

Ecosocialism & environmental activism

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IDEAS FOR RADICAL CHANGE



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The Ugly Canadian

EDITORIAL

There is an ever-widening chasm between the myth of Canada as a peaceful and humanitarian nation and the reality of Canadian foreign policy.

Stephen Harper says Canada is back as a credible political and military player in world affairs. This highlights the urgency of building a strong movement of opposition to Canadian imperialism.

In Afghanistan, Canadian troops are on the front lines of counter-insurgency war, propping up the US puppet regime of Hamid Karzai. Ninety percent of Canadian spending in Afghanistan is military. There is no way that Canadian forces will bring freedom to the people of Afghanistan or liberate Afghan women. We demand their immediate withdrawal.

While the Harper government's desire to prolong the Canadian military mission in Afghanistan past 2009 will be difficult to accomplish in the face of mounting Canadian casualties, it will take a strong movement to get troops out before 2009.

The Harper government has taken flagrantly pro-Israel and anti-Palestinian positions, including being the first state to cut off funds to the elected Hamas government and cheer-leading Israel's 2006 war against Lebanon. It is aiding the undemocratic Palestinian administration in the West Bank, which has capitulated to the US and Israel.

Canada, as Anthony Fenton demonstrates in this issue, has also been involved in Iraq.

At the 2007 G-8 summit, Harper acted as a stalking horse for international efforts to gut the Kyoto Protocol, which is already highly inadequate, and replace it with something utterly useless. Harper blocked any meaningful aid commitments to Africa, just as previous Liberal governments had.

Under the Liberals, Canada was a key player in the 2004 ousting of President Aristide in Haiti and in support for the anti-democratic and highly repressive interim government. Today Canada backs the repressive actions of the Haitian National Police and the Brazil-led UN forces there.

In July, Harper visited Colombia and praised President Uribe despite the atrocious human rights record of the Colombian state and Uribe's personal ties to paramilitaries. Harper is actively promoting a bilateral trade deal with Colombia. This is, however, merely an extension of Liberal policy, as Canada has become one of the largest foreign investors in the Americas since the mid-1990s, has signed a number of free trade and investment deals, and has supported corporations that are implicated in human rights abuses and environmental damage throughout the region.

In August, Harper, Bush and Felipe Calderon of Mexico

met in an effort to promote the agenda of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP), which is pushed by the North American Competitiveness Council made up of 30 key corporate figures from the three states.

The SPP's proponents are pushing for weaker regulations on business under the guise of "harmonization." The consolidation of a US-style Homeland Security model in Canada is also being pursued. Far more integrated and openly restrictive and racist border security policies are being promoted. North America is to be made even safer for profit-making, while anyone seen as threatening this agenda will be subject to more controls and repression.

Under the SPP the exploitation of resources on indigenous land will accelerate. Canada is slated, in Harper's words, to become "an energy superpower" through a massive fivefold expansion of production in the Alberta tar sands and increased oil exports. Greenhouse gas emissions will rise, ensuring Canada will be a larger contributor to climate change.

Fortunately, there were significant protests against the SPP at the summit in Montebello in August, with solidarity actions across English-Canada and Quebec. But to build effective social movements more activists will need to challenge shallow interpretations of Canadian foreign policy. These suggest that it's all Harper's fault, or accept the view that the US simply dictates Canadian foreign policy.

In fact, government policies are rooted in the history of Canada's foundation as a colonial-settler state and evolution into a major player in the capitalist world system. In recent years, these policies have evolved in a way that reflects the thinking of the Canadian ruling class about the need for Canadian capital to expand internationally in order to be successful in the era of neoliberal globalization. Canadian capitalists and governments are also responding to the US's post 9-11 push for tighter border controls, which threatens the movement of goods and services and thus Canadian corporate profits.

This is the context in which Canadian governments have approved the largest increases in military spending since World War II, intervened in Haiti, take part of the occupation of Afghanistan, seek out investment treaties with "Third World" countries and ignore human rights and environmental abuses by Canadian corporations.

Faced with this, *New Socialist* is committed to deepening understanding of Canada's imperialist role and how people can act more effectively against Canada's foreign policies and their domestic consequences. ★

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LETTERS

New Socialist magazine welcomes letters.

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'Socialism is fighting for what we all need'

WE ALL MAKE A DECISION WHETHER consciously or not, to either live our lives to benefit ourselves or live our lives to benefit the greater good of life itself.

When I was sixteen I left my progressive life and went to boarding school where in turn I found the GAP and thought all my problems were over. Now I didn't have to worry about poverty or war, no, I had my rose coloured khakis on. This only got worse when I entered the world of right-wing politics. Here was power, and power was the best high of all. Like many others before me, I compromised my values, my integrity and my morals in order to pursue the corporate ideal. And like many others I crashed. Not only did I crash but I experienced first hand the lack of humanity in power.

As the world continued to move, I experienced the harder side of life and I began to learn. Not only did I find myself in a difficult economic position, I met others who were struggling to survive, I met the people that are disregarded when decisions are made. The silent masses silenced by the same government that grants them their "freedom." I embraced this learning experience; I went out of my way to find people and situations so that I could learn what life was. Not life at cocktail parties and corporate fundraisers, but life as most people know it; simple, dirty and restrictive. Having been presented with not only knowledge but real life experience I couldn't stand by the things I once believed. I wasn't able to defend the policies I had fought so hard for because I saw not only did they not work.

This is when I made my decision. I decided that if I were to spend my life pursuing success through power I would be very alone and deserve all the misery I know it to bring. I decided to commit my life, my knowledge and my skills to saving even just one person, changing one mind, freeing one thought so that when I die I know I was a part of the growth of life not the destruction of it. Even at this point, the thought of socialism, though terribly sexy, made me nervous. Then one day I asked a past political associate how they defined socialism. Their response opened my eyes. He said, "Capitalism is fighting for what you want. Socialism is

fighting for what we all need." Once the politics are stripped down to the basics, it is a beautiful thing.

It's unfortunate, because I know for myself these realizations only came once I had found myself to be in a rather difficult position in society. It took more than one slap in the face to realize I had been wrong. I'm not afraid to slap others in the face to help along with their learning process. This is why I will never stop speaking out, because I know if I can start listening so will others.

And let these words resound forever: in solidarity.

Lisa Karoway

A standard cliché of conservative politics

IN HER ARTICLE IN THE SUMMER 2007 issue of *New Socialist*, Deborah Simmons rightly points out that the anarchist writer Richard Day, author of the book *Gramsci is Dead*, follows the French philosopher Michel Foucault "in arguing that there is a kind of totalitarian impulse in all global strategies for social transformation."

Many people today believe that all revolutions are inevitably doomed to end in

terrible dictatorships. Day is one of them: "it's perpetual, it's endless, and this is why the idea of the revolution is to be gotten rid of – it makes us too lazy, because we think that domination is done with, and it never will be."

It needs to be pointed out that this idea is an old one. It's been a standard cliché of conservative politics since the reaction against the French Revolution of the 1790s.

It's sad to see anyone who wants radical social change say that it is impossible to have a society without domination. After most of the Stalinist dictatorships collapsed, this idea got a boost because of the widespread illusion on the Left that the "Communist" societies had been some kind of socialism.

Another source of the idea that oppression is inevitable is the influence in universities today of thinkers like Foucault who were influenced by the 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche, who was consistently anti-democratic and anti-socialist, championed this notion.

People like Day need to be challenged when they regurgitate this kind of reactionary mysticism.

Sebastian Lamb



Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci

An Ecosocialist Manifesto

BY JOEL KOVEL & MICHAEL LÖWY

The idea for this ecosocialist manifesto was jointly-launched by Joel Kovel and Michael Lowy at a September 2001 workshop on ecology and socialism held at Vincennes, near Paris.

We all suffer from a chronic case of Gramsci's paradox, of living in a time whose old order is dying (and taking civilization with it) while the new one does not seem able to be born. But at least it can be announced.

The deepest shadow that hangs over us is neither terror, environmental collapse, nor global recession. It is the internalized fatalism that there is no possible alternative to capital's world order. And so we wished to set an example of a kind of speech that deliberately negates the current mood of anxious compromise and passive acquiescence.

This manifesto nevertheless lacks the audacity of that of 1848, for ecosocialism is not yet a spectre, nor is it grounded in any concrete party or movement. It is only a line of reasoning, based on a reading of the present crisis and the necessary conditions for overcoming it.

We make no claims of omniscience. Far from it, our goal is to invite dialogue, debate, feedback, and above all, a sense of how this notion can be further realized. Innumerable points of resistance arise spontaneously across the chaotic ecumene of global capital. Many are immanently ecosocialist in content. How can these be gathered? Can we envision an ecosocialist international? Can the spectre be brought into being?

Manifesto

The twenty-first century has opened on a catastrophic note. An unprecedented degree of ecological breakdown and a chaotic world order beset with terror and clusters of low-grade disintegrative warfare have spread like gangrene across great swathes of the planet—namely, central Africa, the Middle East, northwestern South America – and reverberate throughout the nations. In our view, the crises of ecology and those of societal breakdown are profoundly interrelated and should be seen as different manifestations of the same structural forces.

The former broadly stems from rampant industrialization that overwhelms the earth's capacity to buffer and contain ecological destabilization. The latter stems from the

form of imperialism known as globalization, with its disintegrative effects on societies that stand in its path. Moreover, these underlying forces are essentially different aspects of the same drive, which must be identified as the central dynamic that moves the whole: the expansion of the world capitalist system.

We reject all euphemisms or propagandistic softening of the brutality of this regime – all greenwashing of its ecological costs, all mystification of the human costs under the names of democracy and human rights.

The crises of ecology and those of societal breakdown are profoundly interrelated.

We insist instead upon looking at capital from the standpoint of what it has really done.

Acting on nature and its ecological balance, the regime – with its imperative to constantly expand profitability – exposes ecosystems to destabilizing pollutants, fragments habitats that have evolved over eons to allow the flourishing of organisms, squanders resources, and reduces the sensuous vitality of nature to the cold exchangeability required for the accumulation of capital.

From the side of humanity, with its requirements for self-determination, community, and a meaningful existence, capital reduces the majority of the world's people to a mere reservoir of labour power while discarding much of the remainder as useless nuisances.

It has invaded and undermined the integrity of communities through its global mass culture of consumerism and depoliticization.

It has expanded disparities in wealth and power to levels unprecedented in human history.

It has worked hand in glove with a network of corrupt and subservient client states whose local elites carry out the work of repression while the center is spared its disrepute.

And it has set into motion a network of transtatal organizations under the overall supervision of the Western powers and the superpower the United States to undermine the autonomy of the periphery and bind it into indebtedness while maintaining a huge military apparatus to enforce compliance to the capitalist center.

We believe that the present capitalist system cannot regulate, much less overcome, the crises it has set going. It cannot solve the ecological crisis because to do so requires setting limits upon accumulation – an unacceptable option for

Michael Löwy is a member of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) in France and the author of many books, including Fire Alarm (2006). Joel Kovel's two most recent books are Overcoming Zionism (2007) and The Enemy of Nature (2nd edition forthcoming 2007 from Zed).

a system predicated upon the rule: Grow or Die!

And it cannot solve the crisis posed by terror and other forms of violent rebellion because to do so would mean abandoning the logic of empire, which would impose unacceptable limits on growth and the whole "way of life" sustained by empire. Its only remaining option is to resort to brutal force, thereby increasing alienation and sowing the seed of further terrorism. And further counter-terrorism, evolving into a new and malignant variation of fascism.

In sum, the capitalist world system is historically bankrupt. It has become an empire unable to adapt, whose very gigantism exposes its underlying weakness. It is, in the language of ecology, profoundly unsustainable, and must be changed fundamentally, nay, replaced, if there is to be a future worth living.



Another reason why we need an ecosocialist movement.

Thus the stark choice once posed by Rosa Luxemburg returns: socialism or barbarism, where the face of the latter now reflects the imprint of the intervening century and assumes the countenance of ecocatastrophe, terror counter-terror, and their fascist degeneration.

But why socialism, why revive this word seemingly consigned to the rubbish-heap of history by the failings of its twentieth century interpretations?

For this reason only: that however beaten down and unrealized, the notion of socialism still stands for the supersession of capital. If capital is to be overcome, a task now given the urgency of the survival of civilization itself, the outcome will perforce be "socialist," for that is the term which signifies the breakthrough into a post-capitalist society.

If we say that capital is radically unsustainable and breaks down into the barbarism outlined above, then we are also saying that we need to build a socialism capable of overcoming the crises capital has brought into being. And if socialisms past have failed to do so, then it is our obligation, if we choose against submitting to a barbarous end, to struggle for one that succeeds.

And just as barbarism has changed in a manner reflective

of the century since Luxemburg enunciated her fateful alternative, so too, must the name, and the reality, of a socialism become adequate for this time.

It is for these reasons that we choose to name our interpretation of socialism as an ecosocialism and dedicate ourselves to its realization.

WHY ECOSOCIALISM?

We see ecosocialism not as the denial but as the realization of the "first-epoch" socialisms of the twentieth century, in the context of the ecological crisis. Like them, it builds on the insight that capital is objectified past labor, and grounds itself in the free development of all producers, or to use another way of saying this, an undoing of the separation of the producers from the means of production.

We understand that this goal was not able to be implemented by first-epoch socialism, for reasons too complex to take up here, except to summarize as various effects of underdevelopment in the context of hostility by existing capitalist powers. This conjuncture had numerous deleterious effects on existing socialisms, chiefly, the denial of internal democracy along with an emulation of capitalist productivism, and led eventually to the collapse of these societies and the ruin of their natural environments.

Ecosocialism retains the emancipatory goals of first-epoch socialism, and rejects both the attenuated, reformist aims of social democracy and the productivist structures of the bureaucratic variations of socialism. It insists, rather, upon redefining both the path and the goal of socialist production in an ecological framework.

It does so specifically with respect to the "limits on growth" essential for the sustainability of society. These are embraced, however, not in the sense of imposing scarcity, hardship and repression. The goal, rather, is a transformation of needs, and a profound shift toward the qualitative dimension and away from the quantitative. From the standpoint of commodity production, this translates into a valorization of use-values over exchange-values – a project of far-reaching significance grounded in immediate economic activity.

The generalization of ecological production under socialist conditions can provide the grounds for the overcoming of the present crises. A society of freely associated producers does not stop at its own democratization. It must, rather, insist on the freeing of all beings as its starting point and goal. It thereby overcomes the imperialist impulse both subjectively and objectively.

In realizing such a goal, it struggles to overcome all forms of domination, including, especially, those of gender and "race." And it surpasses the conditions leading to fundamentalist distortions and their terrorist manifestations. In sum, a world society is premised on a degree of ecological harmony with nature unthinkable under present conditions.

A practical outcome of these tendencies would be expressed, for example, in a withering away of the depend-

ency upon fossil fuels integral to industrial capitalism. And this in turn can provide the material point of release of the lands subjugated by oil imperialism, while enabling the containment of global warming, along with other afflictions of the ecological crisis.

No one can read these prescriptions without thinking, first, of how many practical and theoretical questions they raise, and second and more dishearteningly, of how remote they are from the present configuration of the world, both as this is anchored in institutions and as it is registered in consciousness.

We need not elaborate these points, which should be instantly recognizable to all. But we would insist that they be taken in their proper perspective.

Our project is neither to lay out every step of this way nor to yield to the adversary because of the preponderance of power he holds. It is, rather, to develop the logic of a sufficient and necessary transformation of the current order, and to begin developing the intermediate steps towards this goal.

We do so in order to think more deeply about these possibilities, and at the same moment, begin the work of drawing together with all those of like mind. If there is any merit in these arguments, then it must be the case that similar thoughts, and practices to realize these thoughts, will be coordinatively germinating at innumerable points around the world.

Ecosocialism will be international, and universal, or it will be nothing. The crises of our time can and must be seen as revolutionary opportunities, and it is our obligation to affirm and bring these opportunities into existence. ★

Ethics of ecosocialism



BY MICHAEL LÖWY

What exactly is eco-socialism? It is a current of thought and action that incorporates the principle gains of Marxism while jettisoning its productivist baggage. It is a current that has understood that the logic of the capitalist market and of profit – along with that of the technocratic and bureaucratic authoritarianism of the defunct so-called “people’s democracies” – is incompatible with protecting the environment. Last but not least, it is a current that, while critical of the dominant currents of the working-class movement, understands that workers and their organizations are vital to any project of radical systemic transformation. An eco-socialist ethic would be radically opposed to the destructive logic of capitalist profit and the all-encompassing market, which Marx called a system of “universal venality.” What would be the main components of such an ethic?

First of all, it seems to me that it should be a social ethic. It is not an ethic about individual behaviour aimed at guilt-tripping people, or promoting asceticism and self-denial. Of course, it is important that individuals learn to respect the environment and eliminate waste, but the real question lies elsewhere. It is a matter of changing capitalist and market-driven economic and social structures and establishing a new paradigm of production and distribution based on social needs – especially the vital need to live in an undamaged natural environment. Such a change requires social forces, social movements, environmental organizations, political parties, and not just well-meaning individuals.

This social ethic is a humanist ethic. Seeking to live in harmony with nature and protect endangered species is a human value, just as using medicine to destroy life forms that attack human life (bacteria, viruses and parasites) is a human value. The Anopheles mosquito, which carries yellow fever, does not have the same “right to life” as the Third World children threatened by this disease. To save these children, it is ethically legitimate to eradicate this type of mosquito in certain regions.

By threatening the environment’s natural equilibrium, the environmental crisis endangers not only plant and animal life but also and especially the health, living conditions and very survival of our own species. There is therefore no need to rail against humanism and “anthropocentrism” to see the defence of biodiversity and endangered animal species as an ethical and political priority. The fight to save the environment, which is necessarily a fight for a change in our



Demo in Montreal against climate change, November 2006

civilization, is a humanist imperative that concerns not only this or that social class but also every single human being.

This imperative concerns future generations, to whom we are in danger of bequeathing a planet made uninhabitable by the increasingly uncontrollable damage being done to the environment. But the approach which based the need for an environmental ethic on this future danger, has long been overtaken by events. It is now a far more urgent question, of direct concern to present generations. People living at the beginning of the 21st century have already seen the dramatic consequences of the capitalist poisoning and destruction of the biosphere. Those of us alive in 20 or 30 years could well be confronted with full-blown ecological disasters.

It is also an egalitarian ethic. The current mode of production and consumption in the advanced capitalist countries is based on a logic of unlimited accumulation (of capital, profits and commodities), of wasting resources, of conspicuous consumption and accelerated destruction of the environment. Spreading these methods to the rest of the planet would create a major ecological crisis. This system is therefore necessarily based on maintaining and deepening the glaring inequality between North and South. The eco-socialist project aspires to a planetary redistribution of wealth and the cooperative development of resources, within a new productive paradigm.

