

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

IMAGINE

No war but the class war!

Once again another bloody capitalist war has broken out. The US and GB have ignored the objections of most of the world and invaded a country that posed no threat to any of the coalition countries and for reasons that seem illusory, even to the most casual observer. This has brought unprecedented street demonstrations against the war around the world. The Socialist Party of Canada and its companion parties of the World Socialist Movement have opposed all wars, except the class war, since it first formulated a policy regarding armed conflicts in response to the First World War. It is worth reiterating our position at this time by quoting the Manifesto of the Socialist Party of Canada on War printed in "The Western Socialist" (October 1939):

It is in the nature of capitalism that in their quest for markets, raw materials, sources of exploitation, *etc.*, the respective capitalists of the world are engaged in a constant, competitive struggle, either to preserve or to gain advantages over their rival: and by virtue of their control of the powers of government they are in the position to transfer this struggle from the economic field to the military field, where they endeavour to gain by wholesale slaughter, what they have been unable to gain by other means. This is the explanation, not only of previous wars, but also of the

present war. Thus, the declarations of the ruling class propagandist agencies that this conflict is being waged for democracy, freedom, and the independence of small nations, are merely the bait that must be used if the active participation of the politically uneducated workers is to be gained.

The Socialist Party of Canada, in placing on record its opposition to this new, horrible demonstration of capitalism's unfitness to survive, herewith reaffirms:

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist class and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced;

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess;

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the capitalist class and the conversion into common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people;

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from

WHAT'S INSIDE

LETTERS	2
AGGRESSION IN IRAQ	3
IN ONTARIO	4
OBSCENE AND HEARD	5
A JUST WAR	7

the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

The Socialist Party of Canada further declares that no interest is at stake in this conflict which justifies the shedding of a single drop of working class blood; and it extends its fraternal greetings to the workers of all countries and calls upon them to unite in the Greater Struggle, the struggle for the establishment of Socialism, a system of society in which the ever-increasing poverty, misery, terror, and bloodshed of capitalism shall be forever banished from the earth.

The pertinence of this Manifesto in today's world is a sad testament to the continuance of the destructive nature of our economic and social system and to the accuracy of its analysis.

—EDITORS

Letters

Lennon no better than Lenin as a spokesperson for real socialism?

Dear Sirs,

I wondered what inspired the SPC to adopt the title *Imagine* instead of “socialist” as a prefix or suffix, as, for, example *The Socialist Standard*, *The World Socialist Review*, etc. I never considered John Lennon a socialist. To me a socialist is one who has no dichotomy between his thought and action. So why should we be eager to project a hero’s image on him by hiring his word? We are not hero worshippers. The working class does not require any hero for its emancipation. I have bitter experiences with people like John Lennon, Bob Dillon, Herbert Marcus, Rezis Debre, Franz Fenon, and similar personalities in our own country. They were all opportunists. Where are those people now? They never undertook the day-to-day strain of socialist organization, education, and propaganda within the working class. They went on selling their wares in the market. Like

capitalists publishers who take advantage of Marx’s writings, not from consideration of a socialist cause, but from profit motives, they never tried to come out of the ghetto of capitalism. Hiring anything from them will automatically give a wrong signal to the working class. Taking any other name implies the ignorance that the working class cannot be attracted to socialism directly. To lay false bait to the working class only signifies ignorance and prejudice that the working class cannot understand and achieve socialism themselves. Last, but not least, “An end which requires unjustified means is not a justifiable end” (—Karl Marx)

