



No U.S., Canadian, UN, EU Intervention!

Defend the Palestinian People!



Reuters



AP

Israeli soldier terrorizes Palestinian youth at West Bank checkpoint. At right, cops attack pro-Palestinian protest in Beirut. Outraged at Zionist massacres, hundreds of thousands have demonstrated throughout the Near East and beyond.

Ramallah, Nablus, Bethlehem, Jenin, Qabatya, Qalqilya, Yatta, Samua, Ber Zeit: the roll call of Palestinian communities devastated by Israeli troops, tanks and helicopter gunships encompasses almost all of the West Bank. Upwards of 200 Palestinians were slaughtered in the Jenin refugee camp alone—where nearly 15,000 people are crammed into little more than a third of a square mile—as defiant fighters armed with automatic rifles tried to defend homes and families against the Israeli juggernaut. Likening Jenin to Vietnam, carpet bombed by the U.S., one Israeli soldier said, “There’s nothing left there now.”

Over 4,000 Palestinians have been arrested, including

Marwan Barghouti, second only to Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Yasir Arafat in the Fatah party. The PA now exists in name only. Estimates of the death toll range to 500—on top of more than 1,200 killed and 50,000 wounded over the previous 18 months. The full extent of the slaughter may never be known. Cities and towns that once had a semblance of an economy and life have been reduced to ruins. Old towns and casbahs, some of them with walls dating back to the Roman Empire, have been turned to dust. The West Bank is now a massive pile of twisted metal and destroyed lives. It will take years, if not decades, to rebuild what the

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**Down With the Zionist and Arab Bourgeois Rulers!
For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!**

Young Spartacus

SYC Denounces Zionist Provocation at York University

We print below a 30 March leaflet by the Spartacus Youth Club at Toronto's York University. The leaflet was widely distributed at York as part of a successful defense of our democratic right to distribute our Marxist newspapers on the campus.

* * *

On Tuesday, March 26, two Spartacus Youth Club supporters—distributing our Marxist newspapers *Workers Vanguard* and *Spartacist Canada*—were ordered by two campus cops to take down our literature table outside the Student Centre and leave York University. Their pretense for baldly suppressing our democratic rights? “Someone” called and complained. Who, and about what, is no mystery. Over the last semester, foam-flecked Zionists have repeatedly accosted and threatened us for our signs defending the Palestinian people against their murderous oppression by the Zionist state, calling for “All Israeli Troops, Settlers out of the Occupied Territories!” That day, a rabid Zionist repeatedly harassed our team, brushing up against us, screaming that we were murderers and racists. Perhaps he failed to notice our signs in Chinese, our placard defending immigrants against the current state witchhunt, and our pamphlet calling for the freedom of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal?

This attack is but a single example of the jack-booted campaign of intimidation that the York Zionists have waged against anyone who might dare object to the expulsion of the Palestinians from their land in 1948, the massacres of Sabra and Shatila, or the vast and lethal repression aimed at the current *Intifada*. In November, the Jewish Student Federation fiercely pushed a petition to have the administration ban the *Atkinsonian* newspaper for its coverage of Israel's atrocities in the Occupied Territories. A demonstration called by the CUPE 3903 Anti-Racism Working Group to show how the “war on terror” is being used to demonize the Palestinian cause was provocatively disrupted by members of the Jewish Student Federation. Recently, a forum by a heroic Israeli “refusenik,” whose refusal to serve in “an army of occupation” shatters the lie that all Hebrew-speaking Israelis support the oppression of the Palestinians, was repeatedly interrupted when Zionists sought to drown out all discussion with their fanatical ranting.

The lie that defense of the Palestinians “equals” anti-Semitism is a chauvinist myth that contains the seeds of a program of genocide. As the Jewish Israeli poet Avot Yeshurun wrote, “The holocaust of European Jewry and the holocaust of the Arabs in Palestine is one holocaust of the Jewish people.” This weekend, the Zionist assault has dramatically escalated. Seizing on the criminal murder of 22 innocent Israeli citizens at a Passover seder in Netanya by a Hamas suicide bomber, Sharon unleashed hundreds of troops, dozens of tanks, and helicopters in an assault on Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah. Israeli troops have made other incursions into Palestinian towns throughout the West Bank. ***It is urgently necessary for working people and opponents of racist oppression internationally to oppose the Zionist terror machine and to defend the Palestinians.***

There can be no justice for the Palestinian people under capitalism. The system of private property and ownership of the productive forces necessarily contains within it the components of nationalism and religion, which make impossible the settlement of the conflicting national claims of the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking populations. Only through the overthrow of the Israeli *and* Arab ruling classes can the right of self-determination for both peoples be fully realized. What is needed is the leadership of an international revolutionary workers-party that can mobilize the working class across national lines, Arab- and Hebrew-speaking alike, in a revolutionary struggle for power. Such a party would fight against imperialist intervention under the cover of a UN fig-leaf or a bogus “two-state” solution that would only be legal window-dressing for the continuing apartheid-like hell of the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

The petty two-bit Zionist McCarthyism at York coincides with a massive intensification of state repression against left and immigrant organizations (such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), spearheaded by Bill C-36 and the Canadian capitalist state's other attacks on democratic rights. Just last week, a phalanx of cops, wielding tear gas and batons, attacked OCAP demonstrators on the eve of the protests against the Tory leadership convention, arresting dozens who now face onerous bail conditions and jail time. Every opponent of racism and injustice should vehemently oppose the York Zionist intimidation campaign. ***Defend the Palestinian people! For a socialist federation of the Near East!*** ■

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Mass Arrests in Montreal, Toronto Protest Police Repression of Leftist Demonstrators!

As 400 demonstrators gathered in Montreal on March 15 for a march against police brutality, hundreds of riot cops moved in to stop them. Encircling the protest, the cops blocked all escape routes and sealed off the surrounding area to keep out reporters and other witnesses. By the end of the evening, 371 demonstrators were under arrest.

The following weekend in Toronto, police with weapons drawn attacked and threatened to shut down marches against the provincial Tory convention organized by the Ontario Common Front (OCF) and Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP). Protesters, including young women, were beaten on the street and in detention and subjected to humiliating strip searches. One was repeatedly shot with a high-voltage taser stun gun, while police fired tear gas into an abandoned building occupied by protesters seeking to highlight massive homelessness. At least 79 were arrested.

In Montreal on April 26, an entire 300-strong rally was arrested before it could leave downtown Dominion Square for a march against a gathering of G8 labor ministers. After sealing the area, police attacked the protesters with pepper spray and billy clubs. A statement by Anti-Capitalist Convergence (CLAC), the anarchist organizers of the demonstration, noted: "They simply took away our right to freedom of expression with truncheon blows, pepper spray, intimidation tactics, degrading searches, without a call for dispersal nor any prior warning."

As the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), the legal and social defense organization associated with the Trotskyist League, noted in a letter to the Ontario attorney-general protesting the mass arrests in Toronto:

"It is not a coincidence that this escalation of police violence and provocations against OCAP and OCF follows hard on Bill C-36 and other repressive federal legislation allegedly designed to 'combat terrorism.' In the bourgeois press and in your courts, OCAP and the OCF have been repeatedly slandered as 'terrorists.' Such sinister baiting—as absurd as it is vicious—expresses both the cynicism of the racist domestic 'war on terrorism' and its real purpose, which is to witchhunt whole immigrant communities, crack down on dissent and further restrict the democratic liberties of the entire population.... Down with the reactionary 'war on terrorism' at home and abroad! Cops and courts: Hands off OCAP and OCF!"

Anti-Terror Witchhunt Targets Everybody

The rise of state repression internationally began well before September 11. In the U.S. and West Europe, violent repression of leftist demonstrators is increasingly the rule: witness the police onslaughts at anti-globalization protests



Hugh/Indymedia

Baton-wielding cops move in to arrest hundreds of anti-G8 protesters in Montreal on April 26.

from Seattle to Genoa. Everywhere, this has been combined with wholesale state attacks on immigrants, such as France's Vigipirate program, which centrally targets North Africans and sub-Saharan blacks.

