

The socialist standpoint on the 1995 Quebec referendum on secession

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For our readers' information, the World Socialist Web Site here republishes a statement issued by the predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party of Canada, the International Workers Party, explaining the socialist standpoint on the October 30, 1995 Quebec referendum and the movement for Quebec secession.

1. The International Workers Party fights to unite workers in Quebec and Canada—French- and English-speaking and immigrant—with their class brothers and sisters in the United States, Mexico and around the world. Only a political movement of the international working class can defeat the worldwide offensive of big business on jobs, wages, working conditions and social programs.

The IWP urges workers to oppose the Parti Quebecois government's scheme to establish a capitalist Republic of Quebec and consequently to vote No in the October 30 referendum.

Separatism and the politics of nationalism and ethno-linguistic chauvinism are a trap for the working class. They deflect workers' anger at the misery produced by capitalism away from the profit system and, by splitting the working class, render it helpless before globally-organized capital.

Workers have nothing to gain by supporting the establishment of an "independent" Quebec that would, as the PQ's "Sovereignty Bill" stipulates, be a full member of the imperialist world order, a partner in NAFTA, NATO and GATT. Such a state would only be a further barrier to the international unification of the working class.

By claiming to be the protagonists of change, the Parti Quebecois and Bloc Quebecois are trying to exploit the widespread popular anger over declining living standards and increasing social inequality and economic insecurity. But the change that the separatists want to bring about is a change to the advantage of Quebec big business and the most privileged sections of the middle class, not working people. Through the establishment of a separate Quebec, the political parties that comprise the Yes Committee—the PQ, BQ and the Action-Démocratique du Québec—hope to strengthen the position of Quebec capital against its economic rivals and against the working class.

2. In opposing the separatists, workers must give no support whatsoever to their bourgeois opponents organized in the No Committee. To separatism, the No Committee counterposes reactionary Canadian nationalism and defence of the federal state, the instrument through which the bourgeoisie has exercised its domination for more than 125 years. The working class has no more interest in propping up the Canadian state than it does in supporting the establishment of a capitalist Quebec.

The IWP calls for a No vote on October 30 as part of its struggle for the independent political mobilization of the working class. Opposition to Quebec separatism must be coupled with a struggle to mobilize workers across Canada in a political offensive against the assault on jobs and social programs being carried out by big business, all levels of government, and all parties from the federalist Liberals, Tories and NDP to the separatist PQ.

3. The separatists and their allies in the trade union bureaucracy claim

that all political options are subsumed in the two rival bourgeois camps, that opposition to separatism equals support for the federal state. This is a crude attempt to straitjacket the working class, to prevent it from adopting an independent class viewpoint. Indeed, the referendum law itself seeks to legally muzzle those who advocate that the working class oppose both bourgeois camps and advance a program that corresponds to its own independent class interests. The law, which was drafted by the PQ under Rene Levesque and upheld by subsequent provincial Liberal governments, threatens any working class party or trade union that intervenes in the referendum campaign independently of the big business Yes and NO committees with severe legal penalties.

The IWP opposes separatism from the standpoint of the struggle for the international unity of the working class. To the existing federal state and the North American Free Trade Agreement, the working class must counterpose—not a redistribution of power among existing governments, a reshuffling of state boundaries or protectionism—but the unification of the struggles of Canadian, US and Mexican workers and the fight for the Socialist United States of North America.

4. The crisis of the Canadian federal state is rooted in the struggle of rival, regionally-based factions of big business over their place in the new continental economic order that is emerging as the result of NAFTA and globalized production.

Behind all the posturing over obscure constitutional phrases lies a clash of economic interests. At issue is what power different factions of big business will exert over the federal Canadian state and how great will be their freedom to maneuver independently of their rivals.

That the PQ's "Sovereignty Bill" commits a "sovereign" Quebec to seeking an agreement with the Government of Canada on a "new partnership," including joint control of the national bank and tariff policy, only serves to underline that the PQ's rhetoric about "self-determination" is a smokescreen. What the separatists seek is a reorganization of the nation-state system in North America that will give the Quebec bourgeoisie greater leverage and freedom of action. The Reform Party advances a similar agenda on behalf of big business in Western Canada, only at present it deems those goals can be best achieved within a restructured federal state.