—ASOK CHAKRABARTI, INDIA

There is much to agree with in your letter, the most salient being that emancipation from capitalism will be the work of the working class itself and that we will require no leaders to show us the way. The title Imagine was selected by democratic means by the whole membership of the SPC from a large number of proposals, most of which did include the word “Socialist”. You will note that beside the title we have clearly placed the words, “Official Journal of the Socialist Party of Canada”. While many of the protest singers wrote against war and the social ills of their time, as far as we are aware, none of them professed to be socialist, certainly not as we understand the term. This should not mean that we should not listen to, appreciate, or even use their words in the right context. Marx’s works are replete with quotations from non-socialists and are used both to juxtapose and to support his positions. As for selling their wares in the market place, it should be noted that, from the very beginning, capitalism was as virulent at eliminating alternative forms of employment for the labourer as it was in promoting itself. Thus, all workers in a capitalist system must sell their wares, labour power, to the capitalist. The title Imagine takes its inspiration from

the words of Lennon’s song and also is a reminder of our stand that socialism has never been tried and has no living, concrete examples and, at the present time, can only be imagined. Perhaps printing the words of the song would be appropriate at this point to reflect on their meaning:

*Imagine there’s no heaven
It’s easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today*

*Imagine there’s no countries
It isn’t hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace*

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world*

*You may say I’m a dreamer
But I’m not the only one
I hope some day you’ll join us
And the world will be as one*

We couldn’t have said it better ourselves!
—EDITORS

We welcome correspondence from all our readers — you can write us by post or e-mail at the address shown at the left.

Letters which are selected for publication in *Imagine* may be edited for length.

Published by:

The Socialist Party of Canada
Box 4280
Victoria, BC V8X 3X8
Canada

spc@iname.com
<http://www.worldsocialism.org/canada/>

The Socialist Party of Canada provides educational material and forums to explain capitalism and socialism, and works to promote working class understanding of socialism. Although primarily active in Canada, the Party sends information to people around the world.

The Socialist Party of Canada was founded in 1905. It is a companion party in an international organization of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement, whose Object and Declaration of Principles can be found elsewhere in this issue.

US–British military aggression in Iraq and the privatization of everything

The US–British war with Iraq is nothing new in terms of US–UK foreign policy. For fifty years, the United States and Great Britain have used military aggression against militarily weaker third world nations like Korea, Vietnam, Panama, and Argentina. None of these conflicts were ever over the threatened sovereignty of the United States or Britain—just their economic logic.

Like these countries, the Muslim way of life in large parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia frustrates the economic aspirations of capitalists in America and Britain. Despite world opinion against this war, Bush and Blair's lackey-like, laissez-faire globalization stumbles irresponsibly towards Iraq's devastation under their distorted logic of capitalist accumulation.

Like the US and Britain's laissez-faire approach to "Thinking Globally"—including murdering nations when deemed advantageous—this logic is likewise bullying its way into numerous Canadian provinces, such as Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario, slashing provincial utilities while simultaneously axing public services.

Conservative-led governments in these provinces are the local chapters of this US–British expansion of corporate greed, echoing such sycophantic mantras as Gordon Campbell's "New Era of Prosperity" which rationalize massive tax cuts for the rich through undermining healthcare, education, and social services for the labouring population.

Global privatization is nothing more than these Right-wing loonies' ideal of turning publicly owned assets into profit making markets for the ever-grasping hands of their political whips, the capitalist class. Their paring back of what little advances workers have gained through reforms since World War II arises in ever-rising user fees; gross deregulation of sound mining,

fishing, and forest practices; and systematic dismantling of hard-earned labour rights—proof positive that reforms under capitalism repeatedly fail to free workers from the fetter of international capital.

These capitalist-minded provincial Rightists, instead of using "weapons of mass destruction" to get their way, are using draconian legislation to kick-start their own version of *economic terrorism* on Canadian workers nation-wide.

Their moves to privatize provincially-owned hydropower, insurance, parks, liquor distribution, and water is their brainchild to spurring sluggish local markets while choking nationalized cash-flow to already under-funded public services like hospitals and schools. Their brand of legislated terrorism and union bashing threatens to roll back public reforms decades while simultaneously lending perverse merit in telling workers to *tighten their belts* to pay for all-too-cash-strapped public services.

