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NOV-JAN 2005/2006
ISSUE NO. 54
\$4.95
www.newsociallist.org

SPECIAL ISSUE ON CANADA & EMPIRE
HURRICANE KATRINA

EDITORIAL

Canada and Empire

Since the US government reacted to the attacks of September 11th, 2001 by accelerating its push for global dominance, there has been more talk about empire and imperialism than at any time since the 1970s.

With Canadian troops and police in Afghanistan and Haiti, the big boost in spending on the military in the last federal budget and active government support for the “structural adjustment” policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that have inflicted so much harm on people in the “Third World,” serious questions about Canada’s relationship to imperialism are harder and harder to ignore.

But because most anti-imperialist protest and analysis in Canada focuses on the US, such important questions often go unanswered. This special issue of *New Socialist* on Canada and Empire tackles some of them.

In our view, one of the reasons why the Left in Canada has a hard time coming to grips with Canada’s role in the world today is that most of the broad Left sees Canada as a nation under the thumb of the US. Much left-wing analysis has portrayed Canada as a dependent nation (similar to the so-called developing world, only richer) with a weak capitalist class that lacks a nefarious global reach of its own.

Such ideas are common on the moderate Left – in the NDP, NGOs like the Council of Canadians and among many labour, peace and social justice activists. Many people on the radical Left see things in a similar way.

This view of Canada leads people to assert that the best strategy for advancing socialism is to organize for a sovereign Canada, free from the controlling yoke of the US, and, furthermore, that the Canadian state can be a vehicle to realize this goal.

For the editors of *New Socialist*, this “left-nationalist” view has never really been very helpful in understanding Canada and its place in the world order, and it has even less credibility today than it did in the past, as the articles in this issue show.

The very existence of the Canadian state was made possible by the colonization of Aboriginal Peoples within Canadian borders. The theft of Aboriginal land and the denial of Aboriginal People’s rights to freely determine their own futures have only intensified since the emergence of the agenda of privatization, economic restructuring and capitalist expansion often called neoliberalism (reflected in deals like NAFTA).

No serious analysis of Canadian history or contemporary state policies towards Aboriginal communities can deny the colonial nature of Canada or lend credence to a political strategy based on asserting the sovereignty of the same state that denies Aboriginal Peoples and Quebec the right to self-determination up to and including independence if they so choose.

In our view, the notion that Canada is some kind of dependent nation can’t be squared with the reality of the Canadian state’s current role in Haiti or its pursuit of policies that destroy the livelihoods of millions of people in the Global South while giving free reign to multinational corporations – including Canadian companies – to plunder their resources.

This special theme issue of *New Socialist* aims to contribute to the development of a better understanding of Canadian capitalist society and its place in the imperialist world order. The articles it presents challenge different aspects of the view of Canada held by far too much of the Left.

Our theme section begins with an overview of Canada’s position within the contemporary global order. Other articles consider Canada’s relations with Aboriginal Peoples, the activities of Canadian corporations in the “Third World,” Canada’s role in Haiti, Canadian military intervention, the accuracy of claims that Canada is controlled by US capital, and racism and anti-racism in Canada. The last article looks at why so many people see Canada as an underdog and at what the analysis developed in the other articles means for the politics of social change.

The editors of *New Socialist* want to open up discussion and debate with this issue. We’re advancing analysis and arguments of a kind that traditionally have been dismissed without the serious consideration they deserve on the Left. In our view, people who want to transform Canadian society need a reliable understanding of this society and a political strategy that flows from this. But we don’t pretend that we can come up with them on our own. We see this special theme issue as a first step.

To encourage discussion and debate both with people who agree with the kind of perspectives presented in this issue and those who don’t, we are planning to feature responses in the next issue of *New Socialist*. We ask individuals or groups who consider these matters important to contribute. For the next issue, we will consider articles received by December 15, 2005, and we will accept letters until the end of the year. ★

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Issue #54: November-January, 2005-2006

NEW SOCIALIST offers radical analysis of politics, social movements and culture in the Canadian state and internationally. Our magazine is a forum for people who want to strengthen today's activism and for those who wish to replace global capitalism with a genuinely democratic socialism. We believe that the liberation of the working class and oppressed peoples can be won only through their own struggles. For more information about the publisher of this magazine, the New Socialist Group, please see the inside back cover.

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Editors or members of the New Socialist Group.

New Socialist is a member of the CMPA.
Printed at JT Printing, a union shop



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As this issue of *New Socialist* went to press, teachers in BC continued their strike in defiance of anti-union legislation and court rulings, and are receiving strong support. Visit www.newsocialist.org for news from this important struggle, and stay tuned for analysis in the next issue of this magazine!

LETTERS

Dove beauty and critical feminism

MY RECENT EXPERIENCE AS AN EXHIBIT attendant in a Winnipeg mall for “The Dove Real Beauty Photography Exhibit” offered an important lesson about the significance of articulate feminist analysis such as that provided by Jackie Esmonde in the last issue of *New Socialist*. The mass media portrayal of the beauty ideal is unquestionably very real to the crowds of mostly women who showed up in the thousands to visit the Dove exhibit. They were visibly and self-admittedly moved, inspired, grateful and overtly supportive and excited about Dove’s campaign. They openly praised Dove’s efforts with statements like “it’s about time” or “I have been following the campaign and love what Dove is doing.” A large number of women talked about the importance of the campaign in securing a better future for their daughters and it was not uncommon to see the eyes of women swell with tears of hope as they enjoyed the exhibit.

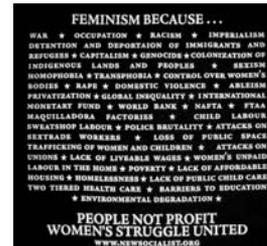
A general critique of the ideology of beauty or a healthy suspicion about the campaign’s real motivations of profit were apparently absent from everyone’s mind as they were allowed a few moments to entertain the possibility that they were being witness to the beginning of a new era. Though these responses should not be surprising in a time and place without any significant women’s movement, the experience was disheartening. Critical feminist analysis such as that offered in the last issue of *New Socialist* will be crucial to maintaining clarity in a time when ‘the word in the mall’ offers little.

Nicole Dzuba



DOVE: Real women have real curves. Meet the women selected to join the Dove Firming campaign.
(www.campaignforrealbeauty.com).

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Feminist t-shirt: front and back



Anti-occupation/anti-Imperialism t-shirt: front and back

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NEW SOCIALIST welcomes letters and other contributions.

Please write to us at letters@newsocialist.org

FEATURE

Canada and empire

BY DAVID McNALLY

PARTICULARLY SINCE THE 1960s, MUCH OF THE LEFT IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING CANADA HAS DESCRIBED THIS country as a colony or dependency of the United States. Those who share this analysis typically argue that imperialism in the Canadian context involves a one-way relationship in which the US dominates and oppresses Canada. With the Canadian state thus depicted as a victim of imperialism, the idea of Canada and its ruling class as imperialist is largely dismissed out of hand.

For the most part, this position is highly influential inside the New Democratic Party (NDP), the Council of Canadians, much of the officialdom of the union movement and not infrequently in the pages of publications like *Canadian Dimension*. To be sure, there are important differences of emphasis among these groups. But the dominant currents of opinion in their circles assume that defending the sovereignty of the Canadian state is a progressive stance. In the last couple of years, for instance, the Council of Canadians has argued that Canada is being transformed from a country to a colony, while *Canadian Dimension*, which to its credit has also published dissenting opinions, has sponsored a series of articles arguing for a campaign in defence of Canadian sovereignty.

However, this position – often described as *left nationalism* for the way it embraces defence of Canadian nationhood as oppositional to empire – has always had its critics on the Left. And many of these critics have produced powerful analyses that directly challenge the assumptions of left nationalism. Moreover, many of those criticisms look especially potent today, in the era of capitalist globalization. In what follows, I offer a summary of some of the main arguments put forward by those on the Left who consider Canada to be not a dependency but a middle level imperialist power in its own right, and who thus question the progressiveness of politics founded on Canadian nationalism.

DEFINING IMPERIALISM

WHILE THERE IS NO CONSENSUS OVER THE MEANING OF the term imperialism, I will offer a preliminary formulation that will meet, I think, with the agreement of many: *Imperialism is a system of global inequalities and domination - embodied in regimes of property, military power and global insti-*



Paul Martin and George W. Bush: two faces of empire

tutions - through which wealth is drained from the labour and resources of people in the Global South to the systematic advantage of capital in the North. A nation-state is imperialist, then, to the extent to which its state and ruling class perpetuate and systematically benefit from this system of global inequalities. While this definition is far from exhaustive (and I will come back to other dimensions later), it is a crucial point of departure. Furthermore, by this definition, I suggest, the Canadian state, and its capitalist class, ought to be described as imperialist.

Those who would dispute this tend to argue principally that the Canadian economy suffers from massive and debilitating levels of foreign ownership, so much so that its economic elites cannot be considered an independent class in their own right. This argument is repeated throughout the nationalist Left. But does it actually stand up to inspection?

Let's begin with foreign ownership of the Canadian economy. In 1971, foreign control of business assets in Canada (excluding the financial sector) stood at 37 per cent.

David McNally is an editorial associate of New Socialist and a member of the New Socialist Group.

By the mid 1980s, however, foreign ownership had *fallen* to less than 24 per cent – meaning that Canadian business had been buying back large chunks of the domestic economy. Over the same period, the American share of these Canadian assets dipped to less than 17 per cent. Once we include financial corporations, like banks and insurance companies, we discover that *only about twenty percent of all business assets in Canada are foreign owned*, and that American capital controls only about 11 per cent of all corporate wealth in Canada. As a result of these trends, by the early 1990s, US ownership of the Canadian economy was at its lowest level since the 1920s. It is hard to see, therefore, how left nationalists can sustain the idea that Canada is being persistently colonized by American capital.

Looking for different indicators, some left nationalists have pointed to the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) as a sign of an ongoing, or even escalating, US takeover of the Canadian economy. But, again, the facts do not bear out these claims. When we compare the amount of foreign investment that flows into Canada as a proportion of gross national product we discover that it is lower than the rate in the Netherlands, Australia and even Britain. It is true that countries like the US and Japan have lower rates of FDI inflow, but Canada's profile by these measures is pretty much what one would expect of a first-tier middle power in the world capitalist system.

OPPOSING CANADIAN IMPERIALISM

There are a number of important campaigns against the abusive practices of Canadian multinationals in various parts of the world. Here is how to contact some of them:

Rights Action has been coordinating much of the work against Glamis Gold in Guatemala. Their website can be found at www.rightsaction.org. They can be contacted directly at info@rightsaction.org

For solidarity work with the movement against Alcan in India check out the Alcan't in India campaign at www.saanet.org/alcant

Information on the struggle against Inco's actions in Indonesia is available from Mining Watch Canada. Email Catherine@miningwatch.ca for updates. Also check out the Mining Watch website: www.mining-watch.ca

There is also an ongoing campaign against Canada's military intervention in Haiti. The website of Haiti Action Montreal is particularly useful in this regard. See www.haitiaction.net

CANADIAN FOREIGN INVESTMENT

MORE SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, IS THE FACT THAT Canadian-based businesses are now among the most aggressive foreign investors in the world. FDI by Canadian corporations is equal to 18 per cent of the country's gross national product, ranking Canadian capital fifth in terms the relative amount it devotes to investing outside domestic borders. Judged per capita, Canadian capital has a higher rate of foreign investment than does big business in either the US or Japan. Only Britain exceeds it among the world's wealthiest nations.

To look at Canadian FDI in slightly different terms, for every dollar of foreign direct investment that flowed into Canada in the 1990s, about \$1.70 flowed out. In short, Canadian capitalists are buying up or starting up foreign businesses at a much faster rate than foreign capital is doing the same here. As a result, by the mid 1990s the value of foreign investments by Canadian business exceeded the value of FDI in this country.

These growing levels of foreign investment by Canadian corporations have generated what is known as a *dividend surplus* for Canadian capital. This term refers to the ratio between dividends that flow out of Canada to foreign investors (because of what they own here), and the dividends that flow into Canada by virtue of Canadian ownership of businesses in other countries. In short, a country has a dividend surplus if its capitalists make more outside their home country than foreign corporations take out of that same country. By 2000, according to Statistics Canada, this country was running a dividend surplus to the tune of \$3.5 billion per year.

Most of these dividends flow in from investments within other capitalistically developed countries, since most Canadian FDI can be found in such countries. In this Canada resembles all the countries at the core of the world system. At the same time, however, Canadian-based banks and businesses are significant investors in the Global South, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. Compared to other core nations, Canada is the second largest foreign investor in Jamaica, Bolivia, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. Canadian capital also has a significant presence in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, India, Vietnam and the Philippines, among others. In addition, corporations based here have established a foothold in China, Indonesia, Malaysia and parts of West Africa.

Investments by Canadian multinationals in the so-called less developed countries of the South are designed, like all such investments by core countries, to take advantage of the cheap labour, readily exploitable natural resources, lax taxation systems and weak labour rights to be found in many of the poorest parts of the world. On top of these practices, western banks set a debt trap for countries of the South, extending them loans which they repay many times over as a result of payments on interest and principal. Taken in combination, activities of western banks and multinational corporations siphon hundreds of billions of dollars out of the South



The unloading of Canadian troops in Afghanistan, 2003

every year, robbing the world's poorest to the benefit of global corporate capital. And Canadian capital is without a doubt one of the beneficiaries of this global system of unequal flows of wealth.

CANADIAN CAPITAL VERSUS THE WORLD'S POOR

IN FACT, MANY CANADIAN COMPANIES HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT of protest campaigns as a result of their exploitative practices in the Third World. Let me take four recent examples.

In Guatemala, Glamis Gold, a subsidiary of Canadian-owned Skye Resources, is in direct conflict with local Mayan communities. In the course of establishing an open pit gold and silver mine, backed by the World Bank, Glamis is wreaking environmental damage, displacing Indigenous Peoples and undermining their water supply. Sustained protests, including a march by 1000 Mayan women and men, have been greeted by paramilitary responses, resulting in the death of one protestor and injuries to many others.

Consider next the behaviour of eight Canadian mining firms in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Investigations show that these firms have been complicit in human rights violations in the midst of civil wars that have killed three million people. A 2003 report by the United Nations found these Canadian mining companies in violation of international standards for corporate conduct with respect to human rights, taxation and other matters. Canadian journalist Madeline Drohan documents the sometimes violently exploitative practices of these firms in her book, *Making a*

Killing: The Corporate Use of Armed Force in Africa.

Now let us examine the case of Alcan, a Canadian-based multinational firm that is among the world's largest aluminum companies.

In India, Indigenous Peoples, the Adivasis, have been waging a defiant campaign against Alcan, in its role as half-owner of a proposed bauxite mine and refinery in the Baphlimali hills in the Kshipur region of Orissa. Thousands of Adivasis are facing displacement as a result of effluent discharge, ash disposal and the dumping of overburden – all of which will dramatically degrade the local environment. Since 1998, Indigenous Peoples have been protesting against the development of the mine and refinery. They have regularly been met by armed police, who have killed at least four and wounded hundreds.

Finally, I offer the example of the International Nickel Company (Inco). More than thirty years ago, Inco was involved in displacing the Karonsi'e Dongo community of Sorowako, Indonesia when it began mining operations in the area. Recently, this Indigenous community has stepped up actions to force the company into negotiations over land and compensation. In September of this year, protestors held demonstrations, a sit-in and a hunger strike at Inco's regional office in Makassar, Indonesia. Shortly afterwards, 500 people staged a blockade at the PT Inco mine site in Sorowako.

In each of these cases, we observe some of the world's poor locked in opposition to Canadian multinational corporations. Taken as a whole, these four cases illustrate the violent practices of exploitation of labour, plunder of natural resources and

appalling human displacement characteristic of Canadian corporations in various regions of the Global South. These are recognizably the practices of imperialists – capitalist firms in the core nations of the world system engaged in siphoning wealth from the poorest regions of the world, and cooperating in violent suppression of popular dissent. While some might argue that the prevalence of mining companies in these examples shows that Canada is not a first-tier capitalist economy, since mining is ostensibly a mere resource industry, William Carroll demonstrated many years ago in his book *Corporate Power and Canadian Capitalism* that mining firms are very much high-tech companies operating at the cutting edge of modern capitalism.

RESORTING TO FORCE

THESE FOUR EXAMPLES ALSO RAISE AN IMPORTANT DIMENSION of imperialism only hinted at in my original definition: the use of force by the core capitalist countries, and corporations based there, in order to secure the flow of wealth out of the South. And just as Canadian firms have regularly been complicit with violence in the interests of accumulation – be it in Guatemala, the Congo, India or Indonesia – so has the Canadian state. Many Canadians don't like to admit this unpalatable truth. But the evidence is clear on the matter.

Of course, capitalism always involves the threat of force. While the day-to-day business of exploitation often proceeds without overt violence, force is readily available should protest and resistance create instability for capital. That is why militant demonstrations, strikes and sit-ins are frequently met with police violence and arrests. And such resort to force is especially common in the South, where western capital provokes special opposition for its behaviour as an intruder utterly disrespectful of the needs and histories of local populations.

Since the end of the Second World War, there has been an unending string of imperialist interventions in the South. Asia, the Middle East and Latin America in particular have known repeated military invasions, of which the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq are only the most recent examples. And the Canadian state has frequently played an active part in toppling regimes and suppressing dissent in the South.

Today, for instance, Canadian troops are actively involved in imperial ventures in both Afghanistan and Haiti. The Canadian presence in Afghanistan, as part of a coalition of occupying forces, demonstrates that our government is completely prepared to override the right of peoples to self-determination. And its role in Haiti, which is less publicized, has been especially odious.

At first, Caribbean leaders denounced Canada for not speaking out against the US-backed coup that removed Haiti's president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide in early 2004. But as the dust settled, it became clear that, worse than not speaking out, Canadian troops were central participants in the kidnapping of Aristide.

As the deposed Aristide told Naomi Klein recently (June 20, 2005), "the coup, or the kidnapping, was led by the

United States, France and Canada. These three countries were on the front lines by sending their soldiers to Haiti before February 29 [2004, when Aristide was overthrown], by having their soldiers either at the airport or at my residence or around the palace or in the capital to make sure that they succeeded in kidnapping me."

And since that time, Canadian troops have been on the front lines of violent repression of Haitian resistance. On May 18, 2005, for instance, hundreds of thousands poured into the streets of Port-au-Prince to demand the return of Aristide and the end of western occupation. Canadian soldiers, among others, opened fire, killing many.

Whatever valid criticisms there may be of Aristide, it is hard to disagree with his view that "the Canadian government and the Canadian army have Haitian blood on their hands."

IMPERIAL CANADA

TO THE CLAIM THAT CANADA PLAYS THIS ROLE ONLY because it's a boot boy to the US, we need to remember that Canada's rulers refused to go along with the recent US war against Iraq, just as it abstained from the American war in Vietnam.

The Canadian government helped depose Aristide because, in protecting the interests of Canadian capital, it perceives any government insufficiently compliant with the interests of western business to be a threat. And so blood flows in Haiti – just as in Guatemala, the Congo, India or Indonesia – in defence of Canadian capitalism.

