

Editorial

## **George W. Bush Should Stay Out of Canada**

The upcoming visit to Ottawa from November 30 to December 1 by U.S. President George W. Bush is an affront to the vast majority of Canadians. The Canadian people oppose the militaristic foreign policy of the Bush regime as well as its predatory trade policies towards Canada and numerous other countries. The visit is an affront to all those Canadians who are opposed to the U.S. occupation of Iraq and to the ongoing efforts of the Bush regime to militarize space with its missile defence program.

Recent opinion polls indicate that a significant majority of Canadians consider the United States to be a rogue state and the greatest threat to world peace and security. An overwhelming majority of Canadians also hoped for Bush's defeat in the November U.S. presidential election. Many

Canadians view a Bush visit to Canada so soon after his re-election to be not only obscene, but also an indication that the Martin government is preparing to make major concessions to the Americans on issues such as missile defence and further integration of the two economies.

The Canadian government has always played a duplicitous role in relation to the U.S. imperialist domination of Canada. For the past two decades, both Liberal and Conservative federal governments, as well as provincial governments of all stripes, have pursued policies of closer integration of the Canadian and U.S. economies. Free trade and various other measures have been touted as the only antidote to U.S. protectionist trade policies and the only way to

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Commentary

## **What "Opportunities" do the Imperialists See for the Palestinians?**

In the days following the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, the media has been full of commentary and speculation about the "opportunities" that supposedly exist for the Palestinians now that he is dead. Of course, the underlying premise for all of this speculation is the claim by the Israeli Zionists that Arafat was a terrorist and the main roadblock to the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Those asking the question are, therefore, not innocent observers but proponents of a particular "solution" to the conflict, that is the "solution" being proposed by Ariel Sharon with the support of George W. Bush.

Palestine has been under military occupation for at least four centuries, first by the Ottoman Turks,

then by the British imperialists and now by the Israeli Zionists. During this period of military-colonial occupation only one "opportunity" has existed for the Palestinian people, the opportunity to struggle for independence, freedom and democracy. The Palestinian people are a small nation of people whose main misfortune has been that they happen to live at the crossroads of the Middle East. Throughout history, every big power with imperial ambitions in the region has sought to control Palestine as the key to controlling the entire Middle East. Today, U.S. imperialism controls the Middle East, in large part through its control of Palestine, exercised through its military outpost, Israel.

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For the past 50 years, the policy of the Israeli Zionists, sometimes spoken and sometimes unspoken, has been the elimination of the Palestinian nation and its dispersal into the larger Arab community. The Zionists have used every means at their disposal, from naked state terrorism and economic sabotage to political intrigue in order to destroy the Palestinian nation. Despite unlimited financial and military support from the world’s biggest superpower, to date the Zionists have failed to achieve their aims. The Palestinian people have suffered the most terrible hardships, brutality and humiliation, but they have endured. Time and again they have emerged from the ashes to assert their humanity and their right to national self-determination.

For the past 50 years, each time that the Palestinian people have re-emerged as a political force on the world stage, Yasser Arafat has been there to lead them in their struggle. His death means that he will no longer be there in person, but his revolutionary spirit lives on in the Palestinian people who gave rise to him in the first place. Just as during his lifetime, the Palestinian people have only two choices: to continue their struggle for national self-determination or to cease to exist as a nation.

Those who talk about the “opportunity” that now exists for the Palestinian people invariably accuse Arafat of being a failure as a statesman. They claim that Arafat was incapable of state-building, that he did not understand the importance of national institutions. As proof, they point to the absence of such institutions within the Occupied Territories of Palestine. However, this is sheer sophistry. First, in general it is impossible to construct state institutions within a territory which is under military occupation because the occupying force will not allow the construction of such institutions. Therefore, the only institutions which an oppressed people can build are institutions for national liberation. Arafat built such institutions and his skill was such that those institutions for national liberation – al Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization – have survived 50 years of imperialist-Zionist onslaughts, as well as all of the political intrigues of the reactionary Arab regimes.

A special situation existed in Palestine during the 1990s in which the U.S. imperialists and Israeli

Zionists could no longer rule in the old way. They were forced to make concessions to the Palestinian people or risk being ostracized by the international community. Therefore, they were forced to officially recognize Arafat and the PLO and to accept the existence of a token Palestinian state within the Occupied Territories. However, from the beginning it was clear that this was not to be an independent Palestinian state, but an extension of the Israeli state. Its purpose, from the point of view of the Zionists, was not to defend the interests of the Palestinian people and prepare them for independence, but rather to defend the interests of the Zionists by ending the resistance of the Palestinians to the Israeli occupation.

When the second *intifada* began and it became clear to the Israeli Zionists and their U.S. allies that the Palestinian Authority (PA) was not prepared to act as their puppet regime, they systematically destroyed every vestige of the Palestinian state institutions that had been built by the PA. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) blew up Palestinian police stations, ransacked Palestinian universities, robbed Palestinian banks and invaded Palestinian government buildings, destroying computers and all records kept there. Thus, the absence today of any Palestinian state institutions, has more to do with the actions of the occupation forces than with any lack of state-building abilities of Yasser Arafat.

The speculation by the Zionists, the imperialists and their media about the “opportunity” now presenting itself to the Palestinian people can only mean one thing. They are hoping that a new Palestinian leadership will emerge that is willing to do what Yasser Arafat refused to do – capitulate to Israeli Zionism and betray the struggle of the Palestinian people. At various times, it even appears that they have specific candidates in mind, but are afraid to name them for obvious reasons. However, this wishful speculation misses the crucial point that Yasser Arafat was created by the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination; he championed but did not create that struggle. Therefore, if the Zionists and U.S. imperialists get their wish and Arafat’s successors betray the Palestinian cause, then that leadership will be rejected by the Palestinian people.