The criminal attack on the World Trade Center was a gift from god for the imperialist rulers, allowing them to strengthen the machinery of state repression and to line up Muslim and other immigrants in the crosshairs of the "war on terrorism." At bottom, the purpose of such campaigns is to divide native-born workers from their foreign-born brothers and sisters in order to cripple prospects for united working-class struggle. That is why it is crucial to mobilize the social power of the working class to defend all these victims of state repression and to combat the growing attacks on political dissent.

In this country, groups like OCAP have long been targeted for repression for their highly visible opposition to poverty and homelessness. Several OCAP leaders are currently being dragged through the courts on serious charges of "counseling to participate in a riot" following the police rampage against a 1,500-strong OCAP protest outside the Ontario Legislature in June 2000. And youthful demonstrators organized by CLAC, among others, against last year's Summit of the Americas in Quebec City were met with brutal repression. Thousands were tear-gassed and pepper sprayed; among the more than 450 arrested there, several still face trumped-up charges including "conspiracy" and "possession of explosives."

The same cops who bust the heads of leftist protesters have been unleashed to round up Arab and other immigrants under Ottawa's draconian "security" legislation. The Anti-Terrorism Act (Bill C-36) has now been joined by a proposed Public Safety Act (Bill C-55) that would give the government

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Police Repression...

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sweeping rights to suspend any law it sees fit without even the widow-dressing of parliamentary approval. And the military and RCMP have been given the go-ahead to use "lethal force" against protesters at the G8 summit in Alberta in late June.

Faced with the "war on terrorism," the labor bureaucracy has for the most part abandoned OCAP, CLAC and other left-ist protesters. This was shown clearly on March 23 in Toronto, when leaders of the Ontario Federation of Labour deliberately dispersed their own rally outside the convention center just as the 500-strong OCF/OCAP march, hemmed in by riot cops, was about to arrive. Earlier, during the Quebec City protests, goons organized by the Quebec Federation of Labour bureaucracy blocked trade unionists from joining with radical youth under police assault near the security fence.

Anarchism, "Direct Action" and Revolutionary Leadership

Our defense of OCAP, the OCF and CLAC is an expression of our non-sectarian defense of the left. But we have a very different political perspective than anarchists and other "direct action" militants. Many youth have embraced anarchism out of revulsion against the flagrantly pro-capitalist labor leadership and a social-democratic left which masquerades as Marxist. But revulsion and anger are not a guide to victory. To prevail against the highly organized, ruthlessly efficient forces of the bourgeois state requires an organized and disciplined vanguard party that can mobilize the power of the one class that can defeat capitalist rule—the proletariat. Only the working class has the social power and objective interests to liberate mankind from oppression. The purpose of the revolutionary party is to infuse the proletariat with that understanding.

Anarchists reject such a struggle for revolutionary leadership, viewing it as at best irrelevant or even harmful. CLAC counterposes a "diverse and pluralistic resistance movement," a perspective which at best relegates the working class to just another sector of the oppressed. In fact, it is the proletariat which is uniquely capable, not merely of "resisting" this or that attack, but of sweeping away the entire

bankrupt capitalist system. By rejecting the fight for a proletarian vanguard party, the anarchists leave the working class in the hands of its *existing* pro-capitalist misleaders.

OCAP does acknowledge the importance of the working class. An April 3 statement by its executive, drawing a balance sheet of the March 22-23 demonstrations, correctly states that: "Under the present leadership, unions have become a sleeping giant and the vast power of organized labour is held back from being brought into the struggle." However, its alternative is, in practice, a struggle for reform backed up by militant protest in the street. Thus the six-point OCF platform for the March demonstrations was explicitly tailored to "provide a basic minimum of what must be done in order to begin to restore the damage inflicted on working people across this province by the Tory government."

Revolutionary Marxists seek to *link* the day-to-day struggles of the workers and oppressed to a perspective of social-ist revolution. This isn't mainly a question of militancy—"an agitational shot in the arm," in the words of the OCAP statement—but of political program and perspective. It is necessary to confront the *political roadblocks* to successful proletarian struggle, obstacles like chauvinism, nationalism, racism. What is needed is a revolutionary vanguard party that can bring the working people to understand their own social power and their role as champion of all the oppressed; and to offer the prospect of victory over the system that is the source of their exploitation and oppression.

A taste of what revolutionary leadership means in action was provided by the labor-centered mobilization against the anti-immigrant witchhunt and related attacks on the unions held in Oakland, California on February 9. At the core of that 300-strong protest were over 30 dock workers from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10. They joined with other unionists, Latino day laborers, Asian and Near Eastern immigrants, students and the revolutionary Marxists of the Spartacist League/U.S. to declare that the American working class must fight to defend all the oppressed against their capitalist class enemy.

In initiating and building this united-front protest, the PDC and the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense sought above all to win workers to the need to tear through the straitjacket of "national unity" promoted by the capitalist rulers, and to break down the poisonous racial and ethnic divisions among the oppressed that they foster. As we wrote in reporting on the Oakland mobilization in *SC* (No. 132, Spring 2002): "This demonstration illustrated on a small scale what a revolutionary party would do. The task ahead of us is to forge such a party, in political struggle against the pro-capitalist misleaders of the working class, which will mobilize all the oppressed in a united struggle for workers power. Those who labor must rule! Join us!" ■



SC photo

Toronto, April 27: Trotskyist League banner calls for defense of immigrants against government's racist "war on terrorism."

The PDC has donated to the legal defense of those arrested at the Toronto protests against the Tory convention; we urge our readers to do the same. Make checks payable to "Common Front Legal Committee" and mail them c/o OCAP, 517 College St., Suite 234, Toronto ON M6G 4A2. The organizers of the Montreal anti-G8 protest are asking that letters of support for those arrested there be sent to: solidarite26avril@ziplip.com.

Slandering Militant Protesters, Praising "Militant" Jail Guards... How Low Can the I.S. Go?

The February 20 issue of *Socialist Worker*, newspaper of the International Socialists (I.S.), includes a foam-flecked polemic against anarchist groups like the CLAC over planned protests against the G8 summit of imperialist leaders this June. Following the huge demonstrations against the last G8 gathering in Genoa, Italy, during which a young protester was killed by police, the Canadian government announced that this year's summit would be moved to the isolated Rocky Mountain resort of Kananaskis, which will be sealed off in a massive security clampdown.

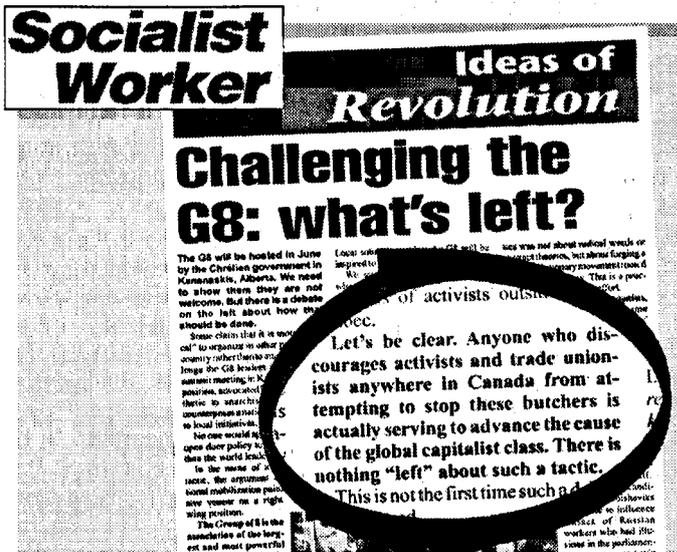
The I.S. responded to the police violence in Genoa with a disgraceful diatribe against anarchist protesters of the Black Bloc, claiming the latter "gave the security forces and the G8 leaders the media visuals they needed to attack the credibility of the movement" (*Socialist Worker*, 1 August 2001). Now, under the headline "Challenging the G8: What's Left?", *Socialist Worker* rails that anarchist groups who have decided to organize a regional anti-G8 protest in Ottawa rather than remote Kananaskis are thereby "serving to advance the cause of the global capitalist class!"

These seemingly different stances—denouncing "violence" by anarchists in Genoa, then chicken-baiting them for not descending en masse on rural Alberta—in fact have a common root. The I.S. is following the lead of the nationalist/reformist mainstream of "the movement"—the union bureaucracy, New Democrats and Maple Leaf nationalists like Maude Barlow's Council of Canadians, whose role is precisely to tie workers and leftist youth to the cause of the capitalist class.