5. To rally popular support for their demands for more power and privileges, the political representatives of the various rival bourgeois factions exhort workers to defend "Canadian" or "Quebecois" or "Western" interests, to view politics through the prism of various national, regional and linguistic identities

All these concepts serve to obscure the class divisions that beset Canadian and Quebec society. The two fundamental and *opposed* camps into which Canadian society is split are not the federalists and Quebec separatists, are not the Québécois and English-Canadians. No, the real divide is between the tiny minority of capitalists who control the wealth and the vast majority, the workers, who possess only their ability to work.

Quebec workers are victims of class, not "national," oppression. The problems they face—chronic unemployment, declining living standards and

a deterioration in the quality of life—are common to workers across Canada.

Social struggles such as the 1991 federal workers' strike and the movement against cuts in Unemployment Insurance have underscored the objective unity of the working class. But unless this unity becomes a conscious strategy, there is a grave danger that the working class will become cannon fodder in the struggle being waged by rival capitalist cliques for power and privileges.

6. Workers must beware: The trade union bureaucrats and social-democratic politicians of the NDP are seeking to corral them behind one or another of the rival big business factions. The leaders of the Quebec Federation of Labor, the Confederation of National Trade Unions and the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec are the most ardent boosters of the PQ's separatist project. The NDP premiers of B.C. and Saskatchewan have joined Reform Party leader Preston Manning in threatening Quebec with economic reprisals in the event of separation.

Were the working class armed with a socialist program it could take advantage of the profound crisis wracking the Canadian bourgeoisie and its state to take the offensive. But because of the betrayal of the traditional labor organizations, the working class is in grave danger of being polarized along national-ethnic and linguistic lines.

If workers do not resolutely oppose all the rival big business factions in the constitutional crisis, they will be sucked into this inter-capitalist power struggle and be pitted against each other on regional and national-ethnic lines, just as surely as workers from different companies and even different plants have been pitted against one another in the corporate struggle for market share and profits. The dangers such a development would constitute for the working class have been graphically demonstrated by the nightmare in the former Yugoslavia.

7. Separation is a reactionary political project advanced by a section of Quebec big business and their hangers-on in the managerial elite. Through Quebec's secession from the federal state, the separatists hope to better position Quebec capital to pursue trade and class war. It is the political equivalent of the program of restructuring that is being pursued relentlessly by big business as it seeks to speed up production and slash costs.

The PQ, BQ and ADQ speak for a faction of big business that calculates that global economic integration and, in particular, the North American Free Trade Agreement make it possible for the Quebec bourgeoisie to bypass the traditional political structures and economic networks. Quebec capital can forge, or so they think, more lucrative relations with Wall Street and international capital through a state dedicated exclusively to upholding its class interests, than it can through Canada's federal state and Toronto-based banks.

The PQ, BQ and ADQ also argue that separation would provide Quebec capital with a unique opportunity to complete the dismantling of the welfare state, since it would necessitate a complete restructuring of the state apparatus. It is no accident that Parizeau has named Richard Le Hir, the past president of the Quebec Manufacturers' Association, Minister for Restructuring of Government Operations in the event of separation. Moreover, the PQ has pledged to enshrine "decentralization"—the pretext that capitalist governments all over the world are invoking to justify the destruction of social programs and government services—in the constitution of a Quebec Republic.

The separatist project is also aimed at shoring up the political-ideological foundations of capitalist rule. The assault on social programs, argues the separatists, has left the state too nakedly exposed as a weapon of big business. "Building our own country," they believe, will be a choice means of promoting "social solidarity," of subordinating workers to the interests of Quebec big business and of further integrating their allies in the trade union bureaucracy into the machinery of the capitalist state.

8. The separatists seek to exploit the legacy of discrimination against

Quebecois workers to pursue their own selfish class aims. Their national-exclusivist program—chauvinist language laws, immigration controls, bellicose anti-Indian chauvinism, and the erection of a new capitalist nation-state on national-ethnic lines—will exacerbate both Anglo and Quebecois chauvinism and further divide the working class.

9. The leaders of the No Committee—Quebec Liberal Party leader Daniel Johnson, Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Tory leader Jean Charest and Reform Party leader Preston Manning—are no less ferocious opponents of the working class. All are agreed that workers' jobs, wages and social benefits must be slashed to ensure that big business remains competitive on the world market.

All are working to replace the Welfare State with "competitive government", that is to transform the state from an instrument for mitigating class conflict into as an instrument for disciplining the working class in the interests of capital's struggle for global markets.

As they pursue policies that transfer wealth from working people to the rich, the federalist politicians, like their separatist adversaries, increasingly seek to deflect social tensions by whipping up chauvinism and nationalism. In particular, they have scapegoated immigrants for the rise in unemployment and, in the case of the Reform Party, openly promote Anglo-chauvinism.

