



Ottawa's Racist "Law and Order"

Canada already has some of the most sweeping restrictions on firearms possession in the world. Now the Liberal government is turning the screws even tighter through Bill C-68, which requires the registration of

No to Gun Controls!

every gun in the country, including hunting rifles and shotguns.

This legislation is an attack on civil liberties—and a whole lot of people, right across the political spectrum, don't like it one bit. Many gun owners have vowed to ignore it. Even eight of the nine federal NDP MPs voted against the bill on first reading, reflecting the high level of firearms ownership in the party's remaining Prairie base.

Bill C-68 will force millions of gun owners to register with the police, and to keep registering every five years. The government will set up a central, computerized list to keep tabs on each and every gun owner and each and every gun in private hands. To legally own any firearm, you will be required to have a magnetically encoded identification card, complete with photograph. The sale of handguns will virtually be banned, as will 21 categories of "assault" weapons.

In introducing his proposed legislation, Justice Minister Allan Rock "said Canada, a country born not of a revolution but of political consensus, should not become a U.S.-style society where many people own guns for self-defence" (*Globe and Mail*, 1 December 1994). True enough, the American right "to keep and bear arms"—as codified in the Second Amendment to the Constitution—was a result of the revolutionary struggle against British rule. But today's U.S. government doesn't want a society where people own guns for self-defense, either. In the last several years there has been a concerted campaign to undo the Second Amendment and disarm the population.



Jim Garnett/Canada Wide

Capitalist state seeks monopoly of arms against population.

This was brought home with fire and blood in Waco, Texas two years ago. The American government murdered 86 people, including at least 25 children, in an FBI/BATF assault on the racially integrated Branch Davidian religious commune. Washington tried to justify this holocaust with charges of "child abuse" and "illegal firearms possession" (though the Davidians' guns were *legally owned*).

Strengthening the State

As social discontent with unemployment, poverty and capitalist austerity threatens to boil over into social struggle, in both the U.S. and Canada the rulers are strengthening their forces of repression. This is the meaning of their "war against crime." The ruling class and its media are whipping up a fear-mongering uproar over "law and order," whose cutting edge is thinly veiled racism.

The Ottawa Liberals are capitalizing on public revulsion at
(continued on page 12)

Arming Turkey's War Against the Kurds

Canada's Merchants of Death

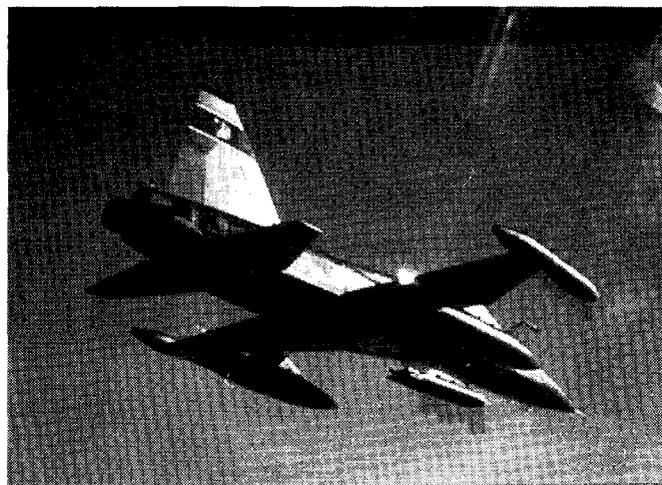
On March 20, the eve of the Kurdish New Year holiday of Nowrouz, the brutal Turkish regime launched an offensive of 35,000 troops against the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq. The very next day, it was revealed that Canada is trying to sell 39 refitted CF-5 fighter planes to the bloody Ankara regime. These are precisely the types of warplanes Turkey is using in its blitzkrieg against the Kurds.

Turkish prime minister Ciller and her apologists brazenly claim the invasion is "self-defense" against Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas. But as one Turkish military official openly admitted about this "final operation," "the aim is to cause as much destruction as possible." The invasion of the Kurdish territory in Iraq, complete with air strikes, artillery barrages and helicopter gunship attacks, is an intensification of the genocidal war against the Kurdish minority in Turkey, which has been raging for years. More than 1,400 Kurdish villages have been destroyed and more than two million Kurds forced to flee. Defend the Kurds!