This is the reality of Canada and empire. This is the ugly face of a middle level imperialist power that pretends that, because it lacks the aggressive capacity of US imperialism, it has no imperialist interests of its own. History and geopolitics tell a different story. And it's a story we must hear and publicize – if we are to stand in genuine solidarity with those fighting the predatory actions of Canadian capital in the Global South. ★

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

While the literature on Canada as a developed capitalist power in its own right is fairly thin, there are some classics very much worth consulting. Some of these books may be hard to find, so people should be encouraged to share and circulate them. Others are readily available in major libraries. Here are a few recommendations:

Steve Moore and Debi Wells, *Imperialism and the National Question in Canada* (1974)

William Carroll, *Corporate Power and Canadian Capitalism* (1986)

Jorge Niosi, *Canadian Multinationals* (1985)

There is a growing number of activists and scholar-activists now working on these issues. We should soon have some major works to stand alongside these classics from an earlier period.

Does the US control Canada's economy?

BY BILL BURGESS

Most socialists, anti-globalization activists and other progressive-minded people in Canada believe that the US controls Canada's economy. US capitalists are often considered the "main enemy."

If this was true, Canadian nationalist demands could play a positive role in working-class and other progressive struggles. However, the left-nationalist understanding of Canada's economy is wrong on three inter-related points.

First, there is less US investment and control within Canada than is widely assumed. Second, capitalists in Canada are not so divided between industrial sectors or integrated with US capitalists that they lack independent interests at home and abroad. Finally, capitalist industrial development in Canada is not distorted or underdeveloped.

In other words, Canadian capitalists, not foreign capitalists control the Canadian economy. Capitalism here is Canadian.

Left-nationalists have argued for decades that Canada suffers from a distorted form of economic development flowing from foreign control. Their usual solution has been some form of "national industrial policy" to direct Canadian

capitalism away from natural resource or "staple" production towards job-rich, "higher-end" manufacturing activities.

In fact, there is actually little to criticize about the comparative record of capitalism in Canada. Yes, Canada is more specialized in primary products than other G7 countries (US, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy). However, this is not some kind of "staples" colony: the resource-extracting primary sector share of the economy (GDP) is less than six percent.

Nor is the relative scale of manufacturing in Canada very different than that in other imperialist countries. It accounts for the same share of GDP as in the US. Left-nationalists predicted that "free" trade with the US would "de-industrialize" Canada. In 1988 there were 1.99 million manufacturing jobs. There are now 1.93 million. Meanwhile, manufacturing employment in the US has fallen by 3 million.

What about the concern that, within the manufacturing sector, foreign ownership discourages high-tech, end-product manufacturing? Does Canada overspecialize in resource-intensive "intermediate" manufacturing products?

In fact, the "finished goods" portion of manufacturing output in Canada is the

same as the equivalent "final product" share of manufacturing output in the US. Both are around one-half of total manufacturing. An OECD ranking of individual manufacturing industries by level of technology also shows that Canadian industry falls within the norm for advanced capitalist economies. "High" and "medium-high" technology industries in Canada in 1995 accounted for a smaller share of total manufacturing than in the US, but their share was greater than in France and Italy.

The ability to export highly-manufactured goods is often cited as a measure of capitalist competitive success. The trend here is exactly opposite to what left-nationalists have predicted for decades.

Figure 1 shows that the share of total exports from Canada made up of both primary product and semi-manufactured goods has declined from around one-third in the 1970s to one-quarter. Meanwhile, the share accounted for by fully-manufactured goods has risen from about one-third to one-half. This share of Canada's GDP is now four times greater than in the US. In short, capitalist manufacturing in Canada has done what left-nationalists said it should, but could not, at least not without their "national industrial strategy."

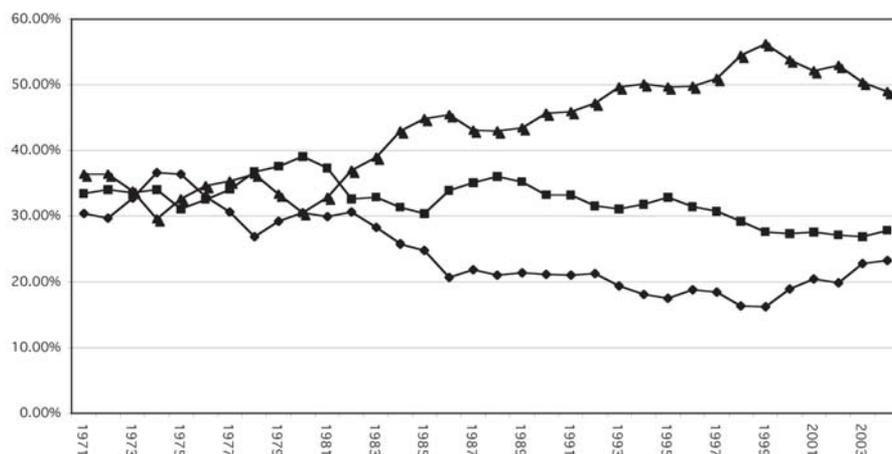
Yes, Canadian capitalism has vulnerabilities that constrain its ability to compete with imperialist rivals. But the core argument of left-nationalists – their basic pessimism regarding the comparative prospects for Canadian capitalist industrial development – is wrong.

What made left-nationalists think that Canada is so different from other imperialist countries? The answer is usually foreign investment. As political scientist Leo Panitch put it in 1985, Canada is marked by "the implantation within the social formation of a powerful fraction of foreign capital on a scale unmatched anywhere in the developed world."

However, the extent of foreign investment within Canada is exaggerated. Left-nationalists then compound this error by ignoring factors that help the Canadian bourgeoisie retain domination of the domestic economy.

The best indicator of foreign economic

FIGURE 1: Composition of exports from Canada, 1971-2004



SOURCE: Paul Kellogg, 2004

Bill Burgess teaches geography at Kwantlen University College in Vancouver.

penetration within a country is probably the share of corporate assets ultimately controlled by majority or large minority shareholders whose residence is foreign. For example, a corporation in Canada that is 51 percent owned by a corporation headquartered in France, that in turn is 51 percent owned by a family trust in the US, is considered US-controlled.

As illustrated in Figure 2, Statistics Canada reports that 78 percent of all corporate assets in Canada in 2003 were Canadian-controlled. Only 14 percent of corporate assets were US-controlled, less than usually assumed. Left-nationalists invariably restrict their attention to the non-financial half of the economy, where foreign control is higher.

While high foreign control in such industries is significant, it is not representative. Canadians control 85 percent of all corporate assets in the financial half of the economy. The 78 percent rate of overall Canadian control is significantly higher than the 71 percent over non-financial corporation assets, or the 49 percent control over manufacturing assets. And if non-corporate assets (residential, farm, institutional, government, etc.) were included, the rate of Canadian control over all assets in the country would total about 90 percent.

The strategic role of the very largest and most powerful corporations is also relevant here. Statistics Canada calls groups of corporations controlled by a common parent corporation or family an enterprise. It reports that in 1998, Canadians controlled 95 percent of the assets of the largest 25 of these enterprises. The 25 enterprises accounted for 41 percent of all corporate assets in Canada.

Figure 3 lists the 25 largest enterprises in 2003 ranked by assets, plus additional enterprises that complete the "top 25" ranking by revenues. Only two of the 25 enterprises ranked by assets are foreign-controlled. Seven are foreign-controlled when the "top 25" ranking is by revenues.

Another error by left-nationalists is to one-sidedly focus on periods and instances when foreign control increases. Data compiled by Statistics Canada on foreign control of non-financial corporate assets and revenues shows that foreign control over non-financial corporate assets declined significantly between 1970 and 1985. As in most countries it

FIGURE 2: Control of corporate assets in Canada (%)

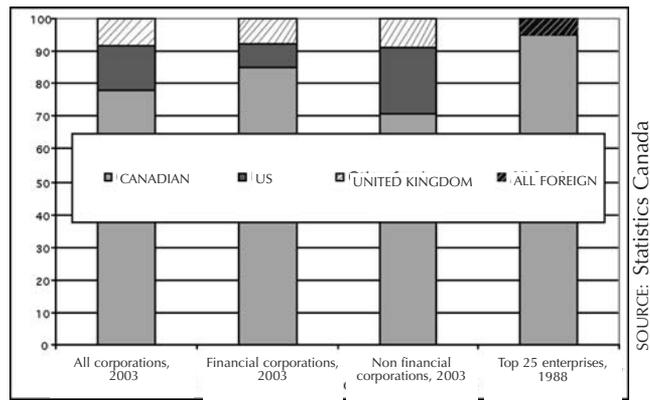


FIGURE 3: "Top 25" enterprises in Canada by corporate assets and revenues, 2003

ENTERPRISE HEAD (Controls Member Corp.)	CONTROL	ASSETS	REV.
Royal Bank Of Canada	Can	1	12
The Bank Of Nova Scotia	Can	2	24
Toronto-Dominion Bank	Can	3	15
Cdn. Imperial Bank Of Commerce	Can	4	25
Le Groupe Desmarais	Can	5	1
Bank Of Montreal	Can	6	28
Sun Life Financial Services Canada	Can	7	4
Le Gouvernement Du Quebec	Can	8	5
The Government Of Canada	Can	9	8
Le Groupe Desjardins	Can	10	35
Masonite International Corp.	Can	11	67
Canada Life Financial Corporation	Can	12	29
Partners Ltd	Can	13	22
Banque Nationale Du Canada	Can	14	78
Manulife Financial Corporation	Can	15	30
Bce Inc	Can	16	3
The Jr Shaw Family Group	Can	17	33
Fmr Corp	Usa	18	11
1109519 Ontario Limited	Can	19	10
Suncor Energy Inc	Can	20	40
Hsbc Holdings Plc	Gbr	21	137
Le Groupe De La Famille Peladeau	Can	22	13
Nortel Networks Corporation	Can	23	16
Weston Group	Can	24	2
The G.W. Schwartz Group	Can	25	7
Le Groupe De La Famille Bombardier	Can	27	19
Ford Motor Company	Usa	31	14
Ontario Municipal Emp. Retire. Ben.	Can	32	18
Stronach Trust	Can	35	9
General Motors Corp.	Usa	42	6
Exxon Mobil Corporation	Usa	45	17
Daimlerchrysler A.G.	Deu	47	23
Mitsui & Co Ltd	Jpn	48	21
Honda Motor Co. Ltd.	Jpn	492	20

NOTE: Ranking by sum of all large corporation members of the enterprise for which data available.
SOURCE: Calculated from Statistics Canada, Globe and Mail and Financial Post

has since risen, but both trends should be considered. A more balanced view is also gained by considering long periods of time. This requires a different indicator of foreign economic penetration, the stock of inward foreign direct investment (FDI) relative to the size of the economy (GDP). Inward FDI in Canada is now equivalent to 32 percent of GDP, compared to 33 percent in 1926. By this measure, Canada is a little less foreign-dominated, less “globalized” than it was 8 decades ago.

Finally, it simply is no longer true that foreign investment distinguishes Canada from other imperialist countries. When one compares the ratio of inward FDI stock to host country GDP in 2003, it is found that foreign penetration of Canada’s economy is less than in the UK and Sweden. The FDI/GDP ratio in Canada grew 10 percentage points between 1980 and 2003, but it grew by an average 27 percentage points in Western European countries. Their 33% average rate is now very similar to Canada’s 32 percent.

Left-nationalists also pay very little attention to outward FDI from Canada. Canadian capitalists hold more direct investments in foreign countries than foreign capitalists hold in Canada. In other words, it is not large inward foreign investments that distinguish Canada as much as large outward investment by Canadian capitalists. Of the G7 countries, only the UK and France have exported more capital relative to their GDP.

Finally, Canada conforms to the imperialist pattern of investing in “Third World” countries. In 2002, Canada was one of the largest foreign investors in the Americas. In most of these countries the US ranked first, but relative to the size of its economy, Canada held more direct investments in these countries than the US.

The third key assumption by left-nationalists is that the Canadian capitalist class lacks independent interests. As economist Mel Watkins describes it, an unequal alliance between Canadian financial capital and American industrial capital prevails within Canada. This country never developed an independent capitalist class rooted in both financial and industrial sectors. Such a class is considered the domestic base for the

imperialist form of capitalism.

In other words, Canadian corporations are assumed to be substantially integrated with foreign, especially US corporations. Part of the “Canadian” investment and control cited above therefore reflects foreign rather than Canadian interests. Left-nationalists complain that Canadian capitalists lack any real interest in defending Canadian sovereignty.

The main evidence for this line of argument was the pattern of directorship links between corporations, that is, when the same person serves on two or more Boards of Directors. Sociologist Wallace Clement claimed that only weak directorship links existed between Canadian financial and Canadian industrial corporations in the 1970s. He argued that inter-sector links within Canada were disrupted by extensive foreign ownership of industry.

However, international comparisons of directorship links in the 1980s clearly showed that the Canadian corporate network was relatively well integrated along a financial-industrial axis of Canadian-controlled firms. As sociologist Michael Ornstein notes, the Canadian network was actually one of the best integrated among advanced capitalist countries. William Carroll’s directorship studies confirm that the Canadian corporate network in 1996 was still far more integrated than that in the US. Carroll also tested for divisions along regional lines within the Canadian bourgeoisie, for example, whether the directorship links reveal a separate Western “oil bourgeoisie” allied with the US. They don’t. His results portray a predominately “national” corporate elite, linking finance with industry and East with West.

The significance of directorship links is not always clear, so it is also useful to look at links taking the form of share ownership. Among 600 large corporations in Canada in 2003 for which financial data is available, more than 70 percent had subsidiaries in both ‘financial’ and ‘industrial’ sectors. Of the 34 largest enterprises in Figure 3 ranked by assets and revenues, 23 include both large ‘financial’ corporations and ‘industrial’ corporations.

We know that most large corporations are Canadian-controlled. But even if Canadians own a majority of shares, could minority shareholdings by foreign-

ers provide a link between foreign and Canadian capital, and vice versa? Such alliances could disrupt an independent Canadian corporate interest.

In fact, there were only 26 instances among the large 600 corporations where foreign-controlled corporations or their subsidiaries held significant shareholdings in Canadian-controlled corporations or their subsidiaries. And there were only eight instances where Canadian-controlled corporations were linked through significant share ownership with foreign-controlled corporations within Canada.

Among the 34 largest enterprises in Figure 3, only three foreign-controlled corporations (DaimlerChrysler, Ford and Exxon) had significant share-holdings in corporations associated with Canadian-controlled enterprises. Only three Canadian-controlled enterprises had significant shareholdings in US-controlled corporations within Canada.

In short, the evidence shows that left-nationalists are wrong to deny that independent Canadian financial-industrial capital exists. This class is closely allied with US capital on many points, but this is a choice. It reflects their perception of how to best advance their interests. It is not because they are better connected to foreign capital than to each other.

The assumptions regarding foreign control, the organization of capital and the industrial structure of Canada discussed above have traditionally provided the justification for Canadian left-nationalist politics. In recent years other reasons have been raised, but this perspective is logically and historically rooted in these three points.

They are wrong on each count. Left-nationalists underestimate the Canadian capitalist class and its imperialist character at home and abroad. This is also true of many anti-globalization activists. In practice, both tend to oppose foreign capitalists rather than Canadian capitalists and capitalism itself.

The Left needs to develop a more accurate understanding of Canadian capitalism. This will more clearly place us with the majority of humanity against imperialism. More truth is also essential to better identify the social forces that may join the struggle within the Canadian state for a workers’ and farmers’ government.★

Colonialism and Aboriginal resistance in Canada

A SHORT HISTORY BY DEBORAH SIMMONS

There is a myth perpetuated by Canadian nationalists that Canada's relationship with the Aboriginal Peoples within its borders was founded more than four centuries ago in the friendly "partnership" established through the fur trade. Canadian political economist Harold Adams Innis developed this perspective in his book *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930). More recently, the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples claims that the first phase of British policy aimed to "protect" Aboriginal peoples from the encroachment of settlers. This is contrasted to the brutal wars of extermination waged against Aboriginal Peoples in the United States. However, Aboriginal Peoples mourning the impacts of more than a century of dispossession and assimilationist policies carry a very different view of Canada's origins.

And it is not necessary to look far back in history for evidence of the racist violence on which Canada is founded. This fall marks the tenth anniversary of two armed offensives by Canadian police against Aboriginal People in Ontario and British Columbia, and fifteen years since the Canadian military was called to confront Kanien'kehake/ Mohawk protesters near Oka, Quebec.

Ten years ago in southern Ontario, more than 200 Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), including a riot squad and an elite assault force, confronted forty unarmed occupiers at Ipperwash Provincial Park who demanded the return of an historic Aboriginal burial ground in traditional Aazhoodena territory. On September 6, 1995, Dudley George was killed by police.

Deborah Simmons is a member of the Winnipeg Branch of the New Socialist Group.

Ten years ago at Ts'Petén/Gustafsen Lake in northern British Columbia, more than 400 RCMP officers surrounded 18 occupiers claiming an unceded area that had been used for Sundance ceremonies. A major offensive was launched by the RCMP on September 11 in an operation involving armored personnel carriers, machine guns and other military weapons. This was the most expensive police operation in British Columbia history at an estimated cost of \$5.5 million, with 77,000 rounds of ammunition fired.

Fifteen years ago last March, protesters set up a blockade at Oka, Quebec to prevent bulldozing of a historic burial ground for the expansion of a municipal golf course. Four months later, one hundred Quebec police armed with tear gas, concussion grenades and assault rifles were sent to enforce a court injunction to tear down the blockade. As the conflict escalated, two thousand military troops were called in as reinforcements. The standoff finally ended on September 26, six months after the barricade went up with the surrender of the Mohawks.

EVERYDAY OPPRESSION

These three conflicts are symbolic of systemic violence and injustice against Aboriginal peoples in Canada. But the contemporary Aboriginal experience of oppression in the Canadian state extends beyond high profile events such as these to countless humiliations, injustices and acts of violence that have become so normalized as to be virtually ignored by the mass media.

As Aboriginal artist and writer Stewart Steinhauer recently put it, "What if your conditions of life make suicide appear to be an attractive option? Suicide is epidemic on reserves across Canada." Aboriginal People seeking to escape the hopelessness of reserve life face dispro-

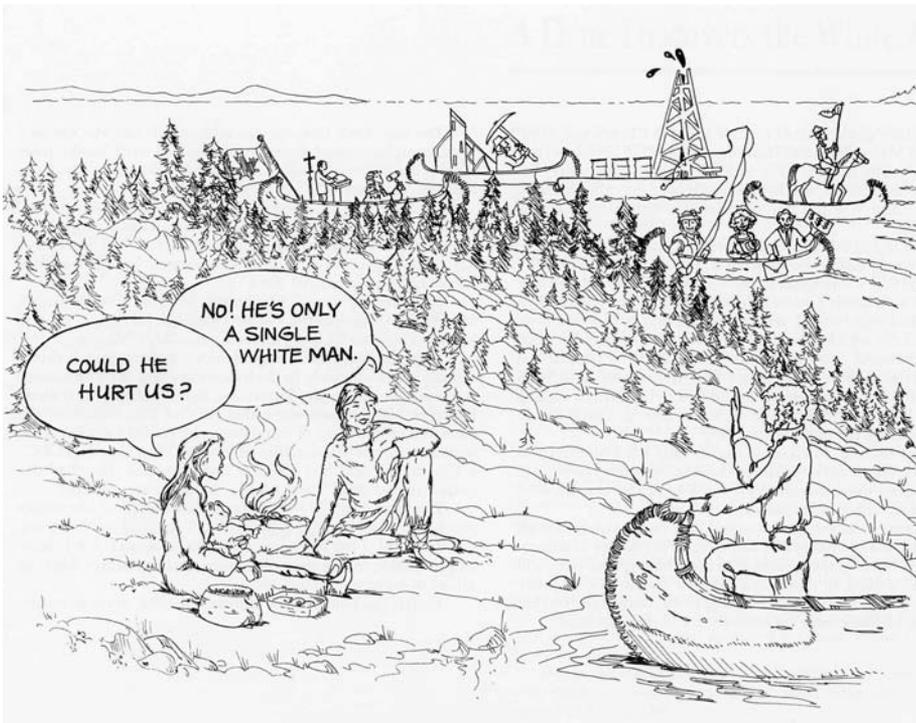
portionate poverty, homelessness, criminalization and police violence in Canadian cities.