The social and ethical requirement to meet social needs has no meaning outside an approach based on social justice, equality (which does not mean homogenization) and solidarity. In the final analysis, it means the collective appropriation of the means of production and distribution of goods and services “to each according to their needs.” It has nothing in common with the liberal notion of “equity,” which according to John Rawls in his book *Political Liberalism* seeks to justify social inequalities by describing them as being “attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.” This is the classical position of those who defend economic and social “free competition.”

Eco-socialism also involves a democratic ethic. As long as economic decisions and choices about production remain in the hands of an oligarchy of capitalists, bankers and technocrats – or, in the erstwhile system of state-run economies, of a bureaucracy escaping all democratic control – we will never break free of the infernal cycle of productivism, exploitation of workers and environmental destruction. Economic democratization – involving the socialization of productive forces – means that major decisions about production and distribution are not made by the markets or by a politburo, but by society itself, following democratic and pluralist debate in which different proposals and choices are compared and contrasted. This is a necessary condition for

creating a different socio-economic logic and a new relationship to nature.

Finally, eco-socialism is a radical ethic, in the etymological sense of the term – an ethic that seeks to go to the root of the problem. Half measures, partial reforms, Rio conferences and markets in pollution rights do not provide a solution. We need a radical change in paradigm, a new model of civilization – in other words, a revolutionary transformation.

Such a revolution would affect the social relations of production – private property and the division of labour – but also the productive forces themselves. Dogmatic forms of Marxism – based on references to some of Marx's own work – see change stemming solely from the elimination of capitalist social relations, which are seen as being obstacles to the free development of the productive forces. Contrary to this approach, we must seek to overturn the very structure of the production process.

To paraphrase Marx's famous remark about the state following the Paris Commune: workers and the people cannot simply take over the productive apparatus and make it work in their interest: they must smash it and replace it with another. This means a profound transformation of the technical structure of production and of the energy sources – primarily fossil and nuclear – on which it runs. Technology that respects the environment, and renewable energies, especially solar power, are at the heart of the eco-socialist project.

Embracing the utopia of an ecological socialism or solar communism (see David Schwartzman's article of the same name in the journal *Science and Society*) does not prevent us from fighting right now for immediate objectives that prefigure the future and are inspired by the same values: Prioritize public transit against the monstrous proliferation of personal automobiles and road transport; escape the nuclear trap and develop research into renewable energy sources; demand that the terms of the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gases be met, and reject the hoax of the “market in pollution rights;” fight for organic agriculture and against seed multinationals and their GMO.

These are just a few examples, and it would be easy to draw up a much longer list. One can find these demands, and others similar to them, among the positions of the international movement against capitalist globalization and neoliberalism that arose in 1996 at the Intergalactic Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism organized by the Zapatistas in the mountains of Chiapas in southern Mexico. The movement made a show of strength at the major protests in Seattle, Prague, Nice, and Washington DC and Quebec City and Genoa. It is not only critical of the huge social injustices the system produces, but also capable of advancing concrete alternatives – as it did at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January 2001. ★

"We can't eat money and we can't drink gas" Petro-capitalism and the fight for indigenous culture in Denendeh

BY ERIN FREELAND AND JESSICA SIMPSON

We are a group of arctic women, sweating on the Mall in Washington. This long stretch of grass is where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech in 1963. It is the summer of 2006, and in front of a giant dump truck we are hoisting a banner that reads: "Global Warming – Killing Indigenous Communities – Climate Justice Now."

We are the Arctic Indigenous Alliance (AIA), a grass-roots organization from Denendeh and the Inuvialuit region – also known as the Northwest Territories (NWT). Since 2003, AIA has worked to demand human rights and sustainable communities. We have been working to strengthen, honour and protect our heritage, which is rooted in the health of our land and its people.

Our actions connect the wisdom of our elders with the vision of new leaders for our survival and that of future generations. We organize collectively for the people that really want to say something but can't. We take action for the future generations who do not yet have a voice.

We do this by raising awareness of the potential impacts of the proposed Mackenzie Gas Project (MGP) on our people and our communities, and posing alternatives are to these "development" projects. We also promote a cultural revival, because as women and mothers we too have a dream. We dream of a North that is truly self-determining, and engaged in and supported by sustainable development that honours and respects indigenous culture and our future generations.

Jessica Simpson (Wha Ti First Nation) is a member of the Arctic Indigenous Alliance and the Canadian Youth Climate Coalition. Erin Freeland is currently working on an inter-community participatory film about oil and gas development, climate change and well-being for a PhD in Environmental Policy at Oxford University. She works to ensure that future generations have dry meat to eat and clean water to drink.

We have come to the Smithsonian Institute's annual Folk Life Festival – a festival to promote "the understanding and continuity of diverse, contemporary grassroots cultures in the United States and around the world." We aim to be voice of opposition to the continued promotion of unabated oil and gas development that affects our watersheds, food security and many basic human rights. Canada's display at this year's festival focused on Alberta, and was dominated and sponsored by the expanding oil sands industry.

The MGP proposes a 1200 km pipeline that will run between Inuvik and Alberta, forging a line down the sacred Mackenzie Valley that will in large part fuel expansion of Athabasca oil sands extraction and processing capacity. The public glorification of this mega-project obscures the risks that oil and gas development pose to First Nations people.

HISTORY REPEATED?

Many indigenous communities of the NWT already have a long and painful experience of resource extraction in their traditional territory. The oft-repeated story is cogently told by Inuvialuit elder Ruth Stewart of Aklavik: "We didn't really understand what was happening when the people were gonna come in to do their exploring and everything else. We didn't understand anything about it and we never had a say in it... There was drugs and alcohol that really ruined the families and unwanted children were born, jobs were lost. People gave up their

education to go to work... And so the men, because they left school and went to work, they didn't have any skills when everybody pulled out.

Our actions connect the wisdom of our elders with the vision of new leaders for our survival and that of future generations.

"When they left it was so surprising, it's like one day everybody was gone. And the men found out they were in limbo, they didn't have education, they didn't have bush skills, they didn't know how to make a living. They'd just get odd jobs, and those jobs were only in the summertime. So they were stuck. It just brought a lot of low self-esteem. So, we have to be really careful this kind of thing doesn't happen again."

By 1973, in response to continued acts of colonization, the Indian Brotherhood of the NWT completed an oral history project demonstrating the fraudulence of Treaties 8 and 11, and launched a land caveat against development under the Land Titles Act. The subsequent 1975 Dene Declaration proclaimed the existence of the Dene Nation and called for the government of Canada to recognize the inherent rights of the Dene people. In response to the demand by the indigenous people for power over their own futures and their land, the federal government appointed Justice Thomas Berger to conduct a public inquiry into the proposed pipeline. It was through these pipeline talks, the Berger Inquiry of 1974-1977, that the Dene Nation came together. They asserted their aboriginal

rights, their human rights, and their culture. They viewed this pipeline to be another form of colonial development, an imposition of foreign procedures, values and decision-making in their traditional territory.

Berger's 1977 report *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland* made a series of recommendations, the principal of which was that such large scale development should not take place until land claims were settled. Berger proposed a moratorium on the pipeline project of at least ten years.

The political landscape of the NWT has shifted since the Berger Inquiry as a result of land claim agreements and self-government deals. But 40 percent of the current pipeline route runs through the Dehcho First Nation, which does not have a settled claim yet. For many of us in the NWT it seems that not much has changed since the 1970s.

As in the 1970s, the consortium of groups promoting pipeline construction are claiming that they can help our people by giving them jobs on a pipeline. A principle difference is that now many of the same leaders that were against the pipeline in the 70s are now for it. Many of these leaders now work for the Aboriginal Pipeline Group (APG).

MANUFACTURING CONSENT

Many of the grassroots people of the Northwest Territories feel disempowered in decision-making about the pipeline. In fact, many feel that there is nothing that they can do because the decision to build the pipeline has already been made by government officials. When Prime Minister Stephen Harper made his first visit to the NWT, he delivered a clear message: "The Mackenzie Project has the potential to transform the North into what some call the next Alberta."

This promise of provincial status was accompanied by a clear threat: the NWT's continued struggle for devolution and control over resource revenues is impossible, in Harper's words, "... unless you make sure projects like the Mackenzie Pipeline come to fruition because without them no amount of

transfer payments will give the North the future it deserves." This statement is exemplary of the attitude expressed by government officials and Northern leaders alike that the pipeline is an all-or-nothing option.

In the multi-million dollar process of manufacturing consent, an abundance of misinformation is a powerful tool. Youth and elders and other people in our communities are not being provided with full information about the alternatives to industrial development. This is one of the reasons that people are for the pipeline – they feel powerless because they think that building a pipeline is our only possible option.

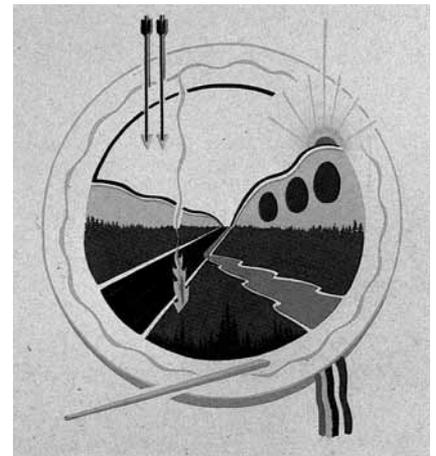
This is no surprise, given Premier Joseph Handley's statement in *Far North Oil and Gas Quarterly* that "I always believed that if the rest of the world wants our gas, our diamonds, our gold, they'll find a way of getting here to get it. Don't ever believe that you can stop a big multinational. If they want to be here, they are bigger than we are. The best we can do is find a way of buying into that."

OPPOSING THE PIPELINE

AIA opposes the extraction of our non-renewable resources, and fights for the right of indigenous peoples of the NWT to be truly self-determining and self-governing. By investing in people's healing and well-being as a first priority, and through initiatives such as integrated on-the-land educational curricula and regionally-specific renewable energy technologies, we can build a North where "development" means the development of people and of community projects that support culture and decolonization.

In August 2005, members of AIA traveled to the Dene National Assembly in Deline. Two years previously, the Dene Nation had given us their unanimous

support to research potential impacts and community concerns related to the proposed pipeline. This time, based on what we had heard from indigenous youth and elders, we sought support from the Dene



Logo of the Dene Nation

Nation in opposing the pipeline and demanding sustainable alternatives.

In our presentation to the Assembly, we told our leaders that we do not have the resources to deal with the current social, health, and education crisis in our communities and the pipeline will increase these problems. It will also increase the effects of climate change and economic globalization in the arctic.

We argued that the MGP is a continuation of colonization and the oppression of indigenous peoples. These are non-indigenous people that are essentially telling us that they can make us better if we accept their profit-oriented system.

One of our presenters, young Michael Francis of Fort McPherson, stated "I want to be able to take my children out on the land and teach them our traditions like my grandparents did for me. You can't eat oil. You can't eat gas. You can't eat money."

Our presentation was received with undivided attention and a standing ova-



tion. But the leaders did not bother to discuss our resolution, despite the request of the elders.

This was the first time that Dene Nation talked about whether or not the

We can build a North where "development" means the development of people and of community projects that support culture and decolonization.

pipeline will benefit our nation since the 1970s. Some of our Chiefs commented that they too once felt the way we did, but then they grew up and became realistic. As if cooperation with multinationals who have a history of exploiting indigenous people is something that can only be accepted.

In the NWT, there is a mixed economy supplementing bush resources with store bought goods. The importance of traditional diets, inextricably linked to cultural and community practices of indigenous people in the NWT remains a primary concern for youth when the future of NWT development is discussed.

In smaller communities in the NWT, upwards of 92 percent of the diet remain traditional country foods. As Michael Francis put it, echoing the oft-repeated words of the elders, "You can't eat money."

The producers' group for the MGP (Imperial, Exxon-Mobil, APG, Esso, Shell, Conoco-Phillips) has argued that they will compensate people who lose access to traditional hunting areas during pipeline construction. How does one quantify the loss of a caribou, which pound for pound has three times the protein and a fifth of the fat of beef?

How can one be compensated for the healing power of the land, for the intergenerational teachings that accompany the hunt, preparation and use of the caribou? Will it be considered that in the NWT a steak will travel by air an average

of 3,000 km, costing \$18 at the supermarket? If we are not enjoying full-cost accounting in the pipeline, it is unlikely we will see carbon analysis on our compensation payouts!

DEFENDING OUR LAND

AIA is a network of warriors, young and old, who want the world to recognize petro-capitalism and its ultimate consequence, climate change, for what it ultimately is: a silent violence perpetrated upon the ability of indigenous people to thrive on their renewable natural resources. Training northern indigenous youth for short-term, high paying jobs in an industry that destroys the environment and disables their culture and identity will not bring a just or equitable future.

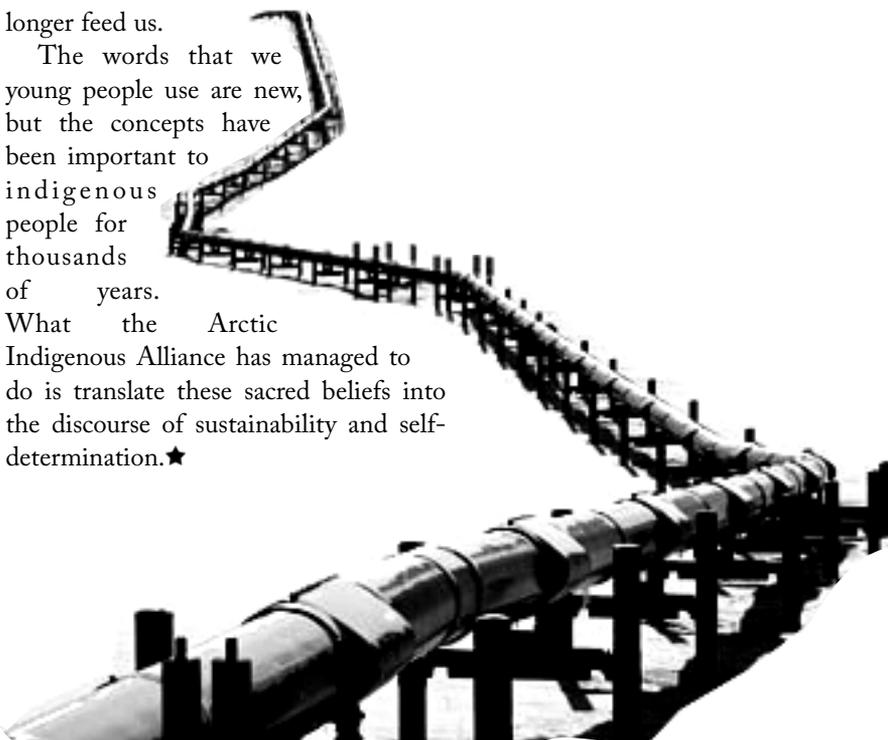
Youth in the NWT are working to create livelihoods that support healthy communities and a sustainable future. Renewable energy can potentially create 60 times more jobs than fossil fuels. We must invest in jobs that strengthen our traditions, language and future, not weaken them as the extractive industry does. We can't eat money, and we can't drink gas. No matter how large an impact-benefit agreement is, we are poor if our land can no longer feed us.

The words that we young people use are new, but the concepts have been important to indigenous people for thousands of years. What the Arctic Indigenous Alliance has managed to do is translate these sacred beliefs into the discourse of sustainability and self-determination.★

A Pipeline Story

People of long ago always used to ask *tadsq* (raven) for advice about how to do things, so when they wanted to know how to cool moose fat in the summer, they asked *tadsq*. He told them to pour the moose fat in the intestine, and string it along the river (the Red River at Tsiigetichic) to cool it. He said he would volunteer to hold the other end while they poured the fat. But they kept pouring and pouring and pouring, and it didn't seem to fill up. And one of them said that *tadsq* could be mischievous, so they threw a fish bone into the intestine along with the oil to test him. Then shortly at the other end, they heard *tadsq* choking on the fish bone - kaa kaa! And so this tells us that we might get ripped off by industry.

*Story told by Alfred Masuzumi
Interview with Deborah Simmons
Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories
July 20, 2006*



Combating climate change

Facing a major social and political challenge

BY DANIEL TANURO

IN THE WORST CASE SCENARIO 150 million people could be obliged to relocate between now and 2050 following the rise in ocean levels due to planetary warming. At the same time, deaths due to lack of water, malaria and famine could increase respectively by three billion, 300 million and 50-100 million.

Although this picture of climate change effects is already more than worrying, two other elements should be added, whose importance should be clear to everyone:

- **The agricultural repercussions.** Beyond a 3°C increase in average surface temperature, it is very probable that the overall productivity of cultivated ecosystems will be affected. Below this limit, negative impacts will be felt (and are already felt) in vast tropical and subtropical regions, in Africa and in South America mainly;
- **The effects on ecosystems.** Warming now has clear observable consequences, some of which will have serious implications for certain populations: an accelerated decline in biodiversity (-25% according to a study published in the magazine *Nature*), loss of coral reefs, increased fragility of mangrove forests and big forest groupings like that of the Amazon.

How will the capitalist system manage such situations? The question continues to be of concern if we consider the policies already implemented in certain concrete cases, like the Pacific islands, or New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, or if we examine the strategic scenarios of certain “experts.”

PACIFIC ISLANDS

In certain small Pacific island states, the threat of warming is already experienced as a painful everyday problem. In early December 2005, the population of Lateu, a small village of around 100 inhabitants on the island of Tegua, in the Polynesian state of Vanuatu, was displaced to escape increasing frequent floods: the coral barrier no longer provides sufficient protection from hurricanes, with the coast eroding by two to three metres per year. Lateu is the first case of collective relocation following the rise in ocean levels. But Tuvalu, another Pacific state, already

“The poor will be the main victims of climate change”, warns the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

has three thousand climate refugees. Situated 3,400 km to the northeast of Australia, this country (26 square kilometres of more or less firm land) is made up of eight atolls rising to 4.5 metres above sea level. It could well go down in history as the first country which has had to be completely evacuated because of climate change.

Conscious of the situation, in 2000 the government of Tuvalu asked Australia and New Zealand to undertake to take in its 11,636 residents if need be. Canberra refused, on the pretext that a collective agreement would be “discriminatory” in relation to other refugee candidates. As for New Zealand, it only agreed to accept 74 people a year, on condition that they

were aged between 18 and 45, had a “suitable” employment offer in New Zealand (paid work, full time, open ended), could prove their knowledge of English, are in good health and possess sufficient resources if they have a dependant. To get a full picture of this policy, remember that Australia, for example, has three inhabitants per square kilometre, that its GDP per inhabitant is \$29,632 per year, that it has refused to ratify Kyoto and that it is one of the biggest carbon users on the planet.

NEW ORLEANS

“The poor will be the main victims of climate change”, warns the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The Katrina affair shows that this warning is also true for the developed countries. There is no basis for saying that the hurricane which devastated New Orleans in August 2005 was due to the increase in atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases. But the violence of hurricanes in the North Atlantic has doubled over the last thirty years, probably following warming. Above all, the crisis management has been very revealing. Before, during and after.