Canada's foreign affairs minister André Ouellet says there's "nothing wrong" with the proposed fighter plane deal—after all, Turkey is Canada's NATO ally. Getting to the heart of the matter, he added "we have to sustain these [Canadian 'defense'] companies who have major investments.... We just can't deny them prospective sales."

Some bourgeois editorialists and opposition politicians have complained the sale of the fighter planes would "dirty Canada's hands." But their real beef is the timing, which looks like bad PR. For decades, the Canadian imperialists have sold all manner of military goods to murderous right-wing regimes around the world. Clients of Canada's merchants of death have included Chile, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia and Thailand. During the Vietnam war, Canada supplied the U.S. war machine with \$1 million a day in arms shipments. The Americans did the killing, Canada reaped the profits, and Ottawa declared its hands were clean.

Under the cover provided by the United Nations, Canada has directly participated in the slaughter of hundreds of thou-



no credit

Canada deals deadly ground attack aircraft to Turkish NATO ally, today carrying out genocide against Kurds.

sands of Koreans, Congolese and Iraqis. Psychotic Canadian Airborne "peacekeepers" tortured black Africans to death in Somalia. But the Canadian rulers, echoed by the social democratic "left," continue to push the myth of a "peaceloving" Canadian imperialism, a posture which is of immense use to Ottawa's senior partners in Washington. When the U.S. finds it inconvenient to send in the Marines for one reason or another, they can turn to the "brave neutral mediator" to the north to "keep the peace," i.e., police the imperialist-dictated status quo against the oppressed.

Imperialism isn't a "policy" that can be "corrected" through pressuring the ruling class, contrary to the beliefs of the reformist left. Imperialism is the system of capitalism in its death agony; it *must* foster militarism and wars in order to survive, by protecting its foreign markets and plundering new ones. This decaying capitalist system, which would generate profits out of blood, must be overthrown by the working class and its allies among the oppressed. ■

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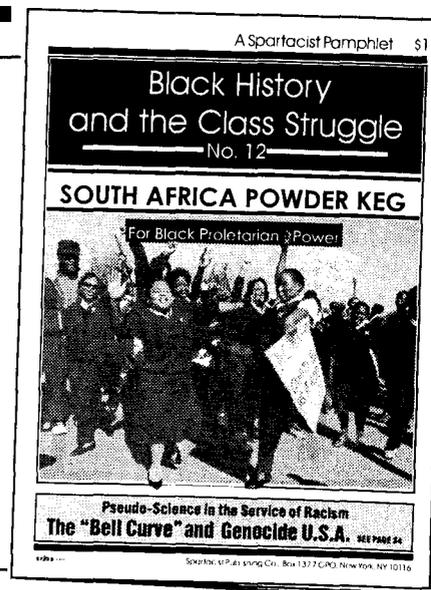
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Chauvinists in a Feeding Frenzy

The "Fish Wars"

The ghost of absurdist playwright Luigi Pirandello hovers over the scene. It is March 28. Liberal fisheries minister Brian Tobin stands aboard a scow moored in the filthy waters of New York City's East River. In his hand he holds a dead fish. Before the assembled international capitalist press, and in all apparent seriousness, Tobin intones, "We're down now finally to one last lonely, unattractive little turbot clinging on by its fingernails to the Grand Banks...saying: 'Someone reach out and save me in this 11th hour'."

Welcome to the fish wars. While nobody expects an all-out North Atlantic shooting war over flatfish, Tobin's maudlin off-Broadway theatrics are part of a serious tussle among rival imperialist powers. The prize is control of what's left of the devastated North Atlantic fishery.

On March 8, Canadian gunboats fired on and seized a Spanish fishing vessel in international waters on the "nose and tail" of the Grand Banks. Spain responded by sending in a naval warship to protect its fishing fleet. When negotiations over fishing quotas broke down in mid-April, Ottawa dispatched two heavily armed navy ships, the frigate *Gatineau* and destroyer *Nipigon*, to confront the Spanish in the North Atlantic. Only an eleventh-hour deal among Canada, Spain and the other countries of the European Union over revised quotas for the turbot catch averted another round of naval gunfire.

