

Supreme Court vs. Quebec's National Rights

Independence for Quebec!



Reuters

Quebec nationalists protested Chrétien government's appeal to Anglo-chauvinist Supreme Court last winter. Court's ruling in August was open attack on right of Quebec to independence.



Christopher Morris

On August 21, the Supreme Court of Canada issued its decision on Ottawa's constitutional "reference," which asked the court to rule on whether Quebec could unilaterally secede from Canada. Through its challenge, the federal government sought to legally formalize Quebec's forced retention within this country. As expected, the court ruled that Quebec cannot unilaterally declare independence from the Anglo-dominated state which has oppressed it since the 18th century. Rather, they declared, Quebec must first obtain the "consent" of that oppressor state, confirming the centuries-old denial of Quebec's right to determine its own fate.

The Supreme Court ruling supports Prime Minister Chrétien's hard-line "Plan B," which seeks to scare the Québécois away from independence and to justify threats to partition an independent Quebec along linguistic lines. As we wrote in an article entitled "Anglo Chauvinism's Day in

Court" at the time Ottawa launched its "reference":

"Once again, the Quebec national question is dominating and polarizing political life in this country. The confinement and subjugation of the French-speaking Québécois nation in the Anglo-dominated Canadian state serves to set worker against worker along national lines, deeply poisoning the prospects for anti-capitalist working-class struggle. We advocate independence for Quebec in order to cut through this divide and remove the national question from the agenda."

—SC No. 116, Spring 1998

"Plan A" Resuscitated

Among both the chauvinist Anglo establishment and Quebec nationalists, many have noted that the Supreme Court judgment resolves nothing. And the ruling federal Liberal Party is clearly annoyed with the ermine-robed judges for including in their ruling a statement that the rest of Canada

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New TL/LT Pamphlet: Who We Are, and What We Fight For

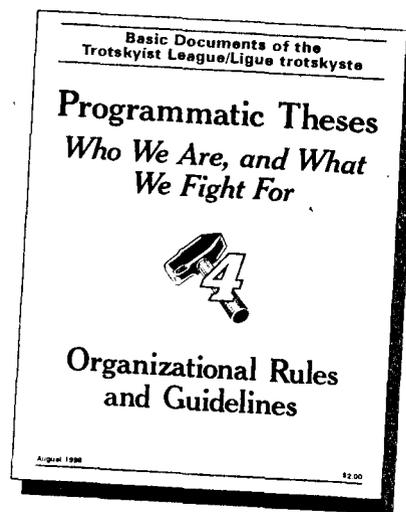
The Eighth National Conference of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste was held in the summer of 1998. The National Conference is the TL/LT's highest decision-making body, and was attended by all members as well as representatives of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), of which the TL/LT is the Canadian section. Visitors from several other ICL sections also attended.

The conference centered on codifying our program and organizational structure. The lively debates were informed by substantial educational on the history of the labor movements in Quebec and English Canada. Time was also allotted for a Youth Commission, where the local Spartacus Youth Clubs, the youth and student affiliates of the TL/LT, met and discussed their work. They also heard a presentation on the Con-scription Crises which wracked the country during the First and Second World Wars. We plan to publish edited versions of these presentations in future issues of *Spartacist Canada*.

Following its deliberations, the Conference amended and adopted our new *Programmatic Theses*, entitled "Who We Are, and What We Fight For," and our *Organizational Rules and Guidelines*. We are pleased to announce that these basic documents of the TL/LT are now available as a bilingual pamphlet in French and English.

Forging a Program and Party for Socialist Revolution

The Third International Conference of the International Communist League, held in Europe in early 1998, adopted a *Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program* as well as international *Organizational Rules and Guidelines*. (Both documents have since been published in English-language *Spartacist* No. 54, Spring 1998.) The International Conference advised all ICL sections to undertake the necessary study and discussion to codify appropriate programs for the country in which they work, within the overall framework of the Declaration of Principles. Sections were also mandated to adopt sectional rules which resolve the generalizations



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of the ICL's International Rules to specific applications for each country.

Trotskyists must assimilate the political and social heritage of the countries in which they work, in order to understand where they are and where to employ the Marxist lever to further the cause of workers revolution. The TL/LT *Programmatic Theses* and *Organizational Rules and Guidelines* are an application of the ICL's proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist principles to the particular conditions confronting revolutionaries in Canada.

Our *Programmatic Theses* bring the key elements of our Trotskyist program together in a single document for the first time. They are the product of intensive pre-conference discussions in TL/LT branches, and incorporate important contributions made by numerous comrades, including from other ICL sections.

Since the founding of the TL/LT in 1975, the social reality we live in has changed, and our knowledge of it has evolved through intervention in struggle. This has led us to clarify and even alter aspects of our program, notably on the Quebec national question. Throughout our existence, we have vigorously championed the right of the oppressed, French-speaking Québécois nation to self-determination. Until relatively recently, however, we did not *advocate* Quebec independence. We changed our line following intensive internal re-examination of the question in 1994-95. In the course of that debate we came to recognize that national relations had become so poisoned that the only way that English-speaking and Québécois workers can come to see their respective capitalist oppressors as the enemy, rather than each other, is through separation.

The vicious anti-Quebec chauvinism fostered by the English Canadian ruling class and its social-democratic henchmen, and the reactionary Quebec nationalism which it fuels, are the key impediments to the development of revolutionary class consciousness in this country. Our change of line to advocate Quebec independence was of crucial importance in maintaining our integrity as revolutionary Marxists. For full documentation of this discussion and its outcome, see "On the National Question in Quebec," ICL *International Internal Bulletin* No. 37, July 1995, and the article "For Quebec Independence!" in *Spartacist Canada* No. 105, September/October 1995.

The organizational structure of a revolutionary workers
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Racist Backlash Against B.C. Nisga'a Treaty

Labor Must Defend Native Rights!

VANCOUVER—The treaty signed by representatives of the Nisga'a people of northern B.C. and the federal and provincial governments in early August has been met with an outpouring of anti-Native bigotry, spearheaded by the anti-labor demagogue Gordon Campbell, leader of the provincial Liberals. Campbell rails against supposed "special rights and powers" for aboriginal people, threatening legal action to force a province-wide referendum in order to block the treaty.

Opposition to the Nisga'a treaty is the cutting edge of racist reaction on the West Coast today. Union-busting former Social Credit premier Bill Vander Zalm, now leader of the B.C. Reform Party, howls that the deal, which gives the Nisga'a a measure of control over fishing, will leave white fishermen "standing on the shore, not allowed to fish" and unable to feed their families (*Vancouver Sun*, 12 August). In B.C. today, where capitalist plunder of the sea and rivers has produced a disastrous decline in fish stocks, Vander Zalm's populist ravings are an open incitement to violence. Already in July 1995, in an appalling incident of murderous racism, three Native-owned fishing boats in Port Alberni were contaminated with mercury.

Campbell and Vander Zalm are vying to replace NDP premier Glen Clark as the overseer of capitalist exploitation in B.C. Their ravings against "privileges" for Native people are sure to please forestry giants like Macmillan-Bloedel and fisheries companies like B.C. Packers, whose depredations have decimated the province's core resource industries. But these right-wing capitalist politicians are not alone in pushing anti-Native bigotry. While the ruling NDP social democrats have openly attacked aboriginal struggles, their allies in the trade union bureaucracy have joined in the racist scapegoating of Native people for the loss of jobs in the fishery and other resource industries. This is *poison* to effective working-class struggle against the all-sided attacks of the capitalist rulers.

We call on B.C.'s organized working class to come to the defense of Native people against the current racist backlash. Only by taking up the cause of *all* the oppressed can the multiracial working class forge the fighting unity needed to beat back the capitalist onslaught against jobs and social programs. In B.C. as elsewhere, the aboriginal peoples are by far the most downtrodden section of society. Across the country, the Native poverty rate is 44 percent (60 percent for children). Youth unemployment is 85 percent in some communities. Illiteracy is twice as high as in the rest of the population, while AIDS, tuberculosis and other diseases of poverty are reaching epidemic proportions among aboriginal people. Labor must defend Native rights!

NDP premier Clark claims the Nisga'a deal is about "righting historic wrongs." But the New Democrats' approval of this treaty, with its limited concessions to aboriginal rights, was hardly based on a sense of historic justice.