These forces (and their European equivalents like ATTAC, which is uncritically backed by I.S. co-thinkers in France and Germany) led the media charge against the anarchists in Genoa. In Quebec City, the labor tops and their nationalist allies built the government-funded People's Summit in explicit counterposition to CLAC's leftist Carnival Against Capitalism. *Socialist Worker* enthusiastically touted the protectionist, pro-capitalist People's Summit, which is what the labor tops are planning to repeat in Alberta.

The I.S. is so in thrall to the union tops that, like them, it openly embraces agents of the capitalist state as "workers." Over the past few months, hundreds of Arab and other immigrants have been rounded up and thrown into prison hellholes like the Toronto West Detention Centre in the name of the capitalist rulers' "war on terror." Yet far from calling to free these detainees, the I.S. has been busy hailing a "strike" by their jailers!

Some 5,000 of the 45,000 Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) members who struck against the Ontario government for eight weeks this spring are jail guards. During their "strike," they prevented inmates from getting medical treatment and prescription drugs, seeing lawyers or going to court hearings. When prisoners in Ottawa staged a revolt on March 17, a flying squad of "strikers" joined with the cops to put it down. Five days later in



February 20 *Socialist Worker* denounces anarchists for organizing anti-G8 protest in Ottawa.

Toronto, they rushed to help managers curb another prison revolt. The president of the OPSEU local at Toronto West Detention Centre railed that "the inmates are really running the facility."

When OPSEU settled with the government in early May, the head of the union's "corrections bargaining unit" warned darkly: "Now we're going to bring back the rules." And how do they enforce "the rules"? It was "unionized" guards who killed black inmate Robert Gentles at Kingston Pen in 1994. Earlier the same year at Kingston Prison for Women, male guards put down a revolt by strip-searching prisoners, shackling them and leaving them for 12 hours on the cold concrete floor.

The I.S. politely calls such racist thugs "corrections workers." But jail guards are not part of the working class. They are a key instrument of capitalist state repression *against* workers and the poor, who make up the vast majority of the prison population. Like the cops, jail guards have no place in the labor movement, yet the I.S. displays a marked fondness for these agents of capitalist repression. A 17 April *Socialist Worker* back-page article approvingly quotes a "striking prison guard." Six years ago, when OPSEU jail guards staged a similar strike, the I.S. bragged that it had "gotten a hearing" among them "on picket lines recently, at the Don Jail and elsewhere" (*Socialist Worker*, 6 March 1996).

Marxists struggle to build a revolutionary party that can lead the working class to power, replacing the violent and oppressive capitalist state with a workers state through socialist revolution. The anarchists' disavowal of the fight for proletarian revolutionary leadership offers no way forward for workers and youth who want to do away with racist capitalism. But the I.S. are far worse; they are scarcely veiled "left" props for the status quo. ■

oppressed and persecuted by France, against a chauvinist tirade by Chirac because they jeered the French national anthem at a May 11 match. "I don't know if one can jeer *La Marseillaise* in the French Stadium," Besancenot told *Le Monde* (15 May), "but in any case one has the right to boo Jacques Chirac."

As the immediate "vote Chirac" frenzy subsides, a lot of workers and minorities will rightly blame those who stampered them into voting for Chirac. Lutte Ouvrière (LO), an ostensibly Trotskyist organization which resisted the pressure to call for a vote to this rightist—for which it was reviled, hissed and booed—could be well positioned to make gains.

In the lead-up to the first round, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France issued a 10 March open letter to LO (reprinted in *Workers Vanguard* No. 778, 5 April), which recognized that its presidential campaign sought to draw a crude class line against the Jospin popular front. At the same time, we explained why LO did not warrant even the most critical electoral support:

"LO does not oppose the government because they are opposed to class collaboration: they empty their correct opposition of all its content by their tacit support to Vigipirate and their explicit support to the reactionary mobilizations of cops in November.... LO's refusal to fight against Vigipirate represents a loyalty oath to the racist bourgeois order and to the anti-working-class austerity of the Jospin government. But if, in its campaign, LO came out clearly against Vigipirate and the cop terror, we would envision calling for voting for LO, without muting our criticisms of their program."

Only after the election has LO "discovered" that the policies of the Jospin government—which LO helped put in office—were racist and paved the way for Le Pen.

LO's main emphasis going into the second round was to appeal to workers who had voted for Le Pen on the first round not to do so again. But in capitulating to the Jospin government's Vigipirate/"security" campaign, LO aided the popular front in driving backward workers into the arms of reaction. This election was a clear demonstration of how, in the absence of a credible left opposition to popular-front austerity and racist attacks, more backward sections of the working class can be attracted to "radical" right-wing demagogues. That underlines why the fight against racist oppression is so central to anti-capitalist struggle. Yet LO's timeworn practice is to capitulate to the existing level of con-

sciousness of the working class rather than struggle against racist, sexist and anti-gay bigotry.

The centrist Internationalist Group (IG), a small clot of defectors from the revolutionary Trotskyism of the International Communist League, struck an ultra-militant posture over the French elections, thundering (in bold print) in a 26 April leaflet that it was "*necessary to mobilize the power of the working class to boycott the electoral circus of the bourgeoisie*" through "*demonstrations and workers strikes*" on the day of the vote. Interestingly, the "boycott" line was also promoted by the cyberspace political bandits of David North's World Socialist Web Site (29 April), who are past masters at cynical posturing to camouflage their opportunist appetites. The IG is no less cynical. For the working class to *boycott* bourgeois elections presupposes a level of class consciousness one would expect in a pre-revolutionary situation posing the question of state power. But the IG's call came as over one and a half million people, including large numbers of workers, were demonstrating in the streets in support of the bourgeois "Republic"—and the rightist Chirac!

The IG's macho phrasemongering is simply a smokescreen for its fundamentally opportunist politics, posturing as the militant in-the-streets wing of the anti-fascist electoral "unity" pushed by the French left in the tow of the popular front. While admitting in passing (in a 4 May statement) that "Le Pen is not about to take power," the IG's articles on the French elections are full of the same "fascism is around the corner" rhetoric that the PS, PCF, LCR et al. used to justify "unity" behind Chirac. In its 4 May statement, the IG draws an analogy with the 1932 election of Hindenburg as German chancellor, who handed over power to Hitler a year later. But by the early 1930s, Hitler had 100,000 stormtroopers on the street terrorizing Jews and attacking trade-union and leftist meetings. Since the French proletariat does not currently pose an immediate threat to the bourgeois order, the capitalists are not about to resort to fascist dictatorship. While Le Pen's gains at the polls will certainly embolden his fascist thugs, the FN's success is an electoral phenomenon.

This same question came up two years ago when Jörg Haider's openly racist Freedom Party (FPÖ) entered a coalition with the right-wing People's Party (ÖVP) in Austria. Social democrats across Europe, screaming that Austria was on the verge of a fascist takeover, mobilized to pressure the ÖVP to kick out Haider and reinstate its longstanding coalition with the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ). While noting that Haider's political outlook is indeed fascistic, we wrote at the time: "In a situation in which there are no fascist mobilizations in the streets and the main question is the participation of the FPÖ in the government, the slogans 'Stop Haider,' 'Strike Now' can only be a call for extraparliamentary action for a new parliamentary coalition, that is, a 'more militant' call to replace the FPÖ with the SPÖ" (SC No. 124, Spring 2000).

Then, too, the IG posed as the militant voice of anti-fascist unity. Denouncing us for "lulling the masses," the IG devoted 20 pages of its *Internationalist* (June 2000) to "proving" that Haider's FPÖ is fascist. So does the IG think Austria is fascist today? Have the unions
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Le Bolchévik

LTF banner at May Day demonstration calls for class struggle against capitalism, proclaiming, "Down with unity with Chirac!"

France...

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been crushed, political parties driven underground, concentration camps set up? The complete annihilation of the organized workers movement—that is what fascism means, not the election of an ultra-rightist within a bourgeois-democratic framework.