Declaring the denizens of the North Atlantic to be under Canadian protection, the federal government has stage-managed an eruption of rally-round-the-flag jingoism against foreign "eco-vandals." This reactionary campaign was designed to divert popular anger against Ottawa's vicious austerity budget, and to whip up national chauvinism in the face of the sovereignty campaign in Quebec. We say: Down with the Maple Leaf jingoist crusade! The enemies of Canadian workers are not fishermen from Spain, but the capitalist rulers here at home!

Capitalist Rivalry, Environmental Disaster

Fishing is big business. Today, 30 percent of all ships over 100 gross tons are fishing vessels and, as one UN official put it, "He who catches the most first, wins." Thanks to decades of profit-driven, devil-take-the-hindmost competition among competing capitalist powers, fish stocks have declined precipitously worldwide.

For years, politicians in Ottawa have tried to blame the collapse of the once-teeming Grand Banks fishery on foreign, especially Spanish, overfishing. Cynical hardly begins to describe Canada's posture as the avenging angel of "ecological sanity." The destruction of the once-rich Grand Banks fishery, especially the northern cod stocks, was accomplished above all by *Canadian* corporations.

In 1974, a Canadian monopoly over most of the Grand Banks was established by the declaration of a 200-mile exclusion zone. Back then, too, Ottawa's declared aim was to "save the fishery." In less than two decades of such "conservation efforts," Canadian seafood conglomerates like National Sea Products managed to overfish to the point where 99 percent of the northern cod stocks have disappeared.

This in turn brought about the biggest layoff in Canadian



Richard Drew/AP

Liberal fisheries minister Brian Tobin, with turbot, denounces Spanish fishermen in New York, March 28.

history, with tens of thousands of fishermen and shore workers tossed on the dole overnight in 1992 when Ottawa shut down the exhausted northern cod fishery. So far, the annihilation of the Grand Banks fish stocks has left at least 50,000 people jobless. On the west coast, similar depredations (resulting in the famous "million missing salmon") threaten thousands more jobs. Spain has become the convenient scapegoat for these Made In Canada environmental disasters—which, far from being "natural," all grow directly out of capitalism's mad search for profit.

Piracy and Chauvinism

The Spanish eat a lot of fish, and Spanish capitalism maintains a huge fleet to sustain this domestic market. In the face of sharply decreased stocks worldwide, clashes between Spain and other maritime countries have flared all over the Atlantic and Mediterranean. French and Spanish vessels have exchanged machine-gun fire in the Bay of Biscay; in April the Irish gunboat *Aoife* seized a Spanish trawler; Namibia and Argentina have banned the Spanish fleet from their waters, while Morocco is trying to cut the Spanish presence in half.

Ottawa's seizure of the Spanish trawler *Estai* in international waters was an act of piracy under the imperialists' own "law of the sea." After ignoring an illegal order to heave to, the *Estai* was fired on four times, boarded by Canadian fisheries officers and forced to put in to St. John's harbor. There, her captain was arrested and charged under a new federal "conservation" law which no one but Canada recognizes.

The commandeering of the *Estai* sparked an explosion of Maple Leaf chauvinism. And indeed, this was a key goal of Ottawa's carefully timed confrontation with Spain. Montreal

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Join the Campaign to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Rallies for U.S. Death Row Political Prisoner

