaneous, province-wide general strike against the jailing of labor leaders. With striking workers taking over radio stations, controlling supplies and even whole industrial towns, this strike posed directly the question of power: which class shall rule, the bourgeoisie or the proletariat?

The Québec general strike was met with a wall of chauvinist hostility from the NDP and labor bureaucrats in English Canada. While NDP leader David Lewis supported the jailing of the Québec union leaders, the Canadian Labour Congress tops railed against "elements... which advocate the destruction of Confederation." This brazen opposition to Québec workers' struggles not only helped to isolate and defeat the general strike; in the aftermath it served to drive the Québécois proletariat ever more deeply into the arms of their "own" bourgeois nationalists, with disastrous consequences.

In the end, the general strike was derailed, thanks to the lack of revolutionary working-class leadership. The Québec union leaders, who of course had no intention of leading a struggle for working-class power, called on the workers to return to work. A scant few months later, they began dropping their socialist rhetoric in favor of open support for the PQ, which they helped to elect for the first time a few years later. Even the most left-talking syndicalists, like Michel Chartrand, could provide no alternative. Nor did the small, self-proclaimed Marxist groupings of the time, who were themselves in the thrall of Québec nationalism or, worse, Anglo chauvinism.

This is exemplified by the fate of former FLQ leaders Valières and Gagnon. In late 1971, the former announced that he was joining the PQ, the party of the ascendant franco-



CSN-CEO

Union protest during 1972 Québec general strike.

phone bourgeoisie. Meanwhile the latter renounced the fight for independence altogether, and went on to form a short-lived Maoist organization which proclaimed that the working class should be indifferent to national oppression.

Both these positions are complete dead ends for the working class—in the 1970s and today. Any self-proclaimed socialist who refuses to champion the national rights of the oppressed acts, consciously or not, as a tool of the chauvinist status quo. But any socialist who embraces nationalism acts as a fetter on the only struggle that can genuinely liberate working people and the oppressed—the fight for socialist revolution.

Today, in reaction to years of union-busting austerity by Québec's PQ government, new left-nationalist groups have begun to appear, such as the Parti de la Démocratie Socialiste (PDS) of former FLQer Paul Rose, and the Rassemblement pour une Alternative Politique (RAP), whose most prominent spokesman is Michel Chartrand, now in his 80s. But these are little more than pressure groups on the bourgeois-nationalist PQ. Far from seeking a road to socialist revolution and the liberation of the oppressed, they offer only reformist gimmicks like a guaranteed income for the poor under capitalism.

Social democracy—whether the unashamed Anglo chauvinism of the NDP in English Canada, or the "left" nationalist version on offer from the PDS and RAP in Québec—offers no way forward for the working class and oppressed. We in the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste fight to build a revolutionary workers party which unstintingly opposes Anglo chauvinism and advocates Québec independence, while working to break Québécois workers and youth from the nationalist PQ and its hangers-on. Only such an approach, modeled on that of the Russian Bolsheviks, can show the road forward against capitalism. As an integral part of this fight, we seek to instill among a new generation of youth the lessons of past struggles, including in the crucial period of 1968-72 in Québec. ■

## Palestinians...

(continued from page 2)

Jewish Agency's Colonization Department, Joseph Weitz, wrote in 1940:

"Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples together in this country.... And there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries; to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe should be left."

—quoted in introduction to Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (1973)

Under capitalism there is no "room" for two peoples in this small country. To secure the national rights of the oppressed Palestinian people—without thereby denying the national existence of the Hebrew-speaking people—the Israeli Zionist garrison-state must be shattered from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East can the right of national self-determination of both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples and the many other minority peoples of the region be equitably realized.

This elementary truth, denied by much of the opportunist left, is formally acknowledged by the fake-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers International (CWI, represented by Socialist Alternative in Canada), in an October Web site statement by its Israeli group, Maavak Sozialisti (Socialist Struggle), which argues regarding Israel that "it is impossible to genuinely solve the national question under capitalism." The statement issues the following appeal:

"A class socialist leadership of Israeli Palestinians could make an appeal to Jewish workers to struggle together with them in order to overthrow the hated Barak government, and for the overthrow of the corrupt capitalist system....

"This could be achieved because in Israel the capitalists and their servants in government continually attack Israeli workers and youth by means of privatization, unemployment and attacks on wages and work conditions, and the dismantling of the welfare state."