Last year's federal Supreme Court "Delgamuukw ruling" affirmed the right to aboriginal title to land and natural resources in areas where no treaties were signed, including the vast majority of B.C. The big logging and mining companies have been threatening massive cutbacks unless the land claims issue is resolved. The NDP wants to reassure the profit-bloated mining and forestry magnates that their "right" to exploit the working class will not be hampered by



Ian Lindsay/Vancouver Sun

NDP's Clark (left) and Nisga'a chief Ray Gosnell.

unresolved land claims. Thus Clark boasted that the Nisga'a treaty, which sets the stage for negotiations involving about fifty other Native peoples in the province, would "send a strong signal to the world that our province is open for investment."

Far from defending Native rights, the New Democrats have not hesitated to unleash vicious state repression against aboriginal protest. In 1995, the NDP government ordered an enormous combined RCMP/army military operation against a small group of Native people and their supporters at Gustafsen Lake in the Cariboo. Aboriginal people around the province were harassed, searched and detained without cause. The NDP later railroaded the Gustafsen Lake protesters through a frame-up trial, jailing protest leader William "Wolverine" Ignace. Free William Ignace!

Only Socialist Revolution Can End Native Oppression

About 2,000 Nisga'a live in four small communities in the Nass Valley, where a large majority are unemployed. Another 3,000 live elsewhere in B.C. or across the border in Alaska. Under the treaty, the Nisga'a will get title to about 2,000 square kilometers of land (approximately 10 percent of their original land claim), governmental powers similar to those of municipalities, \$190 million in treaty-settlement payments spread over a number of years, and additional funding to develop infrastructure and social services.

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No Illusions in Capitalist Courts, Cops, Governments! Protest Against Fascist Murder in B.C.

Some 2,500 people marched in Surrey, B.C. on June 28 to protest the brutal beating death of Nirmal Singh Gill. Five neo-Nazi thugs have been charged with the racist murder of Singh Gill, who was the caretaker at a Sikh temple in Surrey, a suburb of Vancouver with a large South Asian population.

This demonstration should have been a militant outpouring of integrated, labor-centered protest against the fascists and the capitalist system which breeds them. Instead, it was a stagemanaged love-in for a supposedly "compassionate" Canada, complete with Liberal Party politicians hypocritically speechifying about "tolerance." We reprint below a Vancouver Trotskyist League leaflet which was distributed at the protest.

For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Anti-Immigrant Racism!

For weeks after the brutal January 4 murder of Nirmal Singh Gill, the media sought to lay the blame on "Sikh factionalists." Four months later, the cops charged five neo-Nazi skinheads, members of a group called "White Power," with second-degree murder. A police spokesman claimed the killing was "a random event that leads to an act of senseless violence" (*Globe and Mail*, 22 April). But this lynching was neither "random" nor "senseless." Wolfgang Droege, leader of the neo-Nazi Heritage Front, boasts that Surrey—with the largest Sikh population in the country—is "the most fertile recruiting ground" for his white-supremacist gang. Singh Gill's killers left an all-night Nazi rally in Surrey and went straight to the Guru Nanak temple in search of a victim. Their purpose was **race terror** against all those who don't fit their twisted fantasies of a "white Canada."

The fascists must be crushed now, while they're small. Capitalism's bitter mix of mass unemployment, government cutbacks and national chauvinism has produced a dung heap on which the race-terrorists flourish. This is clearly evident in Europe, where mass fascist movements have mushroomed in France, Germany, Italy and elsewhere. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and East European deformed workers states brought economic devastation to the region. Meanwhile the triumphalist bourgeois rulers across the continent have moved to dismantle the "welfare state." While stepping up their onslaught on jobs and social programs, they seek to deflect discontent by scapegoating those perceived as the most vulnerable, especially immigrants and refugees. The fascists are growing as they feed off the widespread economic desperation and the anti-immigrant demagoguery spewed by the capitalist ruling class.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste calls for **labor/minority mobilizations** to stop the Nazis wherever they try to rally for genocide. We fought to carry out this perspective in Vancouver in 1993 when Tom Metzger's White Aryan Resistance threatened to hold a race-hate provocation at the Art Gallery. Several integrated union contingents responded to our call to stop Metzger's thugs by demonstrating

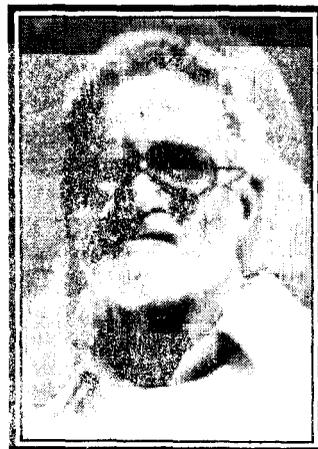
where and when the Nazis said they would be. Faced with a 3,000-strong rally, the Nazis didn't show up. Disgracefully, reformists like the B.C. Organization to Fight Racism and local "anti-fascist activist" Allan Dutton turned the demonstration into an impotent pacifist gab fest. In contrast, TL supporters later joined with hundreds of youthful militants to rout the Nazis from their hiding place in a nearby hotel.

Our call for a massive, disciplined display of labor power, bringing out minorities and all the fascists' intended victims, was sharply counterposed to the reformists' pleas to rely on the capitalist state—the cops, courts and government, whose role is to enforce the austerity and racism of bourgeois rule. The working class makes the wheels of profit turn in capitalist society, giving it enormous potential social power. This power, mobilized at the head of all the oppressed, can drive the Nazi vermin back into their holes. Such actions can be a bridge between the felt need for self-defense and the historic need to sweep away the system of capitalist exploitation which endlessly reproduces the fascist scum.

The fascists constitute the capitalists' last line of defense against working-class struggle. Ultimately, their goal is the destruction of all working-class organizations. Today they target those they view as the most vulnerable in society, especially immigrants and gays. For now, the rulers keep their murderous nightriders in reserve, but they will not hesitate to unleash them when the struggles of the oppressed can no longer be contained by "democratic" means. This is the bloody lesson of Italy in the 1920s and Germany in the 1930s.

B.C. labor embraces tens of thousands of immigrants and other minorities. Sikh, Filipino, Chinese and other Asian workers make up key contingents in strategic unions like the IWA and Hospital Employees. Foreign-born workers are coming to the fore in important labor battles, demonstrating their increasing centrality to the proletariat. Working-class struggles can only go forward in hard opposition to anti-immigrant racism. But this will take a sharp political fight against the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy and their "political arm," the NDP.

Nirmal Singh Gill's murder should have been met with powerful protest centered on organized labor, for whom the fight against fascism is a matter of survival. The fact that it was not reflects the "Canada First" chauvinism of the B.C. Federation of Labour tops. In export-dependent B.C., joblessness has intensified under the impact of the Asian economic crisis. Under the rallying cry of "Canadian jobs for Canadian workers!" the union bureaucrats directly blame foreign workers for unemployment, thus deflecting working-



Nirmal Singh Gill

Province

Stop Deportations of Iranian Refugees!

Chanting "Stop Deportations!" more than 500 Iranian immigrants and refugees demonstrated in Vancouver on August 10. In the two decades since the theocratic, anti-woman "Islamic revolution" of 1979, close to 100,000 Iranians fleeing persecution have come to Canada. The brutal rule of the ayatollahs has meant death for socialists, Kurds and homosexuals, while women are confined under the stifling veil and stoned to death for "adultery." Yet the rulers in Ottawa claim Iran is now a "safe country," and up to 3,000 Iranians face the prospect of deportation. On July 23, Nasrollah Goodarzi, a refugee living in Vancouver, committed suicide in despair at the prospect of being returned to Iran. One week later, a Kurdish family in Toronto (including two Canadian-born children) was sent back into the hands of the Iranian torturers.

The same imperialist ruling class that is staging these racist deportations helped to murder 100,000 Iraqis in the 1991 Gulf War and over a million since through UN economic sanctions. Ottawa fully backed the recent U.S. terror bombing of purported "Islamic terrorist facilities" in Afghanistan and Sudan. We say: Down with the starvation blockade of Iraq! Down with the imperialist terror bombing! Defeat U.S. and Canadian imperialism through workers revolution!

The strident war scare against "Islamic terrorism" is being used to justify stepped-up attacks on minorities at home, particularly people from the Middle East. We reprint below an August 29 letter to Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, protesting the threatened deportation of Iranian refugee Fatemeh Dehghani. It was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle

legal and social defense organization in accordance with the proletarian, revolutionary-internationalist program of the Trotskyist League.