Like the decision process of the Iraq war, decisions on all public utility closures in Canada continue behind closed doors. Insidiously, under Canada's North American Free Trade Agreement with the United States, such changes when they involve the US will be irreversible.

Let's remember this about Bush and Blair's Globalization:

WHEREVER THE "INVISIBLE HAND" OF THE MARKET TRAVELS, THE IRON FIST OF SUBJUGATION FOLLOWS...

Our solution:

Whether private or state capitalism: No compromise, no reform. Let us unite to rid ourselves of subjugation worldwide by transforming capitalism into an economic democracy for all.

— ADAPTED FROM AN ORIGINAL LEAFLET
BY J. AMES, A. O'DAY, & C. EKDAHL

The Socialist Party of Canada

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

In Ontario

Poverty and food deprivation still here despite “robust economy”

Crisis in Education

Ever since the present provincial government came to power in 1995, they have mounted an attack on public services with a view to privatizing them to allow the people they represent, the capitalist class, to cash in on the billions of dollars at stake. In education, they first appointed a high school dropout as Minister of Education. That dovetailed nicely with the appointment of a car dealership owner as Minister of Transportation, and a person of wealth as Minister of Social Services, who promptly lectured the poor on how to wisely spend their welfare cheques that he had just cut by 20%—*e.g.*, bargain with the supermarket manager on the price of cans of tuna! Not surprisingly, none of the above was the least interested in developing public services.

Education in Ontario is run by school boards of elected officials representing districts, like legislative bodies, and funds used to be raised by taking a portion of the property taxes which could be raised by the boards as needs arose and the electorate permitted. The government took the fundraising capability out of the hands of the boards, scooped the money into their own coffers to help pay for massive tax cuts, mainly to the rich and a tax credit for private school users amounting to \$300 million, and then funded the boards directly with about \$2 billion less than previously. The result was the expected cuts in program, maintenance, capital spending, materials, and personnel. The Toronto Board, for example, was recognized as a leader in providing social programs such as beefed up special education services, second language help for the city’s burgeoning immigrant population, parenting, inner-city help, swimming instruction, adult education, outdoor education, *etc.* After slashing or eliminating such programs for years,

and then legislated to bring in a balanced budget, the Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton boards refused to cut any further, while many other boards did so under duress, writing letters of complaint before complying. The three recalcitrant boards were promptly taken over by the government, the elected trustees suspended and prevented from carrying out those duties for which they were elected, a provincial auditor appointed to slash and burn, and another government appointee ran the boards as a virtual dictator. The resulting outcry brought

Ontario Minister of Social Services to the province’s poor: Why don’t you try haggling with the supermarket manager on the price of tinned fish?

the public versus private debate to the forefront. Although the private capitalists would examine each part of the system to reduce costs and maximize profits and we would see costly “frills” such as music, physical education, and learning about nature eliminated (or provided for an extra charge as in Alberta), the proponents of public education would do well to consider that both systems are subject to the laws of capitalism. Services under either one are provided only on a monetary basis, not a needs basis, as is everything where profit is the end result. Having worked for public boards for most of my working life, I know what a struggle it is just to

maintain necessary programs, never mind expand them or introduce new ones. For example, The Toronto Board recently had to cut all-day kindergarten, a program designed to give disadvantaged kids a head start, in order to save \$500 000. In addition the employee–employer relationship of antagonism is little different from that of the private sector with work-to-rules and strikes to improve wages and benefits and avoid staff cuts being common occurrences. Until the system is based on needs and operated directly by and for the people involved, we cannot expect this situation to improve and, very likely, it will to continue to deteriorate.

And the beat goes on...