That this serves merely as a cover for flagrant capitulation to Zionist "laborism" is shown by the statement's despicable failure to raise even the simple unambiguous demand for defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist terror. Nowhere does it call for all Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories, demanding only "the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli army from Gaza, Hebron and Bethlehem." This is not surprising. The CWI's British mainstay, Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party, is notorious for its refusal to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland and its capitulation to anti-Catholic Loyalist reaction, even regularly providing a platform for a fascist Loyalist killer.

The Hebrew-speaking proletariat is indeed no less exploited by its "own" ruling class than are workers elsewhere. In recent years, there have been a series of militant strikes and protests against austerity and privatization. Secular Israelis are suffocated by a semi-theocratic state in which even basic questions like marriage and divorce are determined by the whims of ultra-Orthodox rabbis. The Askhenazi (European-derived) elite lords it over the Sephardic (Near Eastern) Jewish population, many of whom live in conditions of poverty not qualitatively better than those of Israeli Arabs.

But Arab/Hebrew class unity will not be forged on the basis of reformist economism, as the CWI believes. The

Hebrew-speaking workers, not least the Sephardic Jews who form the base of the right-wing and religious parties, are saturated with anti-Palestinian chauvinism, which has only intensified in recent months. If they are to be won to revolutionary class struggle against the Israeli exploiters, the Hebrew-speaking workers must be broken from the stranglehold of Zionist chauvinism and won to internationalist defense of the Palestinian people. For their part, the militant Palestinian workers and youth who courageously defy the Zionist military juggernaut must be won from petty-bourgeois Palestinian nationalism and anti-Semitic Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas, who are deadly enemies of Arab women and workers.

While the CWI capitulates to the chauvinist backwardness of the Hebrew-speaking working class, most other reformist groups offer nothing more than a "leftist" gloss on the treacherous PLO policies which have brought the Palestinian masses to today's bloody impasse. The International Socialists (I.S.), for example, write in *Socialist Worker* (18 October):

"We argue for a democratic secular state in Palestine for Jews and Arabs where each has equal rights.

"Ultimately we believe that lasting peace and equality for people in the Middle East could only be achieved by a revolution to overthrow all the corrupt regimes, to end the luxury for a minority while millions are reduced to poverty."

In the mouths of Palestinian nationalists like Arafat, who for years called for a "democratic secular state," it meant denying the right to self-determination for the Hebrew-speaking nation, which was deemed to be simply a religious minority. In the mouths of the I.S., this is a version of the "two-stage revolution" dogma long pushed by the Stalinists—"democracy" first and socialist revolution later. But from China in 1927 to Iran and Iraq in the 1950s and more, "two-stage revolution" has been a recipe for tying the workers and oppressed to anti-working-class bourgeois nationalists, leading to disastrous defeat. (See "Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism," *Workers Vanguard* No. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September



AFP

1993 "peace" accord meant walled Palestinian ghettos policed by Yasir Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

2000). And in the case of Israel/Palestine, any talk of a “democratic” capitalist stage is a cruel hoax from the get-go.

The right to self-determination is a democratic question. In Canada, the Québécois can in principle achieve self-determination under capitalism by an act of secession. While this would be opposed by the Anglo-chauvinist rulers, Quebec independence would provide a solution to the national question this side of a socialist revolution. We advocate Quebec independence precisely to get the national question “off the agenda,” laying a basis for common class struggle by the workers of Quebec and English Canada, particularly through combatting the dominant Anglo chauvinism.

But in situations of interpenetrated peoples—as in Israel/Palestine, Cyprus and Northern Ireland—the conflicting national claims cannot be equitably resolved under capitalism. The capitalist nation-state is premised on the dominance of one nation and the suppression or expulsion of the other. Where two peoples lay claim to the same land, the national rights of both can only be secured through the overthrow of capitalism. And in the case of the Palestinian people, this requires socialist revolutions in at least Israel, Jordan and Lebanon (which has a sizable Palestinian minority), as well as its patron Syria.