* * *

Dear Ms. Robillard:

We protest the threatened deportation of Fatemeh Dehghani, a refugee from Iran. Four years ago, Dehghani was arrested and imprisoned by Iran's Revolutionary Guards, apparently because of her opposition to the regime's brutal treatment of women. While in prison she was beaten repeatedly. She fled to Canada after her release, seeking refuge from persecution. Yet Immigration Canada has denied her refugee claim and ordered her to be deported on September 10.

If Fatemeh Dehghani is forced to return to Iran, she faces not only imposition of the suffocating veil, symbol and instrument of the Islamic enslavement of women, but the threat of further persecution, arrest and torture. We note that the move to deport Dehghani is not an aberration for the Canadian government. Several thousand Iranian refugees, many of whom were imprisoned and tortured for their opposition to the theocratic dictatorship, face possible deportation from this country. In some cases, removal to Iran would amount to a warrant of execution.

We demand that Fatemeh Dehghani be given permanent resident status now. Stop the deportations of Iranian refugees!

Peter Stevens

for the Partisan Defense Committee

class anger away from the Canadian capitalist ruling class. This nationalist garbage fuels anti-immigrant racism, which in turn is spelled out in arson fires, racist graffiti, assaults and harassment, and now murder.

Capitalist State: Deadly Enemy of the Oppressed

The union bureaucrats and reformists look to the capitalist state to stem the rise of fascist violence. Allan Dutton, for example—whose Canadian Anti-Racist Education and Research Society has been heavily government-funded—appeals for "criminal prosecution when [the fascists] commit a crime and education in terms of stopping people from joining" (*Province*, 27 April). But the fascists aren't just delinquent youth with some repugnant notions in their heads. They are paramilitary action groups whose "philosophy" consists of beatings and firebombs, and whose program is genocide.

Dutton and others—like the Communities Against Racism and Extremism (CARE), organizers of today's rally—join NDP attorney-general Ujjal Dosanjh in appealing to Liberal MP Hedy Fry and the federal government to close down Nazi Web sites and to pass tougher "hate laws." Such demands whitewash the racist crimes of capitalist "democracy." The federal government is carrying out wholesale deportations of Iranian and Latin American refugees, while collaborating with the rabidly Hindu-chauvinist Indian government in its bloody campaigns against Sikhs and other

minorities. Now Ottawa has announced plans to go after immigrant fundraising organizations, claiming they are fronts for "terrorism." This is a barely veiled plan to criminalize entire immigrant communities—notably Sikhs and Tamils—and set them up for repression. ***Government hands off immigrant organizations! Stop the deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!***

The NDP social democrats sometimes claim to be friends of labor and the poor. But the Clark government is a capitalist government, ruling on behalf of the exploiters and employing the methods that their system requires—not least austerity and racism. The New Democrats have carried out deep attacks on the poor, gutting health care and the social services on which millions depend. Dosanjh himself called in the RCMP assassins against Native militants at Gustafsen Lake three years ago. And the NDP has directly targeted immigrants and refugees—for example, trying to impose a blatantly racist ban on welfare for "new arrivals." Glen Clark wraps himself in a blanket of Maple Leaf chauvinism, pushing himself to the front in Ottawa's reactionary "national unity" crusade against Quebec, and demonizing U.S. fishermen for "stealing Canadian salmon." ***Independence for Quebec!***

Appeals for the governments, courts and cops to deal with the fascists obscure the fact that the capitalist state is itself the main source of violence against minorities and working

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Fascist Murder...

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people. CARE announced on their Web site that their "message is not one of protest against [any] government, law enforcement agencies or community because they are all in support of [CARE's] objectives." Such wild illusions that the racist capitalist state is an ally of the oppressed are literally suicide for minorities. Toronto and Montreal police gun down black and other minority youth with impunity. In March in Alberta, a shotgun-wielding RCMP thug blew away Native mother Connie Jacobs and her nine-year-old son Ty after Jacobs resisted the abduction of her children by government "child welfare" officers. Last fall in Vancouver, Guatemalan refugee and community activist Hugo Hernández was jumped on the street and beaten by undercover cops on a "drug sweep."

Various self-proclaimed socialist groups also actively feed illusions in the capitalist state. *People's Voice* (April 1998), newspaper of the Communist Party (CP), glowingly reported the speech of the Surrey Chief of Police at an anti-racist demonstration in March. As for the International Socialists (I.S.), when skinheads waving swastika flags marched right through a 1992 Vancouver anti-racist protest, I.S. rally organizers told outraged demonstrators to rely on the "protection" of undercover police in the crowd! More recently, the I.S. has been on a frenzied campaign targeting an exile Iranian leftist organization, the Worker-Communist Party, as a mob of violent "racists" for driving agents of the blood-drenched Iranian government from the Toronto International Women's Day fair (see "Islamic Reaction and the Left," *Spartacist Canada* No. 117, Summer 1998). As Ottawa gears up to expel thousands of Iranian refugees, the I.S.'s sinister violence-baiting is an open invitation for state repression.

The opposition of today's rally organizers to so-called "extremism," embodied in CARE's very name, also plays into the hands of the racist cops and courts. Following the arraignment of Nirmal Singh Gill's killers, a member of B.C.'s police "Hate Crimes Team" explicitly targeted *anti-racist* militants "who are prepared to take action as well," equating them with the Nazi terrorists. What this means was shown in 1993 in Vancouver when six militants—including five supporters of the Trotskyist League and Partisan Defense Committee—were dragged through the courts on charges laid by white supremacist Jud Cyllorn, which were then taken up by the NDP attorney-general. All six had been prominent in a demonstration to shut down a meeting at Cyllorn's Pro-Cult Institute which featured notorious anti-Semite Ron Gostick. While five of the six successfully defeated the frame-up, one woman, a CUPE library unionist, was convicted of "assaulting" the 200-pound Cyllorn, who had threatened the demonstrators with an iron bar!

The Nazis take their cue from the official state terrorism of the cops and courts, and from the national chauvinism of capitalist governments, NDP and Liberal alike. The fake-socialist groups who ride the NDP's coattails—like the CP and I.S.—are obstacles in the necessary working-class-centered fight to stop the fascists. The Trotskyist League fights to break worker militants from their crippling allegiance to the NDP and forge an internationalist revolutionary party which can make the proletariat conscious of its historic task of overthrowing the entire capitalist system. Through the struggle for a new, egalitarian society ruled by those who labor, the working-class vanguard can rally all of the oppressed against the bankrupt system of poverty, racism and exploitation that breeds fascist terror. **Down with anti-immigrant racism! Mobilize labor and minorities to stop fascist provocations! Workers of the world, unite!** ■



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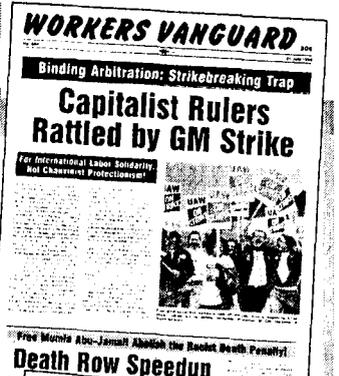
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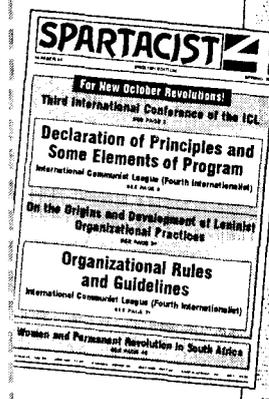


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Young Spartacus

Hands Off Toronto Squeegee Kids! State Crackdown on Youth, Poor

TORONTO—One of the most popular entertainments in this city is the musical *Les Misérables*. Well-heeled theatre-goers weep over Victor Hugo's tale of desperate poverty and police repression in nineteenth century France. Meanwhile, just outside, the City of Toronto under Mayor Mel Lastman has declared "war" on squeegee kids. Lastman rails that the mostly homeless youth who wash car windshields to earn money are violent "pests" and "intimidators." "There's people being hurt," Lastman raves. "There's people who could be hurt, there's people who could be killed" (*Toronto Star*, 30 July).

When Toronto's nasty little mayor sounds off against squeegee kids, he has plenty of support at City Hall. Long-time NDP councillor Kyle Rae snarled: "I want them off of residential and commercial strips." Rae hammered home his arrogant scorn for the poor by orchestrating the closure of a Salvation Army hostel on behalf of businesses in his ward. Meanwhile, downtown councillor Ila Bossons introduced a by-law to prohibit squeegeeing—as well as all panhandling after dark, or near subway entrances, bank machines, transit stops and liquor stores, or while sitting on a sidewalk.