As new statistics showed poverty and food deprivation growing across Canada, even in times of a “robust economy”, the forces of capitalism raised their ugly heel to tread once again on the most needy and vulnerable in our society. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reported in their publication, *The Monitor* (November 2002) that the top 50% of Canadians hold 94.4% of our wealth, leaving just 5.6% to the other half, and the richest 10% held 53% while the poorest 10% held a negative 4%! The December 2002/January 2003 edition of the same journal reported that food bank use has doubled in the last decade, a time that included unprecedented wealth creation. The Canadian Food Bank Association reported, also in that journal, that 750 000 people, about the population of our capital city, now use this service every month. A recent report in the *Toronto Star* (26 March 2003) prepared by Ontario Campaign 2000, part of the national coalition seeking to hold parliament to its 1989 pledge to end child poverty by the year

see ONTARIO, page 8

Obscene and heard

Voices in a capitalist world

On War

"He rules by fear because he knows there is no underlying support. Support for Saddam, including within his military organization, will collapse after the first whiff of gunpowder."
—Richard Perle, Defence Policy Board chair on the invasion to bring democracy to Iraq (*Toronto Star*, 30 March 2003)

"Take away the deaths from helicopter crashes, or bumping into each other in the air... just what have the fatalities been? ...The war is going pretty well and pretty humanely."
—David Frum, neo-con author and sometime presidential speechwriter (*Toronto Star*, 30 March 2003)

Referring to the damaged Iraqi infrastructure from the first Gulf War, such as water pumping and treatment plants which released an epidemic of water-borne diseases like cholera, typhoid and diarrhea, Richard Cheney, then-Secretary of Defence: "We had significant impact on Iraqi society that we wished we had not had to do. Nevertheless, every target was perfectly legitimate. If I had to do it all over again, I would do exactly the same thing." (*Toronto Star*, 10 February 2003)

Then-General Colin Powell, commenting on the number of Iraqis killed in the first Gulf War, estimated to be between 200 000 and 300 000 civilians and soldiers: "It's not really a number I'm terribly interested in." (*Toronto Star*, 3 March 2003)

"I was very much in favour of the American action in Afghanistan. I think it was necessary and I thought, on the whole, pretty well done."
—author Salman Rushdie (*Toronto Star*, 9 February 2003)

Defence contractors were eager to get to war to showcase their new equipment, such as the 9000-kilo MOAB (Massive Ordnance Air Burst). "Well, it's very efficient," said George Friedman. "Let's say you've got a large concentration of Republican Guard units. Instead of having to do repeated bombing sorties, you can take out a battalion, 500 to 600 troops, with one bomb." (*Toronto Star*, 3 March 2003)

On economy and War

Steve Forbes, editor-in-chief, *Forbes Magazine*, commenting on the impending invasion of Iraq: "Until this thing is over we are going to have the economic version of suspended animation." And on the aftermath: "We will then see value in the stock market." (*Toronto Star*, 10 February 2003)

"Incredibly, Sherry Cooper, the chief economist for BMO Nesbitt Burns, thinks war on Iraq 'would be just great' because it would be good for the stock market, and Thomas D'Aquino, CEO of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, thinks the war would be good for the Canadian oil industry. Apparently they feel this is the price we should pay to boost the market and the economy. How callous. These people have no moral compass and we Canadians are no better than the warmongers in Washington if we echo George Bush's policies of greed and self-interest." —letter to the editor (*Toronto Star*, 4 January 2003)

"Of all the possible courses of action, brutally invading and occupying Iraq with massive military force, which will inevitably be followed by disastrous long-term consequences such as disease from lack of clean water, is just not a humanitarian way to proceed. It is the right way to proceed, though, if the goal is to gain economic control of another country's resources."