### Smash Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

While pushing their “democracy first, revolution later” schema for the Near East, the I.S.’s international co-thinkers foster the worst illusions in “democratic” imperialism. Thus the Socialisme par en Bas (Socialism from Below) group in France signed a leaflet for a 28 October Paris demonstration demanding “that the UN constitute a neutral international commission” to protect Palestinian civilians and calling for “meaningful sanctions by the French and European governments against the state of Israel.” Similarly in Canada the Socialist Action (SA) group issued a statement calling on Canada to “impose economic sanctions on Israel until all its forces are withdrawn from the Occupied Territories, Zionist settlements are dismantled, and all displaced Palestinians have the right of return to their homeland.”

Also looking to the good graces of the imperialist powers is American left-liberal academic Noam Chomsky. In a 26 October piece on the Independent Media Center Web site outlining the background to the Israeli plan for “unilateral separation,” Chomsky cites a British article comparing Zionist Israel to apartheid South Africa and comments:

“Such conclusions will come as no surprise to those whose vision has not been constrained by the doctrinal blinders imposed for many years. It remains a major task to remove them in the most important country. That is a prerequisite to any constructive reaction to the mounting chaos and destruction.”

As usual, behind Chomsky’s seeming “anti-imperialist” rhetoric is an appeal for U.S. imperialism to adopt a more “constructive,” humane and rational foreign policy. During the Gulf War, Chomsky called for the imperialist embargo of Iraq (as did the NDP in this country) as a “peaceful” alternative to war (*Z Magazine*, February 1991).

U.S. support for Israel is not the result of “doctrinal blinders” but of its own imperialist interests in the strategic, oil-rich Near East. While far from simply a puppet of Washington, Zionist Israel serves as a bastion for imperialist order and stability in this volatile region, for which it is lavishly rewarded to the tune of some \$5 billion in aid annually. We



Workers Vanguard

**Spartacist League/U.S. contingent at San Francisco demonstration in defense of Palestinians, October 14.**

do not look to the American—or Canadian, French or any other—imperialist rulers to chastise the Israeli rulers or otherwise intervene in the Near East. Charlatans like Chomsky, as well as reformist leftists like the I.S. and SA, seek to obscure the fact that imperialism is not a doctrine or policy which can be reformed, but a system—the highest stage of capitalism. In this, they aim to deflect radical youth from the struggle against the capitalist system.

The International Communist League seeks to forge internationalist proletarian vanguard parties bringing together Arab, Kurdish, Persian and Hebrew-speaking workers to overthrow all the Zionist butchers, sheiks, mullahs and military strongmen and create a socialist federation of the Near East. Relying on the good offices first of the Arab capitalist regimes and then of U.S. imperialism, the petty-bourgeois nationalism of Arafat’s PLO has been a dead end for the oppressed Palestinian masses, serving only to drive many into the arms of anti-Semitic, anti-woman Islamic fundamentalist groups like Hamas.

While spouting off against Zionism to divert the anger of the poverty-stricken masses they exploit, the Arab capitalist regimes are enemies of the Palestinian people and of indigenous religious, ethnic and national minorities in their own countries: Shi’ite Muslims, Coptic Christians in Egypt, Berbers in Algeria, the Kurdish nation in Syria, Iraq, Iran and Turkey. We fight for the revolutionary overthrow of all the murderous capitalist states in the Near East and for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan.

Here in North America, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste and our comrades in the Spartacist League/U.S. fight to build revolutionary workers parties, part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International, to sweep away imperialist rule through socialist revolution. That would be a huge step toward ending the genocidal terror and nationalist fratricide which is endemic to the capitalist system in its epoch of decay.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* Nos. 745 and 746, 3 and 17 November 2000

## CSIS...

(continued from page 3)

1949 Chinese Revolution. The Spartacus Youth Club unconditionally defends the remaining deformed workers states, China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for workers political revolution to oust the ruling nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies.

Last year, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that "For decades, the RCMP kept a close eye on universities as potential breeding grounds for left-wing subversion. CSIS continues to monitor the university environment, though the concern has shifted in the post-Cold War era to countering terrorism and theft of economic secrets" ("CSIS gets more power to spy on campuses," September 14, 1999). But CSIS's concern has hardly "shifted away" from targeting the left. The whitewash Public Complaints Commission into the police beating and pepper-spraying of students during the 1997 anti-APEC protests revealed that CSIS had been spying on activists ranging from "Democracy Street" to the "Raging Grannies"!