Across the country, poverty and homelessness have mushroomed as corporations destroy jobs in pursuit of profits and "global competitiveness." In Toronto alone, according to the United Way, 168,000 people are homeless or on the edge. Simultaneously, all-sided government austerity attacks against social programs have hit young people particularly hard. In Mike Harris's Workfare Ontario, where welfare payments have been slashed over 20 percent across the board, youth under 18 can't get welfare at all. The arrogant capitalist rulers now find themselves offended by the very sight of the human misery they have created. They want it rendered invisible. So the propertied class dispatches its armed defenders, the police, to "clean up the streets" with boots and nightsticks.

Down With Police Repression! Hands Off OCAP!

The provincial Tory government of Mike Harris is expected to swiftly pass legislation making Bossons's vicious



SC photo

OCAP banner on August 22 Toronto demo. Cops seek to equate defense of poor with terrorism.

by-law enforceable. But the Metro Toronto cops haven't been waiting on the formalities. They've been on a rampage against the squeegee kids all summer. Scores have been arrested on trumped-up alcohol and drug charges, held without bail or run out of town. Québécois squeegees have been particularly abused, told by Anglo bigots to go back where they came from. *Cops and councillors, keep your fat hands off the squeegee kids!*

The cops hype themselves as the "thin blue line" between the citizenry and violent anarchy. In their crosshairs today are organizations which mobilize protests on behalf of the poor. The most prominent of these, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), has been targeted by the "Anti-Terrorism and Threat Investigation" section of the cops' Metro Intelligence Services, including phone taps and interception of e-mail (*The Varsity*, August 1998). This sinister attempt to equate protest with terrorism is a *deadly* slander. To be designated a terrorist by the bourgeois state is to be fingered as a violent outlaw to whom anything can be done. *Down with police surveillance and harassment of anti-poverty activists—Hands off OCAP!*

As the yawning gap between rich and poor widens, the police have increasingly tended toward *bonapartism*—the drive to throw off even nominal restraint and set themselves up as a law unto themselves. In August, an undercover cop was knifed in suburban Scarborough, and two women, regular panhandlers in the area, were quickly arrested. The dead narc's funeral was the biggest in Canadian history, packed with TV crews and bourgeois politicians. In a sinister show of force, 10,000 uniformed cops from around the world marched in military formation.

Almost daily, the Metro cops publicly denounce Toronto
(continued on page 12)

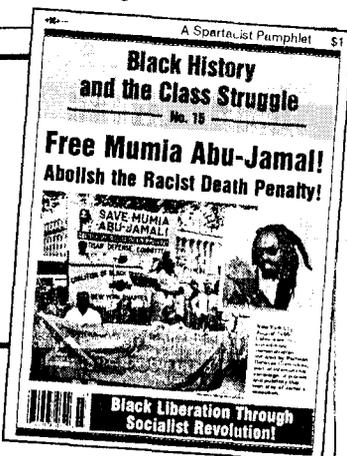
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Quebec...

(continued from page 1)

would have to negotiate with Quebec in the event of a "clear majority vote" for independence. In a front-page "Analysis," the *Toronto Star* (23 August) fretted that, "Thursday's Supreme Court of Canada ruling on Quebec secession has changed everything.... By ensuring there would be a bargaining process after a clear referendum victory, by establishing the constitutional doctrine of 'the obligation to negotiate,' the court has chopped one of the main cables holding up the national unity tent." Meanwhile, Parti Québécois deputy premier Bernard Landry exulted that "Their own Supreme Court imposes on them the obligation to negotiate. That is fascinating because that is what we have wanted to do for the past 30 years.... Those who have said, in order to scare people, that they would never negotiate with secessionists now have been told that this will not be the case" (*Globe and Mail*, 21 August).

The "nuanced" wording of the ruling reflects a fear among sections of the Anglo rulers that Chrétien's get-tough approach may blow up in their faces. Saskatchewan NDP premier Roy Romanow, whose government intervened on Ottawa's behalf during the Supreme Court hearing, now calls for a return to "Plan A"—the softer, patronizing approach which seeks to shore up the Anglo-chauvinist status quo with meaningless "concessions" to Quebec. Plan A is exemplified by the Calgary Declaration, a statement by the premiers of the nine majority English-speaking provinces that all provinces are "equal," but that Quebec has a "unique character" within Confederation.

Plan A and Plan B are flip sides of the Anglo-chauvinist coin. The various "national unity" campaigns all serve to rally English Canadian workers behind their "own" ruling class, even as the capitalists savage social programs and destroy the living standards of working people. On paper, the Canadian Labour Congress supports the "right of self-determination" for Quebec. But the English Canadian work-

ing class is mired in the Maple Leaf jingoism pushed by those same social-democratic union misleaders and their NDP "political arm." Their Canadian nationalism translates not only into anti-Quebec chauvinism, but also into poisonous, racist protectionist campaigns for "Canadian jobs" which target both foreign workers and immigrants in this country.

The Parti Québécois deploys Quebec nationalism to the same reactionary purpose. Lucien Bouchard & Co. have been able to slash health care and social programs with little union opposition, thanks to the nationalist Quebec union tops who back the PQ's appeals to "national solidarity" against Ottawa's threats. Despite sporadic militant walkouts by nurses and others, the Quebec labor bureaucrats have watched hospital closures and the slashing of social programs while barely batting an eye.

It is necessary to cut the Gordian Knot of national chauvinism through Quebec independence. This is the only way to make clear to workers in both English Canada and Quebec that their real enemies are their respective capitalist classes, not each other.

Quebec and the Left

In English Canada, the "national unity" crusade of mainstream social democrats like Saskatchewan's Romanow and B.C. NDP premier Glen Clark finds footsoldiers in the NDP's eternal "left" tails, the International Socialists (I.S.). In a column in *Socialist Worker* (22 July), I.S. leader Abbie Bakan sneeringly describes Quebec as the "remnants of a nation." *Socialist Worker* decrees that "Socialists do not advocate a separate capitalist Quebec," intoning that nationalism "represents no alternative to the workers of Quebec." However, a capitalist Quebec forcibly retained within a Canada saturated with *English Canadian* chauvinism is apparently another matter: the I.S. was the only group to the left of the NDP to support Tory prime minister Brian Mulroney's Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, as well as the Calgary Declaration—each of these an instrument for maintaining the Anglo-dominated status quo!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Toronto Trotskyist League Forum The Fight for a Trotskyist Party

7:30 p.m., Saturday, October 3
Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W.
(just west of Spadina subway)
For more information, phone (416) 593-4138.

Vancouver Trotskyist League Forum Imperialism and Class Struggle in Asia

2:30 p.m., Saturday, October 3
Britannia Community Centre
1661 Napier St. (off Commercial Drive)
For more information, phone (604) 687-0353.

Toronto Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

1. Marxism and the State Sept. 17
2. The Bolshevik Revolution. Oct. 1
3. The Revolution Betrayed Oct. 15
4. Marxism and the National Question Oct. 29
5. The Family and Women's Oppression Nov. 12
6. The Revolutionary Party and its Program Nov. 26

7:00 p.m., alternate Thursdays
University of Toronto

First class at International Student Centre,
33 St. George St. (just north of College).

Phone (416) 593-4138 for readings and other class locations.

Vancouver Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

1. Marxism: A Guide to Revolutionary Action Sept. 16
2. The State and Revolution Sept. 30
3. The Bolshevik Revolution. Oct. 14
4. Stalinism: Gravedigger of the Revolution. Oct. 28
5. Independence for Quebec. Nov. 11
6. Women's Liberation Through
Socialist Revolution Nov. 25
7. The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard Party Dec. 9

7:00 p.m., alternate Wednesdays
University of British Columbia

Phone (604) 687-0353 for readings and class locations.

The U.S. claim they will defend Quebec's right to self-determination if a majority votes for independence, a position which puts them marginally to left of the Supreme Court. Yet these die-hard reformists endlessly reinforce the illusions of English Canadian workers in the "democratic" pretensions of the Canadian imperialist state. For instance, they insist that "Quebec's historic demand for the right of self-determination, up to and including the right to separate, has been partially, if only implicitly, recognized by the English Canadian state during two referendums." "Partially"? "Implicitly"? Subconsciously, perhaps? Quebec's right to independence either exists, or it doesn't. And the U.S. appears oblivious to the obvious fact that, with each referendum, the chauvinist backlash led by the "English Canadian state" has become more and more frenzied.