—letter to the editor (*Toronto Star*, March 2003)

On the Economy

After collecting a \$20 million bonus for the three-week negotiation to merge Chase Manhattan Corporation and J.P. Morgan & Co., William Harrison: "These bonuses are compensation as a round of applause by boardrooms filled with stuffed animals." (*Toronto Star*, 25 August 2002)

Commenting on the federal handout of \$383 million to the metal mining industry in 2000/2001, Joan Kuyek of *Mining Watch*: "The richest vein of gold the Canadian mining industry has ever tapped was the one they discovered in the tax-payer's arm." (*The Monitor*, journal of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, February 2003)

A Treasury official commenting on the revelation that corporate and individual tax write-offs for entertaining would mean a loss of \$0.5 billion to treasury coffers: "Overall the rules represent a balance between fairness and simplicity." (*Toronto Star*, 19 January 2003)

On Poverty

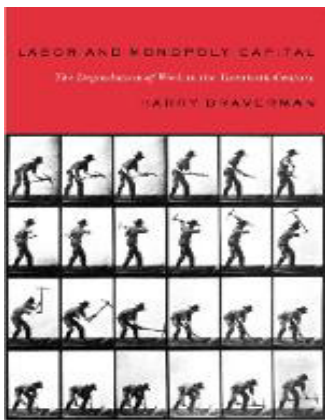
A 32-year-old mother of three, commenting on a new \$500 million condo to accommodate wealthy Toronto skiers in the resort town of Collingwood: "As far as I'm concerned, they're from another world. All they worry about is if it's cold enough for the ski resorts to make snow, while I worry about being able to afford to keep my children warm." (*Toronto Star*, 4 January 2003)

Toronto mayor Mel Lastman, commenting on the dawn raid to oust squatters from an unused lot in the

see *CAPITALISTS*, page 7

Book review

“Machinofecture” and the growth of monopoly capitalism



Labour and Monopoly Capital, the Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century by Harry Braverman, published by Monthly Review Press, 1974. (A 25th anniversary edition was also published.)

The introduction reveals the author as a time-served tradesman working extensively in shipyards and railways and later turning to socialist writing and editing. Also in the introduction, to tweak the socialist reader's interest, Braverman writes on the Soviet Union, "Whatever view one takes of Soviet industrialization, one cannot consciously interpret its history, even in its earliest, most revolutionary period, as an attempt to organize the labour process in any way fundamentally different from those of capitalism." Braverman has produced a readable, erudite book that takes Marxist principles and brings them up to the three-quarter mark of the twentieth century.

The thesis of the book, stated in the subtitle, examines the factors contributing to the appalling atomization of work into fractional, repetitive processes in the sole interest of profitability and, in so doing, exposes the myth of the modern, skilled, well-educated and well-paid worker. Braverman details how the degradation of labour was achieved through the division of labour, the scientific/

technical revolution, and scientific management.

From the earliest days of capitalism, the capitalist took on the role of management through ownership of the means of production, by gathering craftsmen under his roof, and by reorganizing and transforming assembly trades and industries such as iron smelting and sugar refining. He also realized the infinite capacity of humans to adapt to new methods of production that could continually enlarge productive capacities, surplus value, and capital. This mastery over the process, Braverman notes, allowed the capitalist to systematically eliminate alternate forms of livelihood for the labourer and force him to sell his only commodity: labour power. In addition, once in control, the capitalist took the knowledge of the craftsman and returned it piecemeal, dividing the skills into small, repetitive sections, mostly capable of being performed by cheap, unskilled labour.

Braverman documents the growth of monopoly capitalism that produced, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, huge companies such as Dupont, Standard Oil, General Motors and Sears Roebuck, which became the models that dominated the economic landscape. Society was being transformed into a huge market place, greatly expanding cities, transportation systems, infrastructure and, above all, productive capacity. These large agglomerations of capital demanded new non-productive fields such as accounting, sales, advertising, and scientific management. Pioneered by Frederick Winslow Taylor and Charles Babbage and later continued by Frank Gilbreth, scientific management is described by Braverman as "the study of work on behalf of those who manage

it, rather than for those who perform it."