Before? Whereas the threat weighing on the capital of jazz had been known for a long time, the federal state, to finance its bellicose adventures, had from 2001 slashed the budget of the body charged with flood prevention, the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project (SELA), (whose management was responsible to the Army Engineering Corps). In early 2004, the administration granted barely 20 percent of what had been requested for the strengthening of the Lake Pontchartrain levees. At the end of the year, in spite of unprecedented cyclonic activity, the SELA received a sixth of what it had requested: \$10 million.

Meanwhile, in July, the Federal Emer-

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Desertification intensifies as planet warms.



gency Management Agency (FEMA) had drawn up an emergency plan based on the cynical hypothesis that the poor (30 percent of the population, 67 percent of them Black), would stay in the city in case of flooding – since they did not have the financial resources to pay for their evacuation. “The residents need to know they’ll be on their own for several days”, said Michael Brown, head of the FEMA. In July 2005, the city authorities warned the inhabitants that they would be “largely responsible for their own safety.”

During? 138,000 of the 480,000 inhabitants without aid for five days, more than 1,000 dead, brutal repression of initiatives aimed at survival (characterized systematically as “pillage”). These facts have been widely reported by the media. It is clear that they are not explained solely by negligence or disorder, but by a logic which was anti-poor, class-based, racist and arrogant, in which sordid real estate speculations seem to have played a not inconsiderable role. The statements of George W. Bush and his entourage provide numerous confirmations of it.

After? Less known to the public, certain measures taken in the context of reconstruction are also very significant: minimum wage suppressed, public contracts granted to crony companies (Halliburton!) without tenders, hindrance of the return of poor populations to enable remodelling of the city and so on. In short: a good example of the manner in which capital can use the ecological cri-

sis to improve the conditions of its valorization.

THREAT OF BARBARISM

The Pacific islands and Katrina shed light on what the neoliberals mean by “managing the consequences of warming.” If we project these examples to the global scale, there is no escaping the conclusion: in a few decades, climate change could serve as a prop to barbaric scenarios of a breadth as unprecedented as the disturbance of the climate by human activity.

Certain conservative “think tanks” make no secret of their projects in the area. In a study on the implications of serious climate change for the national security of the USA, two “experts” write coldly that “nations with the resources to do so” like the US and Australia “may build virtual fortresses around their countries, preserving resources for themselves.” All around these fortresses, “deaths from war as well as starvation and disease [due to warming] will decrease population size which, over time, will re-balance with carrying capacity.” Too few commentators have drawn attention to the fact that the scientific value of this so-called “study” is nonexistent (notably because, inspired by the disaster film *The Day After*, it posits the dual threat of a new glaciation and a rise in ocean levels, which is nonsense). But of most concern is the absence of protest in scientific circles faced with the fact that the ecological concept of “carrying capac-

ity” of ecosystems is used in support of an abject socio-political project: the massive extermination of the poor. Unhappily, this report does not constitute an exception. The list of reactionary outpourings aroused by warming is in fact very long.

NECESSITY OF MOBILIZATION

Numerous signs indicate that the struggle for the climate will increasingly constitute a major social and political issue. Beyond the Kyoto Protocol (a first very insufficient step), the response of the capitalist system is being sketched out and refined. It will consist notably in using the threat of warming to push an accentuation of neoliberal policies generating exclusion, domination, inequality and degradation of the environment. Another climate policy is then necessary. A policy which can save the climate and deliver social justice, democracy and respect for ecosystems, on a world scale. A policy which redistributes wealth radically and puts an end to productivism. The imposition of this policy necessitates the broadest mobilization, on a world scale.

In this perspective, information plays a role, all the more important as it concerns areas with which activists are still not sufficiently familiar. In February 2005, the International Committee of the Fourth International (an international network of revolutionary Marxists), decided to “devote growing attention to the climate question and climate policy, notably through the press of the sections and of the International.” The May 2007 issue of *International Viewpoint* (see www.internationalviewpoint.org), is intended as a contribution to the necessary effort of consciousness raising, inside our movement and beyond. Although it was drawn up before the publication (on February 1st, 2007) of the fourth evaluation report of the IPCC, and it has not integrated certain recent proposals (like the proposal for a new energy policy for Europe formulated by the European Commission in January of the same year) we hope that it will supply to the anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal left a first battery of tools allowing it to take its place in the great battle which has begun. ★

CANADA'S GREEN PARTY

Only thing green is the colour of money

BY GREG SHARZER

The Green Party has arrived on the national political scene. It receives above 10 percent in opinion polls and its leader, Elizabeth May, receives the same kind of media exposure as other party leaders. As the planet heats up and the weather gets crazier, the Greens' profile can only increase, as voters warm to a green agenda. But how green is the Green Party? And is it left-wing?

GREEN ROOTS

The Green Party comes from a noble tradition: 1970s radicals who saw capitalism was destroying the earth, and rejected the growth-at-any-cost priorities of both sides of the Cold War. The Greens' answer was a rainbow coalition of social justice: anti-nuclear, anti-militarist, feminist, and pro-local development and social ecology. Greens advocated a wholesale shift from development-based growth to a sustainable, harmonious non-capitalist society.

As the Greens got closer to power around the world, those priorities withered. The German Greens dropped their anti-capitalism after the breakup of the USSR in 1991, shifting from grassroots activism and party democracy to a traditional, parliamentary model. They went on to support NATO's bombing of Kosovo in 1998, and – in coalition with the ruling Social Democratic Party – the US-UK invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Across Europe, the Greens have entered into coalition governments with capitalist parties and ended up supporting “modernization” measures to tear up the welfare state.

In Canada, the Green Party was formed in the 1980s from an amalgam of radical currents, from eco-socialists to deep ecologists. The party enjoyed some municipal success in BC running on a social ecology

platform, making links with trade union and environmental movements. In Saskatchewan the Greens remained social democrats, left of the governing NDP. In Ontario the party went eco-capitalist, as did the federal Greens. In 2004, ex-Tory Jim Harris led the national party to win 4 percent of the vote, and transformed it into a centralized, professional organization, with Tory strategists and wealthy funders. Most recently, May has cut a deal with Liberal leader Stephen Dion to choose a single candidate to run against Tory Peter MacKay.

Not surprisingly, Canada's Green Party's politics have shifted hard to the Right too. It dropped mention of NAFTA or war in Afghanistan and Iraq from its publicity materials. Its party platform makes no mention of organized labour, except to call for a total ban on party donations from unions. Its stated commitment to feminism puts heavy emphasis on equal representation in parliament and boardrooms. In 2006, May pandered to the Right by publicly calling abortion a moral issue rather than a health issue.

The Green Party accepts capitalism as given. And not in the old social democratic sense, when labour parties would come to power and pursue public spending and a welfare state. The Greens actively promote capitalism. This means they're not only right-wing, but their green politics fall miserably short of what's needed to avert the crisis.

THE MARKET AND GLOBAL WARMING

The best example is Green policy on global warming. At best it's a Keynesian technological fix, calling for national funding to retrofit buildings, R&D for new green technologies and mass transit investment. These are all good things, but they don't require a Green Party. Toron-



to's new mass transit plan will see \$17 billion invested in subways and buses – and that's under a federal Tory government.

Where it counts – cutting pollution at the source – the Greens fall back on the market. Large Final Emitters (LFEs) are industries responsible for 50 percent of all CO₂ emissions. It makes sense to target centralized production facilities, rather than the consumer behaviour of millions of people. But to curb LFE emissions, the Greens place their hopes in carbon taxes, carbon trading and business incentives to new technology.

Carbon taxes are a tax on energy sources that emit CO₂, like fossil fuels. They rely on price mechanisms. If the price of fuel gets too high, users will switch to non-CO₂-emitting fuels. While consumer behaviour may respond to these types of price changes, LFEs are not consumers. The kind of large-scale capital investments required to change whole industries are simply too high for prices to make much difference: you can make a refrigerator too expensive, but a fuel source, or an industry and infrastructure based on that fuel source, has its own economies of scale. To build a new infrastructure, massive government investment is necessary. Historically, high fixed capital costs – such as building a railroad – are not profitable in the short-medium term, and private capital will not undertake them without considerable subsidies.

Greg Sharzer was never much of a hippie.

The alternative is nationalized green industries and shutting down dirty ones. But this is not something the Green Party, with its slavish devotion to “entrepreneurs” would consider. Even its stated foe, the nuclear industry, would be allowed to continue without subsidies. The rest – agriculture, transport, energy generation, etc. – would be “worked with” to find solutions, rather than forced to change, right now, for our common good.

Carbon trading is an even weaker form of regulation. Companies are assigned credits depending on how much carbon they produce. Those with too few credits can purchase the right to pollute from those with too many. There’s no democratic oversight to this process – and small wonder, since this idea came straight from Milton Friedman and the Chicago School of economics, one of the inventors of neoliberalism. In practice, it’s meant poor countries setting up “carbon sinks” of dubious value – tree plantations that absorb carbon for just a few years, or subsidies to industries that plan to switch to coal and then promise not to.

GREEN NEOLIBERALISM

Also from Friedman comes the Green Party’s concept of tax-shifting. The carbon tax would replace payroll and income taxes. This is regressive, a means of transferring even more money into the hands of the bloated oligarchs who rule capitalism. Socialists are against taxes for poor people. But refusing to tax the rich gives those who profit off ecological destruction a free ride.

The Green Party’s platform and discussion forums are full of rhetoric about “living within our means” and paying down the debt. This is recycled right-wing hype from the 1990s, when capitalist financiers and governments raised interest rates to destroy social welfare measures. It’s a neoliberal myth, considering years of anti-inflation and anti-deficit economics have seen the transfer of money from public coffers to the ultra-rich, and there’s hard evidence to show public investment stimulates growth.

In the Green Party, there appears to be a strange alliance between eco-capi-



Federal Green Party leader Elizabeth May

talists who want to shaft the poor, and deep ecologists who want to stop growth. Neoliberal economics does both – yet both sides are deluded. For the capitalists, neoliberalism has actually slowed global growth; despite the rhetoric, economic growth has remained two to three percent lower in the neoliberal era than during the 1950s and 60s. In turn, the deep ecologists are allying with some dangerous friends. Neoliberalism has ushered in the current ecological crisis, arguably the worst in human history. Growth in itself is not good or bad; the issue is whether it’s democratically controlled to focus on the priorities of people, not capital. As usual, trying to “go beyond” left-wing politics just means being the patsy of the Right.

Knowingly or not, the Greens have become capitalist stooges. Their policies all accept the existence of the capitalist marketplace and its contradictions: the need for corporations to accumulate profit at any cost to workers and the natural environment, private property rights that deny democratic decision-making on development and land use, capitalism’s resistance to internalizing the cost of environmental damage, and others. And worst of all, they give no place to demo-

In the Green Party, there appears to be a strange alliance between eco-capitalists who want to shaft the poor, and deep ecologists who want to stop growth. Neoliberal economics does both.

cratic control over production, which has been the socialist vision for 150 years, and which is the only guarantor of a green economy. If production was organized for human need, not profit, and people had real control over what they produced in their workplaces and how their communities were organized, green decision-making would be central – no one wants to live in a polluted, warming world.

Solving the crisis depends on curtailing the rights of capital in favour of the working class. Voluntary measures have failed – along with legal commitments like the Kyoto Protocol – not from a lack of incentives or consultation, but because the capitalists must externalize costs, or be put under by someone who can cut corners. They will always oppose and evade regulation. Can capitalism solve the problems it’s created? Possibly, but only as long as profitability continues. For leftists, that isn’t our problem. We have to force immediate compliance with strict environmental regulations, based on democratic social justice movements for clean air, clean water, sustainable agriculture and green urban planning. The environmental justice movement, which fights toxic waste disposal in poor communities, is an excellent example of this. The Green Party’s reforms are useful as examples of small-scale change. But to radicalize, and generalize those changes, we don’t need more votes for a capitalist party. We need extra-parliamentary action in our workplaces, streets and communities. ★

How much of a victory? BY ERIC TUCKER

On June 8, the Supreme Court of Canada surprised most legal analysts and union activists when it struck down provisions in British Columbia's Bill 29, the notorious health care restructuring act, on the grounds that the law violated those workers' constitutionally-protected right to bargain collectively.

Apart from the fact that courts historically have been hostile to workers' collective action, the decision was unexpected because it required the court to reverse a position that it had staked out 20 years ago – that the constitutional right of freedom of association did not protect collective bargaining. The decision was delivered in the context of a case challenging legislation defended by the BC government as a measure that addressed a fiscal crisis that was undermining its capacity to provide medical services to the public. The court has expressed its concern about this in two recent, controversial decisions, one opening the door to privatization of health care (Chaoulli) and the other approving fiscal concerns as an acceptable justification for violating women's equality rights by postponing the implementation of a pay equity agreement.

There can be little doubt that the decision is a victory of sorts for the labour movement, but just how much of victory it is and its implications for future action need to be carefully assessed.

Most generally, the case provides public sector workers and their unions with some welcome relief against the increasingly frequent assaults by government on their collective bargaining rights. We will return in a moment to consider the extent of this protection, but government must now be aware that collective bargaining rights have some constitutional purchase and thus can no longer be simply overrid-

den whenever it is expedient to do so.

In reaching its decision, the court reclassified the right to bargain collectively as a human right that it claims is and should be deeply rooted in Canadian society. The court supports this claim in part through its unselfconsciously ironic use of the work of left social historians to advance a version of Canadian labour law history as a movement from repression to toleration to recognition of collective bargaining, with this decision positioned as its culmination. The court also relies heavily on international law, including two UN covenants and International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 87, all of which Canada has endorsed but not adhered to, as evidenced by its abysmal record before the ILO. Finally, the court holds that "Charter values" support the protection of collective bargaining. Here the court is effusive in its praise of the benefits of collective bargaining. It "enhances human dignity, liberty and autonomy of workers by giving them the opportunity to influence the establishment of workplace rules and thereby gain some control over a major aspect of their lives, mainly their work", and promotes the values of equality and democracy.

In essence, the Supreme Court has endorsed and constitutionally entrenched

the industrial pluralist [industrial pluralism is the legal framework that grants rights to certified unions while tightly restricting workers' right to strike -- NS] vision that informed Canada's post-war industrial relations system for the private sector, but which was never fully embraced for the public sector. In so doing, it has given unionized public sector workers some rhetorical and legal weapons that can be used to push back against governments intent on retreating further from their limited acceptance of public sector collective bargaining to pursue a neoliberal agenda at their unionized employees' expense.

But how strong are these weapons and what are the broader implications of this decision for trade union strategy? First, there is the problem of delay. Bill 29 was enacted in the middle of the night on January 28, 2002. The constitutional challenge was launched later that year, but it took over four years for the case to make its way to the Supreme Court of Canada and then more than a year for the court to reach a decision. In the intervening five years, thousands of health care workers lost their jobs due to contracting out and privatization, and the union ended its 2004 strike by accepting a settlement that conceded a wage cut

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Hospital Employees Union was the main target of BC's Bill 29.

and further weakened job security provisions rather than continue its defiance of draconian back-to-work legislation.

These kinds of delays are inherent in the legal system, especially where one of the parties benefits from the status quo. As a result, once a final decision is rendered, it is often difficult for the court to fashion an effective remedy. In this case, the court suspended its declaration of invalidity for a year to allow the government time to respond to its repercussions.

It remains to be seen what the Campbell government will do, but if the response of the Conservative Mike Harris government to a previous SCC decision, *Dunmore* (holding that the government had a positive obligation to protect agricultural workers' privilege to bargain collectively) is any guide, it will do as little as possible to pass constitutional muster. In short, too often by the time legal remedies closing the proverbial barn door are obtained, the horses are long gone, although some financial compensation may be forthcoming.

Even if the decision may be of limited value to the workers who bore the brunt of the health care restructuring facilitated by Bill 29, there still remains the question of the decision's importance for the workers in the future. How much protection have they gained? The answer is less than you might think given the media coverage.

To begin with, although at one point the court states that freedom of association "simply" protects "the right of employees to associate in a process of collective action [my emphasis] to achieve workplace goals" (para. 19), it is clear in other parts of the judgment that employees' Charter-protected rights are far narrower. In fact, the court states specifically that its decision only protects collective bargaining and not other forms of worker collective action, notably strikes.

But what concretely does the court mean when it says that collective bargaining is a protected form of freedom of association? The court explicitly states that it does not guarantee workers access to any particular process of collective bargaining. Thus, the exclusion of a

group of workers from a statutory collective bargaining scheme, such as Ontario's agricultural workers, is not, ipso facto, a violation of their right to collective bargaining. Rather, those workers will still have to establish that they are unable to exercise their right to freedom of association and bargain collectively because of the absence of facilitating legislation. Second, the court is adamant that the constitutional protection of collective bargaining does not ensure a particular outcome is achieved. Third, protective labour rights that are obtained through

spect to important issues that are the subject of collective agreements.

Given this bottom line, what are the broader implications of the decision for trade union strategy? Clearly, a legal strategy, even if successful, yields limited gains that cannot compensate for the political and organizational weakness of working-class organizations. For example, future governments will not be stopped by this decision from restructuring health care at the expense of their workers. As trade unionists well know, absent bargaining leverage, they gain

Given this bottom line, what are the broader implications of the decision for trade union strategy? Clearly, a legal strategy, even if successful, yields limited gains that cannot compensate for the political and organizational weakness of working-class organizations.

legislation rather than collective bargaining can be altered by the government at will without violating workers' freedom of association. What is protected is the process of collective bargaining.

But even that protection is further limited by the court's test for determining when the state has violated the right to a process of collective bargaining. There must be state action, the intent or effect of the state action must interfere with the activity of collective bargaining and the interference must be substantial assessed on the basis of both the importance of the subject matter of bargaining and the manner in which the measure interferes with the duty to engage in good faith bargaining and consultation. And, finally, the government always has the opportunity to argue that its violation of a Charter-protected right is demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

Lawyers will spend many hours (and lots of their clients' money) arguing over what all of this means, but for public sector unions the bottom line is that absent exigent circumstances governments now owe them a duty to consult and bargain in good faith before legislating with re-

little from the employers' duty to bargain in good faith. Also, the decision will do nothing to reverse the long-term decline in private-sector trade union density. The court's recognition of a constitutionally protected right to bargain collectively does not require government to modernize its basic statutory collective bargaining scheme, which even at its best only facilitated collective bargaining for less than half the workforce, and now is quite ill-suited to labour market realities produced by economic restructuring.

In short, the major challenges faced by the labour movement are rooted in the neoliberal economic and political project that capital has successfully pursued over the past thirty years. While the Supreme Court of Canada's decision that the collective bargaining process is constitutionally protected is welcome, it is also clear that it will do little to slow the progress of the neoliberal project and protect workers from its effects. Rather, the labour movement and the Left is still left with the basic challenge it faced before this decision: how to build a movement that is strong enough to resist capital's attack on public health care and workers' rights? ★

AFN DAY OF ACTION

Can we really eat money?