10. The No Committee is led by the Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ), the political arm of that faction of the Quebec bourgeoisie that believes Quebec capital can best assert its interests through a state that is a major imperialist power, a member of the G-7 and an important player in other imperialist institutions from the UN to the IMF.

In the referendum campaign the PLQ enjoys the support of big business outside Quebec. But the unity of the No Committee masks deep divisions. The Reform Party's insistence that a majority Yes vote means Quebec must leave the federal state reveals that a significant faction of big business in the West prefers the collapse of Canada to any further concessions to its Quebec rivals.

11. The separatists claim that the Chretien Liberal government is only waiting for the referendum to be over to cut old age pensions and unemployment insurance. The federalists counter by charging that the separatists are lying when they say an independent Quebec will continue to provide the existing level of government services and social assistance. Both are right. Whatever the referendum result, the bourgeoisie will press ahead with its offensive against the working class.

The social crisis that is rocking Canada, that has produced chronic mass unemployment and hunger and homelessness on a scale without parallel since the Great Depression, is rooted in a systemic crisis of world capitalism. It cannot be overcome on a national basis.

In response to the collapse of the post-Second World War capitalist expansion and a consequent fall in profits, capitalist firms started in the mid-1970s to internationalize production, incorporating the cheapest sources of labor in Asia, Latin America and Africa into their operations. This in turn spurred the development of computer and telecommunications technology, which greatly facilitated the planning and organization of global production.

An attempt on the part of capital to counteract declining rates of profit, the development of globalized production has produced an economic revolution that has enormously intensified the capitalist crisis. The shift to global production quickly shattered the framework of national economic regulation and nationally protected markets through which capital had sought to mitigate the shocks of the business cycle and the class struggle and to guarantee the profits of big business.

Today rival capitalist firms and nationally-based factions of capital are locked in a frantic, worldwide, life-and-death struggle for market share and profits. Victory goes to those that succeed in producing the fastest at the least cost, goes to those that most increase the exploitation of the working class. Thus globalization has been accompanied by a worldwide

assault on the social conquests of the working class.

Central to this assault has been the development of an international labor market, in which the wages and conditions of all workers are determined by the lowest denominator, in which capital pits workers in one country against those in another, shifting production to wherever capital is assured the greatest rate of return.

12. It is not inevitable that the international working class should have suffered reversal after reversal in the face of this offensive of capital. The same developments in technology and telecommunications that have enabled the capitalists to coordinate production and their offensive against the working class also facilitate the organization of an international counter-offensive on the part of the working class.

The working class has suffered defeat after defeat because the organizations to which it has traditionally given allegiance—the trade unions and Stalinist and social-democratic parties—adhere to a nationalist, pro-capitalist program. Led by a privileged bureaucratic caste, these organizations have become fully integrated into the capitalist order, and as such are organically incapable of, and implacably hostile to, mobilizing the working class as an international force.

In Quebec, as in English Canada, the bureaucrats have emerged as the most vociferous proponents of economic nationalism. In the name of supporting "our employers," they have imposed round after round of wage and job cuts, while laying the blame for these attacks on workers in other countries. By waving the Fleur de Lys or the Maple Leaf and agitating for protectionist measures that would place the burden of unemployment on workers in other countries, they seek to channel workers away from a challenge to the profit system and split the working class.

The International Workers Party fights for the working class to adopt a new class strategy—socialist internationalism. To combat globally-organized capital, workers must globalize the class struggle, must consciously organize their struggles as part of a worldwide offensive against the capitalist system.

13. Large numbers of working people are alienated from the haggling over the constitution. They sense that their concerns over the mounting social crisis are not shared by the politicians and government. What difference can it make if Unemployment Insurance and health care fall under the jurisdiction of the federal or provincial governments when both levels of government have taken a wrecking-ball to the Welfare State, are systematically gutting all social programs? However, the popular sentiment that the politicians should concern themselves with "the real problems" is far from class consciousness.

The assault on the working class and the crisis of the Canadian state are rooted in the same process. The globalization of production has shattered not only the relations between classes. It has accentuated the conflict between the world economy and the nation-state. The more the world is bound together as one economic unit, the more the various nationally-based factions of the bourgeoisie must war amongst themselves for markets, resources, pools of labor to exploit, and profits.