It culminated in the infamous time and motion studies of Gilbreth that classified all the possible motions of the worker at his machine and assigned a time to each, thus illustrating how capitalists viewed human labour in abstract and machine terms. To Babbage, the machine was a masterpiece of control: "One great advantage that we may derive from machinery is the check which it affords against the inattention, the idleness or the dishonesty of human agents."

The third factor in the degradation of work was the scientific/technical revolution. Whereas the first industrial revolution was largely a mechanical one, driven by the steam engine in particular, the second revolution harnessed science, the last and most important social property, to the capitalist mode of production. Machinofecture, writes Braverman, took the instruments of labour from the workers' hands and placed them in the grip of mechanization, thus reducing the worker to a mere machine part and bringing to a close over a million years of human labour in which the worker created complex structures and recreated himself. Innovations such as numerical control cards and later silicone chips and electronic circuitry meant fewer parts, fewer steps, and less knowledge by each generation of labourers, reducing training time for machinists by a ratio of 12:1, from four years to four months. Thus, Braverman points out, machinery was not born as a servant to humanity but as an instrument of those to whom capital accumulation gives ownership of the productive process and controlled, not by the producer, but by the owners and representatives of capital.

see *DEGRADATION*, page 8

A just war

Religion's legitimization of armed conflict

Many people have opposed the latest capitalist conflict, the war in Iraq. Among them are many religious groups such as the Anglican Church of Canada. To highlight just how ridiculous their position is and to give further credence to our opposition to all religion, we should listen to Archbishop Michael Peers: "The church has supported wars in the past, including World War II, but the impending war in Iraq fails to meet any of the principles set by the church in the time of St. Augustine to define a 'just' war." (*Toronto Star*, 22 February 2003). Apparently, St. Augustine developed these principles that are supposed to still guide us on when to go to war and are as follows:

1. A just war can only be waged as a last resort.
2. A war is only just if it is waged by a legitimate authority.
3. A just war can only be waged to redress a wrong suffered.
4. A war is only just if it is fought with a reasonable chance of success.
5. A war is only just if its goal is to re-establish peace. Moreover, the peace established as a result of the war must be an improvement over the circumstances that would have prevailed had the war not been waged.
6. A war is only just if the violence used is proportional to the harm suffered.

7. Non-combatants are never permissible targets of war. Their deaths are justified only if they are unavoidable victims of a deliberate attack on a military target.

So far, we have been able to determine neither what terms such as "legitimate authority", "a wrong suffered", "a reasonable chance of success", and "an improvement over circumstances" actually mean, nor how to figure out the proportion of "violence used" to "harm suffered" or what proportion is satisfactory. We now understand why the likes of George Bush and Tony Blair have become devoutly religious. St. Augustine has given them the green light to wage war against anybody, anywhere in the world, at any time with any pretext. It also explains a lot about their rhetoric to attempt to justify their war to the world community.

—EDITORS

Capitalists speak

continued from page 5

shadow of the Toronto skyscrapers: "Somebody was going to get sick or hurt or worse... and that liability could have hurt Home Depot [the owners of the property] a lot." (*Toronto Star*, 25 September 2002)

On the Environment

"Global warming is only a theoretical problem dreamed up by scientists and environmentalists bent on having fun." —Stephen Harper, leader of the opposition Alliance party, a neo-con and pro-business group (*Toronto Star*, 21 September 2002)

On the War against Terrorism

"Blaming terrorism on poverty is a mistake because it weakens the global war on terrorists. India's view is that when you are fighting a war against terrorism, one should not weaken the cause by trying to get into the root causes of terrorism." —India's external affairs minister, Yashwanth Sinha (*Toronto Star*, 21 September 2002)

—EDITORS

Interested in learning more about socialism?

The following members of the Socialist Party of Canada have volunteered themselves as contacts.