Far from being a mutually beneficial partnership, Canada's relationship with Aboriginal Peoples is founded in conflict. Since the early days of British colonialism in North America, much ink and hot air has been expended on how to deal with the intractable "Indian problem" which persists to the present day. Contemporary right wing ideologues continue to claim, as have their forbears through the generations, that the "problem" is rooted in the special status that has been accorded to Aboriginal Peoples in the *Indian Act*, the treaties, and the Canadian constitution. According to this perspective, the solution to the "Indian problem" is "equality" and the supremacy of individual rights – meaning the elimination of collective Aboriginal rights and the inherent right to self-government, and the assimilation of Aboriginal People as ordinary citizens.

THE FAR RIGHT AND THE "INDIAN PROBLEM"

This was the position taken by the late Mel Smith, who was constitutional advisor to the British Columbia government for over thirty years until 1991. During this time the provincial government steadfastly refused to recognize Aboriginal title, despite the fact that legitimate treaties had not been negotiated in the province. Smith was contracted as a paid consultant to the Reform Party's (anti)"Indian Task Force" before his death in 2000, the year that the Reform Party dissolved into the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance.

Smith's book *Our Home or Native Land?*, published in 1995, became the bible of the Federation for Individual Rights and Equality (FIRE). FIRE sprung up in the area surrounding Ipperwash Provincial Park one month after the murder of Dudley George to defend settler "rights" against Aboriginal land claims. FIRE chapters were formed in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and



Manitoba under an umbrella federal organization (CAN FIRE), boasting thousands of members. (Interestingly, FIRE propaganda seems to have disappeared from the web since the dissolution of the Reform Party.)

Tom Flanagan, professor of politics at the University of Calgary and former Director of Research for the Reform Party, has gone beyond Smith to argue that special Aboriginal rights are in fact the cause of Aboriginal oppression. In an article entitled, "Why Don't Indians Drive Taxis?", Flanagan argued that Aboriginal People should follow the example of immigrants and take menial jobs rather than expecting "government handouts." His book *First Nations? Second Thoughts* (2000) opposed the concept of Aboriginal nationhood and collective rights. Flanagan's influence on the mainstream Right rapidly increased after publication of the book. He rose through the ranks of the Conservative Alliance to become Chief of Staff for the federal opposition party in 2002-2003. Following the creation of the new Conservative Party of Canada through the merger of the Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservatives, Flanagan was hired as Chief National Campaign Manager for the 2004 federal election.

THE ANTI-ABORIGINAL STATE

The current anti-Aboriginal rhetoric on the right echoes the perspective outlined in the "White Paper on Indian Policy" introduced in 1969 by Minister of Indian Affairs Jean Chretien under Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government. The White Paper, which proposed termination of Aboriginal rights, was met with outrage and militant protest by Aboriginal People across Canada, and as a result was quietly withdrawn. However, various Liberal initiatives since Jean Chretien's election as Prime Minister are widely perceived as sneaking termination policy in through the back door.

The record of provincial NDP governments on Aboriginal issues is not much better. It was an NDP government that supported the RCMP offensive at Gustafsen Lake. And it is an NDP government in Manitoba that is now promoting a series of major new hydro-electric dams on Aboriginal lands.

The fact is, there is a grain of truth in the anti-Aboriginal ideology. Insofar as they are instruments of the Canadian state in conjunction with capitalist interests, federal and provincial governments must by nature work toward the elimination of Aboriginal rights. The persistence of Aboriginal rights has always represented a major weakness in the power of

the Canadian state to rule within its territory. Aboriginal lands have always been an important obstacle to the expansion of capitalism in Canada.

CAPITALIST EXPANSION

Aboriginal land rights were established under British colonial law not because of any benevolence on the part of the Queen, but because a major rebellion led by Chief Pontiac threatened the very survival of the colonies in British North America. The Indian Territory set aside in the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* was meant more to appease the Aboriginal rebels and thereby secure the colonies than to protect Aboriginal People from encroaching settlement.

The British needed Aboriginal allies not only as fur producers, but as combatants in the battles first against the French colonists, and then against the American revolutionaries. As soon as basic territorial control was established over Quebec and peace was forged with the new United States, the military alliances became unnecessary. Canadian colonists immediately began to formulate ways to get their former allies out of the way of settlement. Genocidal wars and mass relocations such as occurred in the United States were out of the question – the British colony was militarily weak, and the settler population remained a minority. Major General H.C. Darling, military secretary to the colonial Governor General, was commissioned to conduct the first formal inquiry into Indian conditions. His 1828 report established a framework for assimilationist Indian policy in Canada, in the guise of a "civilizing" mission. He recommended that Indians should be established in fixed location, educated, converted to Christianity and transformed into farmers.

The basis for the dispossession of Aboriginal lands was developed a decade later in a document that made virtually no reference to the original inhabitants of the colonies. Lord Durham was appointed High Commissioner of British North America in 1838 with a mandate to quell rebellions that had taken place in both Upper and Lower Canada. Durham's recommendations published a year later involved establishment of a single government to rule over the two

Canadas, along with a program of capitalist development based on the theory of “systematic colonization”, conceived by his collaborator, Edward Gibbon Wakefield.

According to Wakefield’s theory, stability and economic development must derive from the deliberate creation of a capitalist class, capitalist landed property – involving the commodification of the land – and the recruitment of a landless (or commodified) labour force. Aboriginal People were clearly not yet an appropriate mass labour force precisely because of their ongoing connection with the land: their resistance to settlement along with their ability to escape wage labour and subsist independently on country food. The priority was thus to push Aboriginal People aside so that arable lands could be sold to capitalist agriculturalists. At the same time, Canada was to launch a major campaign to recruit immigrant labourers from Europe. This would pave the way for the Canadian wheat boom at the turn of the century.

ASSIMILATION AND RESISTANCE

Of course, the expansion of agricultural capitalism did require the displacement and impoverishment of Aboriginal Peoples from arable lands. It thus became more urgent than ever to find ways to eliminate Aboriginal resistance, and assimilation was seen as the most efficient and cost-effective solution.

The first legislation explicitly aiming toward assimilation was the *Civilization of Indian Tribes Act of 1857*. This was the precursor to a dizzying series of acts and amendments specifically relating to Indians that followed the establishment of the Dominion of Canada in 1867, beginning with the 1869 *Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians and the Better Management of Indian Affairs* and the first *Indian Act of 1876*, which consolidated all previous legislation. The current version of the *Indian Act* (1985) removes some of the most offensive aspects of earlier versions, but preserves the original framework. The Act remains essentially contradictory in that it must recognize Indian status, while at the same time aiming to eliminate the existence of Indians.

The contradictory nature of the *Indian*

Aboriginal lands have always been an important obstacle to the expansion of capitalism in Canada.

Act is the outcome of ongoing Aboriginal resistance to dispossession and assimilation. The purchase of Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company by the Dominion of Canada in 1869 precipitated the first Riel Rebellion. This forced the new state to establish a new province of Manitoba, and to negotiate the first of the numbered treaties. Enfranchisement policy, which provided for educated individuals to acquire private property separate from reserve lands in return for relinquishing Indian status, was a dismal failure, as were a number of policies forbidding traditional practices such as the potlatch and the sundance. The residential school system, which aimed to forge generations of children into assimilated and disciplined workers by eradicating their culture and identity, failed on its own terms. Those who survived the brutality of the schools often continued to resist assimilation despite the trauma of not knowing their language or the skills necessary for survival once they returned to their home communities.

TREATIES AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

The negotiation of numbered treaties extinguishing Aboriginal land title followed the trajectory of capitalist development in Canada, starting principally with the expansion of wheat farming in the 1870s, followed by mineral and petroleum extraction at the turn of the 20th century. Recent research has demolished the myth that the Canadian state initiated the treaties out of the goodness of its heart. Settlers faced the constant threat of violence from Aboriginal

peoples whose lands they were encroaching upon, and only treaties could ensure some level of stability and security. Aboriginal negotiators were notoriously obstinate, and government officials complained of their “extravagant demands.” Often they were able to obtain more than they were originally offered by the government. Compromise in negotiations was a reflection of the weakness of the Canadian state, which remained unable to rely on military might in establishing sovereignty.

Some Aboriginal groups resisted concluding treaties, and those who accepted them demanded guarantees of subsistence harvesting rights, as well as compensation for extinguished title including monetary payments, agricultural implements and food. This was crucial, given that expanded settlement had led to the depletion of the wildlife on which Aboriginal People had depended for subsistence. The state made every attempt to violate its treaty obligations, using its control over food supplies as a weapon. And a policy of “sheer compulsion” was briefly adopted on the prairies in 1884, using an expanded Mounted Police (MP) force. However, this use of force was met with threats of a massacre of MPs, along with numerous physical attacks against authoritarian Indian agents. The following year the second Riel Rebellion erupted bringing together Métis, Aboriginal and white settler interests in the mid-West, and posing a new threat to the expansion of the state. It was clear that force would be required to create stability and reassure capitalist interests, and a military buildup had been prepared to crush the rebellion.

Despite this defeat, the persistent threat of rebellion prevented the state from establishing control on its own terms. As a result of ongoing resistance, Aboriginal lands have remained a bulwark against unfettered capitalist expansion into the present. Rebellions such as those at Oka, Ipperwash and Gustafsen Lake have served warning to the Canadian state that Aboriginal rights will not be eliminated without resistance. Clearly, movements in opposition to Canadian imperialism must centrally involve solidarity with Aboriginal Peoples in their struggle for land rights and self-determination. ★

Haiti is 'fixed'

A success story for Canadian imperialism

BY KEVIN SKERRETT

Recent Canadian policy in Haiti has been remarkably successful, having achieved most of its objectives. This is the case in much the same way that US policies in places such as El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 1980s were smashing successes – quite literally.

At first glance, such an assertion would appear terribly wrong. Any serious reading of the existing situation in Haiti (available almost exclusively outside the mainstream media, within explicitly left-wing vehicles such as *New Socialist*) indicates that when Canada, the US and France initiated the February 29 2004 coup d'état that ousted the elected government of Haiti and installed an unelected puppet regime, they unleashed a terrifying wave of repression against the desperately poor majority of the country (see NS issues #46,49, & 52 and extensive coverage of the coup on *Znet*). Along with uncounted thousands killed, independent human rights groups report that over 700 political prisoners have been jailed without charge, mainly leaders and supporters of (deposed) President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Lavalas party. The Canadian-trained Haitian National Police have been repeatedly seen shooting unarmed demonstrators, and – most recently – collaborating with machete-wielding gangs engaged in a terror campaign targeting all those calling for a return of the constitutional government that most Haitians elected.

However, to conclude that such outcomes signify a policy failure assumes that Canada's agenda was actually the establishment of a peaceful, human rights

CIDA is doing a tremendous job [in Haiti]...We're already getting involved in governance ... The credibility of Canada, as you know, and the specific and very special relationship between Canada and Haiti are also an added value to resolve the situation ... We're not colonialist. We're not imperialistic.

Denis Coderre, Liberal MP & "Special Adviser on Haiti", 14 June 2005



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Haitians give five-finger salute (calling for the President to fulfill his five-year term)

respecting democracy in Haiti. In fact, the recent episode in Haiti offers us rich evidence for the view that Canada's actual foreign policy agenda is to work in tandem with the US and a few other key military allies in entrenching and stabilizing a world economic system where safe investment outlets, cheap labour production zones and unfettered access to natural resources and export markets are not only established but locked-in by trade agreements which trump national constitutions.

In what follows, I advance this argument by examining three central objectives of Canada's Haiti policy. In concluding that these objectives were met, I then offer a brief reflection on what lessons this "success" might hold for

those of us aiming to challenge and subvert this unconscionable agenda.

OBJECTIVE 1: FURTHER DEBASE THE ESTABLISHED CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Having joined the coup brigade in Haiti, Canada needed a rationale to explain why such a patently undemocratic assault on a poor country was in fact quite legitimate. This rationale would need to be able to overcome the established attachment to the concept of national sovereignty and make it revocable, under certain circumstances (to be defined by the powerful). As eventually articulated in the May 2005 International Policy Statement, and in various speeches to the UN, Canada has used its Haiti intervention (along with the bombing and occupation of Afghanistan) as positive illustrations of the doctrine now known as "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P). For some, this concept is merely an update of the racist "white man's burden" – the notion that wealthy, militarily powerful countries have an obligation to "protect" the populations of poorer countries unable to protect (or govern) themselves.

Canada's Haiti policy also shows us how deeply-set racist perceptions of other (non-white) countries can be effectively mobilized to advance this concept. The established view of Haiti's (formerly enslaved, extremely poor, African) population – as "incapable of self-govern-

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ment” – was renewed and refreshed. When Ottawa Citizen columnist David Warren lamented on the eve of the coup that Haiti had failed to create “a people who are susceptible to self-government,” it elicited no particular notice. His racism was echoed more recently by Liberal MP Beth Phinney, who asked during a June 14 Foreign Affairs committee hearing: “How can you change the will of the people [of Haiti] to want to be able to govern themselves?” Such repugnant views require total ignorance of Haitian history, during which the population liberated itself from slavery, occupation and dictatorship, and then managed to democratically elect a president (three times!) that the US government overtly opposed. If the people of Haiti have proven one thing in their tragic history, it is their burning desire – and their capacity – to “govern themselves.”

But of course, this is the threat that the coup in Haiti ended, and that the R2P doctrine is designed to counter. And, with the concept now “field-tested,” it is ready to serve usefully in the future should the need to violate another country’s sovereignty (or support the violations carried out by an “ally”) arise again.

**OBJECTIVE 2:
DISGUISE IMPERIAL DOMINATION
AS “DEVELOPMENT”**

Unfortunately, fond recollections of some of the original redistributive ideals attached to international development programs have blinded some progressives to the true function of “development” and development agencies within the current international system. As a result, we have the social democratic NDP and many well-intentioned progressives following the lead of Bono, Bob Geldof, and the recent “Live 8” showbiz against world poverty concerts calling more or less blindly for “more aid.” Progressive critics of the Liberals point to their failure to reach the hallowed development aid target of 0.7% of GDP – and often just stop there.

Canada’s relationship with Haiti is a stark indicator of the simplicity of these calls. When the Canadian government hosted a secret meeting in early 2003 in order to (it was later revealed in *L’Actualité* magazine) plot the overthrow

of Haiti’s elected government, they invited representatives of the US and France, and brought along senior staff from Canada’s international development agency – CIDA. A careful examination of CIDA’s recent programming in Haiti reveals that in politically sensitive areas (human rights, women’s rights, media, etc.), the Haitian NGOs and agencies that CIDA was funding were without exception active players within the elite minority political opposition to Haiti’s government.

While CIDA continued to boast publicly that it was providing substantial assistance to Haiti, the reality was that in the several years leading up to the coup, it was quietly supporting the US-led embargo on aid to the highly dependent Haitian government, in an effort to destabilize it through financial strangulation. A look at recent international aid flows to Haiti – coming primarily from Canada, the US and France – clarifies the severity of this murderous embargo.

External aid to Haiti

in \$US millions 1994-2002

1994-95	611
1995-96	427
1996-97	378
1997-98	371
1998-99	330
1999-2000	266
2000-01	170
2001-02	136

Source: World Bank, International Cooperation Framework (ICF), July 2004

With the election of George W. Bush in the US in 2000, US aid to Haiti’s government actually stopped altogether, leaving the nearly bankrupt Haitian government defenceless and incapacitated. It is telling that the thousands of Haitians who surely died or suffered badly as a result of these “aid sanctions” have never even been counted – “unworthy victims” of an aid policy turned policy sledgehammer.

What must be realized is that this result was intentional. It was the design and intended consequence of a program in which CIDA and its American equivalent USAID participated directly. The question of why this destabilization was carried out continues to be debated, but

many have argued persuasively that while President Aristide accepted some of the dictates of Canadian and American neoliberal conditionality, he also resisted some, such as the demand for wholesale privatization of state enterprises. (On this, it is worth recalling that in a recent interview with journalist Naomi Klein, Aristide summarized the reason for his overthrow in three words: “Privatization, privatization, privatization.”)

Of course, none of this has ever been reported in any detail in the Canadian media, and in fact, Prime Minister Martin was able to point to Haiti as his main foreign policy “success story” during the June 2004 federal leadership debates (to no response from NDP leader Jack Layton or anyone else for that matter). In this sense, the con – disguising an utterly cynical and self-interested imperial game as a humanitarian intervention led by CIDA – has worked quite well. It has shown that “international aid” can do more than just feed and dig wells: it can provoke (and legitimize) regime change.

**OBJECTIVE 3:
ESTABLISH CANADA’S REPUTATION
AS TRUSTED ELECTION MONITOR**

Following the coup, it was recognized that the installed puppet government would not enjoy the full legitimacy that would be required to truly move Haiti onto the “correct” neoliberal path. What was therefore required was what Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman have referred to as a “demonstration” election – a tightly constrained and controlled voting exercise that projects the imagery of liberal-democratic institutions, but whose actual function is to legitimize the “elected” government. A key function within such elections is the “observation/monitoring” process, which Chomsky and Herman describe in *Manufacturing Consent* as follows:

“Official observers are dispatched to the election scene to assure its public-relations success. Nominally, their role is to see that the election is ‘fair.’ Their real function, however, is to provide the appearance of fairness by focusing on the government’s agenda and by channeling press attention to a reliable source. They testify to fairness on the basis of long lines, smiling faces, no beatings in their presence, and the assur-

ances and enthusiasm of U.S. and client-state officials.”

