



**February 5, 2002**

## **Education for people, not profits!**

Press Statement issued by  
the Central Executive Committee  
Communist Party of Canada

Free education – a basic right

Everyone has the right to a free education to the highest of their ability. Cold war propaganda has always claimed that communism is undemocratic, but what can be more anti-democratic than denying people an education? That is what our governments are doing right now.

Every communist-led revolution has mandated free education and universal literacy. Even now, Cuba and Vietnam boast better education systems than capitalist countries in their regions. Communists believe that encouraging people to think for themselves helps the fight for social change, and for a better society.

Our governments want people to just watch and read the corporate controlled media, which promotes the ideas they want you to have and censors "dissident" views. Now the corporate elite also want to own Canada's education system, to control it for the interests of profit.

### **Crisis in Education**

Higher Education is increasingly becoming a privilege of the rich. According to Statistics Canada, children from upper-income families are two and a half times more likely to attend university than those from the working class. Funding cuts to post-secondary education mean that most students will graduate with a \$25 000 debt or more, which puts higher education out of reach for most people.

With the advent of private universities, this trend will get worse. In Ontario, where some campuses have "deregulated" fees, students are looking at \$25 000 a year for tuition. Soon only the rich will be able to send their kids to university, ensuring their status as the dominant class – making sure that

our children work for their profits.

### **Crisis in the Market**

The "Free Trade" agreements are another front of the attack on education. These deals aim to reduce "unfair trade barriers" like government funding for universities, and to privatize so-called "economic sectors" such as education and other essential public services. Opening up education to foreign investment will create an influx of private universities and colleges, undermining Canada's post-secondary system. This amounts to the wealthy elite of the richest countries (mainly the US) making a profit out of an essential human right. They want to own and control our education system, and the Chrétien Liberals are willing to let them do it.

### **What Are They Doing?**

Corporations and governments are using the media and even some student associations to make people believe that this is a "natural" and "inevitable" change which may even work for the benefit of students. The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), claiming to represent the interests of students, lobbies Ottawa for small concessions that it knows it can win.

This amounts to asking for nothing. In fact, CASA betrays the interests of students, by not protesting against the damage inflicted by higher tuition fees. Instead, through newspaper editorials and PR campaigns, they try to dupe people into believing that higher tuition will "improve the quality" of education, and that allowing corporations onto campuses allows for "better services."

This is not surprising, since CASA is linked to the Progressive Conservative and Canadian Alliance parties, which see education as a privilege for the rich.

### **What Can We Do?**

Students are fighting back, by participating in the Canadian Federation of Students' "Action for Access" campaign. Past demonstrations and campaigns, like those on Feb. 6 this year, have won a 10% tuition reduction in Newfoundland and Manitoba, and a tuition freeze in BC.

Students are resisting trade agreements such as the GATS and the FTAA. By protesting the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City (April 2001), and the G8 summit in Kananaskis, Alberta (June 2002), we are warning that politicians and corporations cannot hide behind media propaganda and concrete barriers.

The Quebec trade unions have issued an important call to the labour

movement to step up this struggle, by organizing a one day protest strike against the FTAA on May Day, 2003. Student groups can help by urging the Canadian Labour Congress to support this call.

On the electoral level, we need to fight the Liberals, Tories and Canadian Alliance, which all want to put public education in the hands of the wealthy.

### **A new society – people's power!**

The Communist Party works tirelessly to put power in the hands of the majority, not the corporate elite. Calling for the reduction and elimination of tuition fees is an important part of the struggle against corporate domination of all aspects of our lives.

As Karl Marx once said, "The capitalists fight for their profit, the workers for their health, for a few hours of daily rest, to be able to engage in other human activities as well, besides working, sleeping, and eating."

By uniting across racial and gender lines, students and workers can create a society where a free education is a universal human right. The Communist Party believes that the best answer to the corporate attack is to unite around a real People's Alternative, and to replace capitalism by socialism – the power of the working class.

It is up to every one of us to struggle for a free education. We must conquer or drown, because there is no liberty without access!

Statement from the Youth & Student Commission,

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