The most powerful imperialist powers—the US, Germany and Japan—are being driven inexorably down the path of trade and military conflict, to strive for world domination, just as they were twice before in this century. The weaker imperialist powers, meanwhile, can only hope to secure a niche for themselves in the world market by accepting the role of junior partner of one of the aspirants for global hegemony.

Invariably, the terms of these accords have caused bitter conflicts within the ruling class for they require that the weaker sections of capital make major political and economic concessions to their rivals. In Italy, Britain and Belgium, as in Canada, these disputes have been reflected in the growth of regionalist or separatist movements that agitate for their wing of the bourgeoisie to strike a separate deal.

In short, in the name of the self-determination of small peoples, regional factions of the bourgeoisie are seeking to gain a bigger share in the

exploitation of the working class.

The political map of the world is going to be remade. The question is: will it be remade at the expense of the working class and the mass of humanity through economic and military conflicts, through fascism and war: or will it be remade from below as the result of the revolutionary mobilization of the working class against capitalist and the outmoded nation-state system?

14. The crisis of Canada's federal state is rooted not in ethnic-linguistic antagonisms—as the capitalist press invariably claims—but in global economic forces which have undermined the economic relations on which the Canadian nation-state was erected in 1867.

Historically, the Canadian bourgeoisie sought to resist domination and absorption by the US by maintaining a close association with Britain and its empire and by employing high tariffs to secure domination of the home market.

Canada's entry into a Free Trade Agreement with the US in 1989 was an explicit recognition that this "national strategy" had been rendered obsolete by the decline of Britain, the fusion of Canada's economy with that of the US, the division of the world into continental trade blocs, and the development of global production.

Since 1989 Canada's economy has been reorganized—through plant closures, cuts in wages and social programs, and the introduction of new technology—for the continental market. This reorganization has vastly accelerated the process of continental integration. In 1994, more of Canada's manufacturing output was sold in the US than in Canada.

But the more Canada becomes bound to the US, the greater becomes the crisis of the federal state, for continental economic integration has given rise to regionally-based factions of the bourgeoisie with different and conflicting interests.

This crisis is exacerbated by the bankruptcy of the federal government. The federal state no longer has the financial resources to mitigate regional tensions through transfers to the "have-not" provinces. Furthermore, the bourgeoisie in the wealthier provinces resents its money being used to bolster living standards in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces under conditions where they no longer form part of a protected national market.

If the federal state is now threatened with collapse, it is because entry into a free trade pact with the US and the deepening world trade war have forced each faction of the ruling class to reassess its prospects, to reevaluate how it can best secure its profits and privileges into the next century. Who will prosper and who will perish as Canadian capitalism is reorganized for trade war—that is the conflict that lies behind all the squabbles over the workings of Canada's federal state.

15. Canada is breaking apart along several fissures. A Yes vote will shatter the federal edifice and the framework within which these conflicts, albeit with increasing difficulty, have been contained.

The separatist faction of the Quebec bourgeoisie believes that in the event of a Yes vote, geopolitical and commercial considerations will compel the Quebec bourgeoisie's rivals in the Canadian state to strike a new partnership. Blinded by their own self-interest and nationalism, they fail to recognize that the same global changes that make it feasible for Quebec capital to seek a new relationship with the world market also render it possible for their rivals in the West and elsewhere to contemplate a future without Quebec.

Quebec's secession would so fundamentally alter the balance of power within what remained of Canada and so dramatically reduce Canada's position within the world capitalist order that it would inevitably lead some factions of the bourgeoisie to consider establishing their own statelets or joining the US. If Canada is inviable with Quebec, it is even less viable without it.

16. A Yes vote will not lead to an amicable divorce. It will merely produce a frenzied struggle for power among a host of rival bourgeois factions. Already the Quebec bourgeoisie's rivals have said Quebec's

borders will have to be renegotiated, egged on the Indian and Inuit communities to consider seceding from Quebec, and rejected out of hand the separatists' proposal on the division of the Canadian national debt. Parizeau for his part has threatened to withhold debt payments to force Canada to the bargaining table.

In Quebec, as in English Canada, the bourgeoisie would use the economic and political fallout from separation to try to whip up chauvinism and deflect the blame for the social crisis produced by decaying capitalism onto the "other nation."

In the event of a No vote, the Quebec bourgeoisie's rivals will press for a redivision of power within the Canadian state in their favor. Moreover, the Chretien Liberal government will try to claim that a majority No vote is a mandate for it to continue "restructuring" federalism through the elimination of all national standards and the replacement of matching funds by the Canadian Social Transfer.