Meantime, various fake-Trotskyist organizations simultaneously support the chauvinist NDP in English Canada *and* the nationalists in Quebec. Groups that are or were in the orbit of the disintegrating "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" of the late Ernest Mandel, like Socialist Challenge, Socialist Action and the Communist League, imbue Quebec nationalism itself with a "progressive" character. Such outfits thereby give backhanded political support to the bourgeois nationalists, while fervently backing such undemocratic projects as Quebec's restrictive Law 101 language legislation.

In this they echo the nationalist left within Quebec, which has been a crucial part of the syphilitic chain binding the Quebec working class to the capitalist PQ, by way of the nationalist union tops. Thus the Quebec Mandelites of *La Gauche*, now submerged in the Parti de la Démocratie Socialiste, declare that "Independence will be socialist or will not be!" This is simply absurd. The Quebec capitalist class, built through the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, is a would-be imperialist ruling class in its own right, if only a very minor one, and currently hampered by the absence of

an independent state power. They are quite capable of obtaining such a state without investing it with an ounce of progressive reform, let alone "socialism."

In a commentary on the recent formation of the Rassemblement pour l'Alternative Politique, a vague "leftist" opposition to the PQ, *La Gauche* (May 1998) states that: "Quebec independence gives us the occasion to redefine society, it harbors projects of profound social transformations: a Quebec of full employment, a Quebec without an army, a Quebec without social exclusion..." In reality, Quebec under the PQ—with its savage capitalist austerity, racism and union-busting—precisely prefigures the bourgeois "project" of an independent capitalist Quebec.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste rejects the reactionary ideology of nationalism in all its forms. We call for Quebec independence first and foremost in order to cut against the dominant Anglo chauvinism among English Canadian workers, but also to break the grip of nationalism on the Québécois proletariat. As we state in our recently adopted *Programmatic Theses*, "Who We Are, and What We Fight For":

"Nationalism and chauvinism are the key strands in the ropes which bind English-speaking and French-speaking workers to their capitalist enemies. The existence of two separate and increasingly divergent nations, one oppressing the other, defines the political landscape in this country, and has terribly undermined working-class struggle. We advocate *independence for Quebec* to help clear the way for united struggle by the working class against capitalist oppression."

Within the currently unitary Canadian imperialist state, we fight to forge a binational, multiracial revolutionary workers party, part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International. Only such a leadership can infuse the working class with the understanding of the need to overthrow capitalism through socialist revolution, and put an end to all forms of oppression and bourgeois injustice. ■

Native Rights...

(continued from page 3)

The Nisga'a will receive a guaranteed share of the fishing catch and, eventually, control over all forestry resources on their lands. The racist Indian Act will no longer apply, the reserves will be abolished and Nisga'a will be legally able to own property in their own villages for the first time since 1871. In return, the Nisga'a agree to surrender all future claims for land and resources. Some Nisga'a have denounced the treaty for surrendering too much of their land; meanwhile another Native group, the Gitanyow, has opposed it on the basis that it includes a majority of their own claimed territory.

An editorial in the *New York Times* (15 August) praised the deal as "Canada's Noble Gift" to aboriginal people, comparing it to the treaties signed with conquered American Indian tribes in the late 18th and the 19th centuries. If anything, the degree of self-government now on offer to the Nisga'a is rather less than what many American Native peoples, for example the Navajo, already have. But *any* treaty arrangement between the rich, racist capitalist rulers and the deeply impoverished aboriginal peoples is necessarily based on a wildly unequal balance of forces. There can be no solution to the oppression of Native people short of socialist revolution.

At the same time, we demand that whatever rights Native peoples have been able to maintain or wrest from capitalist governments, whether through treaty agreements or otherwise, be respected. In particular, we defend whatever measure of political autonomy aboriginal peoples with a land base, like the Nisga'a, are able to secure—including the right to govern their land and control its resources. Where land claims run up against socially useful developments like railways, the Native peoples should receive generous compensation for deprivation of land or disruption of activity, based on completely consensual agreement.

Only a workers government can guarantee these conditions. The destruction of capitalism will provide a real future for the aboriginal peoples, both those living in the cities and those in their traditional territories. A workers state would take special measures to ensure voluntary integration on the basis of full equality for those aboriginal peoples who desire it, and the fullest possible regional autonomy for those who do not. The multiracial working class must forthrightly defend Native rights as an integral part of the fight to sweep away the entire brutal and violent capitalist system.

Native Rights and the Quebec National Question

Clark boasted that the Nisga'a treaty "begins the healing that will bring us all into the 21st century a stronger, prouder
(continued on page 10)

Native Rights...

(continued from page 9)

and more united country." The New Democrats have long been prominent in the chauvinist "national unity" crusade of the Canadian ruling class against Quebec independence. Indeed, the current pretense of the B.C. NDP and the Liberal government in Ottawa to uphold Native rights is intimately connected to their opposition to the national rights of Quebec.

In 1990, Ottawa dispatched thousands of combat-ready soldiers against Mohawks seeking to defend their historical burial ground at Oka, Quebec, from redevelopment as a private golf course. Meanwhile racist mobs in the Montreal suburbs rioted for Mohawk blood, shouting "Québec aux Québécois" as they hung Natives in effigy. In forcibly suppressing the Mohawks, Ottawa showed once again that it is a sworn enemy of Native people. But since the Oka crisis, the federal government has increasingly sought to "play the Native card" against Quebec nationalism.

With the vast majority of the Cree and Inuit of Northern Quebec hostile to Quebec independence, Ottawa has tried to portray itself as an "ally" of Native people against Quebec. Its promises of Native self-government, in Quebec and elsewhere, are transparently hypocritical: in most cases they are a cover for "transforming" the reserves into apartheid-style "self-governed" bantustans. However, Ottawa's strategy of "dividing and ruling" over the oppressed has an impact, and several Native leaders in Quebec have called for Canadian army intervention in the event of Quebec secession, something which we would adamantly oppose.

We Trotskyists advocate independence for Quebec, because we recognize that the forcible retention of this oppressed nation in the Anglo-dominated Canadian state has deeply undermined the consciousness and the struggles of the working class in both English Canada and Quebec (see "Independence for Quebec!" page 1). At the same time, we assert the right of the Native peoples of Northern Quebec to determine their own fate. But in addressing the concrete "choice" between being part of an independent Quebec or remaining in a rump Canada, our main point of departure is that within the framework of racist capitalism, this simply means the right of the aboriginal populations to determine by whom they will be oppressed and brutalized. Only an egalitarian-socialist society under workers rule will be able to redress three centuries of abuse and degradation of the Native peoples.

Colonialism, Capitalism and the Nisga'a

The spread of European settler-colonial capitalism across the Americas dispossessed the existing inhabitants, destroyed



Dave Bustin/CP

NDP ordered 1995 siege at Gustafsen Lake. Above, RCMP with military armored car.

their way of life and segregated most of the remaining aboriginal societies in barren and unproductive reserves. Isolated on the remote northwest coast, where they largely lived off the abundant salmon fishery, the Nisga'a for a time resisted more successfully than most.

In fact, the first Hudson Bay Company traders into the Nass Valley in the 1830s found Nisga'a living in "two-storey wooden houses the equal of any in Europe." The Nisga'a added European goods to the commodities that moved along their existing trade routes with other coastal aboriginal peoples. Yet when the colony of British Columbia was established in 1858, the Imperial statute referred to the territory as "wild and unoccupied." In 1887, when the Nisga'a first travelled to Victoria to push for land claims, they were dismissed by Premier William Smithe with the insult, "When the whites first came among you, you were little better than the wild beasts of the field."

A perceptive 8 August article by *Globe and Mail* correspondent Terry Glavin describes how the Nisga'a initially adapted to the encroachments of resource-based industrial capitalism:

"There were once nine cannery towns around the mouth of the Nass River, where several generations of Nisga'a fished and laboured alongside European, Japanese and Chinese workers. The first labour strikes in north coast history, in 1896 and 1897, were led by Nisga'a protesting against poor wages and working conditions....

"When Indian reserve surveyors came into the Nass Valley, the Nisga'a pulled up their stakes and threw them into the trees, and sent letters to Victoria reminding politicians there of the king's promises. When the first white settlers arrived, the Nisga'a charged them rent for the land they used. The settlers paid."