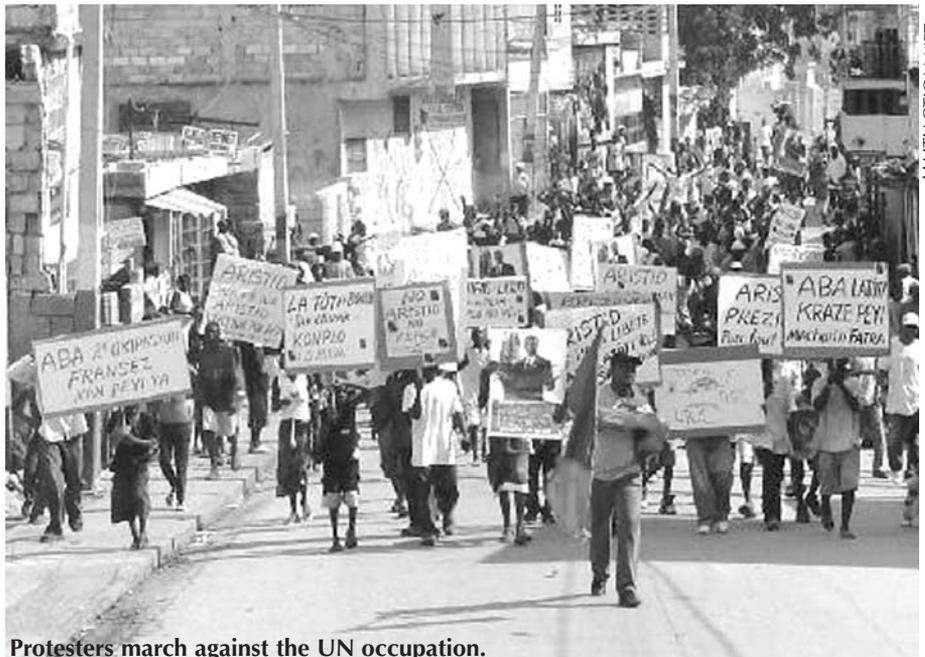
Such elections were recently organized in both occupied Afghanistan (October, 2004) and occupied Iraq (January, 2005). What is interesting to recall is that in Iraq, Canada’s Chief Electoral Officer, Jean-Pierre Kingsley (head of Elections Canada) played a leading role in precisely this process. Barely six weeks prior to the January 30, 2005 vote, Kingsley was called upon to form an expert “assessment mission” to evaluate the quality of the planned election. To no one’s surprise, this mission dutifully issued the needed blessing on the day of the election itself (surely drafted in advance, and released prior to any possible detailed reporting as to the vote’s fairness). Remarkably, the definitive conclusion brought forward was widely cited in the pro-war corporate media, despite having been reached by an “assessment” team physically located in Jordan!

When a similar blessing was needed for a post-coup occupation election in Haiti in late 2005, the relevant powers turned once again (in June 2005) to Jean-Pierre Kingsley to head up an almost identical group of “election experts,” this time not even offering to “assess” (as in Iraq) but merely to “monitor.” Kingsley was an especially good choice for advancing the Canadian and American agendas in

An utterly cynical and self-interested imperial game

Haiti. He is a Board member of a “pro-democracy” NGO called the International Foundation of Election Systems (IFES), which has been very active in Haiti in recent years. In fact, as a detailed report from the University of Miami Law School has shown, IFES was centrally involved in the organization of Haiti’s small, elite-led political opposition, and was an active supporter of the forces that brought about the coup. (It is hardly surprising to find that IFES receives funding from such renowned democracy-lovers as Exxon-Mobil, Citibank and Motorola).

In order to reach the foregone conclusion that a “free and fair” election was



Protesters march against the UN occupation.

held in Haiti that “meets recognized standards,” it will be necessary that the assessment team minimize or ignore the significance of certain key aspects of Haiti’s political climate, such as: hundreds of political prisoners including prominent leaders of one party in particular (Lavalas); state terror exercised through police squads who target victims on a political, as well as class/race basis; the arrest or even police execution (Abdias Jean) of journalists willing to report on police atrocities; politically selective exclusions of vast sectors of the electorate through insufficient registration and polling station access; the judicial exoneration and release of convicted paramilitary killers such as Louis-Jodel Chamblain; reasonable and legitimate boycotts of both registration and voting by parties who are targets of state terror, etc.

We should anticipate that yet another sham occupation election will be carried out, buttressed by the foregone conclusions of the Kingsley/Elections Canada led monitoring mission, and Haiti will be placed neatly in the Afghanistan/Iraq category – embarking on a “bold new era of democratic life.” Paul Martin and the Government of Canada will take much credit for having “democratized” the unruly masses of Haiti – and a new pro-US, pro-Canadian government will be installed, ready to embrace the economic policy agenda designed for it in

Washington and Ottawa. The profits available to Canadian companies engaged in Haiti’s “reconstruction,” or taking advantage of its re-disciplined labour market, are already flowing, with more to come.

LESSONS FOR THE LEFT IN CANADA

One of the obvious lessons from the foregoing is simple: “Don’t believe the hype.” But the fact is that far too many “progressives,” including some involved in the anti-war movement and within otherwise quite progressive NGOs, have swallowed the government and the corporate media messaging about Haiti. In part, this is because certain trusted groups – such as CIDA-funded NGOs like Development and Peace, Rights and Democracy and Alternatives – supported the coup. Trust in such groups needs to be reassessed.

Further, much more work is needed to undermine and expose the carefully constructed and maintained mythology of Canada as peacekeeper and democracy-builder. If anything, our Haiti policy illustrates that neoliberal and neo-colonial rot has infected and transformed even some of the government programs and NGOs about which we may have thought better. In some cases, they now serve as key cogs in the machinery of Canadian imperialism, no less vital than Foreign Affairs and its corporate partners.★

The Canadian military order

NEIL BRAGANZA argues that if we want to understand the role the Canadian military plays in the world and in Canadian society itself, we have to consider how it is possible for a “soft power” like Canada to have an imperialist military order with global aspirations.

It is widely believed that military interventions can serve the ends of humanitarianism, peace and goodwill. This faith in “humanitarian intervention” came to the fore after the end of the Cold War with the idea, popularized by British PM Tony Blair, of “nations without enemies” who have the moral duty to “save” failing states. This kind of “humanitarianism” is a major source of Canadian nationalist pride.

But today, Canada’s self-image is being remade. It is being called a naïve “Boy Scout” on the world stage who must grow up to face a new dangerous world. The critique is coming from Canadian military sympathizers and lobbyists, like Chief of Defence Staff, Lt. General Rick Hillier, who sound alarms that the country is under attack by people of colour who hate our freedom. The alarm goes something like this: Boy Scout nations need to wake up and realize that they are potential victims of evil terrorists who hate the good work they do. Waking up means going on the offensive against the terrorist threat.

Indeed, just as Superman and Spiderman tried to pull out of crime-fighting, but re-entered the fray with a vengeance when evil-doers got in their faces again, so have the terror attacks of September 11th forced humanitarian interventionists to wage an infinite war to avenge their own goodness. Now that the world villain of terrorism has revealed itself, the nation that thinks it has no enemies must shed its naiveté if it is to survive. It must realize that humanitarian

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Racist bumper-sticker from a Canadian military base (posted on a right-wing website).



intervention is not enough: we have to hunt the terrorists. Humanitarianism is replaced with pre-emptive attacks. A boy becomes a (white) man.

It is true that the idea of “nations without enemies” is a naïve distortion of the world. But not for the cartoonish reasons offered by Hillier. Rather, the problem is that the so-called “humanitarian” state depends on and reproduces the very global system that creates threats against it: collapsing governments, crimes against humanity, mass displacement of peoples, civil conflict, HIV/AIDS and other pandemics, weapons proliferation, environmental crisis, mass starvation and terrorism. Many of these problems are aggravated or directly caused by the military order that is said to keep freedom secure. Nationalist tales of benevolent wars and noble soldiering cover up this vicious circle and allow their storytellers to justify almost anything.

A MATURING MILITARY ORDER

The growth of war-mongering in Canada is but the latest sign that military defence and security are becoming top priorities in civil and political institutions across the country. Three other signs are:

First, there has been an increase in its international interventions since the end of the Cold War. Canadian troops have been deployed all over the world, with major engagements in the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo, Haiti, Somalia,

the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan, where the number of Canadian troops is surpassing 2000 in the coming weeks.

Second, in April 2005 the Liberal government released an International Policy Statement (IPS) that, much to the delight of the military lobby, has a clear emphasis on overseas operations against terrorism and in defence of the global economy. The IPS is seen as heralding the end of the long decade in Canada between the end of the Cold War (1989) and the beginning of the “War on Terror.”

Third, there is the recent hike in government investment in the military. In June 2005, the Liberal minority government, with the help of the NDP, passed a budget that promises to double defence spending over the next five years.

Collectively, intervention by the military, international policy favouring the military and investment in the military form the basis of the Canadian military order. To understand how these factors work together, we need to retrace and explain some steps in history.

The Canadian state was the world’s fourth largest military power at the end of WWII. It was a part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) formed in the late 1940s in opposition to the “Communist” bloc in the Cold War. But with the collapse of the USSR in 1989 and the end of the Cold War, the Canadian government withdrew its forces

from NATO Europe in 1993 and reduced the military budget. Between 1989 and 1998, 52,000 personnel were cut, the number of bases was reduced from 54 to 27 and funding was chopped by \$1.1 billion.

Interestingly, however, after the end of the Cold War the Canadian Forces became even more active. They participated in a series of multinational interventions, such as in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Haiti and the Persian Gulf. The Mulroney government's participation in the Gulf War against Iraq in 1991 and ratification of a free trade agreement with the US deepened the economic and political integration of the two countries. One would have thought that this would trigger more defence spending in Canada, but for several years it did not. Why?

INTEROPERABILITY

The answer lies in how the evolution of military technology and organization gave Canada more bang for its military buck by allowing it to interface with US forces and thereby avoid the costs of becoming operationally self-sufficient. This "interoperability" allows a "soft power" like Canada to join campaigns that would otherwise involve prohibitive logistical difficulties.

Canada has been moving toward full interoperability with the US since the early 1940s, when the two countries began sharing military intelligence and

coordinating and focusing military industrial production. In 1947, they developed exchange programs for training and observation, common designs and standards in arms equipment and organization, and they committed to being available to each other militarily. This relationship was concretized with the development of weather station networks.

Interoperability has progressed far past these early beginnings, especially since 1958 when it acquired an institutional basis in the North American Air (later Aerospace) Defence Command (NORAD). It also extended into NATO. Ottawa uses its privileged relationship with the US to work on turning NATO from a loose coalition of military forces playing niche roles into a standardized system interoperable with the US. Today, interoperability is clearly the dominant perspective in the Canadian military establishment. No new equipment will be purchased or developed unless it builds interoperability.

Interoperability with the US, however, is a chase after a constantly receding goal. Since the US spends more on its military in absolute terms than do all its allies combined – annually over \$400 billion, compared to Canada's \$13.2 billion – it develops cutting-edge technology that is difficult to keep up with. The US is leading what is known as the "revolution in military affairs": war is said to be computerized, urban and fast (and there-

AFGHANISTAN

There are currently about 1000 Canadian troops in Kabul and Kandahar. Another 1000 will soon join them. By February 2006, Canadian officers will be commanding a NATO brigade (including Dutch and British troops). This greater Canadian involvement in the occupation of Afghanistan assists the US military, which is stretched to the limit by the occupation of Iraq. It also signals the Canadian government's commitment to playing a larger role in the US-led "War on Terror." It's predicted that Canadian troops could be in Afghanistan for years.

fore precise and clean, but that's delusional). Today, radar and communications systems allow a US commander to target and fire missiles from a Canadian ship by remote control.

The revolution in military affairs also involves greater emphasis on waging war "out of theatre," in the economic, technological and cyber planes. This requires a deeper alliance between public and private sectors around military priorities and a greater emphasis on military research and development in addition to operational capacity. It means that the Canadian military is not assessed in terms of its present capabilities, but in terms of how fast it can grow to keep pace with the US.

The advantage this has for the US is clear: it allows the US to set the global pace. This is important because catching up with the US involves buying military technology and equipment from US companies. It also reinforces the central role the US plays in the world politically. It is no wonder, therefore, that the only directive the Bush administration needed to give Paul Cellucci, its former ambassador to Canada, to advance US interests was to push Canada to spend more on its military.



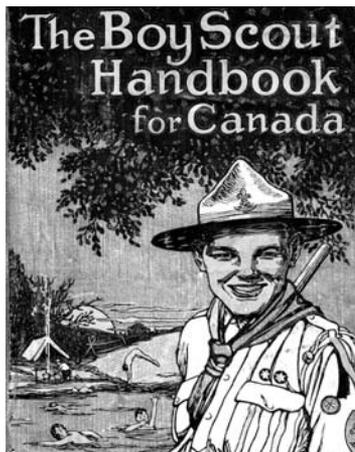
The Reagan-Mulroney era is seen as a sort of Golden Age for military lobbyists.

There are fears amongst Canadian liberals, nationalists and social democrats that interoperability threatens the autonomy of Canadian foreign policy and decision-making in military operations. For instance, NORAD, which involves Canadian and US forces, was put on active alert by the US after 9/11 without consultation with or report to the Canadian government.

The perceived threat to Canadian sovereignty has long been cited as the main reason why Canada must defend a multilateral coalition-building approach in international relations as a check to US dominance. The main theorist of Canadian multilateralism in the post-Cold War era was Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs under Chretien and now President of the University of Winnipeg. Axworthy championed the idea of “human security”: security isn’t just about acting against destructive forces but about creating and reconstructing community infrastructure, communication and legal and political institutions.

From this perspective, “soft powers” (Axworthy’s phrase for countries like Canada) cater to the needs of others and have a “responsibility to protect” victims of the world. This requires developing multilateral institutions and international laws that keep superpowers and soft powers on the same level. Axworthy’s approach is often derided by the military lobby as the end of the Mulroney-Reagan honeymoon and a return to a Boy Scout moralizing that ignores the reality that the US’s interests are our interests.

But when we take military interoperability into account, the distinction between Boy Scouts and soldiers falls apart. Axworthy’s multilateralism is difficult to distinguish from efforts to militarily and politically integrate more soft powers with the US. The Canadian state is uniquely positioned to help broaden multilateral interoperability – a task that becomes more urgent as military occupations become more difficult to manage. Canada is a leader in developing political and technical ways for soft powers to interface with the US military on a tight budget. Far from weakening the Canadian state, interoperability with the US gives it a special role to play in the imperial order.



If Canada is a Boy Scout nation, this Boy Scout is hard to distinguish from soldiers like Lt. General Rick Hillier (pictured right) who want to increase Canada’s involvement in imperialist war.

What’s more, fears that interoperability threatens Canadian autonomy can actually fuel arguments for more defence spending. Interoperability threatens the sovereignty of the Canadian state only when the military is under-funded. This happened during WWI when Canadian interoperability with Britain meant political subordination to the latter. More funding means interoperability will be more complete and therefore less dependent on the US for various logistics. Thus, defending Canadian sovereignty against the US does not necessarily exclude the idea of increasing the Canadian state’s participation in endless and pre-emptive war.

The doubling of defence spending with the Liberal-NDP budget will surely extend the reach of the Canadian Forces. Coupled with a commitment to multilateral organizing, it will also increase the Canadian state’s leverage internationally as it styles itself as a facilitator of an interoperability going global. This is how the Canadian state benefits both from the gap that exists between the US and the world, and from any pressure to bridge that gap.

GLOBALIZATION AND WAR

What’s more, Canadian companies are becoming major military providers who can help countries catch up to the US standard. They are growing with huge assistance from the Canadian government. As Steven Staples from the Polaris Institute has shown, the government can award sweetheart deals to Canadian companies like SNC Lavalin and Bombardier International without fearing any penalty from the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO, as

arbiter of free trade agreements around the world, strikes down government spending that restricts foreign investment and limits corporate profits. But it doesn’t touch defence programs. Thus, military spending is a way governments can circumvent WTO restrictions to create jobs.

In 2000, Canada’s 1559 companies in the defence industry generated almost \$7 billion in production and services. In 2002, 59 percent of their revenue came from within Canada itself. SNC Lavalin was recently hired on massive contracts (to a value of \$400 million for up to 10 years) to provide logistical support to the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan (there is no public scrutiny of the company’s profit margins). As the country’s economy becomes more dependent on the arms industry, military spending will be increasingly difficult to curtail, attracting more companies to the defence industry and pressuring Canadian diplomats to use their office to persuade foreign powers to spend more military money on Canada.

The Canadian government’s financing of the war industry gains support, furthermore, whenever its troops participate in multilateral interventions. Any joint operation inevitably exposes technology gaps between the parties. This gives political ammunition to the Canadian military lobby, allowing it to complain about embarrassing delays and the dangerous ineffectiveness of the forces. The drive for more Canadian defence spending is thus tied to the drive for a more aggressive foreign policy and more Canadian military interventions around the world.

Furthermore, the war drive and war

industry belong to the neoliberal capitalist system that also creates the very problems that military interventions are supposed to address. Take the case of Yugoslavia. In the 1980s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) required the Yugoslav state to pursue a series of “reforms” that involved reducing its costs by privatizing services. To ensure these reforms were carried out systematically and comprehensively, the IMF also required Yugoslavia to shift more control over monetary policy to the federal state and out of the hands of Yugoslavia’s six republics. Resistance from the governments of the republics gave rise to nationalist movements that came into conflict with the federal state and each other. This led to efforts to disperse minority populations from different regions (often by means of mass rape and killing). The Yugoslav state eventually collapsed in 1991.

The Canadian state played a central role in the international intervention in Yugoslavia under the UN flag in 1992-1995. The intervention added another military presence to the fray. This escalated the situation as rivals competed for international support. Nationalists sometimes even allowed their own people to be slaughtered in order to paint their enemies in a negative light and influence the direction of international “peacekeeping.” Though this gave Western militaries a chance to practise in the field, develop interoperability, learn how to manage occupations and later argue for more defence spending at home, it made a disastrous situation in Yugoslavia worse.

One of the more glaring examples of this effect occurred when NATO nations, looking for an excuse to act independently of the UN (and particularly of Russia), bombed Serbia in 1999 in the name of defending the Albanian claim over Kosovo. The dreadful irony was that it was mainly after the bombing that Serbs moved to drive hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians from their homes, creating the food, health and shelter crises that the bombing was somehow supposed to resolve. Eighteen Canadian CF-18 jets rained down 530 bombs in 682 sorties over Serbia. Only in a neoliberal world can bombing be offered as an effective strategy for community development and conflict resolution.

Another example is Somalia. The

modern history of Somalia is one of a struggle between an indigenous population rooted in a peasant economy with kinship-based social regulation, and successive European colonial powers each seeking to impose a central state in Somalia and modernize agricultural production to suit international capital. The emergence of a central state created competition for control over that state and its funds, leading to rivalries between successive dictators. As this “modernization” happened, the Somali state became dependent on foreign loans, which in turn led to cuts in education, health care and other services. With the pressures of neoliberalism and strains of competition between rival clans fighting for control over state resources, the Somali state collapsed in 1992 and famine spread



Comic warning Bosnian children about land mines: US soldiers circulated this in 1995 as part of a campaign to win local support for military intervention.

rapidly. 700,000 Somalis died of hunger in 1992 according to the Red Cross.

It was only after the famine ended that Washington, looking to increase funding to the Pentagon after the Cold War and before the “War on Terror,” announced in November 1992 that it would deliver humanitarian aid to Somalia under the UN banner. But this escalated the situa-

tion by shattering the balance of forces in Somalia as various factions settled scores before the arrival of the international police. This caused more health crises, deaths and damage to remaining community infrastructure.