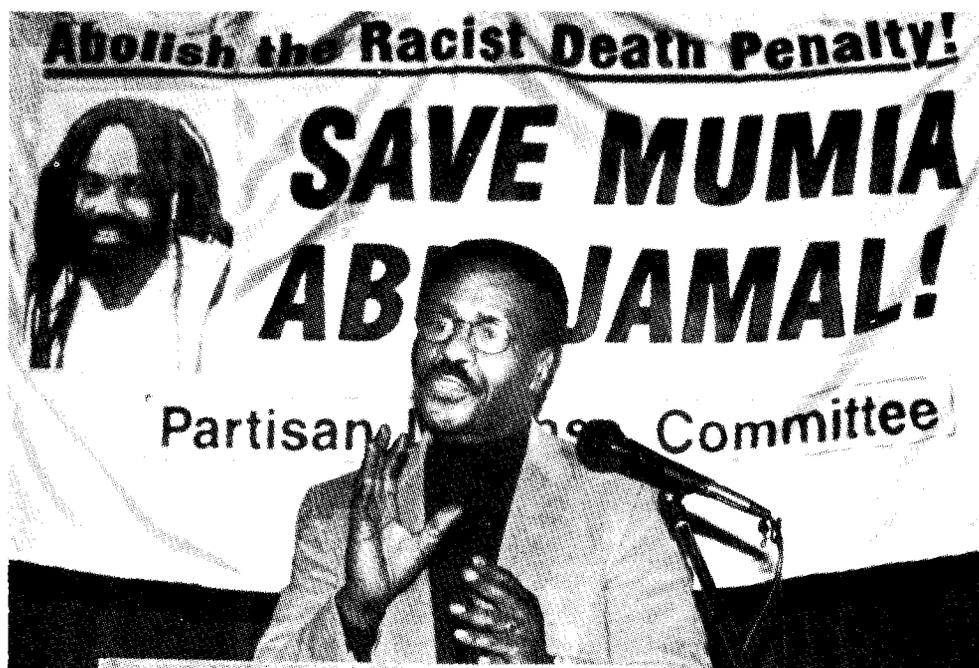
More than 170 people packed the auditorium at St. Paul's Centre in Toronto on March 11 for a rally to save the life of U.S. death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty. Black community activists, prison rights advocates, socialists, trade unionists, students and anti-racist youth came out for the rally, one in a series held in cities around the world under the sponsorship of the Partisan Defense Committee and its fraternal defense organizations.

The same evening, the PDC hosted a rally of over 60 in Vancouver, which was addressed by postal and public employee unionists whose locals have endorsed the campaign to save Jamal. On March 18, about 70 supporters of Jamal demonstrated outside the U.S. consulate in Montreal in a protest organized in collaboration with the PDC by local left organizations including Mobilisation, Action Socialiste, Démanarchie and others. More than \$1,800 was raised for Jamal's legal defense at the rallies in Toronto and Vancouver.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an award-winning black journalist who became known as the "voice of the voiceless" for his passionate defense of black, poor and working people. Jamal is a supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization and was a founding member of the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party. Long a target of the notoriously racist Philly police for his exposure of their brutality, in 1982 Jamal was framed for the killing of a Philadelphia policeman. Railroaded through the courts, Jamal was sentenced to die explicitly for his political beliefs.

The urgency of the international campaign to save Jamal was underlined in mid-March when Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge signed a law ordering a 90-day time limit for signing death warrants after the state Supreme Court upholds the sentences *and mandating execution 30 days thereafter*. Ridge campaigned for office vowing to get the machinery of state murder rolling at top speed.

The featured speaker at the Toronto rally was Rubin Hurricane Carter. A former middleweight boxing contender, Carter was the victim of a racist frame-up in New Jersey nearly 30 years ago for a triple murder he did not commit. In the aftermath of the 1964 police riot in Harlem, Rubin Carter spoke out



Rubin Hurricane Carter Speaks Out for Jamal

for the right of black self-defense. Two years later he and John Artis were framed up on phony murder charges. Thanks to the racist "justice" system, Carter had nearly two decades of his life stolen from him in prison, and only finally won his freedom in the 1980s. Today, he is executive director of the Association in Defense of the Wrongly Convicted.

Among the other rally speakers were Partisan Defense Committee representative Peter Stevens, Marc Lamarre of the Haitian Resistance Movement in Toronto and Norman Richmond of the African Liberation Month Coalition. Zoltan Lugosi of Prison News Service, which has long publicized Jamal's case, addressed the meeting and read greetings from German prisoners. Two spokesmen for Toronto's Black Action Defense Committee (BADC), Lennox Farrell and Dudley Laws, also spoke out in defense of Jamal. Leaders of BADC including Dudley Laws have themselves been targets of a racist vendetta by the local cops and media because of their active, long-standing opposition to racist police terror.

David Bleakney, a chief shop steward with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers Toronto Local, underlined the need to mobilize the power of organized labor in defense of Jamal. "We've got a duty to defend these prisoners," he told the rally, "whether they be the [Geronimo] Pratts, the Hurricanes, the Scottsboro Boys, whether it be black youth shot down in the streets of Toronto with a bullet in the back, or whether it be



SC photos

In defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal: Rubin Carter addresses Toronto rally (opposite page), CUPW Local Vice President Jim Lougheed at Vancouver rally (above left), demonstrators march in downtown Montreal.

members of my own union who've gone to jail for defending their rights on a picket line."