17. Quebec separatism is a reactionary response to an objective problem: the present political divisions in North America and throughout the world correspond to an economic era now long gone.

The global integration of production has created the material prerequisites for a higher social order in which production can be planned democratically by the workers of the world and organized to meet social needs, not enrich a few. But to realize this potential, the international working class must overthrow capitalism and the outmoded nation-state system.

In answer to the reorganization of the North American economy being carried out under NAFTA and in opposition to all factions of the bourgeoisie (free trader and protectionist, federalist and separatist), Canadian, US and Mexican workers must unite in the struggle for the Socialist United States of North America.

18. Canadian and Quebecois nationalism are the ideological pillars of capitalist rule in Canada. They play a complimentary role in mystifying class relations, subordinating workers to big business, splitting them along linguistic lines and dividing them from the international working class. Thus, the Parti Libérale du Québec promotes both nationalisms simultaneously.

Formed by a split-off from the PLQ, the PQ has always been an ardent defender of the bourgeois order. Reflecting the class polarization in capitalist society, it has moved sharply to the right in the quarter-century since its founding.

In the wake of the 1981-82 slump, the PQ was forced to drop its facade of "a favorable prejudice to the labor movement". It savagely cut social spending, imposed by government-decree contracts which slashed wages and gutted the working conditions of 300,000 public sector workers, placed unions under government trusteeship, threatened striking workers with mass firings, and promoted cheap labor schemes.

Significantly, the more conservative the PQ has become on socioeconomic questions, the more extreme its chauvinism. In the 1970s, the PQ made demagogic denunciations of the banks and the multinationals and portrayed independence as an instrument for building a "national economy" that would serve the interests of the "Quebec people." Today it advocates independence on an unabashedly pro-big business program.

While demagogically denouncing the Canadian federal state, the separatists have been wooing Washington and Wall Street. Parizeau boasts that negotiations with the Americans on NAFTA and other strategic issues have "already begun." During his March 1994 US visit, Lucien Bouchard urged Washington to oversee Quebec's secession, a veiled invitation to US imperialism to take advantage of the breakup of Canada to strengthen its position at the expense of their common rival, Bay Street.

19. The Quebec bourgeoisie cynically uses the language issue as a means to incite animosity among English-speaking, French-speaking and immigrant workers and to divert them from a struggle against the horrific

social conditions that are being created by the crisis of capitalism. While claiming to be defenders of French-language rights and Quebecois culture, both the PLQ and PQ have connived in attacks on the rights of the French-speaking minorities outside Quebec. Moreover, both Liberal and PQ governments have slashed the funding for education, creating conditions in which large numbers of Quebecois youth are functionally illiterate.

Chauvinist language laws like Bill 101 seek to boost the francophone middle class in the competition for managerial jobs and to promote the fiction Quebecois workers have more in common with Desmarais and Peladeau than with English and immigrant workers.

National exclusivism is the antithesis of socialism. The petty-bourgeois response to chauvinism is to counter one discriminatory act with another and to propose the segregation of humanity into "nationally-pure" ethnic states. The working class answer to Anglo- and Quebecois-chauvinism must be to oppose privileges for any language and to fight to put an end to production for profit and the nation-state system, the sources of all national bickering and racism.

20. Joining the PQ and the trade union bureaucracy in calling for a Yes vote are a large number of self-avowed socialist organizations, including Gauche Socialiste, the International Socialists and the Réseau Populaire pour le Oui [The People's Network for the Yes].

Their names notwithstanding, these organizations are neither socialist nor working class. They speak rather for a section of the middle class that was radicalized in the 1960s, but has since moved sharply to the right. So far to the right, they are ready to promote an "independent Quebec" that will be an integral part of the imperialist order and ready to urge workers to entrust the PQ-BQ and ADQ to act on their behalf, in establishing a sovereign Quebec.

They call for a Yes vote on the grounds that the majority of big business across Canada supports the No. This opportunist argument has long been invoked to prevent the working class from advancing its own program, to politically subordinate it to capital.

Workers cannot advance their interests by blocking with one section of capital against the other. They can defend their rights only through a struggle against the capitalist system as a whole.

Another rendition of the same argument is that a Yes vote should be supported because it will "intensify" the crisis of the federal state. A Yes vote certainly would plunge the Canadian bourgeoisie into crisis. History, however, has shown that no crisis in and of itself is of benefit to the working class. Moreover, there is a vast difference between a crisis precipitated by the independent mobilization of the working class and one triggered by the attempt of one faction of the bourgeoisie to change the balance of power at the expense of its rivals.