When it was discovered that Canadian troops in Somalia tortured and executed Somali teenager Shidane Arone, and ritually humiliated and tortured other Somalis including children, an inquiry into what became known as the “Somalia Affair” was launched. Like current discussions underway in the US around Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, controversies like the Somalia Affair create opportunities to challenge the military political order. But as Sherene Razack has shown in her book *Dark Threats & White Knights*, the inquiry only absolved everyone by portraying Canadian soldiers as victims of an impossible situation.

Spectacles like the Somalia Inquiry illustrate the depth of allegiance to the military order in Canada. It goes deeper than formal declarations like the recent IPS, mentioned earlier. It is rooted in practices that cut across levels of government, the media and daily life in the Canadian state. It is this systemic alliance that allows the military order to weather storms of controversy or changes in government.

The alliance, however, needs to be nurtured, and the military lobby knows this. Though it sees the IPS as a solid basis for military growth, its fear is that the IPS won’t do enough to build alliances between politicians and the military to ensure defence growth through different governments and controversies. The way to ensure military growth is not only to seek legislative guarantees for long-term funding, but to discipline Canadian politics and everyday life so that security and defence are always top priorities. Preparations for possible terrorist attacks or natural disasters in Canada, for instance, are examples of how an alliance is built between the military and politicians, medical professions and the media.

But as long as consensus around the military order needs to be actively managed, there will be opportunities for anti-war activists to challenge that consensus by calling attention to the barbarism upon which it rests. ★

Concessions to imperialism

BY MURRAY COOKE

The New Democratic Party (NDP) has never seen the Canadian state as an imperial project. Being social democratic, the NDP naively views the state as a neutral instrument that can easily be wielded for progressive purposes. This ultimately makes it incapable of consistent support and follow-through when it does “get it right.”

A clear recent example is the NDP’s position on the involvement of the Canadian state in the events of the February 2004 coup in Haiti that overthrew Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Days before the coup, Alexa McDonough, the NDP’s foreign affairs critic, had warned that: “The democratically elected president appears powerless to defend against their march to the capital ... Rumours swirl about American backing of armed insurgents ... If President Aristide is removed unconstitutionally, that would amount to Haiti’s 33rd coup d’état.” In the days after the coup, however, NDP leader Jack Layton supported sending Canadian troops to Haiti under a UN flag, although he did call for an investigation into how Aristide left office.

On March 10, 2004, the House of Commons had a special debate on Haiti and New Democrats raised important questions about the Canadian role. The NDP questioned the government about an international meeting held in Ottawa the previous year that discussed removing Aristide, the fact that Aristide himself had stated that he had been forced to resign and the perception by many countries that Canada was acting as an “occupying force” in Haiti. After that one debate, however, the NDP did not mention the issue in the House again nor did Layton raise it during the federal election. McDonough has subsequently pointed to the continuing violence in Haiti without any reference to Canada’s role in the coup.

The history of the NDP abounds with examples of the problems of a social democratic reformist approach to issues around imperialism. While the NDP has attempted, in a limited and contradictory fashion, to address the demands of Aboriginal groups and Quebec nationalists, it has never truly recognized the colonial nature of the Canadian state. Generally, the NDP has been too preoc-

cupied with Canada’s “dependent” relationship with the United States and too enamoured of the myth of Canada as a peacekeeping middle power to question Canada’s place in the world.

THE NDP AND FIRST NATIONS

In 1969, Pierre Trudeau and Jean Chrétien introduced their assimilationist “White Paper on Indian Policy” that proposed the removal of any special status for Aboriginal Peoples. Initially, the NDP supported the proposal. It wasn’t until after the angry reaction from Aboriginal groups that the NDP joined the opposition. The fact that the NDP did not anticipate the Aboriginal reaction is not surprising. Up to that point, Aboriginal issues had never been a priority for the NDP or its predecessor, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF).

The record on Aboriginal issues of Tommy Douglas’ CCF government’s in Saskatchewan was not particularly impressive. The CCF’s paternalism and liberal integrationist approach did little to foster Aboriginal self-determination. Subsequent NDP governments in Saskatchewan and Manitoba have maintained colonial relations with their northern resource hinterlands. An example is the current controversy over Manitoba Hydro’s Wuskwatim Dam project which threatens to destroy sacred Indigenous sites and wreak havoc on bioregions near Manitoba First Nations.

The rise of Aboriginal militancy in the 1970s did have an influence on the NDP. As a result, the NDP played an important role in entrenching Aboriginal treaty rights in the constitution that was “repatriated” in 1982. However, the new Charter of Rights had been established without written agreement from Quebec

While the NDP has attempted, in a limited and contradictory fashion, to address the demands of Aboriginal groups and Quebec nationalists, it has never truly recognized the colonial nature of the Canadian state.

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the demands of Aboriginal groups
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Canadian state.*

and this led to two subsequent efforts to amend it. The first was the 1987 Meech Lake Accord which NDP federal leader Ed Broadbent embraced despite its silence on Aboriginal issues. Later, in 1992, the NDP did push to get Aboriginal self-government recognized in the ill-fated Charlottetown Accord.

During the 1990s, there were two major stand-offs in which the Canadian army was called in to crush small numbers of Aboriginal protesters. In 1990, NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin went to Oka in a show of support for the Mohawks of Kanasatake. However, in 1995, Mike Harcourt's NDP government in BC called in the army to confront a small group of Secwepemc Nation members at Gustafsen Lake. The political success of this hard-line approach against Aboriginal sovereignty gave the NDP Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh a boost toward eventually becoming BC Premier.

The BC NDP government's greatest achievement in Aboriginal rights was the ratification of the Nisga'a Agreement. And while it was a landmark treaty that frightened the right-wing opposition, Nisga'a also has serious limitations – a reduced land base and restrictions on Aboriginal self-government.

THE NDP AND QUEBEC

Since its formation in 1961, the NDP has struggled to come to grips with Quebec nationalism, swinging repeatedly between recognizing Quebec as a nation in theory and ignoring this fact in practice. At its founding convention, the NDP recognized that the Canadian state was formed on the basis of an agreement between two nations. By the late 1960s, the NDP supported a form of special status for Quebec within Canada.

In 1970, during the so-called October Crisis, members of the NDP caucus took a bold stand against Trudeau's imposition of the *War Measures Act* – in essence an excuse to smash a growing radical independence movement in Quebec. In 1971, the NDP rejected a proposal to recognize Quebec's right to self-determination that had been put forward by the Waffle, a left grouping within the party. However, at that time, it did at least allow that the country should not be held together by force. By the late 1970s, the NDP recognized that the people of

Quebec have the right to determine their future without coercion from the rest of Canada.

Unfortunately the NDP often ignores its own official positions on Quebec. Not only did the NDP embrace the *Constitution Act* of 1982 that was entrenched without the consent of Quebec, but then Saskatchewan MPP Roy Romanow was one of the chief architects of the “night-of-the-long-knives” when agreement to pass the Act was secured by excluding Quebec and leaving it isolated. Since 1982, the NDP has continuously fudged its position, occasionally reaching out to Quebec through its support for a distinct society clause and asymmetrical federalism – both of which give at least token recognition to Quebec's special status within the Canadian state — but never really promoting these positions in the rest of Canada.

Despite the party's policy of recognizing Quebec's right to self-determination, the majority of the NDP caucus supported Chrétien's Clarity Act in 2000 – an attempt to define the terms and thereby undermine any act of secession by Quebec. During the 2004 federal election, after voicing his opposition to the *Clarity Act*, NDP federal leader Jack Layton backed down in the face of an immediate firestorm from within his own party. Earlier this year, Layton showed that he was not above demagoguery, when he criticized the Conservatives for “getting into bed with the separatists” in their opposition to the federal budget

CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY

In terms of Canada's place in the world, English-Canadian social democrats have focused on the relationship

between the Canadian state and the major imperialist powers. The founders of the CCF favoured Canadian autonomy within the British Commonwealth. They sought to develop a sense of pan-Canadian identity and build the institutions and symbols of nationhood. As the leadership of the capitalist world shifted from Britain to the US, New Democrats grew obsessed with Canada-US relations.

CCFers hotly debated Canada's participation in the Second World War, with many members opposed to the war effort for isolationist, pacifist or anti-imperialist reasons. The party rejected the opposition of its leader, J.S. Woodsworth, and supported Canada's entry in the war. The war years saw Canada become closely aligned with US foreign policy, while the Canadian economy, including defence industries, was increasingly integrated into a continental framework. In the postwar period, under the leadership of M.J. Coldwell, the CCF embraced Cold War anti-Communism, membership in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and NORAD (North American Aerospace Defense) and participation in the Korean War. A particular low point was the party's acquiescence in the face of the US-backed military coup in Guatemala in 1954.

The late 1950s saw the slow emergence of concerns about the degree of American influence upon Canada. When the NDP was formed in 1961, it reflected this emergent Canadian nationalism. The NDP opposed Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons, opposed NORAD and questioned NATO, but it stressed that it remained firmly on the side of capitalist freedom against Communist totalitarianism.

See NDP: Page 34

Canadian capital rips off the Third World

BY HAROLD LAVENDER

CAPITAL IS FLOWING ACROSS national borders at an accelerating pace. Canadian capitalists are playing a prominent role in the globalization rush, behaving no differently in their imperative to maximize profits than US, British, German, Japanese, French and other foreign investors.

Canadian nationalists focus on the large amounts of US capital invested in Canada. However, they ignore or minimize the astronomical rise in Canadian direct foreign investment and its nefarious role in the Third World in such areas as mining and resource extraction.

Statistics Canada defines direct foreign investment in terms of ownership control and permanence (ownership of more than 10 percent of a company in another country). Over the last 15 years, total investment by Canadians in other countries has risen 500 per cent.

Throughout the 20th century Canada had significant foreign investments, primarily in the US but also in the Caribbean and Latin America. Although the value of those investments was much less than the total amount invested by other countries in Canada, since 1997, the reverse has been true. And the gap is widening. In 2004 Canadian foreign direct investment grew by 10 per cent – far faster than the economy as a whole. It now stands at \$445 billion, nearly 40 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (up from 5 per cent of GDP in 1970).

A substantial majority of global foreign direct investment occurs within imperialist countries. Canada is no exception. About 43 per cent of Canadian investment is in the US. Today, 25 per cent (up from 17 per cent in 1990) goes to a heterogeneous group of countries variously described as non-industrialized,

As the world's fifth largest foreign investor, Canada fits the description of a mid-size imperialist power.

developing or Third World countries. The largest part – 15 per cent – goes to Latin America and the Caribbean; another 8 per cent goes to the Asia Pacific.

As the world's fifth largest foreign investor, Canada fits the description of a mid-size imperialist power.

Canadian foreign investment is centered in the spheres where domestic capital is strongest. For example, 46 per cent is in the financial sector. But even where there is substantial foreign capital invested here at home – as in the oil and service sectors – Canadian investments in these sectors abroad are greater. Not surprisingly, the Canadian government is a leading proponent of the General Agreement on Trade in Services.

Canadian foreign investment in manufacturing is less prominent due to the smaller scale of the domestic industry. However, it is increasing in some areas. The Montreal-based transportation company Bombardier AeroSpace has significant foreign holdings, as does another Montreal company, Gilden Sportswear (Canada's largest maker of T-shirts), which operates sweatshops in Haiti.

MYTH VS REALITY

WIDESPREAD MYTHS ABOUT CANADA THE Good, and Canada's domination by the US empire tend to severely distort public perception at home and abroad.

Few people are aware that half the world's mining companies are based in Canada, and account for 40 per cent of global mining exploration. Nor do they realize that the Toronto and Vancouver stock exchanges are world leaders in raising mining capital.

A look at how such companies as Vancouver-based Glamis Gold operate serves as a useful corrective. On January 11, some 800 Guatemalan police and army troopers escorting a piece of mining equipment to Glamis' Marlin mine attacked a Mayan roadblock on the Pan American Highway, killing one campesino and wounding others. Another person died March 13, after being shot by the company's security guards. Death threats have been issued against community and church leaders opposing the mine.

Meanwhile, Glamis had received a US \$75-million World Bank loan for the project. As a condition of the loan, it was supposed to consult the community. The consultation consisted of telling the local population what it planned to do – a process that would have been illegal in Canada.

Community members are concerned that the huge quantities of water required to support the company's mining operations will rob them of what is needed for their crops, while environmentalists warn the cyanide used in the process will contaminate soil and ground water.

Despite a huge outcry in Guatemala, the Canadian Embassy has leapt to Glamis' defense. Ambassador Lambert

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said in January that protesters were “breaking the law,” adding, “we had people complaining to us that they could not get their products to port.”

The embassy has also published pieces in the national dailies selling the benefits Canadian mining companies will bring to Guatemala; debated environmentalists (whom they blame for manipulating the local indigenous communities) on television; and sponsored pro-mining forums and seminars. It even used a BC band chief to promote the benefits First Nations receive from mines on their territories. Ironically, this was Chief Jerry Asp of the Telegraph Creek Band whose office has been occupied by the Tahltan Elders Council who are demanding a moratorium on mining on their lands.

INCREASING SCRUTINY

UGLY INCIDENTS LIKE THOSE IN Guatemala have led to increased scrutiny. This spring, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs held hearings. Their conclusions were critical, calling for more regulation of Canadian mining abroad. They called for stopping Canadian taxpayers financing destructive projects abroad and making Canadian corporations legally accountable for environmental and human right violations in “mining related conflicts where regulations governing the mining sector and its impacts on the economic and social well being of employees and local residents are nonexistent or not enforced.”

However, the report may simply gather dust. James Knech of Mining Watch Canada wrote, “Despite Canada’s dominant role in the global mining industry, the government has consistently refused to develop the necessary tools to hold Canadian companies accountable for what they are doing in other people’s backyards.”

REWRITING THE RULES

IN THE NEO-LIBERAL ERA, RESOURCE exploration and development has spread to the remotest corners of the globe and often to lands occupied by Indigenous Peoples. Mining Watch Canada (www.miningwatch.ca) offers critical material on the activities of Canadian mining corporations in Canada, the US, Latin America, Asia Pacific, Africa and eastern and southern Europe.

Canadian capital is second to the US in Latin America, which is in the midst of a mining boom. This boom coincides with the triumph of neoliberal economic policies. The main cannons of neoliberalism include trade liberalization, deregulation, privatization and slashing of state social spending.

Third World economies were forced open after running up large foreign debts in the 1980s. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank imposed harsh interfering conditions for loans through so-called Structural Adjustment Programs. Economies were reoriented to exports to earn the foreign exchange needed to pay the debt. As part of this process, country after country

rewrote their mining codes to favour foreign investment.

The ideologues of the free market would have us believe that they are pursuing a model of “development” and now “poverty reduction.”

The Canadian government continues to vigorously promote such initiatives as the New Economic Partnership for African Development as the road to salvation. The NEPAD model relies heavily on attracting foreign capital, including investment in resource development.

What’s wrong with this picture? To begin, foreign investors are invariably lured into a country on the basis of major concessions. These include huge tax breaks, very low royalties, lifelong access to large tracts of land, unlimited access to water and minimal environmental regulations. Mining companies are allowed to repatriate the vast majority of their profits (with little remaining in Third World economies). Most of the equipment is not purchased there. Export Development Canada provides generous loans to domestic companies to facilitate the export of their products to mining operations abroad.

Mining, once built upon the harsh labour of many thousands, has become increasingly capital intensive. Huge open-pit mines cast a large swath of environmental destruction but now employ relatively few workers.

Meanwhile, thousands are displaced from their homes or threatened with disastrous consequences like spills from



“No to economic colonialism!”
Guatemalans protest Glamis Gold.

Half the world's mining companies are based in Canada, and account for 40 percent of global mining exploration.

contaminated tailings (or residues) and dams containing such toxins as arsenic.

The notion of national, community and Indigenous control of resources and self-determination that could interfere with profits is anathema to foreign investors. Instead they insist on writing the rules. One example is Honduras, which passed a new mining law in 1998 that was written by the Mining Association – a group primarily consisting of US and Canadian companies.

And in January of this year Colombian President Alvaro Uribe issued Decree Law 254 that liquidated the state mining company Minerol Ltd. The measure wipes out its employee union and allows for a wholesale turnover of exploration, exploitation and administration of mineral, energy and public resources to foreign capital. Nongovernmental organizations funded by the Canadian International Development Agency played a key role in drafting this law.

MANY RESISTANCES

BURMA'S MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS among the world's worst human rights abusers. Among other things, it makes widespread use of forced labour to build roads, etc. The largest mining investment is Montoya Mines owned by Ivanhoe Mines, a Canadian company registered in the Yukon. The company receives generous tax breaks in Canada for foreign exploration and development. Canadian and Burmese activists are now targeting such foreign investments.

For years one of the world's deadliest civil wars raged in southern Sudan. Oil revenues helped the Sudanese government wage war. One of the main producers was Calgary-based Talisman. Talisman has since sold its interests, but a story tucked in the back of the business pages reports that the company faces ongoing

court action in the US from victims of the war who accuse it of complicity in genocide.

This September, 500 people blockaded the PT INCO mining site in South Sulawesi, Indonesia despite intimidation by hired men. Toronto-based INCO, the world's second largest nickel producer, has refused to settle with local Karonsi'e Dongi Indigenous People or to compensate those whose land they took – land that once was used for community gardens.

INCO's Goro and Prony concessions in New Caledonia, a territory of France, contain the world's largest nickel reserves. Last February, Indigenous Kanaks blockaded the Goro entrance. After a few days, a number of leaders were arrested and later charged. The Kanaks were demanding INCO negotiate with their recognized authorities. They noted INCO had agreed to such negotiations with the Innu in Voisey Bay, Labrador. They are also demanding an independent, environmental assessment and a halt to construction until then. Meanwhile, the company has found the funds to open a multi-million-dollar INCO Innovation Centre at Memorial University in St. John's.

At the Utkal project, Montreal-based Alcan would build a bauxite mine and smelter on tribal lands in Orissa state in India. The community (where three tribal villagers were shot in 2000) is engaged in ongoing protests.

MILITANT FIGHT BACKS

TORONTO-BASED NORANDA MINES wanted to build a smelter in Chile, in the Aysen region of Patagonia where the population is dependent on fishing and sustainable farming. A "No-Alumysa" (No-Aluminum) protest campaign forced the Chilean government to ask Noranda to look for another site.

Manhattan Minerals of Vancouver sought to dig an open-pit mine in northern Peru at a site containing an estimated \$2 billion worth of silver, copper and zinc. Local villagers, whose homes and farms were threatened, went so far as to destroy the model homes in which they were to be relocated. The Peruvian government was sufficiently alarmed by the vigorous response that it cancelled Manhattan's concession on a technicality.

This September, Calgary-based EnCana, Canada's largest producer of natural gas sold its Ecuadorian oil operations to a Chinese company for \$1.4 billion. As the deal was being negotiated, there was a revolt against foreign oil companies in Ecuador's largely indigenous Amazonian provinces. A civic strike was launched to call for higher wages, more jobs, local purchasing, construction of better roads, funding for school and health clinics and more tax revenues for the provinces. Some strike leaders wanted Ecuador to take half of the foreign companies' profits. Others went so far as to demand outright nationalization of the country's leading oil producer.

President Alfredo Palacio proclaimed a state of emergency suspending human rights. Thousands protested in Nueva Loja and other centres. The police and army attacked protesters with teargas bombs, water canons and rubber bullets causing numerous injuries and made mass arrests. On August 25, an agreement negotiated between the companies and the national and provincial governments (largely behind the backs of strike leaders) made enough concessions to temporarily end the conflict. But it did not address the fundamental issues.