By WENDY HART-ROSS

On June 29, the Assembly of First Nations National Day of Action took place amidst much media hype. Indigenous peoples and their allies were called to conduct peaceful protests to raise awareness of indigenous oppression. Thousands of people rallied together to stand up for indigenous rights across Canada. In Southern Ontario, Shawn Brant and his allies caused major delays on both the 401 highway and the railway: Brant's warriors blocked the railway, and the 401 was closed by the Ontario Provincial Police.

The Wasáse Movement called on the Assembly of First Nations to go beyond a symbolic day of action. In the words of the June 14 Wasáse Communiqué, "We challenge the chiefs of the AFN to truly respect their people and to engage in a real strategy of action to improve the quality of life for indigenous people in this country. We believe creating a better life for our people means fighting for the respect of our inherent rights and the return of our lands through a sustained campaign of political confrontation and direct non-violent action." Through such a strategy it would be possible to create an ongoing energy that would sustain a stronger movement beyond June 29.

In an interview, Wasáse member Chris Standing talked about his experience of the Day of Action: "The truth needs to come out, settlers and indigenous people need to know the truth of colonization and land theft and realize the reason Indigenous people have such a hard time living in this society. Our people need to be brave and take on the challenge of returning to their traditional systems and ways of thinking. The Day of Action made it clear for me that protest is not for everyone, but it still needs to be done! Sometimes yelling will get more attention

Day of Action,
Ottawa



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than handshakes and a smile, because our people are fed up. Our people will continue to make a loud noise of truth in the return of our lands."

Beyond June 29, some organizers in Vancouver called indigenous peoples to action on Canada Day — the day that symbolizes oppression against indigenous people, including genocide, land theft and occupation, brutality, violence and abuse, and mass child apprehension and deaths.

The AFN Day of Action was officially focused on the need for more band council funding. The AFN did not use the Day of Action as an opportunity to call for an end to the exploitation and devastation of lands and sacred places. This would compromise the agenda of many of our official leaders who are in negotiation with the Canadian government to expand the sell-out of our traditional lands for monetary gain.

Here in Manitoba, indigenous leaders are attempting a partnership with Manitoba Hydro for development of

"Some of us believe in reconciliation, forgetting that the monster has a genocidal appetite, a taste for our blood, and would sooner tear us apart than lick our hands... We need to stand against history and against those who would submit to it, and with the warriors who want to beat the beast into bloody submission and teach it to behave." — Wasáse

new hydroelectric dam projects, setting a precedent that our lands and waters are for sale. More money to run our band councils or more money to continue with the dysfunctional governmental relationships internally is not the answer. And a single day of public education, blockades, and marches will not bring about community well-being.

ONGOING STRUGGLES

Why is the AFN not supporting people who are protecting the land that sustains us and will sustain our unborn? There are numerous examples of conflicts that would have benefited from AFN support:

SEE COMMUNITY PROTESTS: PAGE 20

Wendy Hart-Ross (*Ininew*) lives where the Red and Assiniboine rivers meet in the area now known as Winnipeg. Her roots stem from Pimicikamak on her father's side and Kinosao Sipi on her mother's side. She is a graduate student in Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, and a Wasáse member. For more information on Wasáse, visit wasase.blogspot.com.

AFN DAY OF ACTION

Launching of a sustained campaign of political confrontation?

By DAVE BROPHY

Reprinted from *Manitoba Youth Voices*, a publication of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba Office, June 28, 2007. On the web at <http://policyalternatives.ca>

The Assembly of First Nations has called for a national day of action on June 29 to draw attention to indigenous peoples' issues. A motion to have a cross-country mobilization was made and passed by the Assembly at the end of last year. It immediately turned heads in the minority Conservative government.

After being elected in early 2006 the Conservatives did not identify First Nations issues as a top priority. On the contrary, they gutted the Kelowna Accord, a five-year \$5 billion plan forged under the previous government to improve education, health, and economic development in indigenous communities. However, since hearing about the day of action, the government has been re-assessing its priorities, not least because of concern over the possibility of rail and road blockades. Internal documents obtained by the Canadian Press indicated that the government has been fretting for months about the prospect of such tactics.

In order to slow the momentum building towards the June 29 mobilization, the Conservatives announced a plan to change the way that land claims are dealt with. For sixty years the federal government has acted as defendant, judge and jury in dealing with disputes with native bands over land. The Indian Claims Commission investigates complaints

about treaty violations, but can only make recommendations to the federal government about how to resolve disputes. The government itself decides whether it agrees it is at fault, and whether negotiations should take place.

In addition to the conflict of interest inherent in the current land claims process, the bureaucracy is exceedingly slow to process the claims. Since 1973, when the current system was established, only 282 of the approximately 1,354 filed claims have been settled. First Nations that have had their claims resolved have seen immediate improvements in terms of economic development, according to a

recent senate report. However, the AFN estimates that due to the existing backlog, some First Nations will have to wait 100 years before their claims are processed.

The Conservatives' June 12 announcement of the land claims overhaul was welcomed enthusiastically by AFN Grand Chief Phil Fontaine, who called the plan "historic". However, others reacted differently. Roseau River Chief Terry Nelson, for one, was not satisfied. He would stick with his original plan, which had already been widely reported in the media. If the government did not take immediate, concrete action, he would set up a rail blockade on the CN line that runs by his southern Manitoba community.

Implicitly responding to Nelson's threats, federal Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice stated repeatedly in the media that illegal actions taken on June 29

would be dealt with harshly. Yet, on June 15, Prentice spoke with Nelson directly, agreeing to expedite an application by Nelson's Roseau River band to develop land purchased in 1994 under the Treaty Land Entitlement program. Apparently satisfied, Nelson stated that he would call off the rail blockade, pending a decision on the matter by his community.

Needless to say, after Prentice's explicit warnings against illegal means of protest, his handling of Nelson's demands was surprising. It seemed to indicate a willingness on the part of the government to negotiate if threatened with a confron-



Day of Action, Highway 401.

The late Dave Brophy was a member of the Winnipeg Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement and the New Socialist Group. This was likely the last article written by him before his death in July. See the tribute to Dave Brophy on p.37.

tation. Perhaps it sounds ridiculous to suggest that Nelson intimidated the Conservatives. However, with the report of the Ipperwash Inquiry still hot off the press, and the dispute with Six Nations over lands along the Grand River on-going, the government has its reasons to fear conflict with First Nations.

The land disputed at Ipperwash, Ontario was taken in 1942 from the Stony Point band by the military under the War Measures Act to establish a military base. After the seizure band members petitioned the government on numerous occasions. It was especially important to them to reclaim the land as it contained an ancestral burial

Community protests

Continued from page 18

- My community, Pimicikamak, has been protesting the damage caused by flooding and lack of compensation from Manitoba Hydro at Jenpeg since April 2007. They have been battling the provincially owned corporation's hydroelectric development projects since the 1970s.
- The youth-driven blockade at Grassy Narrows was erected to protect the land from further clear-cutting has been ongoing since December 2002.
- The people situated near the proposed sight at Conawapa established a short-lived protest in early July,
- The Six Nations launched a land reclamation in opposition to suburban development in their territory at Caledonia last year – the confrontation is still ongoing.

It is the responsibility of indigenous peoples to protect our traditional territories. One of the ideal outcomes or lessons of the AFN Day of Action would be for people to start thinking about what it means to them to live on Turtle Island and come to the realization that in the end you cannot really eat money. ★



Day of Action, Winnipeg.

ground. Finally, in 1993, over fifty years after the original takeover, Stony Point band members began moving onto the land surrounding the military base. In 1995 they erected barricades at nearby Ipperwash provincial park to further assert their intentions to reclaim the land. Eventually, the OPP moved in on the unarmed protesters and killed Dudley George.

In 1998 the disputed land was turned back over to the Stony Point band and \$26 million was paid as compensation for the 1942 seizure. In 2003 a public inquiry into George's death was launched. The report of the Ipperwash Inquiry, released on May 31, determined that the federal government bore primary responsibility for the Ipperwash tragedy, as well as the current increase in indigenous unrest. The report also stated that treaties between indigenous peoples and the British and Canadian governments are not, "as some people believe, relics of the distant past," and that promises made in the treaties must be fulfilled.

The 150-year-old dispute at Grand River, Ontario between Six Nations and the federal government came to a head

when Henco Industries set up to begin construction for a housing project on 40 hectares of contested land. In February 2006 Six Nations members occupied the construction site. Initial attempts by Henco Industries to have Six Nations members forcibly removed failed because the sheer numbers of protesters at the site overwhelmed police.

Eventually the province bought the land from Henco and called on the federal government to come to the negotiating table. Sixteen months into the occupation negotiations continue, following the rejection by Six Nations of a \$125 million offer by the federal government to settle four outstanding land claims. Six Nations negotiators are insisting that they be handed over the disputed lands, rather than receiving monetary compensation.

In both the Ipperwash and Grand River disputes, protesters took matters into their own hands because of the federal government's failure to address land claims in a just and timely manner. The resulting confrontations thrust the disputes into the public spotlight, exposing the federal government's moral and legal liabilities to indigenous peoples. With June 29 approaching, the Conservatives face the possibility of still more direct action. They are scrambling to avert conflict, hoping that their promised plans to change the land claims process will minimize the level of militant protest.

But far too many debts to indigenous peoples have been accumulated and left unpaid for far too long. The Conservatives' concessions may have appeased the Indian Act Chiefs, but they have much to lose if they go too far. The real source of fear for the federal government are the natives, especially youth, who reject the system of dependency that is at the root of indigenous poverty. At Six Nations, Tyendinaga, Grassy Narrows, Skwelkwel'welt, and elsewhere, they are the ones who threaten the federal government with a sustained campaign of political confrontation. ★

REVIEWS

Alternative Program

THE CRISIS OF
MANUFACTURING JOBS
PAMPHLET PUBLISHED BY
THE LABOUR COMMITTEE OF
SOCIALIST PROJECT (2007).

“239,100 jobs ‘gone for good’” was the headline of the *Toronto Star* on July 2nd, 2007. That’s how many manufacturing jobs have been lost in Canada between 2004 and the end of May 2007. That’s the background to the demonstration of almost 40,000 people in Windsor on May 27, spearheaded by the Canadian Auto Workers, and to the rallies and plant occupations in some other Ontario cities.

It’s to Socialist Project’s credit that it has produced this pamphlet in response to these events. It makes some important points, such as that the loss of manufacturing jobs isn’t just a Canadian problem (some 15 million have been cut in China in the past decade!) and that what’s happening is not just about trade.

It rightly argues that what’s happening in manufacturing raises some crucial questions: “What kind of society do we want?”; “Can we win if the working class remains so fragmented?”; and “Are community struggles an add-on or fundamental to class struggles?” It rejects so-called “solutions” that strengthen corporations and weaken workers’ power.

The pamphlet lays out an alternative program and makes some points about how unions need to change. Much of this is good, some questionable, but the weakness is that it’s not clear who is supposed to implement the program and how.

Unfortunately, this pamphlet is not the kind of publication that would be really useful for building networks of activist supporters of rank and file unionism – for that, it would have had to offer suggestions about how to fight back most effectively and analyze pitfalls to watch out for, using specific examples

from union experiences. Nor is it a solid socialist educational resource for union activists, which would require a much harder-hitting socialist analysis.

Reviewed by Sebastian Lamb

Anachronism

ONE MAN REVOLUTION
BY THE NIGHTWATCHMAN
MUSIC CD: SONY, 2007

Tom Morello is an electric guitar god. In his solo persona as The Nightwatchman, he declares “the revolution will not be amplified” and, like Bob Dylan in reverse, goes acoustic. His silky, rich voice swirls around dark, bitter ballads of class struggle – songs of workers doing what they have to in order to survive, be it sharecroppers shooting the landlord (Maximum Firepower) or workers’ struggles at home (Union Song). The occupation of Iraq, 9-11, the racism he faced growing up African-American – it’s all there, couched in a spirit of resistance and hope. And Morello isn’t just baring his soul. He plays benefits for left-wing causes and has walked the line for numerous strikes.

He’s got talent, great politics, he’s an activist, an amazing musician – what’s not to love? Sadly, the music itself. America has a rich history of protest music: Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs and so on. Morello says his favourite musician is Joe Hill, the IWW organizer. They all drew on popular musical traditions of poor people in struggle. But when was the last time you heard anyone rocking “Union Maid” in their Honda Civic? The Nightwatchman is an anachronism: a brilliant example of a genre that was already a museum piece by the 1960s.

You can’t fault Morello for paying homage to his forebears. And as he says on his MySpace page, “You don’t gotta be loud, son, to be heavy as shit!” But you also don’t have to make music no one under 30 listens to. Maybe if he was a little less respectful, he could use his incredible talent to deliver his socialist politics in a form more young people would listen to.

Reviewed by Greg Sharzer

A Child’s Perceptions

LULLABIES FOR LITTLE CRIMINALS
NOVEL BY HEATHER O’NEILL
HARPER COLLINS CANADA 2006

I’m glad I read this book, even though I kept wondering when something would happen, despite the story being eventful. At the same time, I often had an anxious knot in my stomach as I read. This contradiction happens because the story is convincingly told by a girl of 12 going on 13, not by an adult.

Baby narrates her story of poverty, foster homes, detention centers, pimps, sex workers, drug use and street life in Montreal. She does not sensationalize or exoticize. O’Neill captures the immediacy and scale of a child’s perceptions of the horrible things that happen to her. It is not an adult’s emotion and reason that we hear responding to the everyday dangers, hurts and disappointments as well as the joys and dreams Baby faces. There are no denunciations of injustice or predictions of Baby’s failure to thrive.

Readers have debated whether or not the author has succeeded in creating an authentic voice. O’Neill uses straightforward language combined with a focus on the small things that are meaningful for children and for childhood. This provides, if not an authentic voice (can we really say what that would be for Baby?), then powerful and evocative insights into (and memories of) what children find important in their worlds. In particular, we see how the dynamics and routines of “family” create a longed-for circle of safety and belonging, even when some of these things can be hurtful and destructive.

Baby frequently speaks her truth in humorous ways. Messing with other people’s reality is a bit of a coping strategy, especially when she is unsure of what is going on – which is often, as she longs for an adult life and begins to dabble in it even as she mourns the loss of the way adults treated her as a child. I was moved by O’Neill’s affirmation that childhood, even when troubled, is a treasure.

Reviewed by Susan Bender

Sexism, racism or both?

A closer look at the Indian Act and the McIvor Case

By MARTIN CANNON

A landmark British Columbia Supreme Court ruling in June of 2007 has condemned Canada's legislative treatment of status Indians since the 1985 Indian Act amendment known as Bill C-31. *McIvor v. The Registrar, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada* is a case that dates from 1989, and has addressed issues of sexism inherent within broader historic policy. But issues of racism, early nation-to-nation agreements, and the inherent right to citizenship-determination remain unsettled.

In her deliberations, Justice Carol Ross said that Canada could no longer justify the discrimination inherent within the Indian Act, and that Indian status does not constitute a "benefit" under Canadian law. She also determined the Indian Act perpetuates historic sexual discrimination because it gives fewer rights to the descendants of female Indians. The descendants of male Indians do not face the same disadvantages.

The Bill C-31 amendment to the Indian Act is incomplete remedial legislation, the court ruled. Instead of eliminating sex discrimination in particular, it "transferred and incorporated the preference for male lineage, legitimacy, and marriage to a male Indian, into the new regime."

Under the current regime, women who have married non-Indians maintain their status – but their sons and daughters are unable to pass their status along to their children. The same does not apply to the descendents of status men who have married non-status women. Such are the potential injustices facing the children and grandchildren of Indian women today. The *McIvor* case effectively describes



STEPHEN HOMER

Tobique Women's Group. From the book *Enough is Enough: Aboriginal Women Speak Out*

a generation of status Indians who are currently living out the effects of this discriminatory legislation.

Jacob Grismer, *McIvor's* son, is a part of this generation. I also include myself among this generation of status Indians as well. The history of sexism is therefore no longer affecting indigenous women alone. As men, we are concerned that our children are not entitled to Indian status because of our mother's gender. We ought to think seriously about the sexism that has affected our indigenous rights. We might also consider broader matters of racialized injustice.

AN UNNATURAL CATEGORY

Indigenous peoples did not play a part in creating the category "Indian," but the Indian Act and other Indian policy has had the effect of making the category appear as natural, even common sense to many of us. It has always been assumed (and expected) that our band council governments would administer status

Indians. Not surprisingly, this history has created an element of hostility and racialized tension in our communities that cannot quickly be reversed.

Indian status is not something that belongs to women or "individuals." Rather, it belongs to the indigenous collective because of the potential of the Indian Act to eventually disinherit all status Indians and dispossess them of their lands, and because of complex injustices that exist at the intersection of racialization and patriarchy. The question is, what does it mean to bring these injustices before Canadian courts of law?

Indeed, Indian Act injustices invite the people who want to challenge them to become engaged in legal disputes, and thereby become even more deeply drawn into the colonial frameworks that have been used to define and sometimes divide them. In this regard, the issue of Indian status (and status injustices) might be viewed as a smoke screen that obscures Canada's failure to engage with indigenous peoples about matters that are basic and fundamental to self-determination.

Seeing women and men in state-con-

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structed terms conceals historic events which imposed racialized distinctions on all indigenous nations, and that later required people to be legislated outside of them. It detracts from the government's responsibility to consult status Indians and indigenous communities about identity matters, fiduciary obligations, and the rights of citizenship.

The reaction to the McIvor case has been interesting. Two days after the *Globe and Mail* reported the decision,

then-Minister of Indian Affairs Jim Prentice was quoted as saying his government would appeal the decision. Federal lawyers in BC were granted time to review the decision, and to prepare for a dramatic increase in the number of registered status Indians. However, it seems Canada would much rather proceed toward the legal assimilation of status Indians.

The discrimination that we face as "Indians" involves a history of coloniza-

tion that aimed to dismantle egalitarian structures in place at the time of contact, treaty-making and early nation-to-nation agreements. Indigenous social forms reinforce a sense of belonging based on real or assumed bonds between people, their knowledge of traditional stories or history, original nation-to-nation agreements, common beliefs, and a tie to some specific territory — including urban areas. These practices require legal acknowledgement in a post-McIvor context. ★

Women and the Indian Act

By DEBORAH SIMMONS

The Indian Act that governs Canada's relationship to indigenous peoples might be seen as an outcome of Canada's repeated failure to "civilize" the original peoples and thereby dispossess them of land and sovereignty. But the Act is also without doubt a tool of state domination. And the sexist construction of Indian status in the Act reflects a centerpiece of colonial strategy dating to the earliest missionizing efforts four centuries ago.

At first the French Jesuit missionaries assumed that indigenous societies could be converted merely by addressing the men. They soon realized that the egalitarianism of these societies would doom this strategy to failure. It became obvious that the subjugation of women, especially early in life, would be a key to lasting conversion.