In weaving its pseudo-revolutionary fantasies, the IG seeks to deny the very real obstacles that stand in the way of forging a revolutionary party. Thus it simply equates LO and the LCR, falsely claiming that both are “organizing extra-parliamentary support for the ‘Republican front’ for Chirac” (26 April) and “openly or tacitly, encouraged a vote for Chirac in the second round” (4 May). In an earlier posting on its Web site (14 April), the IG lyingly denounced our open letter for supposedly granting “conditional critical support” to LO, and instead simply dismissed LO because it has “applauded bonapartist and racist police demonstrations.” We seek to win militants who are drawn to LO on the basis of its stated opposition to the popular front by *exposing* how that is contradicted by its tacit support to Vigipirate. Where the IG aims only to be the “militant” tail of whatever’s in motion, we engage in clear and honest programmatic struggle because our aim is to build a conscious proletarian vanguard party on the basis of the Trotskyist program.

For the French bourgeoisie, Le Pen’s score in the elections—and the popular rallying around the tricolor orchestrated by the reformist parties—was a godsend. Faced with a significant level of labor struggle in response to unemployment and attacks on social benefits, the ruling classes of Europe seek to portray themselves as the democratic repre-

Lutte Ouvrière and the Cops

MAY 31—In the run-up to France’s legislative elections, Lutte Ouvrière (LO) has lurched back to the right, continuing—and deepening—its embrace of the racist campaign for “security.” Faced with the escalation of cop roundups in minority communities, LO is giving advice on how better to police the heavily immigrant suburbs! Even as the government announced an escalation in the police occupation of Paris, *Lutte Ouvrière* (17 May) says: “The policy of state budget cuts has, in turn, led to a...virtual disappearance of the police presence in plebeian neighborhoods.”

LO demands: “As for police duties which are indispensable to society, they should be carried out by people who are close enough to the inhabitants of the neighborhood where they are deployed to be able to defuse many conflicts.” It is *criminal* for a supposedly leftist party to speak of “police duties which are indispensable”! The cops are the guard dogs of capital against the working class and oppressed. Their duties are to break strikes and oppress youth who oppose this society which offers them no future.

As our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France wrote in a May 17 leaflet addressed to LO: “LO’s indifference to racial oppression is the consequence of their perspective of class collaboration, to reform the rotten capitalist system instead of sweeping it away through proletarian socialist revolution. There is no party in these elections for which one can vote to advance the interests of the working class and the oppressed. This party has to be built. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France fights for a genuine revolutionary multiethnic workers party. We say: *Down with Vigipirate! Down with the racist security campaign! For full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Stop the deportations and racist roundups!*”

sentatives of the whole people. The more they can submerge class consciousness under a barrage of “national unity,” the easier it will be for them to launch imperialist military adventures abroad and attacks on the working class and minorities at home. Against the reformist misleaders who chain the workers to the capitalist order, we Trotskyists fight for the class independence the proletariat needs to resist the attacks of the bourgeoisie. And we will not let the working class forget the miserable leftists who rallied to the defense of the imperialist “French republic.”

—Adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 781, 17 May

Natives...

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Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented both among the homeless and in the prison population, and the massive welfare cuts now being imposed will strike them especially hard.

Nowhere is the nightmare of poverty, despair, disease and cop violence clearer than in Vancouver’s heavily Native Downtown Eastside. In this, the poorest neighborhood in all of Canada, ravaged by AIDS and drug abuse, the disappearance of more than 50 prostitutes—the majority of them Native women—was ignored by the cops for years. Under intense pressure from relatives, the police are now investigating what may be the worst serial killing in Canadian history.

Hundreds of thousands of other Native people live on the squallid reserves established to formalize their dispossession, or in isolated communities where no treaties were ever signed, as in most of B.C. The working class must defend whatever political autonomy aboriginal peoples with a land base are able to wrest from the courts and government, including the right to govern their land and control their

resources. But treaties in and of themselves—necessarily negotiated on wildly unequal terms—can fundamentally do little to relieve the misery of Native people in Canadian society. That requires a fight to uproot the entire brutal and racist capitalist system.

The referendum and other Liberal attacks in B.C. come in the context of the Canadian rulers’ “war on terror”: a program of stepped-up state repression which targets immigrants in the first instance, but which directly threatens the rights of the entire working class. Working people must clearly understand that an injury to one is an injury to all, that the oppressed must go forward together if they are not to be driven back separately.

Thanks to its central role in capitalist production, the working class, including its strategic component of foreign-born workers, uniquely has the social power to beat back the capitalists’ onslaught on jobs, social programs and basic rights and open the road to a socialist future. In order to rally all the victims of capitalism for such a struggle, the proletariat must champion the cause of *all* the oppressed. Any concession to the bourgeois enemy’s consciously-fostered bigotry—anti-immigrant or anti-Native racism, anti-Quebec

chauvinism, fear and hatred of gays—can only poison unity and derail class struggle.

Native Rights and the “Treaty Process”

The very first item on Campbell’s ballot—“Private property should not be expropriated for treaty settlements”—cuts to the heart of the land claims issue, the sanctity of the capitalists’ property relations. Under the system of private ownership of the means to produce wealth—which lines the pockets of a handful of capitalist parasites while exploiting and immiserating the vast majority—there can be no lasting justice for aboriginal people, or working people either.

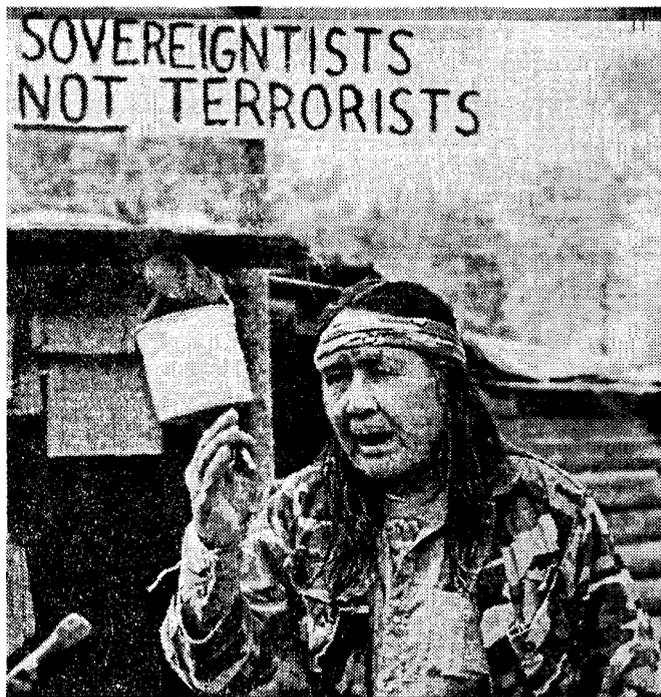
So cynical is the Liberals’ referendum, with its blatantly rigged questions, that the government announced it would simply ignore the results if any of its reactionary-populist proposals were turned down! Aboriginal groups, joined by many others, have quite rightly called for a boycott of this in-your-face fraud.

Campbell’s attempt to bury treaty negotiations is also opposed, for their own reasons, by important elements of the ruling class, who worry that it will only inflame relations with Native people determined to pursue their land claims. The absence of treaties in B.C. has increasingly made corporations “insecure” about doing business here: if companies like Weyerhaeuser are going to invest billions, they don’t want unresolved land claims getting in the way of exploiting “their” resources. This was the explicit rationale behind the then NDP government’s 1998 Nisga’a treaty. NDP premier Glen Clark boasted that this settlement would “send a strong signal to the world that our province is open for investment.” Today, even Bay Street’s conservative mouthpiece, the *Globe and Mail* (14 March), sternly denounces “B.C.’s referendum folly.”

The arrogant racism of Canada’s rulers toward the Native population saturates the “treaty process.” Of the nearly 50 bands engaged in the process, more than three-quarters have been mired in “Stage 4” (negotiating an “agreement in principle”) for years, with no end in sight. In fact, the only agreement signed in the past hundred years—the Nisga’a treaty—was settled outside of the process, following three decades of legal battles.

The Haida of the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii) are a classic case. Their treaty process claim stymied for almost a decade while corporations plundered their forests, the Haida are suing for title of an area containing an estimated 10 billion barrels of oil. While Chief Reynold Russ (Iljawassa) maintains the Charlottes are theirs “lock, stock and barrel,” they have also made clear that they have no intention of interfering with other residents on the islands, which remain overwhelmingly undeveloped. Rather they seek to prevent their resources being pillaged by the oil companies. The Haida have lived on these islands for millennia, surviving the ravages of smallpox introduced by European visitors, the removal of their children to residential schools and more than two centuries of racist degradation. The Charlottes and their resources should belong to them, period.