The Vancouver rally was announced in the CUPW Vancouver Local "Update," *Afro/Carib News* and elsewhere, bringing out a very integrated crowd of student youth, unionists, and activists. In addition to speakers from CUPW and CUPE Local 391, representatives of the Somaliland Friendship Society of B.C., the Partisan Defense Committee, Anti-Fascist Info and Third World Alliance also spoke. Denise Kowalski, sister of Guy Paul Morin, the Ontario man whose false conviction for murder was recently overturned after a Canada-wide campaign, also made a heartfelt plea to save Jamal.

We print below excerpts from the remarks by Rubin Hurricane Carter to the Toronto PDC rally.

* * *

I often begin speaking by telling people how pleased I am to be anywhere, given my history, a history that is not unlike Jamal's history. But I won't say that tonight. I'm gonna be

rude. I'm *not* pleased to have to be here tonight. There's a man on death row facing execution for something that he didn't do, and there's nothing pleasing about that. In fact, it is absolutely obscene.

On the other hand, this gathering here tonight is absolutely vital and necessary. I can't tell you how much it means, when you are wrongly imprisoned, to know that there are people out here like you attending events like this. It gives us hope. And in a place as hopeless and as desperate as prison, there's nothing more precious than hope. Hope that something can happen, that wrongs can be righted. And wrongs *can* be righted. My presence here tonight is living proof of that.

In 1966, I narrowly escaped the electric chair for a crime I did not commit. I was sentenced instead to three life terms, and spent almost 20 years in prison before being exonerated. And I would still be in prison today had it not been for the care, efforts and concern of a few people, of a few people who gave
(continued on page 6)

Prepare for Emergency Demos!

THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL IS AT A CRITICAL POINT—YOU CAN HELP! At any moment, Pennsylvania's pro-death penalty governor, Tom Ridge, could sign Jamal's death warrant. Ridge has already signed warrants for five death row inmates, and the state's first execution in 30 years is set to take place in April. Jamal is in imminent danger—if a warrant is signed, emergency demonstrations will be held in New York and other cities. In Canada, demos are planned for Toronto and Vancouver. Get on the Partisan Defense Committee phone tree and help organize to make these urgent protests the loudest possible outcry against the racist death penalty.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN: take petitions; ask your friends, neighbors and co-workers to sign and get involved. Organize a showing in your union, community group, church or school of the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*. Send letters and get Jamal's powerful columns into your local newspapers, school or union newsletters; raise motions in your union or at your school to send a letter to Governor Ridge demanding "Mumia Abu-Jamal

must not die!" Contact the PDC in Toronto at (416) 593-4138, or in Vancouver at (604) 687-0353.

SEND PROTEST LETTERS TO: Governor Tom Ridge, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120.

WRITE TO JAMAL to express your solidarity: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090.

SEND \$\$\$ FOR JAMAL LEGAL DEFENSE NOW! Funds are urgently needed to wage the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal's life. All money raised through the rallies organized by the Partisan Defense Committee has gone directly to Jamal's legal defense. Since February 9, nearly US\$15,000 has been collected or pledged. More is needed now! Jamal's legal team initiated the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, co-chaired by actors Ossie Davis and Mike Farrell, to help raise funds. Make out your contribution for the defense to: Partisan Defense Committee, earmarked "Jamal Legal Defense," and send it to the PDC at Box 314, Station B, Toronto ON, M5T 2W1. These donations will be forwarded in full to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal. ■

Press Coverage of Jamal Defense



Jailing innocent called a crime

RALLIES IN TORONTO AND VANCOUVER TO SAVE LIFE OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL SUCCESSFUL

The following is an excerpted version of a press release received from the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC):

...were read by Denise Burnett of CIUT radio. (see page 15)

"Don't tell me life that was lost in prison." In 1966 I was at the peak of my career. A professional prize fighter about to fight for the middleweight crown, I thought to myself, "My God, I'm in a real jam."



the life of U.S. death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal. The following is an excerpted version of a press release received from the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC):