Thus the subjugation of women and the disciplining of children intersected as the condition for the forging of a hierarchy that would allow for the subjugation of indigenous peoples under monotheistic European rule. Women and children had to be reduced to property through the monogamous and authoritarian institution of marriage.

The 1876 Indian Act reflected a similar perspective, and entrenched an

Deborah Simmons is an editor of New Socialist magazine.

existing policy of "gradual civilization" or "enfranchisement" by which it was hoped that all indigenous people would gradually relinquish their special status. An aspect of this policy was the association of Indian status with the male line. Thus Indian women marrying non-Indian men would automatically lose their status. And if an Indian man decided to become enfranchised, his wife and children automatically lost their status as well, regardless of their views on the matter. Added to this were blatantly discriminatory provisions on land surrender, wills, band elections, and band membership.

Loss of status had profound social, cultural and economic impacts on women and their children. Women without status could never return to reside in their home community, share in collective property of their bands, nor even hold the right to burial on reserve lands. Whether widowed or divorced, they remained non-status. Once designated non-status, women no longer enjoyed rights to resources and social services as protected by the Indian Act, such as fishing and hunting rights, or education and health benefits.

WOMEN FIGHT BACK

In the early 1970s two Native women's organizations, Indian Rights for Indian Women and National Native Women's Association, began to campaign to change

the sexist provisions of the Indian Act. With the support of non-Native women's groups such as the National Action Committee and the Voice of Women, they took direct action such as sit-ins, marches, and appeals through the courts. In 1974, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the Indian Act.

By 1977, Sandra Lovelace, a Maliseet woman from the Tobique Reserve in New Brunswick joined the struggle. When her marriage to an American airman disintegrated in the early 70s, she to her reserve to find that she'd lost all her rights to housing, education for her children, and health care. And she found many other women who had similar experiences of discrimination imposed by their own Band Council leaders.

In July 1979 a Tobique women's group organized a 100 mile walk of women and children from the Oka Reserve, near Montreal, to Ottawa to draw attention to their problem. Lovelace also took her case to the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations. Finally after two years the UN committee found Canada in breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In 1985 Canada was finally forced to amend the Indian Act in what is now known as Bill C-31. This did not mark an end to discrimination, however. Nor will the current BC Supreme Court ruling, though it is to be applauded. Indigenous women will continue to be forced to struggle against the oppression imposed by our colonial legacy. ★

Warriors of this generation

Anarcha-Indigenism and the Wasáse Movement

BY LANA LOWE

This spring, the 2007 Indigenous Leadership Forum and Wasáse gathering brought together indigenous and non-indigenous students, scholars and activists from Canada, the United States (including Hawai'i), and Australia to WSANEC territory to build solidarity and discuss theories and strategies of indigenous resurgence.

The 2007 Indigenous Leadership Forum (ILF) was hosted by the Indigenous Governance Programs at the University of Victoria, May 28-June 1. The goal was to explore the emerging political philosophy of Anarcha-Indigenism.

Following the ILF (June 4-8), indigenous students and activists met to reiterate a commitment to Wasáse, a radical intellectual and political movement grounded in indigenous experience, wisdom and ethics that exists to enable indigenous people to live freely in our homelands. This article summarizes some of the key points of discussion and consensus during the ILF and Wasáse events.

ANARCHA-INDIGENISM

Rooted in indigenous philosophies, values, and connections to this land and our struggles for freedom and justice, Anarcha-Indigenism takes a critical, non-hierarchical, action-based, approach to political and economic organising that is inherently non-capitalist, non-statist, pro-feminist, and based on a sustainable relationship to nature.

Mainstream (Aboriginal) politics of recognition and demand (including land claims, self-government, and on-going legal processes) serve only to tighten the colonial grip on indigenous lands and

Lana Lowe is Dene (Fort Nelson First Nation). Thanks to Chiinuks and Matt Wildcat for the coffee, salmon and hours of discussion in preparation for this article.

The goal is not to determine the future for our coming generations, but to bequeath them the freedom to determine their own future.

freedoms. In contrast, Anarcha-Indigenism provides a solid framework for achieving peaceful co-existence in these lands through indigenous autonomy and resurgence, rather than dependence and assimilation.

Engaging Anarcha-Indigenism enables us to cast aside the politics of recognition and demand, thereby shifting the site of struggle and abandoning old, ineffective pathways of action. In doing so, Anarcha-Indigenism provides a framework of resistance that encourages us to act in the here and now, place women at the centre of the struggle, broaden our alliances, and give up "more-militant-than-thou" ideas of activism.

By concerning ourselves with the here and now, Anarcha-Indigenism is not concerned with creating a blueprint for the future. The strategy is to act in the present. Action is focused on widening the cracks in the system as it exists today.

The goal is not to determine the future for our coming generations, but to bequeath them the freedom to determine their own future.

During the ILF, the term Anarcha-Indigenism replaced Anarcho-Indigenism. In so feminizing the term, the central role of women in the struggle for freedom and the creation of a non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian indigenous resurgence is highlighted. The aim is to pinpoint patriarchy and paternalism as fundamental forms of oppression that must be overcome if we are to live free in our lands.

DECOLONIZING SOLIDARITY

Those engaged in building the indigenous resurgence watch with chagrin as Aboriginal politicians knock on the doors of the Canadian state and shake hands with big business in a tripartite venture to exploit indigenous lands and people.



Wasáse 2007 Gathering, WSANEC Territory.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEROME CLARK

Meanwhile, a non-indigenous critique of the crushing imperialism that has afflicted our communities since 1492 has emerged from the radical left, indicating that we are not alone in our struggle against the state and corporate powers that be. The “Us vs. Them” approach has shifted and we are wise to seek out our non-indigenous allies.

The basis of our solidarity must be grounded in some basic principles, however. First, we need to recognise that though we come from different traditions of thought and experience, we can work together (and it is desirable to do so) towards freedom and justice in these lands.

Second, it is necessary for us to overcome our misconceptions about each other. Indigenous people must recognise that not all non-indigenous people are the oppressor. We also need to recognise that anarchists are not just white, summit-hopping thugs, pining for a nihilistic world of chaos and destruction.

Non-indigenous people, on the other hand, must begin a process of decolonisation. They must examine their positions of privilege and power, which are embedded in the colonial relationship. Non-indigenous people also need to acknowledge their racist misconceptions about indigenous people and societies (such as those that lead to anarcho-primitivism [a kind of anarchism which believes that agriculture gave rise to civilization, which is seen as inherently oppressive -- NS], for example). At the same time, non-indigenous people need to realise that indigenous people are in no need of being saved, enlightened, or indoctrinated. We have our own ways and our own ideas.

Lastly, the idea that we need to give up “militant” activism is compelling. We need to disappear into the cracks of the system in order to pry them wide open. Rather than pounding on the doors (or occupying the offices) of the Canadian state begging for recognition, concessions and handouts, we need to seek out and support existing ways of being that are inherently anti-statist and anti-capitalist in a spirit of solidarity, co-operation and mutual aid.

AGENTS OF THE STATE

On this year’s Wasáse Gathering agenda was the June 29 National Day of Action called for by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). While the Day of Action presented the Wasáse movement with an opportunity to censure the AFN and its band council chiefs, participants acknowledged that many indigenous people took the call to action seriously, despite the illegitimacy of the AFN and the band council system.

The illegitimacy of the band councils rests in the fact that they are agents of the colonial state. They exist and function under the authority of the Government of Canada and their role is to administer funds and manage programs at the behest of that government.

Band councils ... are agents of the colonial state.

Band councils are funded by and accountable only to the Government of Canada. They are not accountable to our people. They are not our governments. The National Chief and the band council chiefs who constitute the AFN are not our leaders.

In the call to action, the National Chief stated that a recent cap placed on band council funding was of primary concern. Clearly, the motive behind the Day of Action was to put pressure on the Canadian government to increase cash flow to the band councils.

The Wasáse movement concluded that a single, symbolic Day of Action to gain more money for band councils would not make a difference in the way our people are affected by land-loss, racism, and poverty.

Creating a better life for our people requires a genuine respect for our inherent rights and the return of our lands through a sustained campaign of political confrontation and direct non-violent action.

BEYOND EGO

Each individual involved in the movement brings their own commitment and involves their community in a way they feel is appropriate, using their own traditions and experiences to create radical change in their own lives and the lives of their communities.

An elder from Hawai’i advised that in the struggle toward a better life for our people and the return of our lands, we have to put our egos aside so that we may engage in a good way.

The struggle for peace in our lands precedes us for at least 500 years and will continue long after we are gone. While each of us has a responsibility to take our place in this ongoing struggle, we have to recognize that what we are doing is bigger than us and our personal pride.

Committing to living our lives in a way that respects who we are as indigenous people is what we should be doing. There is no room for pride. That’s like being proud for brushing your teeth in the morning. This is who we are. It’s like breathing the air. We are the warriors of this generation and we must stand up without fear or arrogance, because it’s not about us.

These teachings bring to mind two related issues that have long overshadowed indigenous politics: male dominance and the cult of personality. These issues have yet to be taken on in a concerted and sustained manner within the movement.

However, it is clear that as individual activists and community members we need to take and make our own opportunities to transcend patriarchy and paternalism on the home front if we hope to effect such change on a global scale.

A fundamental principle of Anarcha-Indigenism and the Wasáse movement is a commitment to creating meaningful change in our lives and in those around us; to move forward in unity, strength and concerted action in the struggle against colonialism. To do so, each one of us must move, think, and act upon our own initiative and experience. Only then will we be strong enough to transform society and create a new reality. ★

CANADA IN IRAQ

Dedication to the war of terror

BY ANTHONY FENTON

Tens of thousands of members of the Canadian Forces have rotated through Afghanistan, Iraq and the Persian Gulf in support of military occupations and/or the broader “global war on terror,” since it began in 2001. Canada has exercised its much-promoted 3-D or “whole of government” foreign policy approach in three of the major post-9/11 regime changes: Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti.

There is growing (but still insufficiently organized) opposition to Canada’s role in Afghanistan, and there is a growing network of Haiti solidarity activists. But little attention is being paid to Canada’s role in Iraq. A look at the readily available facts shows that Canada is complicit in Iraq and that vocal and explicit opposition to this is necessary.

On July 13th of this year, the Canadian Forces issued a press release announcing the conclusion of Operation Iolous, which “consisted of one CF senior officer” who functioned as an advisor to the head of the UN Iraqi mission, UNAMI. Not a single print news outlet reported on the expiration of this mission, which had begun in 2004 under the Martin Liberals.

When in December 2006 Canadian Forces Major General Peter Devlin took over as Deputy Commander of the US Multi National Corps in Iraq (MNC-I), there wasn’t even a press release, and to date not a single Canadian newspaper has mentioned that the second in command of the largest contingent of US soldiers on the ground “surging” in Iraq is Canadian.

Beginning in late 2003, Canadians helped train Iraqi police at the US-run

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Iraqi corrections cadets march at graduation as the desert sun rises behind them.

Jordan International Police Training Center, while other Canadian advisors have been embedded within the Iraq Minister of the Interior’s office. As of early this year, approximately 10 percent of the 37,000-plus police that Canada helped train have been killed in action. A Canadian, Claude April, was the deputy director for training when the program ended on March 20, almost four years to the day after the invasion. According to RCMP media relations officer Patricia Flood, the eight other Canadian police officers “instructed various democratic policing subjects at the police college.”

Although the police training program (and thus Canada’s participation in it) ended, the \$110 million US-built center is now being used to train prison guards. A July 18 Associated Press article reports that Canadians are assisting in the training of the prison guards, where “recruits learn how to run tent cities which the US military is setting up around Baghdad because regular prisons are jammed.” A spokesperson said, “The recruits need to learn how to control and secure prisoners within a secure perimeter of cement walls

and razor wire.”

Speaking on the opening panel of the Outlook Iraq: Prospects for Stability in the Post-Saddam Era conference in Toronto last year, Iraqi ambassador to Canada Howar Ziad framed Canada’s engagement in Iraq in the context of the controversial Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine: “This is the same principle which Canada has been applying throughout its engagements in Afghanistan.” Canada also applied this “principle” in Haiti, where they supported a coup that resulted in the murder of approximately 4,000 supporters of the deposed president. Both Haiti and Afghanistan have been considered test cases of the R2P principle.

With a nod to Canada’s niche role as a trainer of police and military under intense, post-regime change circumstances, Ambassador Ziad also boasted about how the Canadians “have contributed to the training of new Iraqi soldiers and this assistance has been greatly appreciated. Canadian soldiers and police distinguish themselves and are world renowned for their professionalism and effectiveness.”

Ziad was likely referring to Canada's support for the small but politically important NATO contribution to the Iraq war. NATO soldiers have been training Iraq's military, specifically the officer class. NATO public affairs spokesperson MAJ Herdis Sigurgrimsdottir, confirmed in a June email exchange that no Canadians were in Iraq at that time, however, "the mission is supported by all the NATO nations."

We learned in February that "Baghdad is under pressure from Britain and the US to pass an oil law which would hand long-term control of Iraq's energy assets to foreign multi-nationals." Awaiting the US-backed passage of the proposed hydrocarbons law, several Canadian-based oil companies stand to benefit, having purchased interests in the less volatile Kurdish region. Among the "foreign multi-nationals" are Canadian-based Western Oil Sands, Ivanhoe Energy, Adax Petroleum and Heritage Oil. Dozens, possibly hundreds, of other Canadian companies are profiting from the war in Iraq in one way or another.

QUIET COMPLICITY

An October 11, 1968 CBC broadcast featured an interview with the organizer of a demonstration against Pierre Trudeau's Vietnam policies in Toronto. The organizer stated:

"We feel that Canada's government is very much involved in the war in Vietnam, in supporting Vietnam diplomatically and through arms shipments to the United States. Through the International Control Commission, Canada's representatives have consistently supported the United States in Vietnam. We feel that to be anti-war, to be against the war in Vietnam we need to be against Trudeau and the Liberal government because they have supported the United States in Vietnam."

Few historians, even in the mainstream, dispute Canada's complicity in the Vietnam war. A similar history of Canadian involvement in Iraq will one day be written. But one doesn't have to wait 10 years for the documents to reveal what is al-

ready common knowledge.

A new university-level political science textbook by John Kirton, *Canadian Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, acknowledges Canadian complicity. In Iraq, "Canada decided not to participate militarily, but in practice did so to a very limited degree."

A March 26, 2003 *Ottawa Citizen* feature article quotes then-US ambassador to Canada Paul Cellucci citing Canada's role in the Afghanistan occupation: "Ironically, the Canadians indirectly provide more support for us in Iraq than most of those other 45 countries in the coalition of the willing." Canada's stepped-up role in the most volatile region of Afghanistan beginning in mid-2005 is a further testament to Canada's indirect support for the war in Iraq.

The day after Cellucci's comments were publicized, Canadian officials disclosed that Canadian soldiers were in Iraq serving on exchange with British and US units. At the time NDP leader Jack Layton called for the withdrawal of Canadians from Iraq and said "that Canadians are complicit as a result, and our government is complicit."

Later in 2003, when it was announced that MG Devlin's predecessor Brigadier-General Walt Natynczyk "will become one of the most senior officers of the coalition force fighting in Iraq," Layton proclaimed, "That's quite shocking ... When it comes to having someone in charge of thousands and thousands of troops in a war which is illegal and should never have happened ... this makes us complicit in the unilateral philosophy of George Bush and his administration."

NORMALIZATION

Where has the outrage over Canada's role in Iraq gone?

The problem appears to be a normalization of Canada's role that finds the media parroting the Canadian government line. A feature article in the May 29, 2006 issue of the hawkish *Maclean's* magazine, "A Dedicated Presence in Iraq," provided a good summary of this acceptance only a few months after the minority Conserva-

tive government assumed power.

Author Colin Campbell is clear on the extent of Canada's participation in the war: "From the very first days of the US-led Iraq war, Canadians have been deeply involved: setting up crime-fighting units, working as engineers with coalition forces, serving with the UN, flying planes that help guide missile attacks, even fighting. There are anywhere from 100 to 200 working in the country. Iraq may be an unpopular, troubled conflict, but it is a place everyone, from soldiers to high-ranking officials, acknowledges Canada cannot, and has not, ignored."

But the last word, and the impression to be remembered, is that "Canada has good reason to be involved." Elsewhere, following a high level meeting of "international donors" to discuss Iraq's reconstruction in March 2007, Canada was referred to as "one of the key powers seeking to involve as many countries as possible in the reconstruction of the violence-ridden country."

Building the case for Canada as honest broker, CanWest reporter Steven Edwards noted that "broad acceptance of the accord, which Canada and the other 18 members are encouraging, would help the Bush administration claim there is widespread international support for fixing Iraq even though pressures within the United States are building for Washington to disengage militarily."

Edwards also described the secrecy surrounding Canadian statements made during the conference, implying that under the Conservatives, Canada has returned to Pearsonian quiet diplomacy. The headline alone was telling in this respect: "Canada offers help at UN Iraq Compact talks: Encouraged by progress."

The extent of Canadian complicity in the most horrific and brutal military intervention in this young 21st century is probably far greater than we realize. By acknowledging this and incorporating this understanding into a broader anti-war strategy, the Canadian Left will take an important step forward in the protracted confrontation over Canada's increasingly ugly role in the world. ★

Bantustanizing the Palestinian resistance

A neo-liberal coup for a neo-liberal peace?

BY KOLE KILIBARDA

Since Hamas' January 2006 election victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections, Palestinians have been subjected to a vindictive US and Israeli policy of starvation, siege, military assault, deepening apartheid and proxy-war.

The assault on even this limited form of Palestinian "self-rule" culminated in the December 2006 to June 2007 "factional" fighting instigated by imperialism's proxy forces in the Gaza Strip. The ultimate aim of this strategy is the geographic and political bantustanization of the Palestinian people.

The fighting pitted Hamas' Executive Force against the US- and Israeli-backed Preventive Security Service (PSS) led by Fatah leader Mohammed Dahlan. The end result was a decisive rout of the PSS and the exile of military commanders associated with this coup-trend.

The outcome has left most Palestinians deeply unsatisfied with the political partition of the Palestinian Authority (PA)-controlled bantustans into: a Gaza Strip controlled by the elected parliamentary majority of Hamas through its Executive Force; and an internally-divided West Bank controlled by Israeli military forces and an illegally constituted and unpopular military junta headed by PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and illegally-appointed Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

OSLO: ENTRAPPING THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

The foundations of this partition can be traced to the emergence of a Palestinian leadership willing to sign onto the Oslo Accords in 1993 and thereby to accommodate the racist aims of Zionism.

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In fact, Abu Mazen signed the accords on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), thereby paving the way for intensified Israeli settlement of Palestinian lands while subcontracting the "dirty work" of occupation to the newly created PA.

To this end, the PA's new security forces were armed and trained by the CIA with the approval of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency. Their principle function was to dismantle Palestinian resistance organizations. It was in this context that Dahlan quickly gained a reputation for enthusiastically policing the newly-created bantustans (constituting less than ten percent of historic Palestine).