A suit involving the Tsawwassen First Nation, a band of 200 living on a small reserve stuck in the middle of the Vancouver Port Authority (VPA), presents a different aspect of the fight for Native rights. The Tsawwassen are suing the VPA and government because the two mammoth causeways built in the 1960s (and, over the years, extended) for B.C. Ferries and the port have all but destroyed their fishing grounds. The port now resides on a 113 hectare island at the



Stoody/CP

William “Wolverine” Ignace at Gustafsen Lake, 1995. NDP government sent army and RCMP to violently suppress Native protest.

end of the causeway.

As the Tsawwassen have acidly noted, in 2000 the port shipped 22.5 million tonnes of coal and almost 700,000 containers, while the ferry terminal handles 7.8 million passengers each year—and the band gets nothing. Frustrated by the decades of expansion without their consent, their suit seeks an injunction to both restrict the port and ferry operations and require “the causeways to be removed or altered so as not to interfere with the water flows.”

The Tsawwassen should be massively compensated for deprivation of their land and resources—they deserve every penny that can be squeezed from the government. However, after four decades of construction around and through the reserve, the removal of, or probably even significant alteration to, the terminals would likely mean permanently closing the port. We are not for dismantling ports or other facilities of broader utility to the population as a whole. Where land claims run up against socially useful developments like ports and railways, Native peoples should receive generous compensation for deprivation of land or disruption of activity, based on their completely consensual agreement.

Only a workers government can guarantee these conditions. The supposed guarantees of the Canadian constitution and bourgeois law are an illusion. The only rights that are guaranteed under capitalism are the bourgeoisie’s “rights” to exploitation and plunder. To maintain its unjust order against the working class and oppressed, the bourgeoisie has at its disposal the capitalist state—the cops, courts, prisons and army—to utilize as instruments of violent repression. The vicious and inhumane treatment of Native people by the forces of the capitalist state was brought home recently at the trial of two Saskatoon cops who dumped a Native man on the outskirts of town in subzero temperatures, where he froze to death. Convicted amid revelations of daily brutality, the two cops were sentenced to light jail terms, while their

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Natives...

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cohorts carry on as before.

No Illusions in the Pro-Capitalist NDP! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The B.C. Federation of Labour has joined the call for a boycott of Campbell's racist referendum, and has welcomed Native contingents to its protests against the Liberal government. During their recent wildcat strikes, members of the heavily immigrant B.C. Health Employees Union carried signs denouncing the Liberals' anti-Native referendum. However, far from leading a struggle for aboriginal rights, the goal of the top union bureaucracy in the current labor protests is merely to return to office their "political arm," the NDP. Understandably, facing a vicious enemy like Gordon Campbell, the New Democrats may seem to many to be a lesser evil, if not a positive good. But what does such a perspective offer, especially for Native people?

It was the NDP government that ordered the largest operation in RCMP history at Gustafsen Lake in 1995. The purpose? To evict a handful of Native militants occupying "private" rangeland near 100 Mile House. In the process, more than 7,700 square kilometers were turned into a war zone; Natives throughout the province were detained without cause, harassed and searched. Denounced by the NDP premier as "fanatics," the occupiers faced potential massacre for a month. Following their surrender, the NDP government vindictively threw their leader, William "Wolverine" Ignace into prison for four years. It has also recently been revealed that the NDP's police complaints commissioner covered up the death of Frank Paul, a Native man who died of hypothermia in 1998 after being dumped by Vancouver police.

From its attacks on Natives, to railing against "illegal" Chinese immigrants, to leading the "national unity" crusade in B.C. against Quebec independence, the NDP government oversaw a decade of chauvinist reaction. The New Democrats' purpose in inculcating such racism and chauvinism among the workers was to reinforce capitalist class rule.

Taking their cue from the union tops are a host of pseudo-socialist groups—International Socialists, l'Humanité, Com-

munist League, Communist Party—who present NDP governments (with greater or lesser enthusiasm) as a progressive alternative for working people and the oppressed. These groups all called to elect (and then re-elect) the New Democrats in the 1990s. They were thus politely silent on the NDP's own long, dirty record on aboriginal questions during the run-up to Campbell's referendum.

The NDP is a *bourgeois workers party*, based in part on the trade unions but thoroughly pro-capitalist in its leadership and outlook. When installed in office, NDP governments are *capitalist* governments, committed to maintaining the bourgeois order through parliamentary illusions and reactionary chauvinism where possible, through naked force where necessary. In fact, thanks to their ties to organized labor via the union bureaucracy, the New Democrats are often more adept at suppressing working-class struggle than open capitalist parties like the Liberals.

The struggles of working people and the oppressed can go forward only against the treachery and sabotage of the NDP and its allies in the labor bureaucracy. It is necessary to forge a new, anti-capitalist leadership of labor: a revolutionary vanguard party that opposes every manifestation of injustice and strives to make the proletariat conscious of its social power and historic interest as the only force which can sweep away capitalist exploitation and oppression. The unremitting defense of Native people's lives and rights by the organized working class is an integral part of this fight.

The best historical model for successful proletarian struggle is the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky which, in October 1917, succeeded for the first and only time in history in leading the working class to political power. From its inception, Lenin insisted that the Bolshevik Party act as a spokesman of all the oppressed. He understood that working-class opposition to every manifestation of oppression, however small, was the only way to weld the exploited masses into a weapon capable of shattering the empire of the tsars.

Thus the communists championed the right to independence of all the nations trapped in the Russian "prison house of peoples." They mobilized workers defense guards to protect Jewish neighborhoods from government-inspired pogroms. Following the revolution, they immediately abolished discriminatory laws against Jews, women and homosexuals. Despite isolation and extremely limited resources, the Soviet workers state brought tremendous advances in education, health care and life expectancy to the indigenous populations of Russia's north and east.

Many of these gains were undermined and eventually reversed following the usurping of political power by a bureaucratic caste under J.V. Stalin beginning in 1924. The crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which replaced the liberating and egalitarian ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution with nationalism and crude chauvinism, helped pave the road for the destruction of the Soviet workers state many decades later, in 1991-92, an historic defeat for the working class worldwide.

Nonetheless, the revolutionary perspective mapped out by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks remains the road to liberation for working people and all the oppressed. For Native people—the most oppressed of all in Canadian capitalist society—it is the only road to a future free of barbarous racist abuse and grinding poverty. Only an egalitarian society under workers rule can offer the possibility of 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. ■

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Palestinians...

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Israelis have destroyed: homes, businesses, shops, libraries, hospitals, paved roads, electrical plants, sewage mains, water pipes—the entire infrastructure of the West Bank. The looming health disaster may well claim many more lives.

As the Palestinian people were subjected to an unprecedented onslaught, imperialist spokesmen engaged in hypocritical hand-wringing and the Arab regimes recited their usual litany of empty United Nations resolutions. But in cities throughout the Near East, and elsewhere, hundreds of thousands marched in outrage, desperate for some way to put an end to the savage Israeli assault.

What is urgently necessary is the mobilization of the working class, in the Near East and internationally, in defense of the Palestinian people against Zionist state terror. From the multiracial labor movement in Canada, to black and Arab workers in Detroit, to the proletariat of France with its key North African component, to the port workers of Egypt and the oil workers of Iran: working people throughout the world must take up the cause of the Palestinian people as their own through demonstrations, protest strikes and other class-struggle actions.

In Morocco, upwards of a million people marched through the streets of Rabat making a zero sign with their fingers to express their contempt for the Arab regimes that do nothing to stop this new catastrophe against the Palestinians—but the Arab bourgeoisies have always been enemies of the Palestinian national struggle. Arafat and an array of pseudo-socialist groups in West Europe and North America appeal to the UN or the European Union (EU) or even the Zionist state's American patrons for an "international protection force"—but it was just such a force that paved the way for the 1982 Sabra/Shatila massacre. EU powers Britain and France once had forces in the Near East—as colonial overlords of the Arab masses. It was under the auspices of a UN intervention force that the U.S. and its allies perpetrated their 1991 slaughter of the Iraqi people.