Ultimately, though, the Nisga'a were beaten down by Canadian capitalism's vicious anti-Native racism. Glavin continues:

"Then came the residential schools, and then the logging companies, which took millions of board feet of timber from the mountains surrounding the Nisga'a villages. The mining companies left with 68 million grams of gold, two billion grams of silver, 13.6 million kilograms of zinc and 389 million kilograms of copper.

"Then the salmon canneries closed."

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

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In order to maintain their rule, the capitalists constantly exploit national, ethnic and racial divisions among working people and the oppressed. Thus the early attempts at joint struggle by white, Native and Asian workers in B.C. were undermined and destroyed by the capitalist ruling class, and first aboriginal and then Asian workers were largely driven out of industry. In this the capitalists had inestimable assistance from the racist union misleaders, who refused to organize Native and Asian workers and called for their exclusion from the workforce. In 1900, for example, the union tops whipped up a mob to attack a 2,000-strong demonstration by Japanese workers in Vancouver in solidarity with a joint strike of Japanese and white fishermen. Under the pretext of preventing a race riot, the government declared martial law and broke the strike.

Today as well, the union bureaucracy, joined at the hip to the ruling New Democrats, has actively fueled racism against Native people and other minorities. A case in point is the longstanding conflict between the fishermen's union (UFAWU-CAW) and aboriginal fishermen over out-of-season fishing rights. Five years ago, UFAWU leaders helped found the "Fisheries Survival Coalition," set up to protest the small commercial Native fishery. This Coalition, in which the federal Reform Party is very active, has since organized a series of racist protests against the "preference" given to Native fishermen. Thus, rather than waging a serious campaign to organize Native fishermen into a joint union of all fisheries workers, the union bureaucrats have helped to foment the worst kind of racist backwardness. This serves to undermine any prospect of successful class struggle against the avaricious bosses and governments whose drive for profits depleted the fish stocks in the first place.

For Socialist Revolution!

Today, the B.C. proletariat has become decisively multiracial, including tens of thousands of Asian workers and also a small Native component. Once again, the same capitalist ruling class which has destroyed the jobs and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands seeks to point the finger of blame at Native people, immigrants and workers abroad. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste fights to build a revolutionary party which will champion the cause of the oppressed, making the workers conscious of their historic task of overthrowing the entire capitalist system. Such a party can only be forged in sharp political combat against all the purveyors of racism and chauvinism and other tools of the ruling class to divide and divert working-class struggle, exposing and breaking the hold of the pro-capitalist New Democrats and union misleaders.

This perspective stands in sharp contrast to that of the misnamed Communist League (CL). The 24 August issue of the CL's *Militant* carries two articles on the Nisga'a treaty which are carefully restricted to calls to fight the racist backlash and completely *silent* on the role of the NDP. For their part, the International Socialists (I.S.) wail in the July 22 *Socialist Worker* that "we should...demand that Clark and the NDP offer real, not just token self-government to natives in the province, and that they repudiate the use of force against natives on the lines of Gustafsen Lake." As if Native people could get "real" self-government under capitalism, or the supremely violent bourgeois state could possibly renounce the "use of force"! The I.S. fosters illusions that the capitalist NDP government can be pressured into becoming an instrument acting on behalf of the oppressed. But so long



Hanson/Canadian Press

Mohawk Warrior at Oka, 1990. Ottawa sent in army to suppress struggle for Native rights.

as the labor movement is shackled to the bosses through the vehicle of the NDP, it cannot turn back the capitalist assaults on workers' and Native and other minority rights.

Various pseudo-socialists also tail illusions pushed by some Native spokesmen that a return to "traditional culture" can provide an escape from the horrors caused by capitalism. We reject this idealization of "traditional culture," which amounts to a patronizing glorification of backwardness. The chains of "tradition" bind Native women with particular severity. To cite one example, in May 1992 in the Nass Valley town of New Aiyansh, a local doctor colluded with Native elders to prevent a 16-year-old Nisga'a woman from getting an abortion. In the name of *hawatkw*, an unwritten code which, it is claimed, enshrines traditional cultural relations among the Nisga'a, a Native elder declared "there was no way she will have this abortion." This interference in a young girl's personal life on the basis of "traditional culture" was vicious and reactionary, and should have been opposed by all who champion the cause of the oppressed.

Labor must come to the defense of Native peoples as an integral part of its own struggle to throw off the chains of capitalist wage slavery. As we wrote six years ago, in an article entitled "Torture of Native Women in NWT" (*SC No. 89, Fall 1992*):

"We fight to build a vanguard party to lead the proletarian revolution that will finally put an end to the system of private property and capitalist exploitation. Such a party will be, in V.I. Lenin's words, a tribune of the people, targeting every injustice and cruelty that capitalism creates. It will fight for women's liberation, possible only with the revolutionary transformation of society and the emancipation of women from slavery in the institution of the family. The inauguration of the era of socialist development can ensure the all-sided voluntary integration of Native people into society on the basis of the fullest equality and will meet the special needs created by well over a century of injustice and oppression." ■

State Crackdown...

(continued from page 7)

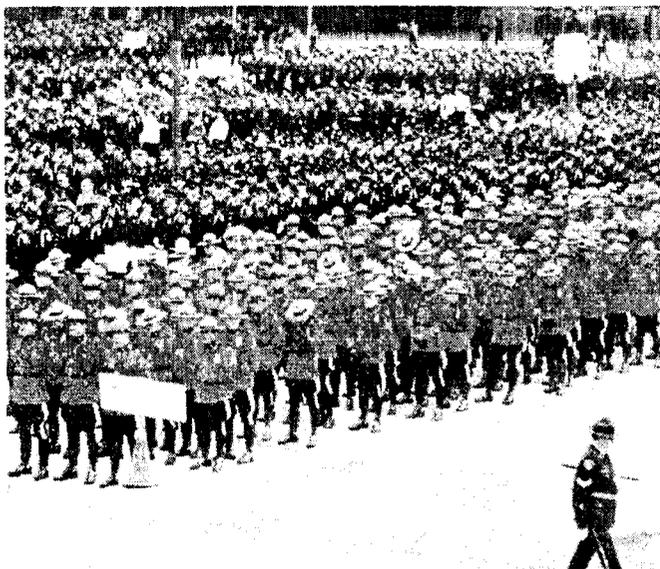
councillors who dare to be mildly critical of their actions. And when the "civilian watchdog" Special Investigations Unit (SIU) charged two cops following a car chase in which an elderly cyclist was killed, the police threatened to stop responding to calls. The regular police obstruction of even pro-forma SIU investigations exposes the dangerous liberal illusion that the police thugs can be restrained by "civilian control."

The capitalist state—centrally the cops, courts, prisons and army—exists to protect capitalist property and bourgeois order through its jealously guarded monopoly of armed violence. The SIU itself was set up precisely to give the appearance of "political oversight," the better to whitewash the cops' daily crimes against the oppressed. The capitalist state cannot be reformed. It must be smashed through revolutionary anti-capitalist struggle.

Fight for Socialist Revolution!

Only the working class, with its hands on the levers that make profits flow in this profit-driven capitalist society, has the social power and self-interest to carry out that task. A class-struggle fight for *jobs and decent housing for all*, led by the unions, could galvanize a counteroffensive against capitalist exploitation. In B.C., Quebec and Ontario, energetic young organizers have recently turned to the unions to help them fight the high-handed McDonalds fast-food empire. But beyond publicizing these important unionizing efforts, the labor tops have done next to nothing to address the needs of youth facing a bleak future of McJobs in the low-wage service sector.

Many thousands of youth and students linked up with the labor movement during the Ontario "Days of Action" sponsored by the Ontario Federation of Labour over the last few



Boris Spremo/Toronto Star

Bonapartist march at cop funeral in August.

years. Militant and well-attended at first, these demonstrations and local one-day political strikes were quickly and methodically turned into NDP campaign rallies by the pro-capitalist labor tops. The NDP has repeatedly demonstrated its loyalty to capitalist profiteering, launching attacks against the poor and oppressed everywhere they have been in office.

To help create a worthwhile future free of racism and poverty, youth must join in the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party to lead the fight against capitalism. The Spartacus Youth Clubs are training grounds of revolutionary education and action, dedicated to bringing a new generation of militants to the Marxist understanding of the need for socialist revolution. Join us—we have a world to win! ■

TL/LT Pamphlet...