The ensuing repression led to a series of PA raids in 1995 and 1996 targeting Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) activists for arrest and torture, including the massacre of 13 Hamas supporters near the Palestine Mosque in Gaza City on November 19, 1995.

Despite these provocations, Hamas leaders insisted that their activists avenge the repression by stepping up attacks on the Israeli military, which the movement correctly claimed bore primary responsibility for this situation. This was in deference to the will of the majority of Palestinians who wished to avoid internal conflicts that would divert energies from the primary struggle against the Israeli colonizer.

THE AL-AQSA INTIFADA

The Al-Aqsa Intifada, launched in September 2000, was a mass-based popular response to the apartheid logic of Oslo, including everything from mass-based community mobilizations to armed actions against the colonizer. In its early phases, joint activities were even coordinated by a "Union of National and Islamic Forces". The on-going popularity of the intifada was reaffirmed in January

2006, when elections for the PLC resulted in a resounding Hamas sweep.

This popular mandate for continued resistance and internal change came in spite of the brutal toll exacted by Israeli military repression: 4,200 Palestinians killed (including 800 children), 12,000 political prisoners, 100,000 injured and nearly 4.5 million people confined to ghettos or open-air prisons.

Internally, the intifada has translated into a clash between two trends: a minority bourgeois tendency seeking full incorporation into regional neoliberal networks as its reward for suppressing the national liberation struggle; and a second, popular and mass-based trend that continues to back the struggle to liberate Palestine, resist Israeli apartheid and transform Palestinian institutions to reflect the will of all Palestinians.

SUPPRESSING PALESTINE

The reaction of international governments to the January 2006 election results was swift. As soon as Hamas assumed its responsibilities, funding was cut to PA structures, with the Canadian government taking a lead role. The result has been an ever-worsening humanitarian catastrophe in the occupied territories, particularly in Gaza.

Furthermore, a program of direct military assistance to notoriously-corrupt Fatah officials, most notably Dahlan, was spearheaded by neo-conservatives in the US administration. In fact "security reform" programs directed at PA structures had been envisioned within the parameters of the 2003 Road Map designed by the Middle East Quartet (US, European Union, Russia, United Nations).

However, popular opposition to such measures came from all quarters, including within the ranks of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and among Fatah grassroots activists who openly revolted in 2004. In fact, it was the growing

perception that Arafat was stalling such “reforms” that led to his increasing marginalization by the Quartet.

In a recently declassified letter penned in July 2003, Dahlan allegedly reassures Israeli defense minister Shaul Mofaz that: “Yasser Arafat’s final days are numbered, but allow us to finish him off our way, not yours. And be sure as well that ... the promises I made in front of President Bush, I will give my life to keep.”

POST-COUP REALITIES

The anti-popular nature of Fayyad’s recently-installed provisional government is illustrative of the neoliberal vision being pursued by the US administration. Even though his Third Way party only secured 2.41 percent of the popular vote, the Quartet has enthusiastically rushed to recognize Fayyad’s government.

Fayyad is a US-educated former World Bank employee described in a recent Israeli newspaper Haaretz article as a “practical businessman” who has just taken “into his hands a plant [the PA] with a failed management and hostile competitors [Hamas] and has decided to make a success story of it.” True to form, Fayyad has vowed to disarm the Palestinian resistance and facilitate an accommodation with Israeli apartheid.

A wave of repression has been unleashed in the West Bank to contain opposition to the Ramallah junta. More than 400 Hamas activists have been arrested, Hamas-linked NGOs have been targeted for looting, military tribunals have been revived, activists killed and media operations tied to Hamas brutally attacked. Similar repression has occurred in Gaza, though on a much smaller scale.

In spite of this, resistance continues to mount. Posters comparing the Abbas-Fayyad clique to Pinochet have been springing up throughout the West Bank. Palestinian campuses have been rife with dissent, with PFLP and Hamas student organizers staging demonstrations at Birzeit University and Hamas students organizing a sit-in at An-Najah National University. A hunger-strike campaign has been launched at the Juneid prison near Nablus, where over 100 Hamas

Abu Mazen
(left) with
US Secretary
of State
Condoleezza
Rice and
Israeli Prime
Minister
Ehud Olmert,
February
2007



detainees are being held by the PA in deplorable conditions.

In this context it is unclear whether Fayyad’s regime will last long enough to see the convening of the Bush administration’s much-heralded “international peace conference.” Some in the Fatah linked Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades have gone so far as to proclaim that they will not tolerate a “Karzai in Palestine.”

GRIM VISION OF NEOLIBERAL PEACE

In response to this legitimacy crisis, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced an \$80-million Framework Agreement on Security Assistance to the Ramallah junta – part of a broader strategy aimed at weakening resistance forces throughout the region and shoring up unpopular regimes. An Israeli-Palestinian “peace” under neoliberal capitalist hegemony can only lead to the further entrenchment of Israeli apartheid and local reaction.

Tony Blair, the Middle East Quartet’s new special envoy, is already implicated in local gas deals worth \$4-billion dollars for the exploitation of a gas-field off Gaza’s coast. In 2005, Blair brokered an agreement between British Gas and the Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF), closely linked to Mahmoud Abbas.

Furthermore, the US announcement of \$20-billion in arms sales to Gulf regimes, counterbalanced by \$30-billion in military aid to Israel and \$13-billion for Egypt over the next 10 years portends further bloodshed. The projected “peace” agreement is clearly one that will seek to secure the rights of capital, while impos-

ing further apartheid on the peoples of this geopolitically crucial region.

BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, SANCTIONS

This racism needs to be challenged internationally through a boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign aimed at isolating apartheid Israel. Just as Palestinian students, workers and others continue to agitate for change under apartheid conditions, so must campuses and workplaces in the Canadian state become sites of active support for indigenous self-determination struggles at home and abroad.

In the Palestinian context, this means active support for the call made by over 170 Palestinian grassroots organizations to implement BDS campaigns globally. The fact that the Ramallah junta is again seeking to accommodate Israeli apartheid at precisely the time when Zionist racism is becoming isolated by a global BDS movement underscores the disconnect between elite negotiations and mass movements. Only time will tell if the 1979 observation of an organizer from a Palestinian refugee camp working in Lebanon will bear fruit:

“There is not one of our people who has not sacrificed, and is not willing to sacrifice. But we must see our leadership announcing revolutionary programs instead of flying to meet this king and that president, and working towards concessions that will humiliate our people. We have a Revolution and the Arab states are offering us a state. A people’s war doesn’t last ten years only, it goes on until it achieves something.” ★

BOOK REVIEW

A condemnation of Zionism

**OVERCOMING ZIONISM:
CREATING A SINGLE DEMOCRATIC
STATE IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE**

BY JOEL KOVEL

TORONTO: BETWEEN THE LINES, 2007

REVIEWED BY SANDRA SARNER

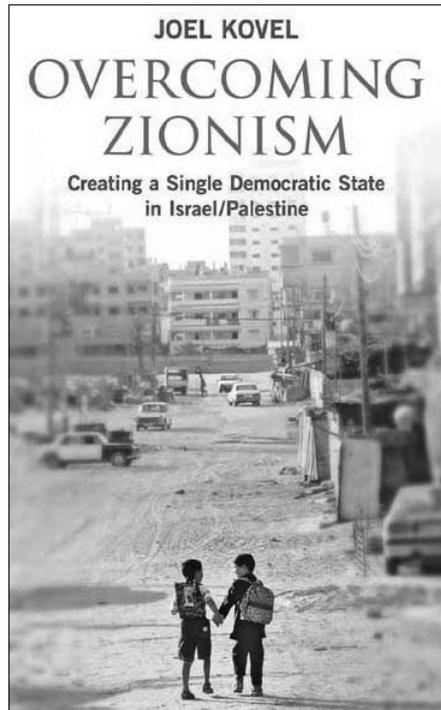
JOEL KOVEL'S EXCELLENT BOOK, *Overcoming Zionism: Creating a Single Democratic State in Israel/Palestine*, is first and foremost a ringing condemnation of Zionism, the ideology that holds that there should be a Jewish state in Palestine. Kovel traces the historical development of the Zionist movement and illustrates how the logic of Zionism dictates a racist, aggressive and militaristic Israeli state, bent on destroying any hope of sharing historic Palestine with the indigenous Palestinian population who continue to be ethnically cleansed from their homeland.

Kovel also illustrates how Zionism has been bad for Jews. Originally a culture with universalistic and progressive elements, Zionism has herded all ways of being Jewish into support for the state of Israel and, by extension, its expansionist aims.

SINGLE STATE SOLUTION

It follows that the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is impossible in the current conditions. It is mere rhetoric and political posturing by Israel as it buys time to continue its policy of making life untenable for Palestinians in the occupied territories and inside Israel. The only realistic solution is the overcoming of Zionism altogether. This means abandoning the contradictory notion that Israel can be an exclusive Jewish state and also be democratic and peaceful.

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It means opening up to the prospect of creating a secular, democratic bi-national Israeli-Palestinian state in historic Palestine, including the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

To some extent, Kovel's arguments are aimed at the largely-Zionist-supporting US Jewish community that is his heritage. But he also makes it clear that it will take more than the recognition that Zionism is a bad idea to effect change in the region and argues for an international campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions patterned after the anti-apartheid movement that was instrumental in ending state-sanctioned racism in South Africa.

Enhanced with philosophical and psychological insights, the analysis in *Overcoming Zionism* is essentially historical and anti-imperialist. Kovel writes throughout with a clear perspective on how the dynamics of capitalism and class society have shaped the events he chronicles.

In its early days, at the end of the 19th

century, Zionism was a marginal movement. Jews responded to European anti-Semitism by emigrating, by assimilating, or by joining socialist movements dedicated to eradicating the conditions that breed racism and oppression.

The Zionist right to build a state in Palestine, based as it was on a 2,000-year-old, mythic claim to an already-inhabited land, could well be called an artificial nationalism. Jews in the 19th century were not a nation but a "collection of peoples united by a set of writings as interpreted by a Rabbinate." The Zionist movement was strengthened after the early part of the 20th century by the decline of socialist movements, the horror of the Holocaust and, above all, by signing on with Western imperialism.

With the backing of the West, principally Britain and the US, Jews who had suffered persecution as a result of the policies and practices of European capitalism, partnered up with their one-time enemies to establish the Zionist homeland in Israel. A big part of the justification for this was the horrors of the Holocaust which caused many Jews to buy into the argument that the only solution to anti-Semitism was for Jews to have their own nation state. It also lent credence to support for Israel by British and US imperialist interests and helped ease the consciences of Western leaders who had closed their doors to Jewish immigration during the rise of the Nazis in Germany in the years leading up to World War 2.

ZIONISM, ANTI-SEMITISM, RACISM

Palestinian Arabs, who had inhabited Palestine for generations and lived peacefully alongside their Jewish neighbours, had played no part in the European anti-Semitism that led ultimately to the Holocaust. But they were the ones who were made to pay the price. "There is sub-

stantial evidence that at least a significant fraction of the actual people who made Zionism happen knew quite well that they were engaged in a fight, the goal of which was the annihilation of the indigenous people as a national entity.”

And ironically, in order to sustain support for an inherently racist project, a Jewish-only state with unequal citizenship rights based on ethnicity, Zionism needs anti-Semitism. “The burden of anti-Semitism, which was the perceived stimulus to Zionism, became integrated into Zionism as an essential condition for it ... it became a useful, and even necessary, wheel in the machinery of Zionism.” Even the Holocaust “became a necessity for Zionism, which has processed it right through the present day as a kind of ur-event to certify its inner absolutism.”

One of the greatest myths about Israel is that it is the only democracy in the Middle East. But if, by democracy, we mean a society based on constitutional rights for all citizens, equality and justice, then Israel falls far short.

Israel is the only “democratic” state that does not have a constitution, since a constitution would have to contain an assurance of universal human rights. This would undercut the Zionist need to maintain its Arab population as second-class citizens. Palestinians inside Israel were governed by the military until 1966. To this day, Arab nationalist political parties are banned. Arab Israelis are not permitted to purchase land. Arab villages receive a small fraction of the funds for education and infrastructure given to Israeli settlements. Palestinians refugees, even those who hold property deeds, are not permitted to return to their lands and homes. Yet, any Jew from anywhere in the world can automatically become an Israeli citizen.

THE RECORD OF STATE VIOLENCE

From its inception, the Israeli state has been ruthless in pursuing the goal of inducing – and at times forcing – as many Jews as possible to immigrate. As Kovel shows time and again, this is the logic of trying to create an artificially-created, exclusively Jewish state in the midst

of a vast, predominantly Arab region. This logic has led to a litany of atrocities against Palestinians. It is instructive that no fewer than three of Israel’s prime ministers have been “world-class terrorists” – Menachem Begin (1977-1983), Yitzhak Shamir (1983-1984, 1986-1992) and Ariel Sharon (2001-2006).

Ironically, Zionist atrocities extend even to Jews. In the period immediately after World War 2, Haganah (Israeli military) operatives launched a strenuous effort within the European Jewish refugee camps to recruit Jews to join its ranks. This “was chiefly exerted through the administrative control Zionists had gained over the camps ... Summary loss of employment for recalcitrants, followed

Israel is the only “democratic” state that does not have a constitution, since a constitution would have to contain an assurance of universal human rights. This would undercut the Zionist need to maintain its Arab population as second-class citizens.

by summary denial of food rations, usually did the trick, though quite often beatings and other forms of violence had to be used.”

In another example, in 1950-51, a series of bomb blasts against Jewish targets in Iraq led to the emigration of 120,000 Jews to Israel. Although it is not certain who set off the bombs, “there is a well-documented suspicion that they were planted by Israeli agents to foment fears of a pogrom.” This is a distinct possibility given the “robust Israeli tradition of covert operations and its perennial interest in addressing the demographic problem by manipulating fears of anti-Semitism.”

Today, Israel is a racist society in which white Ashkenazi Jews of European origin form the bulk of the ruling class and Sephardic Arab Jews from North Africa

and the Middle East are the overwhelming majority of the country’s poorest citizens.

MYTH OF THE DESERT IN BLOOM

Kovel also takes on the myths of the success of the Israeli economy and the phenomenon of “making the desert bloom.” Despite great infusions of funds, primarily from the US government and American Zionists, “Israel remains a society in grave social and economic crisis, with rampant unemployment, pockets of outright hunger and many signs of social disintegration ... it now has the greatest gap between rich and poor in the whole industrialized world.”

Furthermore, Zionist policy has created an ecological disaster in the country. Israel’s rivers are seriously polluted, the Lower Jordan “little more than a drainage ditch for polluted runoff.” Asthma rates among children have more than tripled since 1980 and breast cancer rates increased 32 percent in the 1990s.

In the occupied territories, the landscape is blighted by the presence of the Wall which “divides up the Palestinian polity in innumerable ways, making travel even over short distances unbearable, while adding more territory to Zion.” Some of the settlers regularly destroy Palestinian lands, “tearing up olive groves and spreading poison pellets that kill indigenous wildlife as well as goats and sheep.” With the lack of environmental regulations in the area, “a rat’s nest of Israeli manufacturing firms” have been set up; “Usually situated on hilltops, their effluents drain down on Palestinian towns and have blighted them.”

In these and many other ways too numerous to outline here, Kovel argues that the Zionist state of Israel has led to bad consequences for both Palestinians and Jews. He concludes the book with a preliminary attempt to imagine “Palestrel,” a secular, universal democracy. In his vision, he tries to deal with the practical realities that will emerge for this new nation in a way that is not utopian, recognizing as well the struggles ahead that will be necessary to realize this hoped-for goal. ★

VENEZUELA

The Bolivarian Revolution and Chávez's new party

BY VIRGINIA DE LA SIEGA

The Bolivarian Revolution is now in the middle of a complex, contradictory situation.

An analysis of the present state of affairs shows that the poorer sectors of the population can truthfully say that their standard of living has improved. This is due to the fact that the government invests the profits obtained by high oil prices in programs to meet the social needs of the population.

However, a closer look shows that the Bolivarian Revolution is still in debt to those who have defended it in the streets and at the ballot-box: the minimum wage does not cover the needs of a family, unemployment and underemployment are still rife, and for the last few months workers have been unsuccessfully demanding the passage of a new law that guarantees new social rights such as better working conditions, full social security and job security. Moreover, there is no guarantee that the progressive measures taken by Hugo Chávez's government will not be reversed if the price of oil falls.

WORDS AND DEEDS

Neither is Chávez's policy of nationalization and state control of strategic sectors of the economy quite in agreement with his statements in favour of socialism. To take but one example: the "nationalization" of the rich oilfields of Faja del Orinoco. At the end of the 1930s, the Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas – who never claimed to be a socialist, but nonetheless carried out a nationalist, anti-imperialist policy – expropriated the



Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez

multinationals that exploited Mexico's oilfields and put their production under the control of the oil workers' union. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, Chávez sets up joint ventures with the oil multinationals in which the state oil company, PDVSA, will own the majority of the shares... and calls that nationalization.

This not only means that the oil multinationals will continue to exploit the oilfields, but that they will carry on making profits from refining and derivatives. This situation is repeated in other sectors of the economy, like the auto industry, communications, finance and the national banks, which are making enormous profits. What is worse, there are no signs that the government is planning to change this situation.

These contradictions between the government's policy and its stated objective of "21st century socialism" can also be

*The Bolivarian Revolution
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seen in its attitude towards the process of self-organization of the masses, one of the pillars of the Bolivarian Revolution.

On the one hand, the independent social grass-roots organizations like the community councils, the independent trade unions gathered in the National Union of Workers (UNT), the trade union tendencies such as the United Autonomous Revolutionary Class Current (CCURA) in the UNT, and the radical political organizations and leaders who do not take part in the government's Bloc for Change want to deepen the process of autonomous self-organization of the masses and the revolution.

On the other, the representatives of the national and international capitalist class and the trade union bureaucrats who are deeply embedded in the government and profit from the general confusion and corruption are not interested in the continuity of this process and try to control and reverse it.

Right now, for example, there are complaints that such forces are putting in place a plan with the purpose of launching an attack against the social and trade union organizations that criticize the government. The Ministry of People's Power for Work and Social Security (MPPTSS) is accused of having made an agreement with the sectors of the trade union bureaucracy that took part in the

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2002 coup against Chávez, to attack the independent currents in the UNT and bring to an end the activities of those who are for a free and autonomous trade union movement.

HUGO CHAVEZ

Chávez sits astride these two sectors. He wants to carry forward a nationalistic policy and centralize in the hands of the state the mechanisms that control the strategic areas of the economy, but he does not want to break away from the framework of the capitalist system. He knows that his policy inexorably leads him to a confrontation with the Venezuelan capitalist class and Yankee imperialism, and that to stay in power he needs the support of the mobilized masses. And he sincerely seeks that support through initiatives like the nationalizations, education and health care projects in poor neighbourhoods, food subsidies, loans to small enterprises, etc.