In response, Alissa Westergard-Thorpe of the "Democracy Street" group was quoted as saying "CSIS needs to be more accountable to the Canadian people." But the dirty tricks of Canadian imperialism's secret police aren't an aberration that can be corrected through reforms. To maintain their class rule, the bourgeoisie requires its cops, its prisons and its secret police to "serve and protect" their private property. The conflict between the interests of capital and labor is irreconcilable. The capitalist state is not and cannot be accountable to popular pressure but is the agency of the ruling class to carry out terror against the working class and oppressed.

Most groups on campus who claim to be Marxist, however, evince a totally reformist view of the state. The Inter-

national Socialists push the illusion that elements of the racist capitalist state can be won over to the side of the working class and oppressed, as expressed in their support for the "unionization" of jail guards and cop "strikes." Last year, the I.S. sat mutely through the inaugural meeting of the Students for Choice group as an RCMP officer addressed the meeting. In sharp contrast, the SYC protested the cop presence and then left the meeting in protest. For their part, the NDP loyalists around *L'Humanité* are co-thinkers of a British group (Socialist Appeal) which sees nothing wrong with police in the workers movement and even brags about fighting to organize cops.

At bottom the I.S. and *L'Humanité* are simply left tails on the NDP, seeking to reform capitalism by means of pressure on the social democrats to "turn left." The New Democrats rule this province on behalf of the capitalist class. They have unleashed vicious state terror against Natives at Gustafsen Lake, broke a school support workers' strike, and pushed anti-immigrant racism against Chinese migrants. By channeling the struggles of workers and youth back into the futility of parliamentary politics, the NDP plays an indispensable role in maintaining the capitalist status quo. We fight to build a revolutionary workers party through breaking the workers from these right-wing, pro-capitalist social democrats.

The Spartacus Youth Club understands that only victorious proletarian revolution can smash the secret police together with all the other repressive agencies of bourgeois rule. This repressive and bloody state spy syndicate must not be free to send their agents onto campus unopposed to recruit for their operations aimed at suppression of the struggles of the working class and oppressed! Students should ally with the social power of the working class and struggle against the capitalist system of racism, poverty and war. Fight for a socialist future, join the Spartacus Youth Club! ■

## More Austerity...

(continued from page 16)

to "rebuild" the party, perhaps under a different name. But social-democratic, parliamentary reformism is a dead end. The way forward for the working class and oppressed lies through breaking with chauvinist, pro-capitalist social democracy and building a revolutionary workers party which champions all the oppressed in the fight to sweep away racist capitalism.

\* \* \*

Whoever wins the federal election on November 27, it won't be working people and the oppressed. Behind the façade of capitalist democracy, we live under the dictatorship of a single class: the bourgeois owners of industry, finance and commerce. As the Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin explained in his 1917 pamphlet *The State and Revolution*, "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism."

The election comes after seven years of austerity attacks by the ruling Liberal Party. Jean Chrétien now cynically postures as the defender of health care and other social services

against Stockwell Day's Canadian Alliance. Day himself is a flat-tax, flat-earth evangelical Christian who wants to take away women's right to abortion and believes that Adam and Eve roamed the earth alongside the dinosaurs. Joe Clark's moribund Tories are the same Mulroney gang that lorded it over workers and the poor before Chrétien. Alexa McDonough's NDP social democrats, who have made "saving medicare" their election battle cry, are just as hypocritical as the Liberals. Their provincial governments in Saskatchewan and B.C. have been right in there, closing hospitals and busting nurses strikes.

All the parties use racist scapegoating to deflect popular discontent with their austerity schemes. The Alliance demands that "illegal" immigrants be summarily deported, and denounces "privileges" for the deeply oppressed Native population. The Liberals instituted the racist head tax on immigrants, and sent Department of Fisheries boats to attack Native fishermen in New Brunswick. And it was the NDP government in B.C. which demanded the internment of Chinese immigrants and called in the army and RCMP to attack Native protesters at Gustafsen Lake.