Particularly now, calls for imperialist military intervention serve to legitimize and facilitate Washington's plans for a new war against Iraq. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's "mission of peace" was a transparently cynical attempt to quell the popular Arab outrage that stands in the way of even nominal support from client states like Egypt for the drive to smash Saddam Hussein.

The current White House cabal has been itching to "finish the job" begun by Bush Sr. in 1991, when tens of thousands of Iraqis were slaughtered. In the intervening years, one and a half million people, mainly children and the elderly, have died as a result of the starvation embargo imposed under UN sanctions. Now, under the rubric of the "war on terror," Bush has openly declared his intent to attack Iraq in order to topple Saddam Hussein and install a pliant client regime in Baghdad. Underlying the war plans against Iraq is the drive to strengthen U.S. imperialism's control over Persian Gulf oil fields in order to reinforce American strategic interests against its European and Japanese rivals.

A victory for American militarism in Iraq—or anywhere else—will embolden the power-mad U.S. ruling class to wreak more death and destruction around the world and will mean further misery for working people and the oppressed in the U.S. The international working class has a vital interest in the military defense of Iraq against imperialist attack,



AFF

Israeli army assault on Palestinian Authority headquarters in Ramallah, March 29.

without giving any political support to the anti-working-class, bourgeois-nationalist Saddam Hussein regime. **Defend the Palestinians! All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories now! All U.S., Canadian and UN forces out of the Persian Gulf and Near East! Down with the starvation blockade—U.S./Canada hands off Iraq!**

Protests Sweep Arab East, West Europe

From Cairo to the Jordanian capital of Amman to Ankara, Turkey, pro-Palestinian demonstrators have clashed with riot police. In Egypt, protests spread beyond the capital to Alexandria in the north and Sohag in the south; thousands upon thousands defied a nationwide ban on demonstrations, facing down cops firing tear gas and water cannon. Even the small, oil-rich Emirate of Bahrain—where the U.S. Fifth Fleet is based—has seen an upsurge of mass protest, with demonstrators demanding the closure of the U.S. naval base after one protester was killed while trying to approach the American embassy.

The Arab rulers could well seek to deflect this popular unrest by stepping up anti-Zionist and even anti-American demagoguery, as they have done so often in the past. The solidarity of the Arab masses with the oppressed Palestinian people must be directed toward **proletarian revolution** against their **own** Arab rulers who, whether bourgeois nationalists or Islamic traditionalists, are fundamentally the political agents of Western imperialism. If this does not happen, the intense hostility toward Israel and its American protector will only continue to strengthen the forces of Islamic fundamentalism, which posture as the "radical" opposition to the mainly pro-Western Arab regimes.

Huge protests have also erupted throughout West Europe, and to a lesser extent in North America. Montreal, Toronto and other Canadian cities have seen near-weekly protests by thousands of mainly Arab demonstrators. In Paris on April 6, some 40,000 people took to the streets, shouting "Bush, Sharon—Assassins!" Though overwhelmingly Maghrebin (North African), the demonstration also included black African, Turkish, Kurdish and French protesters, among them

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the Union of French Jews for Peace. The Maghrebin population is besieged by unemployment, "terrorist"-baiting in the press and stepped-up cop repression. Yet among the thousands who marched in Paris were entire families, including children and grandparents, who overcame their fear and defied the segregation that keeps them restricted to the working-class suburbs (*banlieues*).

The French government has seized on a series of reprehensible firebombings of Jewish schools and synagogues to justify its police-state measures against Maghrebin youth. It is not at all clear who is responsible for these heinous attacks, especially given the sizable fascist movement in France. What is clear is that the fascists benefit when justified hatred for the racist capitalist rulers of Israel is turned into vile anti-Semitism, the "socialism of fools." Commendably, as at previous pro-Palestinian protests, Arab community organizers on April 6 made public statements condemning the anti-Semitic attacks.

The Bankruptcy of PLO Nationalism

The current Israeli drive to smash all Palestinian resistance is the bitter fruit of the 1993 U.S.-brokered Oslo "peace" accord between Israel and the PLO. We forthrightly denounced this accord as a "grotesque bargain over the subjugated Palestinian people" that "would place the PLO's seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses" ("Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto," *Workers Vanguard* No. 583, 10 September 1993).

Underlying this betrayal of the Palestinian masses was a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat, the destruction of the USSR through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. Without the diplomatic and financial support previously provided by Moscow, the PLO (like other Third World nationalist movements and regimes) quickly came to terms with U.S. imperialism.

The 1993 "peace" accord served only to deepen the oppression of the Palestinian people. The entire Gaza Strip was surrounded by an electrified fence, turning it into a glorified concentration camp enclosing over one million Palestinians. The Israeli capitalist rulers drastically curtailed access to low-wage jobs in Israel, which had been the source of income for most Gaza residents. The number of Israeli settlers—the heavily armed, ultra-chauvinist auxiliaries to the military occupation forces—has *doubled* since 1993. A series of internal checkpoints and fortified "Jewish only" highways has carved up the Palestinian population into a multitude of isolated ghettos.

The evident bankruptcy of Arafat's PLO leadership has fueled the growth both of reactionary fundamentalist forces like Hamas and Islamic Jihad and of "rejectionist" secular forces like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Despite its occasional verbal opposition to Arafat's conciliationism, the PFLP is simply a petty-bourgeois nationalist formation fundamentally akin to Arafat's Fatah. Like Arafat, PFLP leader Ahmad Saadat looks to the UN, as he said in an interview in *Al-Hadaf* last year, to "force Israel to implement United Nations resolutions." At Palestinian protests in Berlin, PFLP supporters have denounced our comrades for calling for class struggle on the grounds that that would divide the Palestinian people. In the early 1970s, the PFLP was notorious for airline hijackings and indiscriminate

inate terror attacks against Israeli civilians.

While scorning any notion of proletarian class unity between Arab and Hebrew-speaking workers, the PFLP readily unites with Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas. These anti-Semitic reactionaries are a deadly threat to Palestinian leftists and especially to women who refuse to submit to the dictates of *sharia* (Islamic law). In fact, many Palestinians see imperialist intervention as a way of maintaining Arafat's rule in the Palestinian Authority as a lesser evil to Hamas. But it is precisely the utter bankruptcy of PLO nationalism that has driven so many among the historically cosmopolitan Palestinian people into the arms of the Islamic fundamentalists.

The suicide bombings by young Palestinian men and women are acts of desperation in the face of an overwhelmingly superior military force. These attacks have not only targeted Israeli troops and settlers, who are part of the oppressive military occupation regime, but also innocent civilians in Israel. Criminal suicide attacks on civilian populations are typical of nationalist struggles, just or otherwise. As our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S. noted in a March 30 statement titled "Defend the Palestinian People! All Israeli Troops, Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories!":

"Now, not just Islamic fanatics but secular Palestinians, including women, see no other option than to immolate themselves and random others in suicide bombings. But such attacks only serve to seal any fissures in Israeli society, such as the recent protests among Israeli army reservists and their supporters against the occupation, and drive the Hebrew-speaking population into the arms of the Zionist nationalist madmen."

Popular support for the butcher Ariel Sharon among the Hebrew-speaking population climbed significantly in the wake of the series of suicide bombings, with an overwhelming majority supporting the Israeli onslaught on the West Bank. Indeed, Sharon has always sought to provoke Palestinian terror attacks in order to have a pretext for his far more deadly campaign of terror against the Palestinians.

Fake Lefts Plead for Imperialist Intervention

In appealing for imperialist "peacekeepers" or economic sanctions, the reformist and centrist left groups promote the illusion that their respective imperialist rulers can be pressured into serving the interests of the oppressed. In France, the fake-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), among others, calls on the same imperialist government that waged a colonial war of terror in Algeria and today rounds up and terrorizes Arab youth in the *banlieues* to protect Palestinian Arabs in the Near East.

The LCR and other left groups call for delegations of European and American civilian observers in the Occupied Territories. Many of the participants are undoubtedly courageous and are risking their lives out of humanitarian concern for the Palestinians. But such idealistic efforts are being used as a way of bringing about imperialist "peacekeeping" intervention.