John Ayers, (905) 377-8190, jpayers@sympatico.ca
John Thompson, kajeme@telus.net
William Johnson, bill_j@hotmail.com

We also invite you to write us for a free package of introductory literature. Drop us a line at the usual address:

The Socialist Party of Canada
Box 4280
Victoria, BC V8X 3X8
e-mail: spc@iname.com

The degradation of work in our time

continued from page 6

Finally, Braverman records how this process of degradation was applied to the burgeoning numbers of socially unnecessary, non-productive workers in the offices. The same principles of division of labour, scientific management, and technology were applied equally to white collar workers thus shackling these workers to their machines just as surely as is the case for the factory worker. The attention to detail in the interests of higher productivity in factory and office outlined carefully by the author is both astounding and egregious.

In the foreword, Paul Sweezy nicely sums up the reader's outrage when he writes,

The sad, horrible, heart-breaking way the vast majority of my fellow countrymen and women, as well as their counterparts in most of the rest of the world, are obliged to spend the rest of their lives is seared into my consciousness in an excruciating and unforgettable way. And

when I think of all the talent and energy which daily go into devising ways and means of making their torment worse, all in the name of efficiency and productivity but really for the greater glory of the great god, Capital, my wonder at humanity's ability to create such a monstrous system is surpassed only by my amazement at its willingness to tolerate the continuance of an arrangement so obviously destructive of the well-being and happiness of human beings. If the same effort, or only half of it, were devoted to making work the joyous and creative activity it can be, what a wonderful world this could be.

Braverman may not be a socialist by the World Socialist Movement definition, but he has produced a highly readable indictment of the capitalist mode of production and its treatment of labour, bringing a Marxist examination up to more modern times. The events of the

last twenty-five years—the increased use of neo-liberal trade practices and treaties, the further globalization of capital, the drawing of public services into private capitalists' hands, the continued degradation of work, especially as production shifts to the Third World, all serve to validate Marx's exposition of the system for what it is—a system created for the benefit of the privileged few at the expense of the exploited masses.

—J. AYERS

In Ontario

continued from page 4

2000, stated that Ontario was home to 390 000 children defined as poor, a 41% increase in the last decade.

Against this backdrop of dismal statistics, squatters who had built a shanty town within spitting distance of Toronto's gleaming multi-billion dollar skyscrapers were evicted by a dawn raid when the owners of the property, ironically named Home Depot, ordered security guards and bulldozers in. The squatters were escorted out without belongings while a police presence kept the peace—obviously not that of the homeless! Toronto mayor Mel Lastman capped this effort when he told the media, "Somebody was going to get sick or hurt or worse, and the liability could have hurt Home Depot greatly." The insanity of it all is that we have plenty of empty houses and buildings and plenty of homeless people living on the streets or in temporary arrangements, 6000 on any given night. As always under a system based on profit, unless you can pay, you can't have even the basic human needs like food and shelter. Only control of resources, production and distribution of wealth, by and for the people, and free access to all one needs can truly and finally solve problems like these.

—J. AYERS

Obituary

George Jenkins, 1920–2003

Born in Wilkie, Saskatchewan in 1920, George Jenkins spent the first part of his life on our dad's farm near Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. Our dad was a CCFer and George canvassed for that party at that time. His time spent in the army was the catalyst that made George a socialist. The family moved to BC in 1946 where he became a struggling artist. After a short marriage, he lived alone on Darwin Avenue, Victoria, BC. It was during these years that I visited my brother George often, discussing socialism. This is how I became a socialist. George had great insight into the human condition and promoted socialism for many years.

Because of this and our age difference (fifteen years) he was my mentor. George was subsequently married to Ethel (Rachel) for 27 years until the time of his passing. These years were spent on Lodge Avenue in Victoria where he enjoyed greater artistic success. The monthly socialist meetings were held at the Jenkins' house for many years. Towards the end of his life, due to arthritis and Parkinson's disease, George needed a walker to mobilize but his mind remained clear. He had a good sense of humour. I miss him as a brother, a socialist, and a friend, as I am sure most who knew him will.

—RON JENKINS