Chauvinist reaction against Quebec has long served the ruling class by dividing the workers and lining them up behind the rule of capital in the name of "national unity." The Alliance's predecessor, the Western-based Reform

Party, appealed directly to anti-Quebec bigotry and hostility to French language rights in English Canada. Seeking to cast his Alliance as more than a regional party, Day is toning down the rhetoric in a play for "moderate" votes in Ontario. But the fact is that Reform's hardline stance against Quebec has become mainstream bourgeois policy. The Chrétien government's "Clarity Act," which all but outlaws Quebec's democratic right to self-determination by setting multiple conditions on sovereignty referendums, was taken straight from the Reform hymn book. And Chrétien's diktat is supported by the New Democrats, whose Western premiers vie with the Alliance in fanning the flames of anti-French chauvinism.

The capitalist profit system is based on grinding exploitation of working people, who produce vast wealth but are denied the fruits of their labor because that wealth is expropriated by a tiny class of ruling parasites. The capitalists are protected by the armed violence of their state—the cops, courts, prisons and army—whose task is to suppress by force every challenge to bourgeois rule. Thus, fundamental change cannot come through the ballot box or parliamentary tinkering, because the capitalist class will not voluntarily give up its wealth and privileges.

Due to its central role in production, only the working class has the power to sweep away this system of exploitation and oppression, replacing it with a planned socialist economy under workers rule. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League, fights for a program of anti-capitalist class struggle based on the immense potential social power and common interests of the working class in this country and worldwide. We fight to build a new leadership of the workers and oppressed: not wretched NDP-style parliamentarism, but a revolutionary workers party to lead a struggle for socialist revolution.

### For Quebec Independence!

Behind the rhetoric about tax cuts and funding scandals, the Quebec national question remains the crucial underlying issue in this election. The 1993 vote that brought the Liberals to power produced a starkly divided parliament, with the anti-Quebec Reform yahoos in the West, the sovereignist Bloc in Quebec, and the Liberals in Ontario and Atlantic Canada. This result was more or less repeated in 1997, and the polls show a similar split today. Meanwhile in Quebec, where the 1995 referendum lost by the slimmest of margins, popular support for sovereignty again hovers just under 50 percent. The mandate of the new federal government will overlap the next Quebec election and quite possibly another sovereignty referendum. Thus the Canadian ruling class is weighing which party can deal most effectively with the threatened break-up of their country along national lines.

The Quebec question is also key to a proletarian revolutionary perspective against Canadian capitalism. Nationalism and chauvinism, pitting English- and French-speaking workers against one another, constitute the main barrier to the development of anti-capitalist class consciousness among the workers. Anglo chauvinism, carried into the English Canadian working class by the New Democrats and their allies in the trade-union bureaucracy, rallies the workers behind their "own" capitalist exploiters by imbuing them with "national unity" patriotism.

This, in turn, drives Québécois workers deeper into the embrace of the bourgeois-nationalist Bloc and Parti Québécois.

Ruling in Quebec, the PQ has slashed social programs and broken strikes by health care workers and, more recently, independent truckers at the port of Montreal. Yet the Quebec union misleaders continue to tie the workers to these anti-working-class nationalists by arguing for "national solidarity" against English Canada.

We call for *independence for Quebec* in order to cut through this national divide and remove a major obstacle to proletarian class consciousness. With independence, the workers in both English Canada and Quebec can come to see their respective capitalist rulers, not each other, as the enemy, thus laying a basis for common class struggle. To win its battles, it is vital that the labor movement take up the cause of all those oppressed by capitalism. As well as defending Quebec's national rights, that means championing the rights of Native people, women and gays, opposing the racist detentions and deportations of refugees and demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Down with chauvinist Canadian capitalism!

### NDP: Agents for the Capitalist Rulers

Stuck at single digits in the polls, and with most unionized workers in English Canada backing the Liberals or Alliance, the New Democrats are today merely trying to survive as a federal parliamentary party. The NDP is a *bourgeois workers party*—linked to the working class via the privileged union bureaucracy, but wholly pro-capitalist in its leadership and outlook. Its provincial governments in B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba are capitalist governments which attack workers and the oppressed just like their Liberal and Tory counterparts. Federally, the New Democrats hope at best to elect enough MPs to prop up a (hypothetical) minority Liberal government in a "corridor coalition," like they did with Trudeau for a period in the 1970s. Such horse-trading over even the most nominal political independence of the working class underlines the NDP's role as agents for the capitalist ruling class.