Marxists fight to mobilize labor in concrete acts of class-struggle solidarity with the besieged Palestinian masses, including political protest strikes and labor action to prevent the shipment of military goods to the Israeli rulers. But such a perspective can only be realized by mobilizing workers in West Europe and North America against their *own* rulers, not by fostering illusions in the potential benevolence of the imperialist state. As Leon Trotsky wrote in the 1930s, when many leftists were demanding sanctions by the League of Nations (predecessor of the UN) against the Italian invaders



SC photo

Trotskyist League calls to defend Palestinians, warns against illusions in UN on March 30 Toronto protest.

of Ethiopia, "Workers' action can begin only by absolute opposition to the national bourgeoisie and its international combinations. Support of the League and support of workers' actions are fire and water; they cannot be united" ("Once Again the ILP," November 1935).

Behind the reformist left's appeals for imperialist intervention and support to Palestinian nationalism lies the utter incapacity to conceive of any solution to the Palestinian question outside the framework of the bourgeois nation-state system. They reject the prospect of Arab/Hebrew workers revolution to sweep away both the Israeli and Arab bourgeoisies as utopian. In fact, that is the only road to national emancipation for the Palestinian people. It is patently clear that the Palestinians cannot prevail in a military conflict with the Zionist state. Yet there can be no genuine expression of Palestinian self-determination without the destruction of that state, which is inherently oppressive to the Palestinian people. Every "solution" to the Palestinian national question under capitalism either perpetuates the oppression of the Palestinian Arab people or envisions a reversal of the terms of oppression, denying the legitimate national rights of the Hebrew-speaking people.

In 1974, the PLO leadership declared its support for the creation of a Palestinian "mini-state" in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian left-nationalist leaders like George Habash of the PFLP opposed the mini-state solution, but could offer no alternative other than continued wars between the Arab regimes and Israel. This was premised on the perspective that the Arab regimes could be pressured to fight for Palestinian rights. The reality, however, is that the Arab bourgeois regimes are no less hostile to Palestinian national aspirations than the Zionist rulers.

Protesters in Arab cities have demanded, "Where are the Arab armies?" But when Arab armies went to war with Israel in 1948, it was not to "liberate" Palestine but to carve it up among themselves. And the Zionist leaders were well aware of this fact. In November 1947, Jewish Agency leader Golda Meir had secret negotiations with King Abdullah of Transjordan, who informed her of his plans to take over what was then eastern Palestine: "I want to annex the area to my kingdom. I don't want to create another Arab State that

would ruin my plans. I want to ride, not to be ridden!" (quoted in Dan Kurzman, *Genesis 1948* [1970]). Indeed, between 1948 and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the West Bank and Gaza were occupied by Jordan and Egypt respectively. And the Palestinians there remained politically dispossessed and subject to brutal repression.

Stunned by their defeat at the hands of Israel in 1967, the Arab regimes had their authority sufficiently shaken to allow more freedom of maneuver for Palestinian nationalist forces. But the Arab regimes could not long tolerate independent armed forces operating on their territories. With occasional prodding by the Zionists, the Arab rulers suppressed the Palestinian resistance. In the decade following the 1967 war, *nearly 50,000 Palestinians were slaughtered by Arab governments*, including some 10,000 militants killed by the Jordanian monarchy in the 1970 Black September massacre.

When the PLO came out for a "two-state" solution in 1974, we declared "West Bank Mini-State No Solution," while acknowledging it as "a

very partial and deformed expression of the Palestinian Arabs' right to self-determination" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 57, 22 November 1974). Such a statelet under the stranglehold of Israel would have meant an impoverished existence for the Palestinians living there. But what has been on offer as an "independent" Palestine since the Oslo accords would not represent even the most deformed expression of self-determination. At best, it would resemble what former prime minister Ehud Barak offered Arafat at Camp David two years ago: the Gaza Strip and four isolated cantons in the West Bank, crisscrossed by "strategic highways" and surrounded by fortified settlements. This "mini-state" would be nothing more than a bantustan where neighboring states could dump their unwanted Palestinian populations—2.5 million in Jordan, 1.5 million in Israel and one million in Lebanon and Syria.

A "Democratic, Secular" Palestine?

While most North American left organizations today reject the mini-state solution, many cling to the call for a "secular, democratic Palestine" proposed for many years by the PLO. For example, the Socialist Action group calls for "a framework in which both the Palestinian people and the Jewish settler population could live together, a democratic, secular Palestine" (*Socialist Action* [U.S.], March 2002).

To begin with, such a state would exclude the millions of Palestinians today living in Jordan, which is a majority-Palestinian country. More fundamentally, while a secular, democratic Palestine may appear to many Western leftists and liberals as a humane, rational solution, it preserves the essential core of the Arab nationalist position, which denies that the Hebrew-speaking people constitute a nation with the right to self-determination. Rather, they are to be treated simply as a religious minority.

Consonant with this outlook, many reformist left groups describe Israel as a "settler-colonial state." Behind this position is the argument that since the Israeli Jews are the oppressors, they have forfeited their own national rights as against the oppressed Palestinians. This perspective rejects any possibility of winning the Hebrew-speaking workers to a program of

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Palestinians...

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class unity with their Arab brothers and sisters in a common fight around common class interests against all the exploiters and oppressors of the region. And without that, any talk of "revolution" or national justice is simply empty rhetoric that does nothing to advance the cause of the Palestinians.

The doctrine that an oppressor nation forfeits its right to self-determination has nothing in common with socialism and democracy; it is the ideology of genocidal irredentism. The Zionist state was created by crushing the national rights of the Palestinians. But securing national justice for the Palestinians does *not* mean reversing the terms of oppression and denying the democratic rights of the Hebrew-speaking people. Basic to the Leninist position on the national question—the only consistently democratic position—is that all nations have a right to self-determination.

For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution!

At the heart of the Palestinian question is the impossibility of achieving national justice for geographically interpenetrated peoples within a capitalist framework. Both Palestinian Arabs and Hebrew-speaking Israelis live in and lay claim to a small sliver of land in the Near East. Under capitalism, the exercise of national self-determination by either of the populations will necessarily be at the expense of the other. The national emancipation of the Palestinians—including the right of all refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland—necessarily entails workers revolutions to sweep away the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the bloody Ba'athist bonapartists in Syria, to bring down the capitalist rulers of Lebanon and to shatter the Zionist state, establishing a socialist federation of the Near East.

In the 1970s and early '80s, we raised the call for a bi-national workers state encompassing both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples, but we have not since raised that tactical perspective. We cannot project the particular national configuration which would best express the democratic aspirations of both peoples under conditions of proletarian power in the region. This might well take the form of a bi-national workers state or two or more workers states.

It is only the working class of Israel that has the capacity to destroy the Zionist citadel from within. Unless the Hebrew-speaking workers are broken from Zionism and won to defense of the Palestinian people, there is no future for the Hebrew-speaking people in the Near East. If the Israeli bourgeoisie is not swept away through socialist revolution, sooner or later the bloody course of Zionist expansionism will lead the Israeli rulers to launch their arsenal of nuclear weapons and turn the whole region into a devastated wasteland.

Israeli society is not a seamless reactionary mass. Even in the face of the current anti-Arab hysteria, some 10,000 people turned out for an April 3 "Peace Now" demonstration in Tel Aviv to demand withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. Sephardic Jews, though largely under the sway of right-wing and religious parties, suffer widespread discrimination and poverty; the Palestinian Arabs who are nominally "citizens" are consigned to segregated, impoverished areas and low-paid, unskilled jobs. More fundamentally, the class interests of the Hebrew-speaking workers impel them to struggle against their capitalist exploiters, as witnessed by a number of strikes just in recent months.

We have no illusions that it will be easy to shatter the

chauvinism of the Hebrew-speaking working class. Probably only great historic events such as Israel's defeat and humiliation in war or a cataclysmic economic crisis could break the Israeli working class from its Zionist rulers and lay the basis for a mass revolutionary workers party. Alternately, the conquest of power by the proletariat in one of the major Near Eastern states—such as Egypt, Iraq or Iran—under a revolutionary internationalist, i.e., communist, leadership would dramatically change the consciousness of the Israeli working class.