Sentiment is growing that private direct foreign investment is not a solution to development.

In Canada, corporate activities are being monitored. Activists have launched small-scale solidarity protests at corporate headquarters. And there are efforts to link these companies' international records to bad labour and environmental records in Canada. However, a larger movement targeting Canadian capital and state activities that support it remains to be built. ★

THE CANADIAN CASE

Exploring intersections of racism, imperialism and capitalism

BY SHEILA WILMOT

Many leftists would readily say that imperialism and racism are deeply and historically intertwined, and continue to evolve together today. Yet, part of the analytical challenge for understanding the relationship is developing an integrated analysis that functions on multiple levels. For example, an analysis of the relationship between the power relations of racism and imperialism could integrate social processes in three ways:

- in the relationship between everyday and structural forms of racism;
- in terms of the various power relations and how we experience them, particularly racism, sexism and class-exploitation; and
- with respect to how these power relations function and are reproduced within the historical context of imperialism and capitalism.

A large part of our context for anti-racist organizing today is one of fiercely systemic anti-Middle Eastern racism, from new “security” laws to increased repression of immigrants and refugees. In our organizing efforts, the racism itself is not our only challenge: we also have to deal with our society’s collective response to these and other neoliberal attacks, responses that happen in a context in which we continue to accept the dominant idea that electoral politics is the only way democracy can function at the same time as we are disillusioned by it. So, we “the people” get to choose one pro-capitalist party or another and, like it or not, “we” get what “we” voted for. In Canada, this is compounded by the ruling class strategy of constant federal, provincial and municipal intergovernmental public



bickering and buck-passing, each creating themselves as the most socially-concerned, fiscally-sensible player while blaming the other for not looking after Canadians well enough.

AN IMPERIALIST POWER

While this implicit acceptance of being ruled changes over time and looks different in various parts of the world, on the whole, big business owners, high level financial managers, members of parliament, economists, politicians and newspaper owners continue to set the agenda for the “way things are” for the rest of us. The Global South has been ravaged for centuries by various forms of genocide and the siphoning of natural and financial resources, including the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of the last few decades. Meanwhile, the North’s lesser form of SAPs hit us in the 1980s as part of the elites’ response to the

economic crises that started in the 1970s. This has meant the gutting of social programs, the scrapping of trade “barriers” such as cross-border import and export taxes, and plunging big business tax rates. As Employment Insurance, welfare, day care, health care, English/French as a Second Language programs and non-profit housing have bit-by-bit been made inaccessible to more and more people, bank profit margins and CEO’s incomes soar.

Canada also has an odd place in the world as an imperialist power that is still quite subordinated to the self-appointed global banker, decision-maker, cop and executioner on its southern border. To understand Canada as an imperialist power, we need only to look at the diverse and lucrative activities of Canadian multinational corporations (MNC) abroad and the expanding presence of Canadian banks in the Global South. MNC activity ranges from telecommunications to forestry to shoe

This article is adapted from Sheila Wilmot’s upcoming book, Taking Responsibility, Taking Direction: White Anti-Racism in Canada, published by Arbeiter Ring Publishing.

manufacturing. And these Canadian businesses are quite healthy in relation to US ones: between 1994 and 2001, 384 more US businesses were bought by Canadian ones than the reverse, at a cost of \$46 billion to Canadian capitalists. With investors enjoying a dividend surplus of \$3.5 billion in 2000, it is easy to say that Canadian imperialism is alive and well.

DISCOURAGING RESISTANCE

Along with mythical notions of the Canadian nation's politeness and peace-loving ways, the idea is created, maintained and driven home that, because of our place in the world, particularly in relation to the US, we can do very little to change the direction of globalization and are quite powerless to make fight-back efforts matter. This is not to say that no one is fighting back or trying to change things. Many do actively dissent, in ways that also change with time and place, but it is still in small numbers and with little continuity.

We also cannot underestimate the impact on us of how highly privatized, individualized and commodified human life has become in our time. The collective problems caused by social program cuts and bloated corporate profit margins are continually defined and redefined as individual impediments. Apparently, a better resume, attitude and sheer tenacity is what we all need to just get out there and make it. From employment and other support services, to the explosion in business training "opportunities" (from careers colleges to whole new wings of universities), the daily message is that change in our lives comes from doing it all on our own and in the way that suits the needs of business.

Even though the balance of forces is excessively tipped in favour of the ruling class, there is ongoing resistance in the face of intensifying racism. As such, it is not strategic for state organizations, nationally and internationally, to completely ignore racism, so on occasion they do turn their rhetorical attention toward it. As a result of First Nations' focusing part of their struggle on the international stage, in 2002 the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination criticized the Canadian government for not doing

enough to deal with the racism inherent in: the failure to settle land claims; the number of Native deaths in police custody; and the lack of access of Aboriginal People to the legal system. The same report also criticized the state for "ethnic stereotyping" of various immigrants and people of colour as terrorists. Quite an important statement, but what teeth does the UN have to transform the concern into change? As we saw with the UN security council's slow although difficult march to be part of the US-led war on Iraq, the answer seems to be just about none.

Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act...gives immigration officials more power to detain immigrants and refugees as well as more powers to decide refugee claims are ineligible.

RACIST AND IMPERIALIST LAWS

Clearly, ethnic stereotyping barely describes what is happening in Canada today. In June 2002, the *Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act* came into law with the passing of Bill C-11. It gives immigration officials more power to detain immigrants and refugees as well as more powers to decide refugee claims are ineligible. The interaction of this law with Bill C-36, the Anti-Terrorism legislation, and the Safe Third Country agreement between the US and Canada is nothing short of frightening. Terrorism is itself left undefined in C-36 and C-11 allows inadmissibility of claims and detention on the basis of ill-defined "security risks" and refugee claimants coming to Canada via the US can and will be turned back. And it does not stop there. Bill C-18, *The Citizenship of Canada Act*, would have created a two-tier citizenship by allowing

the state to deny, revoke or annul citizenship of non Canadian-born people. As noted in a February 2003 press release by the Canadian Arab Federation, this would have been possible "without consultation, disclosure of evidence, independent review or the opportunity to appeal the decision." (The bill died after second reading following an election call.)

All these measures amount to nothing short of a dangerous intensification of legal racism. The social and political space for these vile laws has been opened by the hysteria of the so-called war on terrorism. It has been whipped up by imperialism to justify its expanded control of natural resources and land, wealth, people's rights to movement and even to their very existence.

INTERSECTIONS OF RACISM AND CAPITALISM IN IMMIGRATION

In terms of people's right to migrate, a clear example of how racism is integrated with capitalism is found in two contrasting cases of Chinese migrants to British Columbia, discussed in Kathryn Mitchell's article, "In Whose Interest? Transnational Capital and the Production of Multiculturalism in Canada" (in *Global/Local Cultural Production of the Transnational Imaginary*, eds. Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanauche). Mitchell reviews the late 80s' purchase of a number of Vancouver condominiums by Hong Kong-based ruling class people and the Canadian state's role in easing the burden of racism to challenge the mainly white middle and working class local outcry against these purchases. The basis of local concern seems to have been a contradictory mix of a legitimate wish for affordable housing in the area rather than more private, expensive homes, and a racism-fueled demonstration of anxiety over "individual and national identity as well as a concern about urban change." As such, the usual cross-class alliance based on white supremacy failed to meet ruling class objectives in this case: the priority was to smooth the way for ruling class purchase of real estate so the BC government took the role of decrying racism to discredit Vancouver-based protesters. If one buys the race relations model of eradicating discrimination, this could

Sentiment is growing that private direct foreign investment is not a solution to development.

appear as a positive step forward on the part of the state in getting rid of racism rather than an example of how when racism gets in the way of “the social networks necessary for the integration of international capitalisms,” it has to be selectively managed.

To grasp this, one need only contrast this case with the one of Chinese migrants who arrived in Vancouver by boat in 1999, without money to invest, but with a legitimate need and desire for refuge. The Canadian-state response in this case was to fan the flames of white Canadians’ everyday racism to buttress structural forms of racist exclusion in the face of progressive demands for asylum for the migrants. Calling the people “illegal” and focusing on the fact that they were “smuggled” in, and invoking the usual kinds of images and ideas about who has a right to be here, a legitimate claim to safety and to share in “our” national identity, the state played the opposite – and more well-known – role than that of 10 years before. These migrants’ applications for refugee status were fast-tracked; indeed, most were deported within a rather short period of time.

ANTI-RACIST ACTIVISM

As leftists, as community organizers, how do we respond to all of this in an emancipatory way? As a white community activist since the mid 1980s, I have come to think of my approach to this as constantly shifting the balance between taking responsibility and taking direction. All white folks benefit – whether actively or passively, whether by doing

something or failing to do something – from the white supremacy that is fundamental to the organization of the capitalist political economy that our society continues to be based on. Since we are enrolled in the club, like it or not, we all have a social responsibility to challenge it, both individually and collectively, and the racism that results from it.

However, often we seem to understand this “responsibility” as a heavy sense of moral duty, embedded in a strange remorse-based anti-racism: we just feel so bad about it all, and about our very selves in it all. The political responsibility then often becomes highly individualized and paralyzing: many white activists, of various generations, seem to be unable to get past invoking the words “white privilege” to describe the situation and their remorse.

When we do take action, given the nature of the superiority complex that we get taught as part of white racism, we white activists also often seem to interpret taking responsibility as taking over. This combines with remorse, so that we feel we have just got to power through and get the things done that we believe will fix racism. That is where the direction needs to come in: to be effective, we must also constantly be looking to seek out, follow and encourage the leadership of people of colour, particularly non-white working class women.

Developing political relationships with

women of colour on this basis is a key piece of good organizing, as they are the targets of the many layers of everyday, commonsense and structural racism, sexism, class exploitation and often other forms of oppression. A political relationship is not one based on superficial short-term alliances of convenience such as what we experience in a lot of coalition work. Nor is it based on a narrow idea of someone’s social or cultural identity; we need to avoid politically homogenizing all people of colour and see political differentiation amongst non-white people. Building political relationships is about constructing a solid basis for working towards shared political goals. This is not to say that white activists cannot take initiative in any project unless there is 50 percent leadership of women of colour. On the contrary, the way our society is structured by racism means we can easily find ourselves in the majority when we’d rather not be – for example, in our workplaces – so we just have to do the work where we are. It does mean that the act of creating the conditions for and building such relationships, the making visible and respecting whoever has been marginalized by oppression, should be a foundational principle of our political projects. All of this will often require many white unionists and community activists to rethink our strategies and tactics, and our certainty about “what is to be done.”★

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Challenging Canada

SEBASTIAN LAMB looks at why so many people see Canada as an underdog and draws some political conclusions from the analysis provided in some of the previous articles on “Canada and Empire.”



Demands for Canadian sovereignty ignore Canadian imperialism

NATIONALIST PROBLEMS

Nationalism involves the belief that all members of a nation share something in common, just because they are part of the same imagined national community. This obscures the irreconcilable antagonism between rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited. That's why all nationalisms are problematic from the perspective of socialism from below.

But some nationalisms are worse than others. The nationalism of imperialist powers is the most objectionable. The nationalism of oppressed nations can play a progressive role to the extent that it expresses a liberation struggle.

Canadian nationalism is the nationalism of a colonial settler-state founded on the conquest of Aboriginal Peoples and the people of New France. It perpetuates the smug lie that Canada is fundamentally a peaceful, caring and sharing society - and, thanks to state multiculturalism policies, not racist. In this vision, class divisions, racism, sexism, heterosexism and the domination by English Canada of Aboriginal Peoples and Quebec are all erased, obscured or downplayed.

The preceding articles give us a very different understanding of Canada than the ones that most leftists and activists have. They make a powerful case for seeing Canada not as an underdog on the world stage and a country oppressed by the US, but as an advanced capitalist society, a colonial-settler state and an imperialist power. When we break out of the narrow perspective that looks at Canada mainly in relation to the US instead of placing Canada in relation to the entire global system, we can appreciate how Canadian capitalists and governments are globally dominant, not dominated.

OBSTACLES TO UNDERSTANDING

Why don't more people understand this even on a gut level, even on the Left? One reason is that within English Canada the usual way of thinking about Canada is in relation to the US, not the world as a whole. It's obvious that Canada lies in the political shadow of its imperialist super-power neighbour to the south. It's less obvious that Canada's relationship to most of the world is one of domination.

Another reason is nationalism. All nations have their myths, their stories about what makes them unique. English Canada is no exception. One of the central ideas of the kind of Canadian nationalism that has flourished since the 1960s is the notion that Canada is at its core a caring society, nicer than the neighbour south of the 49th parallel. The greatest symbol of this supposed caring nature in Canadian nationalist mythol-

ogy is medicare. Public health care is widely believed to somehow express the essential identity of Canada as a nation. Obviously it's important to defend public health care against privatization. But the proposition that medicare defines Canada is inadequate and misleading, not least because the federal Medical Care Act (covering physician insurance) was only introduced in 1966, almost a century after Confederation.

The New Left that sprang up in English Canada in the 1960s as part of an international wave of protest and radicalization was strongly influenced by this kind of nationalism, and contributed to it. English-Canadian left-nationalists saw English Canada and Quebec as neo-colonies of the US, and many thought of themselves as fighters in the global movement of anti-imperialist resistance spearheaded by the Vietnamese. New Left nationalism shaped the political generation that radicalized from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. People from this group have become influential as left-wing researchers, teachers, union officials, NGO and community agency executives and journalists.

A fourth reason has to do with how English Canada's opposition to an increasingly aggressive US ruling class is expressed. The increasingly crude and arrogant drive for global dominance mounted by the Bush administration and the US ruling class more generally (under both Democratic and Republican presidents) since the collapse of the USSR at the end of the 1980s has increased the likelihood that opposition to neoliberalism, war and imperialism in English Canada is expressed in Canadian nationalist terms.

Sebastian Lamb is an editor of New Socialist

Canadian nationalism creates a huge blind-spot for the Left, one which hides the exploitation and oppression that goes on every day within the borders of Canada and which is projected by Canadian capital and its state outside these borders.

The belief that Canada is an underdog oppressed by the US is part of the “common sense” of the Left because the Left’s ideas are drawn from the same pool of ideas from which everyone socialized in English Canada draws. This pool is fed by powerful, deep-rooted streams of ideology. Nationalism is one such stream.

Ideologies aren’t simply delusions, but systems of thought which provide misleading interpretations of reality. In English Canada, the four previously-mentioned factors, along with the low level of class struggle and the feebleness of working-class politics, help explain the strength of nationalism among left-wing people. Recognizing this helps guard against simply dismissing people who hold nationalist ideas. That said, understanding why left-nationalist ideas are influential should not lead anyone to buy into them!

An effective approach to fighting for social change needs to be informed by a sound analysis of what it is we’re trying to change. The preceding articles on “Canada and Empire” in this issue offer the foundations of such an analysis of Canadian society. They point to some important political conclusions:

Ideologies aren’t simply delusions, but systems of thought which provide misleading interpretations of reality.

1 For people living in Canada, the rulers of Canada are our main enemy

There is a well-developed capitalist ruling class in Canada. The much greater power of the rulers of the US should not distract us from our responsibility to challenge what Canada’s rulers do, both within and outside its borders. Opposing what they do goes against the grain of English-Canadian culture more than denouncing the US does, but that’s no excuse for letting Canada’s rulers off the hook.

2 Anti-racism and solidarity with struggles for national self-determination must be central

The oppression of Aboriginal Peoples is as old as the European presence in what is now the Canadian state. Racism is pervasive, corrosive and divisive in this colonial-settler state. Anti-racism and support for the right of Aboriginal Peoples to determine their own futures must not be “add-ons” for the Left. The same is true for support of Quebec’s right to self-determination (a subject unfortunately not addressed by a specific article in this issue).

3 Canada is not a force for peace and justice

Bono is wrong: the world does not need more Canada. The Canadian state needs to be restrained from intervening militarily and politically in other countries, not encouraged, as articles in this issue demonstrate.

4 Appeals for Canada to stand up are misguided and harmful

The US government’s decision to ignore the NAFTA dispute resolution ruling in Canada’s favour on softwood lumber has sparked a new round of such appeals from people on the Left.

For example, Duncan Cameron argued in the online magazine *Rabble* that “Canada must abandon its subservience to the US.” Cameron wrote that “Canada sits passively in the NAFTA protectionist fortress, emerging only to champion ill-conceived, dangerous and downright criminal American trade initiatives on public services,

investmet and intellectual property.”

This suggests a bad case of tunnel vision. Passively? The federal government has been anything but passive in its efforts to make Canada a more profitable place to do business and to help Canadian capital make greater profits abroad. It actively champions the initiatives to which Cameron refers, such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services – not because it is subservient to the US but because of its commitment to neoliberal capitalism.

Equally striking is the complete absence of class analysis in such appeals. Cameron argues “Gas prices rise because we have a US-led continental energy policy, not a policy made for Canadians.” Which Canadians? What exists is an energy policy made for US and Canadian capital.

The fact that political figures who are anything but opponents of neoliberalism have been coming out with similar salvos of nationalist indignation should make people on the Left think twice. Lloyd Axworthy, a cabinet minister under Jean Chretien and now President of the University of Winnipeg, published a newspaper article in August 2005 entitled “No More Mr. Nice Guy.”

Axworthy argued that “we are dealing with an American political system currently steeped in the ideology of ‘empire.’ It recognizes few rules, adheres only to those treaties that are expedient to basic interests, and believes that the only political currency that counts is the exercise of raw power.” Music to the ears of left-nationalists!

But what exactly did Axworthy propose? “Let’s begin by seriously considering an end to NAFTA and reliance instead upon the World Trade Organization to regulate the terms and provisions of free trade.” In other words, switch to a different neoliberal treaty to regulate North American capitalism!

Instead of shouting for the Canadian government to play hardball with the US, the Left should raise demands that oppose neoliberalism and fight for them through campaigns of mass mobilization. The federal government acts as it does because it is charting a course for Canadian capital in the global economy, not because it’s unpatriotic or subservient to George Bush.

Nationalist criticism of neoliberal policies is misleading and strengthens a reactionary ideology. Because it advocates a stronger federal state, it has a proven track record of dividing the English-Canadian Left from the Quebecois Left, which does not see the federal state as its friend. This has been clear from the campaign against the Canada-US *Free Trade Agreement* in the late 1980s through the debates around the Meech Lake and Charlottetown constitutional deals of the early 1990s to Jack Layton's backing down from his opposition to the *Clarity Act* in 2004.

The fact that the nationalist website notacolony.ca posted Axworthy's article, alongside nostalgia for the Canadian Avro Arrow fighter jet of the late 1950s, speaks volumes about the politics of Canadian nationalism. So too does the publication without comment of "Wounded, the Interim Report by the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence," on the left-nationalist website vivecanada.ca. It's little wonder that far right elements have been active in such nationalist circles (as documented by Will Offley's article in the Jan-Feb 2001 issue of *Canadian Dimension*).

5 Canadian sovereignty is not a progressive goal

Many people who want to defend public health care and who oppose Canadian participation in wars, occupations and other "regime change" interventions like the one in Haiti argue in favour of defending or achieving Canadian sovereignty.

