

# Struggles in Quebec up against wall of Imperialism

The Parti Quebecois' electoral victory has catapulted the Quebec nation towards independence after more than a century of domination inside the Canadian state. In response Trudeau and all the major mass media are presently on a campaign for "national unity" to save "their" Canada. Trudeau has even gone so far as to contrast the "cynical and blasé" attitude of Canadians with the "fervent respect" Americans have for their flag and institutions. In this time of hysteria around "national unity" it is time to look at the real situation in Quebec.

For three centuries Quebec has existed as a distinct territorial and economic unit with its own language and culture — basic criteria for defining a nation. And yet the Quebecois have no national state and the political independence this would bring.

Politically, Quebec has had no power over its own future. All of the most important decisions have remained in Ottawa, with the Supreme Court ever ready to reinforce the status quo.

Quebecois national oppression also has a cultural form, particularly in the suppression of national linguistic rights. In education, English schools have better facilities, better textbooks etc. and in the workplace English (the boss's language) is usually required for more skilled positions.

Cultural and political oppression are interwoven with economic oppression. It is no accident that wages are generally lower in Quebec than in any other place in the territory of the pan-Canadian state, that the unemployment rate is over 13 per cent (2 per cent higher than the "national" average), that social services are abominable and that

Quebec unions have experienced the fiercest forms of repression. These are the economic and social hallmarks of English-Canadian domination which have led to the highest forms of working class and student combativity in North America.

Workers and student struggles in

A meeting will be taking place at York on Monday, March 14, at 12 noon in room S167 Ross on the question of "Why English Canadians Should Support Quebec's Right To Self-Determination?". Featured will be two speakers from socialist groups in Quebec. The meeting is part of a cross-country tour sponsored by the Revolutionary Marxist Group, the League for Socialist Action and the Young Socialists. For further information contact the RMG at 368-7313 or the LSA at 368-9618.

Quebec invariably come up against the wall of imperialism. The corporations and their governments try to prevent us from hearing about these struggles so we could learn their lessons of militancy and strengthen our own struggles. The corporations and Trudeau try to blur the question of the national oppression of the Quebecois so we will be fooled into supporting the "national interests" of the English-Canadian corporations against the legitimate national liberation of the Quebec nation and working class. The very same corporations and government that are attacking students through tuition fee hikes and cutbacks are the same ones that

want us to support their "national interests" (i.e. their continued right to use Quebec as a cheap labour pool and as a reserve for raw materials).

We have no interests in supporting this "national unity". Rather we should support the Quebecois right to decide their own future, regardless of who presently leads the independence movement in Quebec. It is only in this way that we can undo centuries of English-Canadian oppression of the Quebecois and lay the basis for united struggles against our enemies.

Gary Kinsman  
for the

Revolutionary Marxist Group

## Legislation to fight Cdn. loan-sharking

OTTAWA (CUP) — Criminal rate lending — lending at a rate unjustifiably higher than prevailing market rates, including discounting income tax refunds at excessive rates — will be illegal if proposed legislation now before the standing committee on health, welfare, and social affairs is approved.

Bill C-16, the borrowers and depositors protection bill, is designed to fight loan-sharking, according to Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister Anthony Abbott.

"The criminal rate will be a new and effective tool for out police forces in their fight against loan sharks and tax refunds and welfare cheque discounters," he said.

The government says the criminal rate, as it is called, is required to punish and deter socially unacceptable practices such as loan sharking, discounting at excessive rates of income tax refunds, welfare cheques, and other government payments.

Discounting tax refunds works like this. A person or company 'buys' a tax refund that may be coming to an individual, at a substantial discount. Another form is the purchase of welfare cheques before they are issued — again at a substantial discount. According to the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, these so-called 'buys' are really loans and the interest is the difference between the amount advanced and the amount the discounter will get.

The concept of the 'criminal rate' is established in the bill. It would also set the rate which would be so far above prevailing market rates as to be what the government would term "unjustifiable in any circumstances."

When Abbott first tabled the bill in

late October of last year, he said, "We are determined to fight Canada's credit black-marketeers in all their forms — from the neighbourhood loan shark hanging out in the local tavern with his muscle boys, to the bird of prey in a suit and tie who sits behind a desk, buying up tax refunds or welfare cheques from the poor, at a fraction of their value."

Under the new bill, a person exacting a credit charge rate greater than this criminal rate is guilty of an offense and punishable by heavy fines and jail terms.

According to a government report, "no existing federal or provincial legislation deals effectively with these practices, primarily because the penalties prescribed by existing statutes are insignificant when compared to the profit potential for loan-sharking and discounting."

Under the British North America Act (BNA) Act banking and interest are entirely within federal jurisdiction.

The penalties upon summary conviction for criminal lending will be a fine, a minimum \$1,000 to maximum \$10,000, or, up to two years imprisonment, or both.

In addition to the criminal rate provision, the bill will, according to Abbott, encourage "vigorous competition among all money lenders." In addition it will give consumers enough information about the terms and conditions about a loan before they enter into it and establish a nationally uniform practice for the calculation, crediting and description of credit charges. Abbott says "we believe this imposes an effective curtailment on the loan shark's freedom to operate."

### Camp '77 Europe



An exciting new way to see Europe — and inexpensive as well.

Join compatible people and tour Europe by motorcoach, with experienced guides. Sleep in tents at superior camp sites, meet the people.

Send for our 32 page descriptive brochure. Some sample tours (London-London)

- England, Scotland, Wales (3 weeks) \$286.00
- Highlights of Europe (22 days) \$388.00
- Greece & Turkey (28 days) \$488.00
- Spain, Portugal, Morocco (32 days) \$486.00
- Scandinavia (3 weeks) \$388.00
- Scandinavia & Russia (5 weeks) \$586.00
- Europe, Greek Islands, Russia (8 weeks) \$896.00

These tours in co-operation with Air Canada and British Airways. Choose the air fair to London that suits your need. e.g. Charter class fare Toronto-London return from \$299.00

For brochure, further information and reservations, call or write:

Sue Webb  
Lawson, McKay & Associates Ltd.  
11 Adelaide St. West, Suite 901  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 1L9  
(416) 364-5267

p.s. We also handle charter flights, package tours, scheduled flights domestic and overseas, ships, etc.

Just call us for whatever you need.

Set up your weekend, with Long Distance. © Trans-Canada Telephone System