Rubin Hurricane Carter Addresses Toronto Rally To Save The Life Of Mumia Abu-Jamal

TORONTO, Ontario - Former professional boxer, Rubin Hurricane Carter, and Black Action Defense Committee spokesperson, Lennox Farrell, were among those who spoke at a Saturday, March 11, Toronto rally to demand the abolition of the death penalty. The rally was held at the St. Lawrence Market, which was sponsored by the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC). Participants included community activists, prison rights advocates, and others. Carter, known as the "voice of the voiceless" in the defense of African, poor and

JAMAL LEGAL DEFENSE NEEDS \$\$\$

The filing of Jamal's appeal against his conviction and execution. The legal help. Jamal is up against the state. In recent years those overturned death sentences have had to pay at least \$1 million to help raise funds. Jamal's Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal (CMAJ) has a list of names of supporters. Your support is urged. The defense should be made a priority. Contact: PDC, P.O. Box 314, MST 2W1. These donations will help pay for Jamal's appeal.



Save Mumia Abu-Jamal Abolish Racist Death Penalty

"Truly in the death penalty we see the impulse to genocide"

...the death penalty is the centerpiece of the right wing Backlash against the Black community. The United States is a racist society. It is a society that has created a system of racial oppression and exploitation. The death penalty is a tool of racial oppression. It is a tool of genocide.

Appui montréalais à un condamné à mort américain

...des centaines de milliers de personnes ont participé à une manifestation de soutien à Mumia Abu-Jamal. Les participants ont défilé devant le Consulat américain à Montréal. Ils ont porté des pancartes et chanté des slogans. Les participants ont également écrit des lettres de soutien à Mumia Abu-Jamal. Les lettres ont été envoyées à son avocat, Me Joseph P. Kamp.



...qui a été promulgué en un décret du Conseil de la Ville de Montréal. Le décret a été adopté par le Conseil de la Ville de Montréal le 10 mars 1987. Le décret a pour objet de reconnaître le rôle de Mumia Abu-Jamal dans la lutte pour la justice sociale et pour l'abolition de la peine de mort.

Mumia Abu-Jamal...

(continued from page 5)

meaning to the words, "True justice will never be achieved until those who have not been injured become as outraged as those who have."

When I was first asked to speak out on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal, I have to admit that I was not familiar with his case. So I requested written materials from Peter, which soon arrived, and I proceeded to immediately review them. And it wasn't long in my review that I detected a foul but familiar odor emanating from the documents. And the more I read, the stronger the odor got. It was a stench that at one time I had hoped was limited to New Jersey, but which I soon discovered is associated with cases of wrongful conviction everywhere.

The classic legal presumption is that the accused is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. Well, as the lifers in the halls of Trenton State Prison are wont to say, "poppycock." The reality is that when the state is the accuser, the presumption of innocence is not accorded to the accused, but to the accuser: "You must have done something to get arrested," "Where there's smoke, there's fire." Right? It is presumed that police officers are scrupulously above board. They don't plant or falsify or suppress evidence. They don't lie. And the same presumption applies to the prosecution. My case, among others like Jamal's, has shown that this blind trust in law enforcement is not always warranted.

In my case, the federal courts ruled that the county prosecutors had resorted to deception and appeals to racism to get their convictions, and that that was the only way they got their convictions. But it didn't matter what the federal court said. These guys are immune from the consequences of their actions. In fact, they've all been promoted! Hmmm. Crime *does* pay.

If we are interested in fighting crime, let's not overlook the

obvious. There's a certain class of criminal that's going undetected in our midst. I'm talking about those who are sworn to uphold the law, and who knowingly send innocent people to prison. What are they, if not criminal? Sending an innocent person to prison is what else if not kidnapping, forcible confinement and torture? And in capital cases such as Jamal's, conspiracy to commit murder.

In the past 20 years, according to a recent Congressional study, no less than 48 people have been released from prison after serving time on death row for crimes they did not commit. We don't know how many innocent people have been executed in North America. Because the United States, alone among western industrialized nations, insists upon maintaining the anachronism of the death penalty. I mean, hell, they even kill children and retarded adults.

In 1966 I was at the peak of my career, a professional prize fighter about to fight for the middleweight crown, for the championship of the world. And the next thing I knew, I was fighting for my very life, on trial in criminal court. I was accused of murdering three people in a New Jersey bar.