(continued from page 2)

party cannot be separated from its aims. For example, our 1994-95 debates over the national question in Quebec were conducted in the best tradition of Leninist democratic-centralism, which is the organizational principle of the ICL and all its sections. Our party upholds full freedom of internal political discussion in reaching decisions, combined with complete unity and discipline in action in carrying them out.

At the same time, the right to form organized factions to struggle within the party for minority positions is integral to democratic-centralism. Our organizational rules are unique in spelling out these rights.

Our *Organizational Rules and Guidelines* are intended to further our proletarian-revolutionary purpose. As founding American Trotskyist James P. Cannon noted in "Leninist Organizational Principles" (*Speeches to the Party*, 1973), "Democratic-centralism has no particular virtue per se. It is the specific principle of a combat party, united by a single program, which aims to lead a revolution. Social Democrats have no need of such a system of organization for the simple reason that they have no intention of organizing a revolution." Only through world socialist revolution will it be possible to achieve real human emancipation, in which the free development of each individual is the condition for the free development of all. As the ICL Declaration of Principles declares:

"The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization." ■

SPARTACIST

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Tibet...

(continued from page 16)

unlike the situation at the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution; when the imperialist powers were exhausted and ideologically bankrupted by World War I, today they have been reinvigorated by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, which was prepared by decades of Stalinist misrule.

Particularly in the face of the "free Tibet" frenzy against the Chinese deformed workers state, the Trotskyist International Communist League reasserts the need for unconditional military defense of China against imperialist attack and domestic counterrevolution. To stop the devastation threatened by the reintroduction of capitalist slavery, China's toiling masses must carry out a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucratic caste. This requires the forging of an authentically communist party rooted in the internationalism of Lenin's Bolsheviks and the early Communist International, whose revolutionary program was carried forward by Trotsky's Fourth International. Key to this is the understanding that the only path to a socialist society of abundance lies through the rapid spread of proletarian revolution throughout South and Southeast Asia and to South Korea and Japan.

The Hell of Lamaist Tibet

Tibet is of little geopolitical importance for the imperialists. But it does pose a test of the resolve of the CCP Stalinists to defend their rule. Former Soviet leader Gorbachev's willingness to cede the Baltic states and, most importantly, the USSR's "influence" over East Germany intensified imperialist pressures against the Soviet Union and emboldened domestic counterrevolutionaries, finally leading to Yeltsin's pro-imperialist coup in August 1991.

When U.S. imperialist chief Clinton visited Beijing in June, he unfurled the banner of "autonomy" for Tibet—which, not accidentally, is the current program of the Dalai Lama—as part of his program for a "democratic" China. Clinton's trip had all the trappings and hypocrisy of an Elmer Gantry revival, replete with tedious sermons on the virtues of democracy accompanied by confessions of human frailty. Autonomy under the Dalai Lama would have approximately the same relationship to democracy as Clinton's (unremarkable) sexual proclivities have to chastity.

The stunning, picture-postcard beauty of "Shangri-La" notwithstanding, Tibet has the most minimal basis for human habitation, a reality which has facilitated its development as a distinct society, isolated, in the large, from the rest of the world as well as from such modern intrusions as literacy, medical care and civilization in general. Formed through the merger of a feudal-like aristocracy and a vast clerical estate making up, at times, over 20 percent of the male population, the Lamaocracy held sway over a society of peasants and herdsmen for hundreds of years until 1959. Only then, nine years after the entry of the Chinese People's



Tibetan Buddhist monks riot in 1987. Huge religious caste was CIA spearhead for counterrevolution after 1950 Chinese intervention.

Liberation Army (PLA) into the territory, did the Beijing bureaucracy begin to implement fundamental reforms in Tibet.

The theocracy in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa so effectively and brutally dominated the society that there is no accessible history of the kind of episodic peasant uprisings which characterized precapitalist societies throughout the rest of the world. In fact, there is no record of any unrest at all. It is a measure of the intensity of oppression and exploitation in Lamaist Tibet that what was perhaps proportionally the largest and most idle ruling stratum in human history was economically supported by growers of barley and herders of yak. At base, this meant the labor of women, since both the monks and a not small portion of the male population, who emulated the monastic life after "sinning" by procreating, were employed in contemplation.

After the PLA's 1950 occupation of Tibet, American imperialism—with parallel efforts by the ruling classes of India, Taiwan and Japan—utilized Tibet's ruling stratum and its fear of the least reform to foment resistance against the newly formed Chinese deformed workers state. In 1959, a rebellion inspired, armed and financed by the CIA originated in Tibet's eastern reaches in China's Sichuan province and culminated in a monk/aristocrat-led uprising in Lhasa. This effort—preordained to fail—was cynically launched by the U.S. simply to harass China. Against the imperialist huc and cry over "poor little Tibet," the Trotskyists stood forthrightly for the defense of China.

The rebellion was smashed, the Dalai Lama fled to India and the CCP quickly abolished his administration—the "Tibet Local Government"—which had been formed in 1951. Only then did Mao move to abolish *ulag* (forced peasant labor), slavery and the myriad of mandatory taxes paid to the aristocracy and monasteries. Previously, the monasteries simply appropriated children to replenish the monk population while villages were forced to hand over children for state functions in Lhasa, with boys thus "donated" taken by the monks as consorts. The land, livestock and tools of the

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Tibet...

(continued from page 13)

aristocrats who fled into exile were distributed to the peasants, as were the land and chattel of the monasteries which had participated in the uprising. As one frequent visitor to the area described post-revolutionary Tibet, "at least now you don't see emaciated serfs in rags carrying the litter of a noble dressed in warm clothing, turquoise rings and gold bracelets" (*Guardian*, 29 December 1973, quoted in A. Tom Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* [1996]).

Even the modest reforms instituted under CCP rule were attenuated through sabotage by the remaining Tibetan aristocrats, as well as through the narrow policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which was shot through with "Great Han" Chinese chauvinism. Those aristocrats who stayed were reimbursed for their property, as were the "loyal" monasteries which were then subsidized by the Chinese state. Mao's "Great Leap Forward" of the late 1950s—a utopian campaign to catapult China to the status of an advanced industrial power on the basis of raw peasant labor—grievously undermined agrarian and social reform. Substituting utopian sloganeering for material reality, this leap *backward* brought industrial and agricultural production to a standstill, leading to a devastating famine throughout China.

Subsequently, Tibetans were subjected to fierce Great Han chauvinism during the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" beginning in the mid-1960s, in which Mao mobilized millions of student youth to buttress his position in an intra-bureaucratic factional feud. In this grossly misnamed campaign, which took aim at all things "foreign" and at such "capitalist" influence as accumulated scientific knowledge and classical music, Tibetan language and native dress (including the distinctive hairstyle) were proscribed. Much of what had been at the core of Tibetan "culture"—monas-

teries, religious artifacts and texts—was simply smashed up and destroyed, although with the appreciable side effect of driving monks into actual labor. By decree, nomadic herds-men were "transformed" into farmers overnight and the peasantry organized into large agricultural communes which lacked not only the machines but the soil necessary for large-scale farming. Predictably, agricultural production was so disrupted that by 1981 one-fifth of the Tibetan population required subsidies from the central government merely to survive.

Deng Xiaoping's rise to power shortly after Mao's death was accompanied by the lifting of Han-chauvinist strictures against Tibetan language, attire and hairstyles. The monasteries were rebuilt and refurbished, while the idle monks returned in droves and currently number some 40,000 to 50,000. At the same time, the "market reforms" initiated under Deng have increased Han privilege in the area, as well as the distaste of most Tibetans for their occupiers. The growing presence of the PLA, with its relatively well-paid officers and soldiers and their families and its prominent role in business ventures (geared in Tibet primarily to tourism), has also led to an infusion of ethnic Han entrepreneurs employing Han workers.

Thus, the real gains for the Tibetan masses from the export of the 1949 Chinese Revolution—from the introduction of modern health care to the establishment of a modicum of education, which lowered the level of illiteracy from 90 percent to roughly 45 percent—stand alongside continuing glaring inequalities. Tibetan farmers and herders earn an average of \$68 a year, while 79 percent of Tibetan women of childbearing age are illiterate. Such inequalities are rapidly increasing with the introduction of capitalist market "reforms."