More than anything else, it was the austerity attacks of Bob Rae's 1990-95 Ontario NDP government which drove tens of thousands of unionized workers away from the party. Now, the NDP's seeming eclipse as a serious political force, together with its unattractiveness for youth, has prompted some high-profile "left" social democrats to raise the notion of a "new labor party." The most prominent is Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) leader Buzz Hargrove, who told the *National Post* (16 October): "After the next election, I think there will be a serious discussion on the left about whether or not we can rebuild the NDP or we have to form a new party." On October 27-28, Hargrove's former lieutenant, ex-CAW research director Sam Gindin, was the featured speaker at a Toronto conference titled "Rebuilding the Left," where some 600 people heard him call for a "structured movement against capitalism" independent of the NDP.

The working class and oppressed do need a new party to defend their interests against the capitalists and lead a fight for working-class power. But the CAW tops' alternative to the NDP's "business-friendly" belly-crawling is only a warmed-over, more left-talking version of social democracy. In fact, the moment Alexa McDonough switched from tax cuts to health care as her campaign theme, Hargrove was back with bells on, cheering for what he called the NDP's "left platform."

The CAW leaders are positioning themselves to corral  
(continued on page 14)

## More Austerity...

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leftist youth, workers and others drawn to the anti-“globalization” protests in Seattle, Windsor and elsewhere back into the trap of NDP parliamentarism by giving it a “militant” cachet—or, failing that, to lay the groundwork for an NDP Mark II. In Windsor last June, CAW security teams protected youthful protesters from police repression, providing a taste of the strength of organized labor. The union has also given highly public support to activist organizations like the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, including sending flying squads to OCAP demonstrations. However, such actions are meant not to mobilize the working class and oppressed in anti-capitalist struggle, but merely to gain respect among youthful militants, and thereby win a hearing for the CAW tops’ dead-end, national-reformist politics.

The problem with the labor bureaucracy is not that they don’t know how to mobilize labor’s power when it suits them: witness the one-day citywide general strikes during the labor Days of Action against the Ontario Tories a few years ago. Rather, their central role is to act as what Lenin called the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class,” lining up the proletariat behind the interests of its “own” imperialist bourgeoisie. Thus the Windsor protest saw the CAW and other labor bureaucrats campaigning to defend the Auto Pact—a protectionist deal to shield the North American auto companies from foreign competition—in the name of “defending Canadian jobs.” Such calls are poison to class struggle, serving only to tie workers to the “national interests” of the Canadian capitalists and against workers abroad, especially in Asia. The enemy of Canadian workers is *here at home*: the ruling class of Ottawa and Bay Street!

The social democrats and labor bureaucrats—especially the so-called “lefts” like Hargrove—are working to reinforce the false consciousness of a new generation of youth, many of whom have been impelled into protest against the depredations of imperialism, but who nonetheless fundamentally believe that Canada and other imperialist powers can serve as a vehicle for “human rights.” This is utterly false. Canadian imperialism is a deadly enemy of the oppressed, as shown by its murderous interventions from Iraq to Somalia and Serbia. Yet last year, it was prominent “left” NDP MP Svend Robinson who took center stage in backing the brutal NATO assault against Serbia, and the CAW leadership called for ground troops to invade Kosovo “with the proper air support,” demanding that Ottawa send in Canadian troops as “peacekeepers.” Against such fraudulent “human rights” imperialism, we Trotskyists called for military defense of Serbia against imperialism and said: “Defeat U.S./Canadian imperialism through workers revolution!”

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the former deformed and degenerated workers states in the Soviet Union and East Europe in 1989-92—a huge defeat for the proletariat worldwide—set the stage for a sharp increase in interimperialist rivalries among the rulers in North America, West Europe and Japan. The social democrats and labor bureaucrats, including the NDP and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) tops, fully supported this drive for capitalist counterrevolution, which has produced economic disaster for working people and minorities throughout East Europe and the former USSR, while emboldening the capitalist rulers to step up their attacks worldwide.



SC photo

Trotskyist League banner on June 1999 Toronto protest against NATO bombing of Serbia.

Today, the pro-capitalist misleaders of labor work to foment counterrevolution in China, by far the largest and most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states. This was fully in evidence in last year’s Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization, where the labor bureaucracy railed that China was a “rogue state” which was “stealing jobs” from American workers. In sharp contrast to the anti-Communist social democrats and labor fakery, we Trotskyists stand for unconditional defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution.