In order to assess this kind of argument, we need to clarify what sovereignty means. Sovereignty can mean more than one thing. "National sovereignty" refers to a nation having its own state, with its own government, central bank, judiciary, police and military. "Popular sovereignty" refers to the relationship between a people and those who rule ("the sovereign power"); in a capitalist democracy, the claim by political philosophers that the people are sovereign masks the reality of class rule.

Canadian national sovereignty already exists: there is an independent multi-national state called Canada with its own institutions (Quebec and the First Nations are subordinated within this state and do not have national sovereignty). As an imperialist power, Canada

is quite unlike the many independent nation-states, such as Mexico, whose national sovereignty is undermined by imperialism, not to mention occupied countries like Iraq.

To say that Canada has national sovereignty doesn't mean that the people who run Canada can do whatever they want, free of outside influences. The actions of every state in the world, even the USA, are limited by the deep interconnections between societies that have been woven over centuries by the development of the capitalist world economy and state system. The fact that Canada's rulers are subject to the influence of economic and political forces they don't control does not prove that Canada lacks national sovereignty.

Demands for Canadian sovereignty are regressive in the way that they bind popular sentiments of opposition to neoliberalism, capitalism and imperialism to Canadian nationalism. In English Canada, such progressive sentiments are often expressed in nationalist terms. The Left should be trying to disentangle these sentiments from nationalism, but left-nationalist arguments for sovereignty tie them together. ★

For several years, the editors of *Canadian Dimension* have been advocating a radical version of the left-nationalist argument for Canadian sovereignty. In the words of the editorial of CD's July-August 2005 issue, "there are two distinct and contradictory class claims to sovereignty – the claims of the ruling corporate elite and the claims of the Aboriginal peoples, the Quebecois and ordinary people in the rest of Canada. The former is oppressive while the latter is liberatory. In order for Aboriginal peoples, Quebecois and the people of the rest of Canada to exercise their sovereignty, they must unite to end the sovereignty of the corporate elite and overthrow the colonial foundations of Canada."

CD's position is less objectionable than that of left-nationalists who ignore or skim over capitalism and the oppression of Aboriginal Peoples and Quebec. But there is a major confusion at the heart of CD's argument between two completely different things: national sovereignty and class rule.

This confusion makes it harder to clarify the central political issue for people who want to change the world: social struggles by working-class and oppressed people are the key to effective resistance today and to future possibilities for progressive anti-capitalist change. Workers and oppressed people in the Canadian state democratically taking power into their own hands and beginning to transform society would be a truly radical assault on class rule (this could be called a revolutionary appropriation of popular sovereignty). It is an entirely different matter than Canadian national sovereignty.

It is vital to popularize the kinds of analysis and politics presented in this issue. The most effective way to do so is not abstract condemnations of nationalism, whose appeal is limited. Instead, by conducting educational campaigns that expose what Canadian corporations, governments and other state institutions are actually doing at home and abroad, we can help people to understand that fighting for social change means challenging Canada, not strengthening it.

CBC lockout and public broadcasting

BY SUSAN FERGUSON



Thank you, CBC workers. Your threat to picket the ceremonial swearing in of Canada's new Governor General kept the airways free of such stupefying pomp and circumstance in the latter days of an eight-week lockout.

Of course, there are plenty of other reasons to be less sanguine about the lockout of 5,500 CBC and Radio-Canada workers – virtually everyone involved in producing, airing and scheduling its TV and radio shows outside of Quebec and Moncton. The most important being management's push for a more "flexible" workforce. Despite real gains for the union, management did indeed achieve its objective in a down-to-the-wire compromise with the Canadian Media Guild (CMG): the proportion of full-time contract workers will rise from its current 5% to 9.5% of the permanent staff of 3780.

Where the CMG succeeded was in improving provisions for contract workers and the 1000 or so casual, temporary workers at the broadcaster. Among other things, the union prevented management from undermining seniority rights and won the right for contract and casual workers to convert to permanent staff over time (after four years for contract workers and 18 months for casuals).

Most significantly, the lockout helped break down the division within the CMG between technical staff (who tend to be more union-conscious) and journalists (who tend to see themselves more as "professionals" than as "workers"). The split in the ranks that management believed would undermine the union never materialized, lending the union negotiators much needed strength at the bargaining table.

Yet there is the troublesome development of the cap itself. Prior to the deal, CBC and Radio-Canada were required to consult the Guild about new contract positions. The 9.5% cap is of course much lower than management's stated goal of no limit, but it's unlikely the top brass really believed they would get that. And the thing about setting limits is that they can be stretched. If you give them an inch . . .

There's little reason to doubt management won't push for that mile in the next round of negotiations. Insecure and flexible workforces are nothing new in the media, including at CBC and Radio-Canada. The lockout was really a case, as one picketer said to a *Globe and Mail* reporter, of them sticking the knife in a little deeper than it already was.

Support for the locked out workers was considerable. Much of it, however, pandered to a creepy, white-washed nationalism, in which the dispute represented a threat to our "Canadian way of life." In this view, public broadcasting is

Locked out CBC workers walk the picket lines in Yellowknife.

essentially a means of promoting national identity, the glue connecting Newfoundland fishers to Ontario immigrant nannies and Alberta oil magnates – deepening everybody's appreciation of each other and creating a sense of community greater than the sum of its parts. Yet, since the beginning, that nationalist vision has systematically excluded the voices of people of colour, women, Aboriginal Peoples, working people and, in English Canada, Quebecers.

A better basis for support is that a "flexible" workforce undermines the broadcaster's mandate to deliver programming in the public interest. That requires taking risks that might offend advertisers and those in power – risks that someone looking to renew a three-month or one-year contract is unlikely to take.

PUBLIC BROADCASTING POTENTIAL

The potential for public broadcasting to be a powerful means of democratic communication and a celebration of creativity can't be denied. Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement, for example, has sprouted some 30 radio stations in recent years. Freed from commercial restraints, journalists, artists and others can express themselves without worry of censorship from big

Susan Ferguson is an editorial associate of New Socialist

business or government.

Still, let's be clear: the CBC and Radio Canada are hardly vibrant examples of such broadcasting. Ottawa's low level of funding (less than one per cent of GDP, much lower than the amount spent in Britain, France, Germany and even the US) has drained CBC/Radio Canada of the resources to produce timely, hard-hitting and entertaining programs and forced them to compete with commercial stations.

And it's an intensely competitive marketplace. With five corporations accounting for 84 percent of the business, Canada has one of the most concentrated media sectors in the world.

Job insecurity is becoming the norm. Frequent "makeovers" of newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations have led to considerable layoffs and the spread of precarious employment in the private sector over the last ten years. Those who remain find their workload intensified. Reporters and writers, for instance, now file more stories, more quickly than ever

*Ottawa's low level of
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programs.*

before. Convergence (the term describing companies with stakes in more than one media, such as TV, telecommunications and print) means they're also expected to contribute to web sites and make television appearances for their sister organizations. As their work intensifies, they have even less time to chase down a story and the "news" is often hastily gathered, cribbed straight from company or government news releases.

In this sense, the workers affected by the CBC lockout symbolize a much broader trend. That the conflict took

place at CBC/Radio Canada, however, puts the question of public broadcasting on the table.

On that issue, US media critic Robert McChesney makes an important point. So long as the commercial media exist side by side with public media, the latter will be squeezed for money and relegated to filling in the holes in the programming provided by commercial media. Inevitably, that means keeping a respectful attitude toward government (who ultimately pays the bills); emphasizing information over entertainment (laudable, but often boring); and, in cases where fundraising pays some of the bills, serving the well-to-do. "Broadcasting," writes McChesney, "has to be removed from the marketplace altogether to begin to fulfill its social promise."

In the meantime, any attacks on the scraps of public broadcasting that now exist have to be fended off – for the sake of the workers first and foremost, but for the sake of the airways too. ★

NDP

Continued from Page 23

As nationalism grew within the party and the country, the NDP took a more critical approach to American cold war foreign policy. In 1965, the NDP criticized the Vietnam War and the US invasion of the Dominican Republic. Finally, in 1969, pushed by the left-nationalist Waffle, the NDP called for Canada to withdraw from NATO. In 1973, the NDP condemned the US-backed coup in Chile while the Trudeau government accepted the US line.

Through the 1980s, the NDP attacked US president Reagan's foreign policy, especially towards Central America. On the other hand, NDP leader Broadbent softened the party's position on NATO. Riding high in the polls in 1988, the NDP declared that it would not withdraw from NATO in its first term as government.

To its credit, in the post-cold war period, the NDP has frequently resisted Canadian participation in US-led military interventions. Audrey McLaughlin and the NDP were alone in the Canadian

Parliament in opposing the first Gulf War in 1991. Alexa McDonough opposed American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. When he became leader of the party in 2003, Layton actively supported the anti-war movement in opposition to the American invasion of Iraq.

However, the NDP's perception of Canada as a benign middle-power and its acceptance of the myth of Canada as peacekeeper have led the party to support (or ignore) Canada's role in a number of imperial campaigns.

The NDP initially supported Canadian participation in the NATO-led bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999. When the so-called "humanitarian intervention" escalated the crisis, the NDP backtracked but, by that time, it was too late to have an impact on the public debate.

The NDP has insisted on maintaining a dubiously "balanced" approach to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. In 2002, after NDP MP Svend Robinson travelled to the Middle East, called Israel a "terrorist state," and voiced his solidarity with the Palestinian people, he was condemned by his party and McDonough stripped him of his caucus

responsibilities for Middle East issues.

As explained earlier, the NDP's silence on Haiti is the most distressing aspect of the NDP's foreign policy under Layton, but there are other problematic signs. Layton struck a deal with Paul Martin on the federal budget in exchange for NDP support. Yet, that so-called "NDP budget" contains provisions for a \$12.8-billion increase over five years in defence spending. As Martin has bragged, this is the largest military spending increase in the last 20 years.

The NDP view of the state as a neutral force with progressive potential takes a particularly ludicrous form when extended to the military. This summer, as Canada announced it was sending 2000 troops to Afghanistan, Canada's Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, commented on the military's role: "We're not the public service of Canada, we're not just another department. We're the Canadian Forces, and our job is to be able to kill people." Unfortunately, the NDP fails to recognize the blunt accuracy of the General's comments and continues to promote the myth of Canada's benign peacemaking. ★

NEW ORLEANS

The making of a social catastrophe

BY ROBERT CALDWELL JR. AND JOANNA DUBINSKY

Most residents of New Orleans were unaware of the potential destruction of Katrina until less than 48 hours before land-fall. In New Orleans, violent tropical storms are routine and hurricanes are a seasonal reminder of nature's power. As residents of the city, we have often been faced with the choice to stay or go, always weighing whether it will be the fabled "big one."

What started as a category one hurricane that grazed Miami, quickly turned into the most deadly hurricane the Gulf Coast has ever seen. But the toll is not simply the wrath of "nature." The catastrophic consequences of Katrina were mostly social in their dimensions.

The social factors contributing to Katrina's death blow to New Orleans are many: funding for levies diverted to the war in Iraq; deployment of the Louisiana National Guard to Baghdad; lack of an evacuation plan for the poor, who primarily live in flood-prone areas; slow federal response with a focus on securing property over people; environmental degradation increasing the frequency and wrath of hurricanes and the vulnerability of the city.

Threaded throughout these factors are the complex ways class, race and gender shape people's social position. For days, national news reports of the developing crisis in New Orleans highlighted what is often invisible to media but well known to the women and men who change the sheets in French Quarter hotels, cook gumbo for tourists, and operate the cash registers in the Lower Garden District Wal-mart: to be poor in the United States, especially Black and poor, is to live

on the very edge of survival.

What becomes of New Orleans and its refugees is tied up in the social causes of the catastrophe, as well as the government, corporate and community response. These reactions are not shaped in a vacuum. They operate within a social system that puts profits and the whims of the market above human lives. Social planning left to the market failed New Orleans. Allowing the market to decide New Orleans' future is the recipe for another disaster. It is also the recipe for cultural genocide and "racial-cleansing." Developers want to create a white-washed French Quarter Disneyland, but the heart of the city – the people of New Orleans – will not cede it without a fight.

MISGUIDED PRIORITIES

New Orleans is a city in which social services are chronically underfunded, and many New Orleanians are locked in a cycle of poverty spurred by inadequate schools and lack of living wage jobs. Despite its once massive port, a seventy mile petro-chemical corridor, and its historical significance, the city has depended upon the tourism industry for sustenance.

So it is no surprise that hurricane



A rescue worker views the flooding following Hurricane Katrina.

preparedness was woefully under-funded by President Bush and Congress.

The Federal Government ignored expert testimony presenting the need for critical infrastructure to prevent New Orleans from becoming inundated with flood waters in the event of a levy break. Contrary to Bush's recent assertions that this catastrophe in New Orleans could not be predicted, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had warned that a hurricane striking New Orleans was one of the three most likely disasters in the US.

Nevertheless, the Bush administration cut New Orleans' flood control funding by 44 percent to pay for the Iraq war. At the time of the hurricane, almost half of the Louisiana National Guard were deployed outside the state. Some were reportedly with critical high water equipment in Iraq.

A PLANNED CATASTROPHE

The poverty and blackness of those most affected by the disaster was obvious to anyone watching CNN in the days following the levy break. The plight of these victims underscores the existing race and class inequalities in New Orleans, but also provides a lens to examine racism and poverty and a persistently growing underclass in the US as a whole.

Robert Caldwell Jr and Joanna Dubinsky are residents of the Ninth Ward in New Orleans and are members of Solidarity and the Louisiana Green Party. They plan to return to New Orleans to work with Community Labor United's People's Hurricane Fund in their effort to rebuild a socially and economically just New Orleans. You can contact the authors at nolasolid@yahoo.com



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LACKLUSTER RESPONSE

The response from Federal agencies was too little too late. While the United States has a history of dropping humanitarian relief to disaster affected areas, media reported that supplies were being diverted because helicopters could not land, or because of reports of hostile gunfire (accounts that could not later be substantiated by rescue pilots). But if the United States is capable of sending planes that can withstand enemy fire to drop bombs in Iraq, certainly they are capable of air-dropping supplies into a US city.

Homeland Security Czar Michael Chertoff dismissed a National Public Radio field reporter's claim that 2,000 or more stranded people were at the Convention Center without food or water, suffering increasingly unsanitary conditions. Subsequent reports verified that 15,000-20,000 were at the convention center in deplorable conditions, including mounting casualties due to lack of water, food and medical aid. The Convention Center was on dry ground and would have been accessible by military transport ground vehicles or helicopters.

Although local government can certainly share in some of the blame of the catastrophe, once the Federal Government was alerted to the dire situation of thousands in the city, its promise to react was sluggish.

Media reports exuded frustration at the federal response. Journalists were embedded with the people, not the government. FOX News reporters – usually spin doctors for the Republican Party – called attention to the stranded thousands at the Convention Center who had not received aid or any attention from government officials. On location at the Convention Center, Geraldo Rivera cried while holding a dehydrated baby and urged the stranded thousands to march across the bridge into New Orleans' West Bank. Fox correspondent Shepard Smith, also on location and equally distraught, told Rivera and the viewers that the people couldn't march across the bridge as they would be pushed back at gunpoint. They were truly trapped.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRIGGER

The ecological component of this disaster is central to its cause. New Orleans, like many major cities, was built

Hurricane Katrina refugees waiting for and demanding relief.

No government hurricane preparedness plan, and none of the doomsday exercises of federal, state and local agencies, made provisions for those who could not evacuate. Disaster planning officials knew that 112,000 people in New Orleans were without any private form of transportation. In 2003, the *New Orleans Times Picayune* produced a five part series that predicted that this segment – upwards of 100,000 people – would likely face death in the event of direct hit by a category 5 hurricane. Despite this warning, city and public school buses flooded while residents were stuck in the city with no way out.

Hurricane evacuation plans reflected a characteristic neoliberal ideology – let the market decide who survives – that increasingly pervades institutions in our society. It's not surprising that the private Tulane Hospital was evacuated well before Charity Hospital – the region's trauma hospital – used primarily by uninsured, poor and overwhelmingly Black patients.

Katrina was not the first hurricane where social decisions influenced the devastating outcome. During Hurricane Betsy, the low-lying Lower Ninth Ward, an area almost entirely under the poverty line and 98 percent black, was intentionally flooded to "save" the wealthy white uptown neighborhoods.

BLAMING VICTIMS

Institutional policies favour ruling class interests, but the flipside of these policies is for purveyors of ruling class

ideology – including many working class whites – to blame the victims hit hardest: poor African Americans.

Both (former) FEMA chief Don Brown and the dominant media spin indicated that the high death toll would be attributable to people who did not heed the advance warnings. The reality is that tens of thousands – the 113,000 without cars, the sick, the disabled or elderly – of New Orleanians did not have the means to comply with an evacuation order.

Reporters and right-wing internet trolls have filled news outlets and message boards with racialized stories of looting, while tens of thousands of the city begged for help. The lawlessness of looting provided a way to shift focus away from the political decisions that kept people without food, water or medical intervention – the very reasons that people had to turn to "looting" to survive.

Officials comforted tense onlookers with a promise of order: they would use troops to protect stores from looting. But by doing so, they shifted scarce resources away from the search, rescue and evacuation of residents whose lives they deemed less important.

As convoys of National Guard reinforcements finally rolled into New Orleans, Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco used the occasion to warn looters and assure the ruling class that troops were under her orders to "shoot and kill" if needed to restore order. Meanwhile, people were dying of dehydration throughout the city.

in a place that poses natural dangers. Though, danger is inherent in any port or coastal city, human-made environmental problems have severely exacerbated the precarious position of the city.

Marshes and wetlands help to slow a hurricane's effect as it approaches the city. But erosion has diminished the size and ability of the coastal marsh and swamp to absorb a hurricane's force. Coastal erosion has two central causes. First, the once rich river silt that built the delta is now being directed to deep waters off the continental shelf to allow for easy river navigation. A second reason is the salt water intrusion from canals built for oil and natural gas drilling and pipeline needs.

Global warming has contributed to a deadly hurricane season that is far from over. Global warming generates longer droughts, more intense downpours, more frequent heat waves and more severe storms. While Katrina began as a relatively small hurricane that glanced off south Florida, it was supercharged with by the high sea surface temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico.

And while environmental degradation set the stage for Katrina, the aftermath of environmental contamination in the city is far from clear. While the city will likely be clear of water just a month after the levy broke, the city will still be awash in toxic chemicals, due to a nearby petrochemical refinery corridor, a landfill site in one of the poorest, predominantly black, and therefore most flooded areas, and dormant heavy metals in the Industrial Canal. This, combined with untreated fecal matter and other germs, could bring health concerns for years to come.

REBUILDING NEW ORLEANS

The Bush administration fiddled while New Orleans flooded. The government failed twice: first to provide basic preventative infrastructure to protect New Orleans and then to enact a plan to rescue those victimized by poor social planning. An administration built upon the promise of "homeland security" could provide no security for the worst, but most predictable, disaster this country has seen.

Hurricane survivors rightly felt that they had been abandoned to die in the

toxic floodwaters and dehydrating heat of New Orleans. But the ruling class abandoned New Orleans long before Katrina hit. Racism, environmental disregard and capitalist deference to "the market" for social planning have long been the hallmarks of New Orleans.