Hollywood Stumps for Counterrevolution

Keenly attuned to the opportunities provided by the policies of the CCP bureaucracy, which has engaged in off-and-on discussions concerning the status of Tibet, the Dalai Lama has "evolved" from his earlier calls for independence, which faded out after the anti-Soviet rapprochement between the U.S. and Mao's China in the early 1970s. Now the god-king has expressed a willingness to dicker over some sort of "autonomy" arrangement, with occasional statements of approval of modernization and, even, some sort of "socialism." At the same time, following the final undoing of the Russian October Revolution in 1991-92, the aristocrats and Lamas who maintain the Tibetan exile communities in the Indian subcontinent have increasingly sought to mobilize international pressure for Tibetan independence.

These developments have inspired a gaggle of American entertainers to lend their efforts to the reactionary anti-Communist crusade against China. Prominent among them is Richard Gere, the actor and sometime pupil of the Dalai Lama, who has vowed to make Tibet "a household word in the United States, like Maalox or Lysol." However, Gere has apparently recently been supplanted in the Dalai Lama's inner circle. If Christopher Hitchens' report in the *Nation* (27 July) is to be believed, "Steven Seagal, the robotic and moronic 'actor' who gave us *Hard to Kill* and *Under Siege*, has been proclaimed a reincarnated lama." Hitchens observes, "Suggestions that Seagal's fortune helped elevate him to the Himalayan status of tulku [sacred vessel] are not completely discounted even by some adepts and initiates."



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Dalai Lama (right) with Chinese troops in 1956. In 1959, he backed CIA-sponsored rebellion.

These jet-setting "artistes," who invariably exceed their gurus in vacuity, wish to add to their collections of causes and extravagant toys a Tibet to be preserved "au naturel," a theme park where tranquil and simple humans live in "organic" relationships unspoiled by "civilization." In reality, they uphold a society only decades ago so ravaged by sickness that an estimated **90 percent** of the population suffered from venereal disease; a society in which women were shared with their husbands' male relatives if poor or added to the stables of wives of the rich; a society where life was brutal, harsh and short and where the masses were offered not the least hope for amelioration or any kind of change. And that society, or one very much like it, would re-emerge if the Lama/aristocrat exiles returned to power in an "independent" Tibet.

In stressing the need for the Chinese proletariat to combat the Han chauvinism of the Stalinist bureaucracy and champion the rights of Tibetans, the Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang and other national and ethnic minorities, we raised the call for "the right of independence for a Tibetan *soviet* republic" ("China on the Brink: Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement?" *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997). However, given the social conditions in Tibet, this call is mistaken. There is currently no basis for *any* sort of independent Tibet, where there exists neither a domestic capitalist class—not even a comprador capitalist layer—nor a working class of any significance. There is no way to even determine what the masses in Tibet might want. The toiling population—peasants and herders—remains unorganized, politically mute and isolated in myriad small villages and settlements.

In *The Permanent Revolution* (1930), Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky wrote:

"Under the conditions of the imperialist epoch the national democratic revolution can be carried through to a victorious end only when the social and political relationships of the country are mature for putting the proletariat in power as the leader of the masses of the people. And if this is not yet the case? Then the struggle for national liberation will produce only very partial results, results directed entirely against the working masses."

As in the case of other horribly benighted and backward countries, like Afghanistan, even a modicum of modernization can only come from without. This is why, at the time of the Soviet military intervention against CIA-backed feudalist reactionaries in Afghanistan in 1979, we raised the call:

"Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" In that context, we pointed to the extension of Bolshevik power to Central Asia in the 1920s, which laid the basis for an enormous leap forward for that region's toilers, particularly women who had been brutally oppressed under the Islamic hierarchy. The Kremlin's withdrawal from Afghanistan in the late 1980s set up women and leftists there for the horrendous rule of the Taliban cutthroats and led in short order to capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union itself.

In Tibet, it was only the entry of the army of the Chinese deformed workers state that enabled the masses to begin even the most minimal steps toward social progress. The fate of the Tibetan people is inextricably bound up with the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and socialist revolution in the Indian subcontinent and throughout Southeast and East Asia.

China: For Proletarian Political Revolution!

To oust the bureaucratic caste that is rushing to liquidate the last remaining gains of the Chinese Revolution requires the leadership of a proletarian party which, as Lenin prescribed, must act as the tribune of the people, fighting on behalf of all the oppressed. This means, for example, struggling against the erosion of the gains made by women since 1949 and combatting every instance of Great Han chauvinism promoted by the nationalist bureaucracy. Proletarian political revolution in China would immediately face the fury of imperialist-led reaction. The only defense against this is the international mobilization of the working class, struggling to spread red revolution particularly to South Korea and Japan.

Key to the victory of the October Revolution was the Bolsheviks' intransigent internationalism, including their defense of the right of self-determination for the many oppressed nations in the tsarist prison house of peoples. After seizing power, the Bolsheviks did indeed grant those nations the right to separate, while establishing measures of autonomy for various pre-national peoples. But particularly as the young Soviet republic was besieged by imperialist-led White counterrevolution, national self-determination, like all bourgeois-democratic questions, was subordinate to the defense of proletarian state power. The short-lived Ukrainian and Georgian "republics" of the time, despite their pretensions of "neutrality" and a patina of "socialist," peasant radical and even anarchist rule, proved to be little more than highways for the military forces mobilized by the imperialists against Red Russia. Similarly, an "independent" Tibet today could only serve as a platform for imperialist provocations against the Chinese deformed workers state.

The preconditions for any meaningful Tibetan autonomy or, if desired, independence are the destruction of every remaining vestige of aristocratic and monastic power—and the end to all state support to the monasteries—through the mobilization of the Tibetan masses into soviets of toilers linked to proletarian soviet rule in China. Only then could the Tibetan people begin to overcome centuries of near slavery and hideous deprivation and embark on the road of progress, prosperity and human freedom that is the goal of socialist revolution. That advance today depends on a victorious working-class political revolution in China as part of the fight for a socialist Asia.

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Anti-Communist Crusade for "Free Tibet"

In recent years, one of the most backward and inaccessible regions on the earth has come to the fore as a cause célèbre for Hollywood movie stars as well as imperialist politicians. The clamor for "freedom" for Tibet from Chinese rule has also managed to yoke a significant number of liberal and leftist youth behind one of U.S. imperialism's longstanding anti-Communist crusades. This has been aided by a seemingly endless barrage of films extolling Tibet's "traditional"—and benighted—culture, its self-exiled god-king and star of Apple computer ads, the Dalai Lama. Among these is *Seven Years in Tibet*, idolizing a German Nazi in the 1930s who became a convert to the Tibetan cause. Meanwhile, a range of rap and rock groups like the Beastie Boys and Red Hot Chili Peppers have donated their efforts for "freedom concerts" to raise funds for this anti-China campaign.

The "Free Tibet" cause originated with the machinations of the American CIA and other imperialist forces intent on fomenting capitalist counterrevolution in China. Until its overthrow following the 1949 Chinese Revolution, the Tibetan "Lamaocracy" ruled a society where slavery—sexual and otherwise—was rampant, medical care nonexistent and literacy the preserve of (some of) the ruling priest-caste. Although bureaucratically deformed from its inception, the 1949 Revolution overthrew capitalist/landlord rule and established a collectivized, planned economy, laying the basis for huge strides forward by the workers, peasants and minority peoples of China, including the Tibetans.

Today, the nationalist regime of the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is itself leading the charge toward capitalist restoration, re-establishing both imperialist and domestic capital investment, with its own cadre immersing themselves in money-grabbing entrepreneurship. The



U.S. imperialist chief Clinton meets Dalai Lama, high priest of counter-revolution, at White House in 1997.

AFP

Beijing bureaucracy is rapidly oxidizing the "iron rice bowl"—the guarantee of jobs and housing and other social benefits—including current moves to eliminate the housing subsidy for state workers, which threatens to create millions of homeless. The looming threat of "free market" misery has led to widespread resistance, including strikes, by the Chinese proletariat.

For now, the imperialists, especially in business circles, have adopted a "soft cop" strategy, correctly perceiving that the Beijing regime has pushed China to the brink of counter-revolution. But the U.S. ruling class has, in the Korean and Vietnamese wars and earlier in World War II, demonstrated that it will readily perpetrate mass slaughter—up to and including nuclear incineration—to maintain world dominance and eradicate the "menace" of communism. And it would do so again in China should such be deemed warranted. Indeed,

(continued on page 13)

For Unconditional Military Defense of China Against Imperialist Attack and Internal Counterrevolution!