The mass protests from North Africa to the Persian Gulf in solidarity with the Palestinians point to the fragility of the Arab bourgeois regimes. The nationalists and Islamists look to a "holy war" of the Arab peoples against Zionist Israel. Marxists fight to bring the class question to the fore, to mobilize the proletariat of the Islamic countries of the Near East in struggle against their own bourgeoisies. That possibility was clearly demonstrated by the revolutionary upheavals in Iran and Iraq in the 1950s. However, these revolutionary opportunities were betrayed by the Stalinist-led Communist parties, subordinating the proletariat to an alliance with "progressive" bourgeois nationalists who, once in power, launched a blood-bath against the Communist-led workers.

More recently, there have been significant workers struggles throughout the region, from Algeria to Egypt and Iran. In Algeria, 14,000 oil workers went on strike on April 9 over wages and working conditions, shutting down the Skikda refinery, which processes 70 percent of the country's oil. Working-class struggles must be directed toward a fight for social and national emancipation against the imperialist oppressors and the domestic bourgeoisies that serve as their agents. Key to that task is the political independence of the working class, requiring intransigent struggle against all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism. What is necessary is the forging of Marxist vanguard parties based on the perspective and program of Trotsky's permanent revolution:

"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses....

"In a country where the proletariat has power in its hands as the result of the democratic revolution, the subsequent fate of the dictatorship and socialism depends in the last analysis not only and not so much upon the national productive forces as upon the development of the international socialist revolution."

—*The Permanent Revolution* (1929)

The fight for a socialist federation of the Near East is part of the struggle to sweep away the system of imperialism internationally. In turn, the struggle for proletarian power in the Near East, a region which supplies the oil on which the industrial economies of North America, West Europe and Japan are dependent, would clearly confront imperialist hostility. The liberation of the peoples of the Near East is therefore integrally bound up with the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist West. Above all, this poses the need to build revolutionary workers parties in the imperialist countries including Canada, and especially in the most powerful and deadly imperialist power, the United States. Re-forge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution!

—*Adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 779, 19 April*

No to Canadian Imperialist "Peacekeepers"!

Svend Robinson in Ramallah

In early April, amid the Zionist butchery in the Occupied Territories, NDP MP Svend Robinson traveled to the West Bank to try to meet with besieged PLO leader Yasir Arafat in Ramallah. Robinson said his "fact finding" trip was intended to "demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian people." Many among the beleaguered Arab population in Canada applauded his gesture, relieved that a high-profile politician appears to be defending them for once. In Toronto, placards at pro-Palestinian demonstrations read "Thank you, Svend!"

Especially in the aftermath of September 11, Robinson's trip bucked the Canadian ruling class's broad pro-Zionist consensus. And his simple declaration of solidarity with the Palestinian people set off a storm that sharply polarized his own party. Former Ontario premier Bob Rae quit the NDP in disgust, publishing a pro-Israel diatribe in the arch-Zionist *National Post* (16 April). In a panic, party leader Alexa McDonough asserted that the NDP's position was not "prejudicial to either side in this conflict," and stripped Robinson of his role as NDP Middle East critic.

Svend Robinson is the standard-bearer of the NDP left wing (such as it is), and the various reformist left groups that have rallied to his defense against the party hierarchy pin their hopes for "renewal" of Canadian social democracy on him. They seek to restore the illusion that the NDP can be an instrument for defense of working people and the oppressed. In a petition urging McDonough to reinstate Robinson, the International Socialists (I.S.) cited the NDP's supposed "strong stand against the so-called War Against Terrorism and the war against Afghanistan." This is nonsense. The NDP called for Canadian "peacekeeping" troops to Afghanistan, and backed most of the provisions in the Liberals' reactionary and repressive anti-terrorism law, Bill C-36, meekly suggesting it contain a "sunset clause."

Moreover, Robinson's own position on the Near East conflict (which is also the official NDP position) is for the insertion of imperialist "peacekeepers" under United Nations auspices. In an 18 April statement, he declared: "The international community must intervene in this humanitarian tragedy with an international protection force." Such a prospect is a deadly danger to the oppressed Palestinian masses. From the UN "police action" against the Korean workers and peasants in the 1950s, to the Canadian troops in UN blue who tortured and murdered black youth in Somalia in the 1990s, the purpose of UN-sanctioned military interventions is to enforce the oppressive imperialist status quo. U.S., Canada, UN: hands off the Near East!

By calling for UN military intervention, Robinson promotes illusions in Canadian imperialism's supposed progressive role, especially its vaunted tradition of "peacekeeping." The reformist left abets his efforts to put a

humane face on Canadian imperialism. They turn a blind eye to his call for military intervention, and anoint him as the savior of the wretchedly right-wing NDP. Praising Robinson's expression of pro-Palestinian sympathies, the I.S. petition declares: "It is precisely this kind of courageous stand—calling for an immediate end to the occupation—that will contribute to a revitalized NDP." In a similar vein, the NDP Socialist Caucus, led by Socialist Action,



CBC TV

NDP MP Svend Robinson argues with Israeli soldier at army checkpoint near Ramallah on April 6.

insists that "NDP prospects for playing an effective role for peace and social justice were greatly reduced when Alexa McDonough demoted Robinson."

Socialist Action, the I.S. and others are working overtime with Robinson on a scheme called the New Politics Initiative (NPI). The plan is to reinvent the NDP as a party able to draw in youthful protesters from the anti-globalization, environmental and antiwar movements. Because the NDP has been so discredited by its attacks on the working class at home, its fake-left enthusiasts hope to put an activist gloss on it, or transform it into a new, more left-talking party of social-democratic betrayal. In either case, the NPI is a thoroughly reformist venture which can only lead militants back into the snare of bourgeois parliamentarism.

It is in the vital interest of the international working class to take a stand in defense of the Palestinian people against the murderous Zionist state. In contrast to the NDP and its "left" shills who only seek to reform the worst evils of the existing system, our purpose is to win workers and radical youth to the understanding that the entire imperialist system must be swept away through socialist revolution. This requires building a revolutionary workers party through political struggle against all the social-democratic charlatans who strive to bind working people to the interests of their exploiters. ■



Down With B.C. Liberals' Racist Referendum!

Native Rights and Labor Struggle



SC photo

Aboriginal contingent leads May 25 march through downtown Vancouver against attacks by B.C. Liberal government.

The following article was first published as a Spartacist Canada supplement for distribution on a May 25 labor demonstration in Vancouver against the austerity attacks of the B.C. provincial government. About 40,000 trade unionists, youth, Native people, immigrants and other minorities joined the protest.

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Gordon Campbell's Liberals came to office a year ago with three prongs to their reactionary program. They swore to step up the attacks on social programs already begun by the NDP, to savage the public sector unions, and to trample Native rights by means of a sham referendum on land claims. Working people who are determined to turn aside the first two, which are aimed straight at their lives and livelihoods, must also strenuously oppose the third.

The Liberals' treaty referendum, like their frontal assault on labor and the poor, was crafted to appeal to their middle class base, especially outside the multiethnic Lower Mainland. However, the referendum also seeks to chain key sectors of the working class tighter to their exploiters by manipulating widespread anti-Native racism. For nearly ten years, economic crises in Asia and elsewhere have hit British Columbia hard, reliant as the provincial economy is on exports of lumber, minerals and fish. As mines and mills

shut down, throwing tens of thousands out of work, Native people struggling to assert some measure of control over their territories and the resources they contain are supposed to take the blame.

This is sucker bait, designed to blind workers to the real enemy, the capitalist class and its bloodsucking resource corporations. The referendum is the Liberals' offer of racist "unity" between workers and bosses against the poorest of the poor, and it is poison. As an integral part of its own struggles, *labor must defend Native rights*.

Capitalist Canada: Hell for Native People

The racist lie that land claims are lining the pockets of Native people while undermining the livelihoods of "ordinary British Columbians" is beyond grotesque. By every conceivable measure, Natives are the poorest and most marginalized people in B.C. and throughout Canada. Canadian capitalism was founded on the destruction of the pre-existing aboriginal societies, whose lands were expropriated through fraud and military conquest by the European colonialists. Today the majority of Native people live in urban centers where, forcibly isolated from any role in social production, they are targets for all-sided racism and police terror.

(continued on page 8)