### NDP Crisis and the Split in Labor

CAW leader Hargrove’s musings on a “new party” are linked to his talk of a new “militant” and “democratic” all-Canadian labor federation. This follows the CAW’s suspension from the NDP-loyal CLC, ostensibly for raiding members of the U.S.-based Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Hargrove has called the split “unbridgeable”; meanwhile the SEIU tops have gone to the bosses’ courts to stop the CAW from signing up their dues base.

As Marxist revolutionaries who aim to lead the working class to state power, we stand for the greatest possible organizational unity of the trade union movement. We oppose the CLC sanctions and the SEIU court suit, which dangerously brings the capitalist state directly into the affairs of the labor movement. We also oppose the CAW tops’ threats to establish a breakaway federation, which could set the stage for years of raiding and mutual backstabbing. At the same time, we fight for a new, class-struggle union leadership against *both* feuding wings of the labor bureaucracy.

Hargrove’s militant rhetoric is tailored to whip up Maple Leaf nationalism. Organizers signing up SEIU worksites are reported to have shouted “Yankee go home” at local SEIU leaders, while unionists have come to organizing rallies wrapped in Canadian flags and with maple leaves painted on their faces. We oppose the CAW’s program of splitting the remaining international unions at the 49th parallel, which would only further isolate the struggles of workers in Canada

from those of their class brothers and sisters in the U.S.

Since the formation of the CAW through a break from the Detroit-based UAW in the mid-1980s, the auto bosses have been able to sharply increase their profits by whipsawing auto workers in the U.S. and Canada against one another. We fight to unite in struggle the workers of Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, where the NAFTA "free trade" deal has sharply heightened the exploitation of the proletariat by North American "multinationals." Against the racist protectionism of the union bureaucracy, which blames low-paid workers in Mexico for "stealing jobs," we struggle alongside our comrades in the U.S. and Mexican sections of the ICL for socialist revolution from the Yukon to the Yucatán!

### For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

At a time when support for the NDP is at an all-time low, various purportedly socialist outfits are busy trying to revive interest in the party, helping to set new snares for working people and youth. Most flagrant is Socialist Action (SA), chief builder of the "NDP Socialist Caucus." Last March, this Caucus issued a "Call for Unity and Action" in B.C. (signed by prominent SA supporters) which called unashamedly to "rally round" and "unite behind" the NDP provincial government of Ujjal Dosanjh. One month later this same government broke a strike by school support workers!

Now the Socialist Caucus has issued a federal election platform with a laundry list of reformist demands including a "pledge to de-militarize the Canadian economy and state" and to "trim" the armed forces budget. Marxists say "Not a penny, not a man for the bourgeois army!" In sharp contrast to SA's utopian-reactionary schemes to prettify the capitalists' repressive apparatus, we warn that the bourgeois state cannot be "reformed" but must be swept away through socialist revolution. Far from being any kind of alternative to McDonough & Co., SA and its Socialist Caucus provide them with a useful "left" cover.

Much the same applies to the International Socialists (I.S.), who claim that "A vote for the NDP is a vote against corporate rule—despite themselves," adding that "the party should be pressured to take a clear left stance" (*Socialist Worker*, 18 October). The New Democrats have amply proven that they are *defenders* of capitalist corporate rule. And the goal of Marxists isn't to "pressure" these social-democratic sellouts to posture a bit more left. Rather, revolutionaries aim to expose and combat illusions in the New Democrats in order to remove them as an obstacle to class struggle, breaking away their working-class supporters in the fight for a revolutionary party.

While backing the NDP, the I.S. simultaneously claims to be building an "anti-capitalist alternative." It's a curious kind of anti-capitalist alternative that accepts the framework of the chauvinist Canadian state. To this day, the I.S. opposes Quebec independence, calling instead for "recognition of Quebec as a distinct society," the formula put forward by the Tories in the failed Meech Lake and Charlottetown deals in the late '80s and early '90s as the solution to the "crisis of Confederation." Along with the NDP (and the Liberals), the I.S. grotesquely supported these Tory schemes, which were designed to reinforce the Canadian capitalist status quo.

We Trotskyists advance a proletarian revolutionary program and fight to build a revolutionary workers party. While any electoral support to bourgeois parties (such as the I.S.'s

frenzied support for Ralph Nader's capitalist Green Party in the U.S.) is excluded on principle, Marxists at times extend critical support to reformist workers parties if such support helps drive home the principle of class against class.