But he is not a revolutionary socialist, so he fears the masses and tries to control them by co-opting their organizations into the structures of his government. He has already tried this policy with the Bolivarian Circles and the community councils. The fact that the Venezuelan masses could see through his manoeuvres, emptying these organizations and creating new ones every time he tried to apply this policy, speaks volumes about their political maturity.

Nor have Chávez's repeated attempts to build solid political structures to draw the masses around his political project proved successful. The bureaucratic structures and the corrupt officials of his own party, the Fifth Republic Movement (MVR), and the other parties that form the Bloc for Change have become the dealers of the government's "hand-outs," promoting political clientelism and becoming the centre of the masses' mistrust and rejection. This is the framework for Chávez's proposal to launch a new party that will bring together those who are in favour of "Socialism of the 21st Century": the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).



Congress of the UNT union federation.

PSUV: THE NEW PARTY

Leaving aside Chávez's intentions, the launching of the PSUV and the success of his call – more than five and a half million applications to join the party – have shaken the world's Left. The arguments as to whether revolutionaries and their organizations should join the PSUV run through and divide political organisations inside and outside Venezuela.

Sergio García, a leader of the CCURA and member of the Party of Revolution and Socialism (PRS), decided to join the PSUV: "The PSUV is in the process of being built. There are fights, political struggles, debates, attempts to exclude people and, above all, the great expectations and the will of large sectors of the masses to build it. In the PSUV there are millions of people who want to participate in the political life of the country, to become subjects in this political struggle and to defeat the bureaucrats who want to control them. This battle may be won or lost, but we want to wage it side by side with this large section of the revolutionary avant garde, in order to defend the revolutionary project inside the PSUV. Time, the class struggle and the final result of

this experience of building a new party will say what we will do afterwards."

This political battle is going to be very hard, and it has already begun with the struggle to determine who has the right to be part of the PSUV. The reformist, pro-capitalist sectors of the government want to transform it into a multi-class movement, allowing "socialist" entrepreneurs and all kinds of representatives of the capitalist class to become members, at the same time that the MPPTSS is taking steps to leave out of the PSUV whole sectors of the working class and of the independent trade unions, with the excuse that they criticize the government. If they succeed, it would be a re-enactment of the experience which transformed the Bolivarian Circles into empty carcasses. Allowing the entrance of the enemies of the revolution into the PSUV and jeopardizing the participation of the workers in its construction can only lead to disaster.

It was doubts as to the viability and the future of the PSUV based on these facts that led to the division of the PRS and the CCURA into two sectors: a majority one which asked to be accepted into the PSUV, and another which decided not to enter, but which is discussing what to do, knowing that the experience of the PRS as the embryo of a new party is over. It is proof of the political maturity of the two groups that they can still discuss and work together in the UNT and CCURA.

Regardless of the reasons why Chávez called for the foundation of the PSUV, two key facts are clear. More than five million workers, students, men and women want to take part in this political struggle and be part of a revolutionary political project. And there are revolutionary Marxists who are willing to fight against the manoeuvres of the government and the bureaucratic, pro-capitalist sectors, to build a current that unites those who are for the independent self-organisation of the masses and the taking of power by the workers – the only guarantee that the process of the Bolivarian Revolution will move forward to the socialist revolution. ★

The looting of Africa

BY PATRICK BOND

ALL EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING, THE LIKES OF BONO, BOB Geldof, Jeffrey Sachs and others still argue forcefully for more capitalist penetration of Africa as the solution to the continent's poverty.

But the balance of the evidence does indeed point to the contrary. Wealth flows out of sub-Saharan Africa to the North occur primarily through exploitative debt and finance, phantom aid, capital flight, unfair trade, and distorted investment. The resource drain from Africa dates back many centuries, beginning with unfair terms of trade, and then being amplified through slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Today, neoliberal policies are the most direct causes of inequality and poverty. They tend to amplify uneven and combined development, especially pre-existing gender, race and regional disparities.

Poverty across Africa worsened in 1990–2001, with 77 percent of the citizenry surviving on less than \$2.15/day.

Finance, trade, and foreign direct investment remain central to the continent's ongoing underdevelopment.

Africa's debt crisis worsened during the era of globalization. The continent now repays more than it ever received, according to the World Bank, with outflow in debt repayments equivalent to three times the inflow in loans and, in most African countries, far exceeding export earnings. The debt-relief measures announced in 2005 by G8 finance ministers do not disturb either the process of draining Africa's financial accounts or the maintenance of debt-associated control functions.

Underlying the G8's 2005 Gleneagles proposals is the notion of sustainable service repayments, but Africa has actually repaid more than it received since the 1990s. Overall, during the 1980s and 90s, Africa repaid \$255 billion, or 4.2 times the original 1980 debt.

In 1980, with inflow comfortably higher than the debt repayment outflow, Africa continued to pay abnormally high interest to service loans, and did so with new loans. By 2000, however, the net flow deficit was \$6.2 billion, so new loans no longer paid the interest on old loans – those resources were squeezed from already impoverished economies. For 21 African countries, the debt reached at least 300 percent of exports by 2002, and for countries such as Sudan, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, it was 15 times greater than annual export earnings.

In at least 16 countries, according to Eric Toussaint, debt inherited from dictators could be defined as legally "Odious" and therefore eligible for cancellation since citizens were victimised both in the debt's original accumulation (and use of monies against the society) and in subsequent demands that it be repaid. These amounts easily exceed 50% of Africa's outstanding debt.

Aid to Africa dropped 40 percent during the 1990s. Contributions from almost all developed countries fall well below the UN-agreed target of 0.7 percent of GDP, with 0.12 percent of US GDP and 0.23 percent of Japanese GDP as extreme examples. In a 2005 study by ActionAid, the NGO estimates that the 2003 total official aid of \$69 billion is reduced to just \$27 billion in real aid to poor people because of a variety of phantom aid mechanisms. Untied aid rose from \$2.3 billion in 1999 to \$4.3 billion in 2003, but declined as a proportion of total aid.

Considering the vast sums – in excess of \$4 billion – removed from Africa over



The African Social Forum, 2007.

the past two decades, the two leading scholars of capital flight, James Boyce and Léonce Ndikumana, conclude that "sub-Saharan Africa thus appears to be a net creditor vis-à-vis the rest of the world."

Trade liberalization has exacted a heavy toll on sub-Saharan Africa – \$272 billion over the past 20 years, according to Christian Aid. Dependence on primary commodities, worsening terms of trade, northern subsidies and long-term falling prices for most exports together grip African producers in a price trap, as they increase production levels but generate decreasing revenues.

Agricultural subsidies to Northern farmers (mainly corporate producers) have risen steeply, which has greatly intensified North-South trade inequalities. Developing countries lose \$35 billion annually as a result of industrialized countries' protectionist tariffs, \$24 billion of this as a result of the Multifibre Agreement.

Non-financial investment flows are driven less by policy – although liberalization has also been important – and more by accumulation opportunities. During the 1970s, according to the Commission on Africa, roughly one third of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the "Third World" went to Africa; by the 1990s, this had declined to five percent. Thereafter, what seems like significantly

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rising FDI in the late 1990s and 2001 can be accounted for by the relocation of South African companies' financial headquarters to London, and by resurgent oil investments in Angola and military-ruled Nigeria. Tax fraud, transfer pricing and other multinational corporate techniques also reduce Africa's income. In 1994, for example, an estimated 14 percent of the total value of exported oil went unaccounted for.

It is increasingly clear that the depletion of natural resources must be factored into any calculation of national wealth. For example, according to the UNDP, the estimated value of minerals in South Africa's soil fell from US\$112 billion in 1960 to US\$55 billion in 2000. The World Bank has proposed a corrective method that, despite under-estimations, reveals stagnant and net negative genuine savings in countries characterized by high resource dependence, extractive FDI and low capital accumulation.

According to this method, a country's potential GDP falls by nine percent for every percentage point increase in a country's extractive-resource dependency, with Gabon's people losing a net \$2,241 each in 2000, as oil companies depleted the country's tangible wealth, investing very little in return and providing few royalties.

In a related category, the North owes the South, especially Africa, a vast amount in ecological debt, because developed countries use or destroy a hugely disproportionate measure of the global commons. A member of the UN International Panel on Climate Change calculates that forests in the South absorbing carbon from the atmosphere in effect provide Northern polluters an annual subsidy of \$75 billion.

Whether in sweatshop-based production systems in several African countries or in the sphere of household and community reproduction, women – already suffering intense patriarchal oppression – are the main victims of neoliberalism. Because they rear children and provide eldercare and healthcare, rural women ensure an artificially inexpensive supply of migrant labour.

The recent global reform proposals will

not reverse the outflow of African wealth. Instead, campaigns to reverse resource flows and challenge perverse subsidies are emerging from grassroots struggles and progressive social movements, such as: decommodification movements to establish basic needs as human rights, rather than as privatized commodities that must be paid for; campaigns to de-globalize capital, such as defunding the World Bank and securing the right to produce generic (not patented) anti-retroviral medicines; demands for civil society oversight of national budgets; and activism to ensure equitable redistribution of resources in ways that benefit low-income households, grassroots communities and shop-floor workers.

Were there even a single genuinely left government in Africa, a variety of nation-

Recent global reform proposals will not reverse the outflow of African wealth.

al policies could be applied to reverse socio-economic collapse: systematic default on foreign debt repayments; strategies to enforce domestic reinvestment of pensions and other funds; reintroduction of currency exchange controls and prohibition of tax-haven transfers; refusal of tied and phantom aid, along with naming and shaming fraudulent aid; inward-oriented import-substitution development strategies; refusal of foreign investments that prove unfavourable when projections factor in costs such as natural resource depletion, transfer pricing and profit/dividend outflows; and reversal of macroeconomic policies that increase inequality.

But since any moves in this direction require bottom-up social movements to intensify their work, it is most crucial in the short run to recognise anti-capitalist efforts to bridge global-local and Northern-African divides. They include (but are not limited to) general strikes by re-

vitalised labour movements in countries ranging from Swaziland (July) to South Africa (June-July) and Nigeria (June); campaigning for reparations and the closure of the World Bank and IMF by Jubilee Africa; AIDS treatment advocates breaking the hold of pharmaceutical corporations on monopoly antiretroviral patents; activists fighting Monsanto's GM drive from the US to South Africa to several African countries; blood-diamonds victims from Sierra Leone and Angola generating a partially-successful global deal at Kimberley; Kalahari Basarwa-San Bushmen raising publicity against forced removals, as the Botswana government clears the way for DeBeers and World Bank investments; Lesotho peasants objecting to displacement during construction of the continent's largest dam system (solely to quench Johannesburg's irrational and hedonistic thirst), along with Ugandans similarly threatened at the overly expensive, corruption-ridden Bujagali Dam; a growing network questioning Liberia's long exploitation by Firestone Rubber; Chadian and Cameroonian activists pressuring the World Bank not to continue funding their repression and environmental degradation; Oil Watch linkages of Nigerian Delta and many other Gulf of Guinea communities; and Ghanaian, South African and Dutch activists opposing water privatization.

How far they go in part depends upon how far valued allies in the advanced capitalist financial and corporate centres recognize the merits of their analysis, strategy and tactics – and offer the solidarity that African and other Third World activists can repay many times over, once the Northern boot is lifted from their countries' necks and they gain the space to win lasting, emancipatory objectives. But setting out campaigns for reparations, closure of International Financial Institutions, corporate malfeasance and an end to many specific other forms of looting is only part of an even bigger challenge for bottom-up construction: establishing a durable programmatic approach that the world's progressive movements can unite behind. ★

WORTH CHECKING OUT

Mini-reviews: on this page, you will find suggestions for good reading, listening and watching. This time, we present recommendations for a movie and a music CD.

Healthcare in America

SICKO

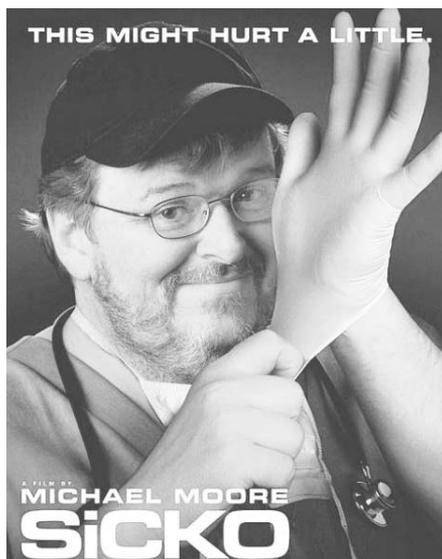
A FILM BY MICHAEL MOORE

Poor Michael Moore. The bumbling American abroad stares curiously at a statue of Marx and questions his country's commodification of health, the socialist evils of universal healthcare and why his country doesn't seem to care about the sick and injured.

Moore's latest film is a step away from the fiery destruction, oil and narrative of his previous film and a closer exploration of the subtleties and comparative disasters of life for his good old working-class Americans. Moore traces the history of healthcare under Nixon and the rise of profit driven health insurance within the US, while contrasting it to the seemingly utopian healthcare in other countries – where people don't have to choose which finger they can afford to lose.

France, Britain, Canada, and – most notably – Cuba are presented as flawless examples of universal healthcare and, surely, attractive alternatives, but his examination fails to provide any structural analysis for the privatization of healthcare and the market it presents for capitalist interests.

As Moore tags along with Tory-voting Canadians, mobile French doctors and those “real American heroes,” the rescue



workers of 9/11, Moore's childlike benevolence is exposed. Couched in nationalism, he brazenly questions why “terrorists” should receive free healthcare, while the American public is robbed by health insurers. Fundamentally, human life is an expendable commodity under capitalism unless it leads to the creation of further profits. Moore doesn't dig deep enough in attacking the giants of private health care; he doesn't realize that the sick and injured are rendered useless by capitalism when their labour can no longer be bought and sold.

Moore, of course, knows how to construct an empathetic film, find “worthy” victims and illicit outrage from viewers. His foray into socialized healthcare should be an instructive and eye-opening experience for his US audience, while it merely leaves us warm and content in our “free” wards and operating rooms.

This is Moore's best work to date. Poignant, political, bewildering and even funny, his films provide valuable insight into areas which mainstream cinema fears to tread. However, his continued assault on the US government, big business and the war in Iraq has still failed to produce a solid criticism of the system itself.

Reviewed by Christopher Webb

Freedom Music

WE'LL NEVER TURN BACK

BY MAVIS STAPLES

MUSIC CD: ANTI, 2007

Genuine freedom music moves both body and mind. It angers and elates. It energizes and educates. All of this is true of the powerful, uplifting songs from the civil rights movement that Mavis Staples delivers on *We'll Never Turn Back*, produced by musician, and radical, Ry Cooder.

The tunes on this CD are protest music pure and simple. Mavis Staples sang them at marches and rallies 40 years ago and more, as a young member of the Staple Singers, led by her late father. With Cooder's direction and guitar work, many of these songs have been rendered more funky and bluesy than ever. Check out the rocking version of “Eyes on the Prize,” for instance, or the pure-roots version of “Down in Mississippi.” What's more, Mavis Staples' voice has lost none of its soulful urgency, as she demonstrates in rousing renditions of “On My Way (To Freedom Land)” or “I'll Be Rested.” Clearly, Staples feels that none of the tunes on this CD have lost their relevance in our age of globalizing poverty and oppression. And she has done a real service in making these musical messages available to both veterans of earlier struggles and young radicals who may discover these freedom songs for the first time.

Some listeners will have their quibbles. The Christian inspiration of the African-American civil rights movement (which runs through the lyrics of two tunes) won't resonate with everyone. But this too is part of the historical record and needs to be appreciated as such. It's also terrific to see figures from the Black Power movement get some recognition. For me, the celebration of Malcolm X and Fred Hampton of the Black Panther Party on “I'll Be Rested” is noteworthy, as is the embrace of union struggles on “We Shall Not Be Moved.”

So, if you want to move to some soulful freedom music, check out this CD.

Reviewed by David McNally

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IN MEMORY OF DAVE BROPHY

Farewell to a comrade

BY DEBORAH SIMMONS

DAVE BROPHY, MEMBER OF THE Winnipeg Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement and member of the Winnipeg New Socialist Group took his life in July after a long battle with depression.

I first met Dave at a political study group in Winnipeg in the summer of 2004. He had been a supporter of the blockade against clearcutting in Grassy Narrows territory since its inception in December 2002. He was clearly outraged by injustices that he had witnessed in building solidarity with the Anishinaabe people of Grassy Narrows, and was struggling to come to grips with strategies for social change that could address oppression and environmental destruction.

Dave came to the conclusion that the system of profit and competition that is capitalism is the root of these destructive forms. His knowledge of indigenous communal traditions inspired him to fight for an alternative society. His dedication to both activist movement building and the battle of ideas was remarkable in a milieu where it has been the fashion to adopt radicalism as individual lifestyle choice rather than a collective way of making history.

Dave was an outstanding and passionate organizer, always willing take on the thankless behind-the-scenes tasks. For this he was much appreciated by his women comrades. If he believed in a political event, he would work tirelessly to making it a rousing success, regardless of whether others were able to help.

He was highly respected by many indigenous activists in the city, who knew they could always rely on his support when needed. In the words of Anishinaabe student activist Ryan Bruyere,

Deborah Simmons is a member of the New Socialist Group, and now lives in the Northwest Territories.



THE DRUM (WWW.FIRSTPERSPECTIVE.CA)

Dave Brophy prepares signs for Caledonia protest, Winnipeg, April 2006.

"He showed me that people actually do care about First Nations struggles ... We need more Daves, not less!"

Ryan Bruyere
Sagkeeng Anishinaabe Nation
Wasase Movement-Manitou Ahbin
(Creator Sits)
University of Winnipeg
Aboriginal Student Centre

"He introduced me to plenty of people in Winnipeg that undoubtedly will come together with Dave's spirit as the catalyst for unity among nations in Canada ... He showed me that people actually do care about First Nations struggles ... We need more Daves, not less!"

One of Dave's great successes was the Winnipeg launch of Sheila Wilmot's book *Taking Responsibility, Taking Direction: White Anti-Racism in Canada* on March 31, 2006. Dave was determined to

use the book as an occasion to carve out a space for discussion and debate about strategies for building solidarity – so he single-handedly raised funds to bring Wilmot to Winnipeg, and posterized the city to promote the event.

His hard work paid off; more than fifty people packed the room, and there was a lively discussion that built new bonds of trust and solidarity among a unique mix of anti-racists. This was a critical counterpoint to the increasing racism being stirred up by the media and police under cover of an anti-crime campaign in the city.

The emergence of the Wasase movement was a dream come true for Dave, who recognized that true solidarity in the battle for indigenous self-determination is only possible under the leadership of a radical indigenous movement. Dave would have been a strong champion of the discussions now taking place among Wasase members and supporters about strategies for addressing oppression, since such discussions would shed light on his own political experiments.

Dave was wrestling with dark demons in the months before his death. The lonely burden of building radical movements during this period of apathy, quiescence and despair was often too much to bear. He was one of those countless people in Manitoba – and in Canada – who fell through the cracks of the underfunded social welfare system.