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For Your Information

## **Imperialism and Terrorism - Part V: Terrorism as a Tool to Discredit the Palestinian Struggle**

In our continuing series on the relationship between imperialism and terrorism, *Modern Communism* is examining the different ways in which imperialist powers have openly embraced the use of terror against civilian populations or provided support to terrorist groups to achieve their aims. The experience of the Red Brigades in Italy (see *Modern Communism* Vol. 5, No. 32) was an example of a supposedly communist group embracing terrorist tactics and lowering the prestige of communism and revolution, ultimately weakening the progressive forces throughout Europe. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) is another such example.

The PFLP emerged on the scene in 1967, shortly after Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Sinai Peninsula following the Six-Day Arab-Israeli war. It was following this war that U.S. imperialism firmly established Israel as its base in the region, funnelling billions of dollars in loans and military assistance to the Israeli state. The overtly racist nature of Israeli Zionism was becoming much clearer to progressive and democratic people around the world and support for the Palestinian cause was growing. The Palestinian struggle was seen as part of the anti-colonial struggles taking place across Africa and Asia.

During this period the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) emerged as the major force representing the Palestinian people. The PLO was established as an umbrella group of organizations dedicated to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Al-Fatah, the group led by the late Yasser Arafat, was the largest group in the PLO. Arafat's influence was increasing rapidly as a result of the work he was leading to organize Palestinian refugees living in camps scattered throughout the Occupied Territories, Jordan and Lebanon. The PFLP was created and joined the PLO at precisely this time.

Within a few years, the PFLP had become infamous for hijacking major commercial airlines, often holding the civilian passengers hostage and bartering their lives for the exchange of Palestinian political prisoners. Fatah, on the other hand, while waging a strategic guerilla campaign against Israel, under the general direction of the PLO Central Committee, had never used violence against civilians in its struggle. The PFLP's tactics caused a rift within the PLO, with one side decrying the use of terrorist tactics and the other claiming it was part of the ongoing struggle to liberate Palestine. Within this situation came the events of September 6, 1970, when the PFLP hijacked three international airlines and forced two of them to land in Jordan. Arafat and other PLO leaders condemned the hijacking and called on those responsible to release the hostages, while PFLP militants accused Arafat and others of going "moderate" and abandoning the struggle.

The Jordanian state, already looking for an excuse to expel the PLO over its organization of Palestinian refugees, seized on the action and launched an all-out offensive against the organization. This resulted in the death of thousands of PLO fighters and the organization's eventual expulsion from Jordan. The losses suffered in Jordan and the move to Lebanon represented a serious organizational setback for the PLO, one from which it was slow to recover. The blows dealt to the Palestinian people by the PFLP tactics led to a rapid drop in support for the group, which also began to splinter. By the early 1970s, when the PFLP became the first group to deploy suicide bombers on packed Israeli buses, the group was expelled from the PLO. However, the damage had already been done - the prestige of the Palestinian struggle was lowered, as the liberation movement became associated in people's minds with hijackings, hostage takings and civilian deaths.

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ensure a strong and healthy Canadian economy. However, two decades of “free trade” have not even slowed the attacks on Canadian exports to the U.S. of commodities deemed by the Americans to be competing with their products. At the same time, the Bush regime does not appear to have any problem with Canadian exports of cheap energy and it is also attempting to get its hands on the vast supplies of fresh water which exist north of the border.

Far from providing Canadians with economic, political and military security, the closer relationship with the United States which has been pursued by successive Canadian governments has succeeded only in putting the Canadian people even more at the mercy of American policy-makers and American corporations. Even worse, it is more and more implicating the Canadian people in the war crimes and crimes against humanity being carried out by the U.S. state in the name of “democracy and freedom”. While the claims of Canadian governments to an independent foreign policy have always been more image than substance, since the Mulroney governments of the latter half of the 1980s and early 1990s, even the pretence of independence has been increasingly abandoned. Paul Martin and his government appear poised to throw away whatever fig leaf remains in their haste to curry favour with President Bush.

Martin’s rationale for pursuing such a course of action is the necessity to protect Canadian trade interests. Once in a while Martin also talks about the need for “collective security” against the threat of international terrorism. However, all of these claims are wearing very thin given the realities of the past several decades. Only those who refuse to see could fail to recognize that Canada’s security – economic, social and military – has only been damaged by a closer relationship to the United States. Similarly, only those blinded by the glitter of empire could fail to notice that, for the Americans, “free trade” and “collective security” begin and end at their own borders, regardless of the grand claims they make to be the “defenders of the free world”.

In Ottawa and across the country, various groups are planning protests and other actions to demonstrate the opposition of Canadians to the activities of the Bush regime. These protests actions, whether large or small, are an important and necessary response to the presence of George W. Bush on Canadian soil. They are a reflection of the views of the vast majority of Canadians, whether or not they actually participate in these actions. However, while it is important for Canadians to express their opposition to Bush’s visit, it is equally important to oppose the Martin government, which is not only facilitating Bush’s visit, but also facilitating the further domination of Canada by U.S. imperialism.

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There can be only one solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and that is the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the Occupied Territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The struggle for those goals is the only opportunity that existed for the Palestinians prior to Arafat’s death and it is still the only opportunity that exists for them. Whatever other “opportunities” that may be presented to them are nothing more than the intrigues of the Zionists and imperialists. The Palestinian people have proved themselves quite adept at rejecting such false “opportunities”.

## **Modern Communism**

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