For example, our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain have on occasion called for critical support to the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) set up by militant miners leader Arthur Scargill in opposition to Tony Blair's "New Labour" when Labour dropped even its fig leaf call for nationalization of industry from its constitution. Though sharply criticizing the SLP's "old Labour" parliamentary reformism, our comrades stressed the significance of this split at the time: "For the first time in decades, the British Labour Party's political stranglehold over the workers movement is being challenged by an important split from within" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 638, 2 February 1996).

Three purportedly communist organizations are running candidates in the current election. Particularly in the case of small left-wing formations without a working-class base, it is necessary that their election campaigns pose a clear *programmatic* break with capitalist politics if critical support to them is to enhance the consciousness of militant workers or subjectively revolutionary activists. That is certainly not the case with the campaigns of the Communist Party (CP), Marxist-Leninist Party (also known as CPC-ML) or Communist League (CL).

Both the CP and CPC-ML raise the chauvinist call to defend "Canadian sovereignty," with the former adding an explicit appeal for "Canadian unity." The CL's token (indeed near-invisible) campaign shows its fundamental reformism by calling to elect New Democrats everywhere but the three constituencies where the CL has candidates. To call for votes for the utterly pro-capitalist NDP today means shoring up crumbling illusions in these right-wing social democrats. No vote to the NDP!

The reformist left cannot conceive of life without the New Democrats, or something similar, because their horizons are defined by the limits of capitalist class society. Their politics consist of oppositional activity completely defined by the framework of bourgeois society. In the words of the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, this amounts to "the actual training of the masses to become imbued with the inviolability of the bourgeois state."

*Our* starting point is the fight to organize the kind of proletarian vanguard party necessary for the seizure of power by the working class. In our interventions at the Toronto "Rebuilding the Left" conference, Trotskyist League spokesmen counterposed our revolutionary program to the tepid left reformism of former CAW bureaucrat Sam Gindin and the other conference speakers. We emphasized our opposition to Maple Leaf chauvinism and our advocacy of Quebec independence in order to break the grip of national chauvinism. We called for defense of China against the counterrevolutionary designs of our "own" imperialist rulers.

We raised the need for an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party committed to expropriating the capitalists, smashing their repressive state apparatus and replacing it with a workers state. While this election campaign offers only a bourgeois spectacle of lying, thieving, bigoted politicians, we offer a revolutionary fight for a better future. For working-class rule and the liberation of the oppressed here in Canada and around the world!

## Election 2000:

# More Austerity and Chauvinist Reaction

### Liberals Keep Ottawa, Alliance Takes the West, NDP Faces Disintegration



Smith/Vancouver Sun



Chartrand/CP

Chrétien and Day spar in parliament. Left: Nurses strike in NDP-ruled B.C. NDP pushes austerity, chauvinism just like Liberals, Alliance. Workers and oppressed need a revolutionary party!

We reprint below a 21 November Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste statement entitled "Election 2000: No Choice for Workers and the Oppressed." All five parties offered only more economic austerity laced, in English Canada, with poisonous national chauvinism against Quebec. No surprise, then, that the percentage of voters who bothered to cast ballots was the lowest in history, reflecting widespread popular indifference to or distaste for the choices.

Jean Chrétien claimed his victory showed that "we're all part of one big Canadian family." What a pile of *crottin*, as they say in Shawinigan. The election once again illuminated the sharp divide between English Canada and francophone Quebec. The sovereigntist Bloc Québécois lost some seats to the Liberals, but still ended up with the most, and increased

its share of the popular vote. Between East and West, too, the country remains polarized. The attempt of the Canadian Alliance—heir to the viciously anti-Quebec Reform Party—to break into the east was a dismal flop, as the Liberals overran Ontario yet again; but the Alliance took the Prairies and B.C. in a walk.

Widely rejected by working people for their enforcement of capitalist austerity in B.C., Saskatchewan and Ontario over the last decade, the decline of the NDP continues apace. The so-called "political arm of labor" was reduced to 13 seats, exacerbating tensions and fissures in the party which are now likely to come to a head. Already Canadian Auto Workers head Buzz Hargrove is talking about the need

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