This is a time for mourning the loss of a great comrade whose candle burned too bright and too brief. But it is also a time for those of us who share his politics to renew our commitment to building the kind of radical resistance and solidarity that Dave dreamed of – the kind of collective resistance that can lead to revolution. In this way we will keep alive Dave's memory, and the memory of countless other victims of this brutal capitalist system. ★

Dave Brophy's three articles about the history of Anishinaabe struggle in what is now known as Northwestern Ontario can be found online in New Socialist 50-53, at www.newsocialist.org

Challenges of imagination and daring

BY PETER GRAHAM
AND GREG ALBO

Alan Sears begins his assessment of the state of socialism in Canada (NS 61, available at www.newsocialist.org) – in fact across the advanced capitalist world – with the sober statement “that we are, in practical terms, starting over.” This is a stark position. It is hard to disagree with. The revolutions against bankrupt regimes, the struggles for decolonization, and the mobilizations of the working classes and oppressed achieved a great deal over the course of the 20th century. But the social forces that achieved them are not what they once were. Meanwhile, neoliberalism, continues rolling back social and political gains. Its ideological claims may be discredited but neoliberalism remains the means by which the ruling classes rule.

OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES

Sears emphasizes that the creation of infrastructures of dissent and the spread of socialist ideas are integrally related, ebbing and flowing with the level of struggle. We fully agree. As political struggle has receded, the organizational, intellectual and cultural infrastructures of the Left have been strained, and their relationship to the demands of contemporary movements more distant. This is the impasse of the Left.

Historical structural changes provide the terrain for political struggle and influence future movements. Sears focuses on some of the new obstacles to a renewed movement for socialism. More people do live in suburbs today, but it is not so clear they are any less isolated than the numbers living on farms or in small towns in past periods of struggle. The mega-cities of today should be a fertile terrain for socialist organizing.

Similarly, the constraints on individual

activism from longer hours of work and limits in state services are not unique to this period. For much of socialism’s history there was a common, misplaced belief that if workers won a paid, eight-hour day, rank-and-filers would become much more involved in the socialist struggle. And in past periods, the Left has variously invoked the popularity of saloons, dance halls and television as barriers to political struggle. But these developments did not curb subsequent radicalization. The political challenges for the Left today are still ones of imagination, organization, strategy and political daring.

Sears’ realism is an antidote to the views that have occupied the space vacated by the old Left: the dogmatic Trotskyism that claims that resistance “from below” is ever ascendant and the revolution near at hand; the anarcho-communist views that the combination of spontaneous rebellion and alternate direct practices can directly confront the advanced capitalist state; and the anti-power politics that suggested neither party nor program are necessary as ‘we can change the world without taking power.’ These views can make a contribution to a revitalized anti-capitalist politics. They do not supply, however, the political, ideological, organizational, or working-class resources necessary to overturn neoliberalism, let alone challenge capitalism.

ANTI-CAPITALIST FORCES

These were the components of the anti-globalization movement which Sears suggests was “cut short” as Bush began his “war on terror” after September 11, 2001.

But it’s worth taking a more serious look at these social forces. Was anti-globalization politics adequately grounded in working class politics – a renewal of unions, day-to-day community institu-

tions, the capacity to contest the ‘national-popular’ framing of the issues of the days with socialist understandings? Did the movement’s political thinking and organizational form offer viable ways to contest hegemony and power in a period of neoliberal globalization? Why did the struggle against war and imperialist intervention not give additional vitality to anti-globalization struggles, considering the strengths of the global peace movements from the 1980s that fought the Second Cold War and the first Iraq war? Why did the “new infrastructure of dissent,” that Sears identifies get eclipsed so quickly? Are the ideological positions and political practices of these forces a reflection of a Left and working class movement defeated, disorganized, isolated?

As Sears points out, the Russian Revolution provided the political coordinates for socialists – for and against – throughout the past century. All but the willfully blind can see that socialists must turn now to different forms of organization to meet the challenges of 21st century capitalism. There have been some past attempts in Canada to construct broader socialist organizations, such as Rebuilding the Left or the initial NSG calls for building a new pluralist organization of the Left. But they ran into obstacles: exhaustion of the movement; disagreements over existing or past “socialisms;” new conservative offensives; massive political miscalculations about direct action and the organizational capacities of marginal communities; or vanguardist groups utilizing these processes to recruit for their own projects. The existence of realigned social democratic parties (such as the NDP) will set the rightward boundary of a renewed socialist organization in Canada. There are many hard issues that socialists will have to grapple with in order for socialist politics and visions to become a defining component of anti-capitalist struggles in Canada again. ★

Peter Graham is a Toronto-based activist and member of Socialist Project.

Greg Albo teaches political economy at York University and is active in Socialist Project.

DEBATE: 20TH CENTURY SOCIALISM

Learning from the history of struggle

BY ADRIE NAYLOR

As a young socialist, it is easy to feel disconnected from the struggles that characterized the 20th century. Although many of the gains achieved through mass action during that period remain visible, the energy mobilized in the fight to realize them has dissipated, at least within Canada. The irony is that many of the specific struggles of the 1960s and 1970s – anti-racism, feminism, the campaign for gay and lesbian rights, the anti-war movement, and a general sense of anti-capitalism – are still relevant and yet, with the possible exception of the anti-war movement, have not generated the same momentum that existed 30 or 40 years ago.

In NS61, Alan Sears argues that socialism as a political reference point is currently so marginal that 21st century socialists are essentially starting over. He contended that the link between today's socialism and the socialism that characterized the 20th century – one that existed in a certain political climate and had a particular set of objectives – is tenuous at best.

In many ways, I agree. Clearly, as Sears argues, the political climate has changed. However much Stalinism was a perversion of socialism, its existence on a global level at least ensured socialism remained within political discussion and debate. As Sears notes, the ever-increasing privatization of space (both physical and psychological) for dissent has meant political discussion and debate do not have the same place within society as they once did.

However, I see room for further analysis and debate in his contention that we are starting over. Instead, I would argue



Latino radicals on a US anti-Vietnam war demonstration, early 1970s

there are two essential tasks to be undertaken. While it is crucially important to develop means of organizing specific to the new political and social climate in which we find ourselves, in doing so we should be informed by the successes and failures of previous socialist struggles. There is a rich history of both, and I think underutilizing the lessons they generated would waste this valuable resource.

In reading Sears' article, I was struck by the similarities between then and now, and perplexed by many of the differences. For example, while protests against the war in Iraq were reportedly bigger than any anti-Vietnam War protests, why have they not inspired mobilization for other struggles the way anti-Vietnam sentiment did? Why didn't the wave of anti-globalization sentiment and action before 9/11, seen clearly in North America in both Seattle and Québec City, get channelled into the anti-war movement a few years later? Why haven't lofty justifications of being in Afghanistan partly to defend women's rights generated questions at home about women's rights with respect to the growing feminization of poverty? Why haven't protests against American imperialism abroad (Canadian anti-war sentiment has rarely been couched in terms of opposition to Canadian imperialism) generated solidarity between largely white, student anti-war activists and oppressed minorities within the US and Canada, both aboriginal

people and people of colour, particularly immigrants? Instead, this period has seen a notable rise in poor-bashing and anti-immigrant racism.

I agree with Sears that this is partly due to a lack of solidarity among the working class, but I would argue that the different response is also a reaction to the way the anti-war movement has presented and justified itself. Today's anti-war sentiment is often couched in blatantly nationalist rhetoric ("Bring the Troops Home" to save Canadian or American lives rather than Afghan or Iraqi ones). This doesn't leave room for opposition to the war based on solidarity with people living in Afghanistan or Iraq, making it difficult to draw a connection between a struggle in support of oppressed people abroad and solidarity with the oppressed at home. As well, the term "democracy" has been so co-opted by the imperial forces that democracy has become something benevolently bestowed (or forced) on people rather than something they struggle for and achieve themselves.

The challenge – to frame today's anti-war movement in such a way as to link it to other struggles currently being waged in North America and beyond – means drawing upon one of the real successes of the mass action that distinguished the anti-Vietnam movement. In this way, we can draw upon lessons learned by previous socialists while adapting them to current circumstances. ★

Adrie Naylor is a student and a member of the Winnipeg branch of the New Socialist Group.

DEBATE: 20TH CENTURY SOCIALISM

What is different for socialism today?

BY PATRICK MCGUIRE

In “The End of 20th Century Socialism” (NS61), Alan Sears asks a worthwhile question: Do radicals in English-speaking Canada need to start over with fresh visions and tactics in order to make socialism a viable revolutionary project? I commend Sears on starting this discussion. It may prove useful in thinking critically about radical social change in Canada. That said, Sears’ piece opens up many more questions than it answers and I am curious to collectively explore his analysis more fully.

Firstly, the primary strength of the article is its brief yet descriptive overview of the history of socialism in Canada. Sears highlights the major phases of struggle and places them in the context of responses by capital and the state. This history would be particularly useful for newer members of the left due to its solid positioning of class struggle and workplace organizing. Further, Sears describes some of the contemporary challenges facing socialists, such as attacks on immigrant communities, lean production methods and the withering of social democratic parties.

My only serious objection is that in providing so much descriptive history, the article could have better been called “The end of the conditions for 20th century socialism.” That is, it sidesteps the task of actually defining 20th century socialism. While to do so in a short magazine article is a challenge, Sears identifies three strains of revolutionary socialism (Stalinism, anti-Stalinism and Anarchism/Left Communism). But by suggesting that we are witnessing the end of 20th century socialism, what precisely is being argued? Are the conditions of struggle in contemporary Canada so fundamentally differ-



Solidarity with indigenous peoples is vital for the Left.

ent that we need to completely re-think what socialism means? Or are the previous strains of socialism obsolete because they no longer speak to the present social situation? I doubt Sears is suggesting this, because he would likely find many salvageable ideas and lessons within certain strains of 20th century socialism. So which parts of previous socialist models need to be maintained and which need to be jettisoned? Approaching this discussion as a class struggle anarchist, I’m biased towards one strain Sears identifies, but all revolutionary socialists need to engage with this question.

EXCLUSIONARY NATURE

This leads me to speculate on how 21st century socialism could or should be different than that of the previous century. Sears identifies the failed project of “full citizenship” due to its inherently exclusionary nature. I concur with this analysis and propose that it reinforces the need for a rights-based approach grounded in internationalism rather than petty nationalism. Similarly, he points to

the precarious qualities of modern labour and the new workplace. In response, I think we need to re-imagine how to make socialist politics a lived daily experience at work. This will require coming to terms with the end of the post-WWII settlement, something that most of the Canadian labour movement has yet to do. As John Clarke of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty explains, some people still believe they are having a friendly round of shadow-boxing with the boss despite the fact that they are repeatedly getting pounded by body blow after body blow.

Further, I heartily agree with Sears’ suggestion that the feminism, anti-racism and queer liberation politics of the New Left need to be maintained and strengthened in future socialisms. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, one of the biggest differences between 20th century and 21st century socialism should be our understanding of anti-colonial struggles within Canada. None of the previous strains of socialism adequately or effectively came to grips with what it would mean to make a revolution in a colonial settler state. Thus, meaningful indigenous solidarity work will remain a pivotal challenge for all radicals dedicated to complete human liberation on Turtle Island.

Radical left wing ideas have been mostly eclipsed in contemporary Canadian politics. For those of us who are serious about creating a fundamentally different tomorrow we need to ask difficult questions about previous models and tactics. Did they fail because the objective conditions weren’t propitious or because our ideas and methods were insufficient? More importantly, faced with our current social reality, what kind of politics and actions do we need to successfully build a new society? Alan Sears’ “The end of 20th century socialism” can serve as a jumping-off point for this worthwhile discussion. ★

Patrick McGuire is an anarcho-syndicalist and a member of the Industrial Workers of the World. He works as a public school teacher and lives in Winnipeg with his life partner and two sons.

DEBATE: 20TH CENTURY SOCIALISM

Need collective inquiry rooted in activism

BY ALAN SEARS

In *New Socialist* 61, I made the provocative argument that the current marginalization of socialism does not represent a normal cyclical downswing, but the exhaustion of a particular mode of socialist organizing. The conditions in which 20th century socialism thrived no longer exist in the same way. We need to focus on the development of the next new Left.

Patrick McGuire points out that my article examined the end of a particular set of social and economic conditions, but did not really clarify the meaning of “20th century socialism.” I used this disturbingly vague term to make the point that the major currents of 20th century socialism existed in relation to one another. Social democracy, stalinism, anti-stalinism and anarchism/left communism all shared key political coordinates, representing opposite poles in a specific set of debates constructed around particular conditions that no longer apply.

The navigational tools shared by these currents of 20th century socialism are now outmoded. This does not mean that they have nothing to offer us, but that we cannot rely on them to figure out the terrain ahead without using our own senses. There comes a moment in navigation when you need to override the charts and instruments, recognizing that you are about to ram into the spit of land dead ahead of you, even if it is not supposed to be there.

Twentieth century socialism has been dislocated by major cultural, social and political changes. We cannot carry on with maps oriented around key landmarks

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that are no longer there, or are no longer recognizable. The old centres of working-class dissent (such as Winnipeg’s North End or Windsor’s Drouillard Road) no longer play that role. Many working-class people now live and work in situations that are less conducive to the formation of communities of resistance. This does not mean that they cannot or will not fight back, but that the infrastructure of dissent that has historically developed the capacity for sustained mobilization will need to be rebuilt in new ways.

Peter Graham and Greg Albo question my assessment of certain of these changes in the organization of work and

*We cannot carry on
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recognizable.*

community, including the impact of suburbanization, increased working hours, and changes in leisure activities. I agree that we must learn more about these factors, debating them in greater detail and with more precision. At the same time, I think we need to be clear that the left is currently seriously dislocated.

This dislocation does not mean we should simply toss out the old maps. Adrienne Naylor raises the important concern that my argument about the end of 20th century socialism might imply that there is nothing to be learned from this incredible historical experience of struggle. I would argue that we can neither turn our back on the past nor assume that it provides us with a ready set of answers to



Drouillard Rd., Windsor: Mural in honour of a radical past.

address the issues of the future.

There is a great deal we do not know yet about the politics required to build the next new Left. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, small groupings of socialists in Britain, France, Italy, the United States and elsewhere began to focus on building a New Left, rather than simply attempting to sustain the old one. They applied themselves to an open analysis of changes in the world and within the working class itself, while learning from their activist experiences as militancy began to reemerge.

It will require a process of collective inquiry, rooted in activism, to begin addressing some of the key questions the Left currently faces. Adrienne Naylor invites us to figure out why the current anti-war movement is relatively weak compared to the Vietnam era. Peter Graham and Greg Albo suggest we need to understand the reasons for the sharp decline of the global justice movement in the Canadian state outside Quebec after 9/11. Patrick McGuire asks us to consider how socialist politics might again become part of the daily reality of the workplace. Genuinely open-ended discussion and debate are crucial if we are to begin building the next new Left by addressing these and other pressing questions. ★

BOOK REVIEW

Imperialist or empire's assistant?

**HOLDING THE BULLY'S COAT:
CANADA AND THE U.S. EMPIRE**
BY LINDA McQUAIG
DOUBLEDAY CANADA, 2007

REVIEWED BY TODD GORDON

Canada's increasingly belligerent foreign policy stance cries out for critical analysis. Yet much of the Canadian Left's analysis remains several steps behind Canada's ruling class, as the latter charts out Canada's role in the global order for the coming decades. Journalist Linda McQuaig's most recent book, *Holding the Bully's Coat*, seeks to address this perennial weakness of the Left.

It details the cozy relationship that the Paul Martin Liberal and Stephen Harper Tory governments have been nurturing with the United States since 9-11. Canada is a key part of the occupation of Afghanistan, played an important role in the 2004 removal of the democratically-elected Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and has been unambiguously supporting Israeli aggression in the occupied territories and Lebanon.

Canada can't be seen simply as a benign presence on the international stage, McQuaig quite correctly concludes. Political, military and business leaders are asserting Canada as a power (if not a superpower) to be taken seriously by others – by the US ruling class as a dependable ally in the “War on Terror,” and by “rogue” and/or “failed” states as an enforcer of Western interests. The foreign policy objectives of the Canadian ruling class, she stresses, don't serve the interests of the average Canadian who's already been subjected to government cutbacks, corporate downsizing and free trade by these same forces.

But if *Holding the Bully's Coat* does well to critically explore Canada's

wretched foreign policy stance of recent years, it nevertheless suffers from its failure to break with the traditional left nationalist dogma that's been plaguing Canada's progressive community for several decades.

For instance, McQuaig frequently makes recourse to the left nationalist refrain that Canada's present foreign policy course is a reversal of its traditional role as a fair and neutral arbiter of international conflict. The jacket cover suggests that “Ottawa has abandoned Canada's traditional attempt to be a fair-minded mediator and conciliator, most notably in the Middle East conflict.” At the same time, however, McQuaig is alive to the fact that left nationalism sanitizes the history of Canadian foreign policy and cannot properly account for Canadian actions abroad that have served its own imperialist interests and those of rich nations more generally. She notes, for example, despite the jacket cover quote above, that in fact Canada has more often than not sided with Israel's illegal and colonial occupation of Palestine against the Palestinians. This tension occurs throughout the book.

McQuaig also draws on another well worn notion used by mainstream leftist critics trying to explain Canadian support for imperialist policies without jettisoning their nationalism: that Canada is merely, as the title says, holding the bully's coat. Canada is relegated to a country without an imperialist agenda of its own; rather, it's seeking to curry favour with the superpower by offering itself as an enabler of US imperialism. By lining up with the US in Afghanistan, for example, Canada provides the US mission with a much-needed fig leaf of internationalism and humanitarian concern.

This argument can only be sustained by remaining silent about the global economic system Canada is a part of, and its position within it. Capitalism is driven



by global expansion, where corporations, trying to survive crowded marketplaces, race around the world, and increasingly into the South, in pursuit of new areas to increase profits. Canadian corporations now have one of the highest rates of foreign investment into developing countries among the G8. Canadian financial, mining, oil and gas, hydro-electric and telecommunications companies are some of the most competitive in the world.

One of the Canadian government's principle foreign policy goals is to protect its corporation's interests against those in the South who might oppose them, be it governments or social movements. That's why Harper visited Colombia recently to promote Canadian investment despite the country's atrocious human rights record, and why Canada supports structural adjustment policies and refuses to enforce human rights standards on Canadian companies that are now systematically violating the rights of people in the regions they're investing in. Thus Canadian imperialism can't be simply reduced to US imperialism.

Unfortunately *Holding the Bully's Coat* suffers from a superficial analysis that simply can't provide the insights that are necessary to properly understand current directions in Canadian foreign policy. ★

Todd Gordon is an editor of *New Socialist*.

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Labour day parade, Toronto, 2007: Labour for Palestine contingent distributed thousands of leaflets calling for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israeli apartheid.

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