Only insofar as the working class is a politically independent force, armed with the perspective of the Socialist United States of North America, can it turn the crisis engendered by the breakup of the Canadian nation-state to its own advantage.

21. The Réseau Populaire pour le Oui and other groups criticize the PQ for not advancing "a social project" and claim an independent Quebec could be a lever for resisting the pressure of international capital.

The truth is the PQ has spelt out a very clear social project—the establishment of an independent Quebec so as to better position Quebec capital in the global trade war.

As for the claim that a Quebec state can be a means of resisting the pressure of the transnational corporations, it is nothing more than an attempt to resuscitate illusions in the bankrupt program of national-reformism.

Insofar as workers tie their fate to the nation-state they are impotent before globally-organized capital. The era when the nation-state could be a lever for economic and social progress has long passed. As an economic unit, the nation-state has been rendered obsolete by the development of the world economy. Its only functions today are to serve as the instrument

though which various rival capitalist cliques stake their claim to a share of the world market and as a means to impede the unification of the world working class.

22. The "left" supporters of the Yes claim a Yes vote would constitute a blow to chauvinism, that independence represents a "democratic" solution to the "national question." But the program advanced by the separatists is the antithesis of democracy. One of the main reasons they want a "sovereign" Quebec is to have the freedom to impose reactionary language laws.

More fundamentally, the whole experience of national movements in the twentieth century—from Kurdistan and India to the former Yugoslavia—has shown that national oppression and national frictions cannot be overcome within the framework of the nation-state system.

The nation is an historical category. The formation of nations and the creation of nation-states did not emanate from eternal national-ethnic identities. Rather this process was bound up with a specific stage of historical development, the rise and consolidation of capitalism.

In an earlier period, when they were directed against feudal particularism and colonialism, struggles to form nation-states had a progressive content, were unifying movements. The "national" movements of today are by contrast the reactionary products of the decadence of the nation-state system under conditions where the working class has as of yet been unable to impose a progressive solution to the capitalist crisis. Invariably these movements are national-exclusivist and hostile to the interests of the working class.

23. Gauche Socialiste and other pseudo-socialists try to give a Marxist cover to their support for the separatist faction of the Quebec bourgeoisie by invoking the "right to self-determination." They give this demand a meaning that is the opposite of that for which the Marxist movement has historically fought. Lenin and others raised this bourgeois-democratic demand as part of their struggle for the "self-determination of the working class," in opposition to chauvinism and the pernicious influence of the bourgeois nationalists. Gauche Socialiste, by contrast, promotes the idea that Quebecois workers should politically define themselves as Quebecois and not as a battalion of the international working class.

24. Whatever the outcome of the October 30 referendum the assault on the working class and the crisis of the Canadian capitalism will intensify.

In the absence of the independent political intervention of the working class, the social crisis engendered by the putrefaction of capitalism and the nation-state system will only grow more malignant.

Workers, don't be lulled to sleep by the soporific assurances that "Canada is not Yugoslavia. It can't happen here." Civil war erupted in the former Yugoslavia not because of eternal and irrational ethnic feuds, but because of burning contemporary problems: a profound socioeconomic upheaval and a crisis of working class leadership.

Under conditions where the Yugoslav workers had no alternative to counterpose to the program of capitalist restoration, the remnants of the Stalinist bureaucracy, in collaboration with the imperialists, were able to manipulate and incite national-ethnic divisions.

The events in the former Yugoslavia must serve as a warning to workers in Canada. Chauvinist elements must not be permitted to channel the growing opposition to the social order in a reactionary direction. Workers must resolutely oppose all the rival bourgeois factions and advance a program of struggle that begins by rejecting the imperatives of the capitalist market.

The IWP calls for a No vote because separation would be a reactionary trap for the working class. Similarly, we oppose all measures aimed at propping up the federal state and maintaining the "territorial integrity" of Canada, including any attempts to use the courts or army to prevent secession.

The IWP says: No to Quebec separatism and "Canadian Unity." Forge the unity of Quebecois, English-speaking and immigrant workers against

Chretien, Parizeau, Manning, Johnson and Harris. Fight for a workers government and the Socialist United States of North America.

All workers and youth who agree with this program, who understand that the working class can defend its rights only insofar as it sees itself to be a battalion of the international proletariat and mounts a revolutionary struggle for socialism in common with the world working class, should join the IWP and fight to build it as the Canadian section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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