Despite assertions that a flood-prone city filled with so many poor people should not be rebuilt, the city will, indeed, be rebuilt. In the coming months, public money will trickle into the state. Hotels, casinos, chain stores and "Disneyfied" developments will compete for the sorely needed money and serve to reinforce a system that was unable to respond to peoples' needs before, during, and immediately after the hurricane.

The struggle in New Orleans offers an opportunity to promote a different vision for social planning – one that challenges cities developed for profit and not for human need.

But New Orleans can be rebuilt with a different ethos, one with environmentally sustainable planning, a vast transportation infrastructure upgrade including public evacuation plans, a bolstered public works system, creation of stable union jobs, new and improved public schools, renewed investment in the public healthcare system and cultivation of participatory neighborhood councils as incubators for a new, participatory, and radical democracy among the working class, poor, and oppressed.

The well-heeled of New Orleans are meeting with government officials, corporate leaders and developers to discuss the fate of the city, eager to take

advantage of the opening to execute economic development plans that would white-wash the city and permanently eliminate the Black underclass. But New Orleans community organizers, themselves scattered with the rest of the New Orleans diaspora, have also come together to fight for the city. Community Labor United, a long-standing community coalition, has established a People's Hurricane Fund and is seeking to establish a strategy to organize refugees and demand that the city be rebuilt in the interest of the people. Central will be the right of return for refugees, training and jobs for New Orleanians and community input in all aspects of the reconstruction process.

Building a city that responds to people's needs instead of corporate and business interests will be an uphill battle. New Orleans was a city in economic decline before the hurricane hit. Bush's recent executive order to disregard prevailing wage rates guaranteed by the *Davis-Bacon Act* for federally-funded construction projects ensures that many jobs generated by the reconstruction efforts won't be good living-wage jobs. But living wage jobs are exactly what New Orleans needs to bring back displaced residents and give them the chance to rebuild their lives and community. The Disney-fication of historic New Orleans would provide the same low-wage jobs that ensured the cycle of poverty that existed before Katrina hit.

The challenges are enormous. But there are also many possibilities. New Orleans' unique culture, one of resistance to the homogenizing forces of world capitalism, could facilitate the community organizing that must happen to save the city.

The struggle in New Orleans offers an opportunity to promote a different vision for social planning – one that challenges cities developed for profit and not for human need. In addition to demanding community control over the city's reconstruction, we must link local and national priorities, such as demanding that troops deployed in Iraq come home, so that a burgeoning military budget can be redirected to social priorities. We – the people – must rebuild New Orleans and the US Gulf South. But we must not stop there. ★

The Movement Toward Socialism and Bolivia's Future:

Upcoming Elections and the "Crisis of Democracy"

By JEFFERY R. WEBBER

On December 4, 2005 Bolivia will be holding a presidential and congressional election, called in the wake of the massive popular mobilizations this past May and June that brought down ex-president Carlos Mesa Gisbert. The three central contenders for the Bolivian presidency are Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga, Samuel Doria Medina and Evo Morales. The first two candidates represent competing elements of the divided Right, while Evo Morales and the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party represent the largest electoral force on the Left. The MAS, it must be said, becomes less leftist by the day.

In the most recent polls Morales led in popular opinion with 27 percent support. Simply because the MAS is leading at this point does not mean that they will form the next government, however. The constitution stipulates that when no single candidate for the presidency wins a majority of the popular vote the President must be chosen by Congress from the leading candidates. This means that even in a case where Morales won a plurality – the most votes of any candidate, but less than 50 percent – Quiroga and Doria Medina could form a pact between their parties in Congress and ensure that one of them becomes the next President.

The ruling class has effectively used the new election cycle to dry up the social movement activity that had reached historic heights in October 2003 and May-June 2005 and to focus demands from the Indigenous poor toward electoral, representative "democracy" and away from building alternative forms of revolutionary power based on their

already well-advanced patterns of self-organization in parts of the countryside and some urban areas. The MAS, meanwhile, has played along willingly with this ruling class strategy and no independent political "instrument" on the Left has emerged outside the MAS.

The key now is to understand the political and social landscape as it exists today. To do so, we should have a closer look at the MAS, as well as the social movements, as everyone anticipates the elections. After that, I offer some guesses on what the near future.

The MAS grew out of and maintains its strongest constituency in the geographical region called the Chapare in the department (province or state) of Cochabamba. During the 1980s, the Bolivian state, in addition to carrying through neoliberal economic restructuring, initiated its "war on drugs" which very obviously was in response to a directive from Washington.

Cocaleros, or coca growers, bore the brunt of the militarized assault on coca growing in the Chapare region. Through their struggles to maintain their source of livelihood, organized mainly through rural coca growing unions, these peasants – a mix of re-located ex-miners of the altiplano and longstanding Indigenous peasants from the region – developed a strong ideological mix of Marxism, eclectic Indigenous activism and anti-imperialism directed overwhelmingly at the United States.

Out of this courageous but relatively localized resistance would eventually be born the MAS in 1996, with noted cocalero leader Evo Morales as its head. For much of its early history the MAS

was an incredibly vital and democratic political party which served as the vanguard of considerable sections of the Left. Its primary focus was on extra-parliamentary activism rather than electoral politics.

One key turning point in the sad recent history of the party was the 2002 elections when Evo Morales came second by a hair to Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. With this major electoral gain, the party started to shift dramatically toward winning over the "middle class," which has turned now into a fanatical faith in a non-existent progressive national bourgeoisie.

The turn after 2002 was poignantly demonstrated by the absence of a mobilized MAS on the side of social movements in the key junctures of October 2003 and May-June 2005. In October, the MAS was central to facilitating the acceptance of a constitutional exit from the situation, allowing Sánchez de Lozada's neoliberal vice-president Carlos Mesa Gisbert to come to power. The MAS then accepted a truce with Mesa, supporting him through the first few months of 2005, until he decided he'd had enough with the pact.

In May and June of this year, the nationalization of gas emerged again as a key popular demand. Evo Morales refused to take a clear position in favour of this, and indeed frequently came out against it, instead proposing that only 50 percent of royalties go to the state. The MAS also demanded a constitutionally acceptable exit when the masses were, at various points in May and June, organizing for control of state power even if this project from below was never clearly articulated or sustained long enough to make it feasible.

Since the elections were called in July

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the metamorphosis of the MAS was made complete. It first dallied with the idea of an electoral coalition with the Movement Without Fear (MSM) party, a deplorable political instrument led by La Paz Mayor Juan del Granado, who effectively was arguing for neoliberalism with a human face.

These dealings fell apart, however, and it was eventually decided that prominent left intellectual and former guerrilla, Álvaro García Linera, would be the new vice-presidential candidate. This raised the profile of the MAS considerably, with the explicit tactical role of the white/urban García Linera to bring in the “middle class.”

He has since been on television constantly talking about the necessity of being friendly with the completely and unalterably reactionary capitalist class of the Santa Cruz department. He also announced – in a gross invocation of the crude and Eurocentric idea that history is a series of stages that correspond with the development of capitalist Europe – that socialism is impossible in Bolivia, except perhaps after hundreds of years, when the country will have industrialized through “Andean capitalism.” Until then, apparently, socialism is but a utopian dream.

POSSIBLE FUTURES

Speculation on anything but the immediate future in politics is always difficult. But here are some potential scenarios. If either of the two Right wing candidates win, it is likely that the social

movements will take to blockades and mass marches almost immediately after the elections. Both Quiroga and Doria Medina are likely to use force, perhaps substantial force, in repressing these developments. This may lead to further radicalization and social movement advance, or could wipe out social movement activity as we’ve known it for the last five years. Either of these two candidates would have the support of American imperialism, though the Empire prefers Quiroga.

If Evo Morales and Álvaro García Linera win I see two broad possible scenarios. The first, and worse scenario, is a sort of Brazilian exit from the revolutionary process. In Brazil, Lula effectively abandoned the working class, socialist roots of the Workers Party (PT) and has continued with force the neoliberal project that preceded him.

Social movements would likely react to the Brazilian exit by mobilizing to enforce their demands. The MAS would lose all legitimacy if it used force to repress these movements. At this point a military coup and the re-establishment of a far-right regime supported by the American state would not be difficult to imagine. To speculate even more wildly, actual invasion by the Americans in the case of a revolutionary situation is not out of the question, especially as they have recently established a military base in Paraguay within 200 kilometres of the Bolivian border. The occupation of Iraq,

however, limits this possibility.

The other scenario is more positive, but the threat of a coup would remain a possibility. This is the Venezuelan exit. When Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez first came to power there was no talk of socialism. While the Chavista project still has its limits, it is clearly the most interesting new regime in Latin America in terms of the possibilities for a future of radicalized socialization and the deepening of radical and popular democracy, including a growth in self-organization from below. We can hope that despite the completely instrumental and pathetic electoral politics of the MAS over the last few years, once in power they would be incapable of avoiding at least substantial reforms due to the advanced self-organization of the Bolivian social movements. They may be able to buy the compliance of some sectors of the movements with clientelist hand-outs, but many social movements are showing signs of independence from the MAS already.

POSTSCRIPT

It is now unclear whether the December elections will actually take place. Two challenges to the constitutionality of the elections were recently brought before the Constitutional Court. One ruling has already passed which declares the upcoming elections to be unconstitutional. Under the constitution, the 130 seats in the lower house of Congress are to be distributed between each of the country’s nine departments according to demographic shifts, as documented in the latest census.

The results of the latest census in 2001 dictate that seats be taken from the departments of La Paz and Potosí (the heart of Indigenous-popular struggle) and added to the department of Santa Cruz (the centre of counter-revolution).

The future is now even more unpredictable. What is fairly evident is that deep right-wing political and economic interests are behind the recent legal tactics of constitutional challenges, orchestrated to avoid what could be a MAS victory in December. President Rodríguez is still promising elections. He is wise to fear the social explosion that could erupt if they do not take place.★

Virtual Sexuality

BY ALAN SEARS

This article continues the discussion in the article "Sex after Marriage" in the last issue of New Socialist.

We live in a society where sexual imagery abounds while actual sexual practices are secreted away, surrounded by walls of privacy and shame. There have been very real gains in sexual freedom, won through the hard struggles such as those waged by women for reproductive freedom, by lesbians and gays for human rights, by people of colour against forced sterilization and by young people for increased autonomy. But these gains are still very limited, as we are a long way from having the information, power and resources required for

that are bought and sold on the market.

VIRTUAL SEXUALITY

The virtualization of sexuality on the internet is one of the many forms in which sexual imagery has proliferated. This virtualized sexuality seems to bring out some odd patterns of behaviour. There are people who spend so much time consuming internet pornography that they describe it as an addiction. They actually feel powerless to control the amount of time they spend on-line seeking sexual images.

able person into a thing to be watched, possessed and used is one of the important dimensions of masculinity in this culture. Sexual imagery fits well into this masculine sexual universe.

The internet seems to add a particular inflection to this pattern, one that is related specifically to commodity fetishism in capitalist society. The internet presents an excellent medium for the flight from our actual bodies that capitalist social relations stimulate. Video games, virtual sexuality and various simulated chat communities all include dimensions of leaving our body to enter into the realm of exchange, leaving behind our earthly presence and becoming information.

The urge to flee our bodies is very strong in a society where commodities seem to hold all the cards. The experience of human existence in a capitalist society is largely defined by the experience of mindless toil without intrinsic reward, under the control of others. Our life energy is sucked out of us by work, studies and household labour so that at the end of the day we just want to be distracted or soothed. Our bodies are often wracked with pain as a result of repetitive strain and other workplace injuries, while our minds are numbed by routine and endless boredom.

This daily experience of bodily drudgery contrasts sharply with the afterlife of the things people produce. These products seem to have extraordinary powers, most particularly in the realm of exchange where they seem to dictate to us the terms of access to them. Gas says, "Sorry, no heating oil this winter unless you cough up more money." The dollar goes up, stocks go down, suddenly you are out of a job or freezing in the dark. The realm of exchange seems to be pretty

This virtualized sexuality seems to bring out some odd patterns of behaviour. There are people who spend so much time consuming internet pornography that they describe it as an addiction. They actually feel powerless to control the amount of time they spend on-line seeking sexual images.

full sexual freedom in an environment free of harassment and coercion.

There seems to be a disjuncture between the proliferation of sexual imagery and the code of silence that surrounds actual sexual practices (excluding locker room bravado). In this article, I am continuing the argument I made in the last issue of *New Socialist* that this disjuncture is grounded in particular characteristics of capitalist society, specifically commodity fetishism which is the attribution of mystical powers to things

Romantic attachment has also been virtualized. I recently heard about someone who left a long-term relationship to run off with someone she had never actually met in person. The only prior contact had been through internet chat. So what is it that makes internet contact and imagery so alluring?

Obviously, there are a lot of dimensions to this. Men often express masculinity in sexuality through an objectification of the person who is desired. The transformation of the desir-

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The internet presents an excellent medium for the flight from our actual bodies that capitalist social relations stimulate.

great compared to our own humdrum existence.

FLIGHT INTO EXCHANGE

It is understandable in this situation that we try to flee our bodies and enter into the realm of exchange. There are many ways we can do that. While we are shopping, we feel the magical transformative power of things tantalizing us. This lasts right up to the moment when we actually purchase the thing and get it home, at which point it becomes a mere use value out of the realm of exchange and loses its charms.

Another strategy for entering the realm of exchange is to turn our bodies into a product, making it like a thing. We can tattoo our skin, dye our hair, work out at the gym or use make-up and fashion to make our body a product and take it out of the realm of everyday toil in exploitive relations. Seen in this perspective, body-building is about wiping out the actual body and making it into an image-like thing.

Virtualization is yet another way to leave our bodies behind. Here we seek to become information, flowing like money through the wires. Desires are inflamed by the very unreality of the virtualized image, which seems to inflect the human body with the magic of commodification. On-line chat allows for disembodied communication, so we can connect with others as if in the realm of exchange. Video games allow us to enter a world of dematerialized interactions, where the dead do not rot.

I am not claiming here that the only thing going on when we are shopping,

chatting on-line or working out at the gym is a flight into exchange. I am arguing that part of the allure of these activities comes from the fetishism of commodities and the attribution of magical powers to the realm of exchange.

TAKING BACK OUR BODIES

One of the dimensions of socialist theory, then, needs to be an understanding of the fight to get our bodies back.

This fight has many aspects and has been expressed in many ways in feminist, anti-racist, queer and workers' mobilizations. It is certainly not only about commodity fetishism, but is also about masculine dominance, racism, heterosexism and the oppression of children and people living with disabilities. But commodity fetishism reminds us that capitalism organizes a particular relationship with our bodies that is interrelated with other experiences of oppression.

Play can take many forms and imagination is a beautiful part of human experience. The struggle to take our bodies back is not about condemning virtual sexuality, fantasy, shopping or gym membership. Rather, it is about trying to understand the sources of the particular circumstances in which sexuality is openly expressed in images while it is repressed or suppressed in practice. This can only change if we challenge the fundamental social relations that create this experience as we struggle for sexual freedom and against violence and coercion.★

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Bacteria, Lost and much more

Germs! Yuck! Don't worry: *The Field Guide to Bacteria* (Cornell University Press 2003), won't hurt you. It might not save your life, but it will give you a better understanding of what the late Stephen Jay Gould recognized as the dominant life form on Earth.

Betsy Dexter Dyer does an exceedingly fine job of promoting an understanding and appreciation for the diversity and utter strangeness of bacteria. Because of their pervasiveness and invisibility, they are a subject which many of us don't do much about except for trying to get rid of them. The book is quite technical and detailed, outlining the different kinds of bacteria (hardcore

sectarians will enjoy debates on gamma and delta proteobacteria vs cyanobacteria), their role in ecosystems and in human and other animal bodies.

It does stand in a good line of scientific writing accessible to the layperson. Exercises are centered on bacteria that can be seen macroscopically or smelled or tasted. As she writes in her introduction: "My primary goal throughout has been 'bacteriocentricity' – that is to put myself in the place of bacteria. [...] I have tried to see myself as enormously large (as indeed I am – most organisms on Earth are microscopic) and strangely multicellular (most organisms on Earth are unicellular). My range of metabolism is quite limited – centering only around oxygen respiration – and it takes me years and years to reproduce...How strange that I don't bud or divide with bacterial frequency and efficiency."

The book would be perfect for biology teachers and students and anyone else interested in life processes. Humanity's hubris is taking a beating with last year's tsunami and Katrina and Rita.

The lovely editors at *New Socialist* were kind enough to let me see the season debut of *Lost*. It, along with *Desperate Housewives*, are sign of intelligent life in American television. Is it true? Picking up on the paranoiac themes which underpin late capitalist culture, *Lost* features exceptionally intelligent writing and editing. The show is part *Survivor*, part *No Exit*, and part *Canterbury Tales*. My own favourite character is the namesake of John Locke, the "great" British imperialist and

empiricist. A fansite for the character can be found at: <http://www.innermoppet.net/locke/>. I look forward to hearing what other lefties think about this program.

Embroideries (Pantheon, 2005) by Marjane Satrapi, author/illustrator of *Persepolis*, reviewed in issue 46 of *New Socialist*, provides a lovely exploration of Iranian women's sexuality. The premise is a tea party where a number of women, of varying ages, and one older man are present. The man leaves and they start talking! About sex! Satrapi captures the feel, or at least what I'd imagine the feel, of such a conversation with lusts rewarded, thwarted and punished. She explores what the no longer left Christopher Hitchens has called Iran's "as if" culture. "As if" in the sense of the Iranian theocrats really not having a hold on the people. Her quirky and seemingly plain illustrations are wonderful as are the retold stories. It also talks about the sexual oppression of Iranian women and conveys the jubilation at discovering all these "dirty" secrets.

Finally, I'd like to recommend *shameless* (<http://shamelessmag.com/>) magazine. Based out of Toronto and produced "for girls who get it", *shameless* explores issues relevant to young women. Their summer issue has a cover story about female comics creators, mainstream and alternative. It also features articles on an all female skateboard crew, Montreal-based band Lesbians On Ecstasy, Zoe Whittall's *Hot Fat Girl Manifesto*, info on War Child Canada and other really cool stuff. While this reviewer is not keen on Xmas, a subscription to *shameless* would be a perfect gift for thoughtful young women or pro-feminist boys in your family or community. The website also features a message board allowing for dialogue on the magazine or whatever cyber conversations need arise. ★



Mark Connery is a childcare worker and library enthusiast from Toronto. *Pluggin' Away* is an ongoing column of reviews in *New Socialist*.

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Branches and members of the New Socialist Group are active in a number of cities. Call for information about our activities.

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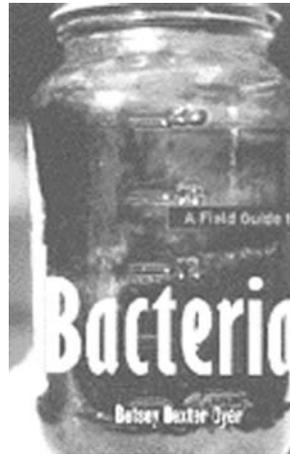
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Germs! Yuck!
Read about the diversity and strangeness of the world of bacteria on the opposite page.

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