The state sought the death penalty. The odds of my being alive today were not exactly in my favor. There were three murder victims; all of them were white. The jury was all white. The judge, the police, the state's witnesses and the prosecutors were all white. I heard the jury foreman pronounce me guilty. I thought to myself, "My god, the electric chair." But here I am, free and alive. Able to lend my voice to yours and demand justice for another.

So don't tell me that we can't do it. Don't tell me that juggernauts can't be stopped. Don't tell me Jamal won't be walking out that prison door, rather than being carried out. Don't tell me the truth can't set you free. I know better. I know better, and you better know better too. ■

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Labor Tops Sabotage Rail Strike

Railway workers showed labor's potential power in mid-March, in a confrontation with the rail bosses that crippled freight transport from coast to coast. Half a million tons of grain as well as sulphur and coal were backed up in rail cars between Saskatchewan and the B.C. ports. Ford plants in

NDP Supports Liberals' Strikebreaking

Southern Ontario closed or cut back production for lack of parts. Via Rail passenger service was shut down, as were commuter lines into Toronto and Montreal. The bosses screamed that they were losing more than \$3 billion a week in lost production and sales.

At the same time, local job actions shut down key ports on both sides of the country. Nearly 1,000 Montreal longshoremen, locked out March 8, threw up pickets and trapped more than 7,000 containers and \$300 million worth of goods. Six days later, west coast ports including Vancouver were shut tight when members of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union honored picket lines thrown up by foremen organized in ILWU Local 514.

Posed point blank was *all-out, united strike action* by rail and port unions across the country to defeat the attacks of the bosses and their government. Such class-struggle action could have given a lead to millions of workers, the unemployed and oppressed minorities, who are all in the sights of today's capitalist austerity drive. But the chance for a labor counteroffensive was squandered by the pro-capitalist union misleaders, who feared a confrontation with the bosses' state above all else.

Rather than organize an all-out strike, the rail union tops kept the workforce divided with separate and limited sectional walkouts. Worst of all, leaders of the Canadian Auto Workers denounced the strikes by track maintenance and operating unions altogether, and told CAW railworkers to scab! Then when Ottawa brought down its inevitable strikebreaking legislation, the bureaucrats meekly folded their tents, instructing

strikers to disband pickets and return to work. For their part, the little band of NDP social democrats in Ottawa acted as junior-league strikebreakers, supporting the Liberals' back-to-work edicts against the rail unions and ILWU foremen in B.C.

Despite sweeping job cuts in recent years, the rail and port unions retain significant economic clout. They have the power to choke off imports and exports and shut down whole swathes of industry. That is why Ottawa has met every rail strike since World War II with strikebreaking legislation, and also intervened to end numerous west coast port strikes. Again and again, the union tops tell the workers to roll over and die in the face of this government union busting. But labor can only win its battles by organizing to *defy the strikebreaking legislation*.

A massive display of labor power could have turned Ottawa's back-to-work laws into meaningless scraps of paper. Elected strike committees, composed of militants committed to a program of class struggle, were needed to take the leadership out of the hands of the sellout union tops, co-ordinate joint action among the unions, and appeal for solidarity from workers across the country and throughout North America. Refusal to handle diverted cargo by truckers, transport workers and rail and port unions in the U.S. would have frustrated the bosses' attempts to undermine the strike, and acted as a powerful statement of international labor solidarity.

The rail strike showed yet again the urgent need for a break with pro-capitalist "business unionism" and social democracy. The key to throwing back the bosses' onslaught is the fight for a new, *revolutionary* leadership of the working class and oppressed, one committed to the overthrow of the entire capitalist system of poverty and oppression.

Solidarity and Scabherding

Canada's 32,000 railworkers have been without a contract since 1993, and the companies want massive rollbacks in order to compete with U.S. carriers. The bosses are demanding a two-tier wage system, an end to contractually guaranteed job security, and wage cuts of up to 20 percent. These union-busting attacks are part of Ottawa's vicious anti-working-class offensive, which includes dismantling social services, slashing education and health-care spending and eliminating another 45,000 public-sector jobs. In particular, by gutting rail union contracts the government hopes to make its planned privatization of CN more attractive to potential investors. Defend jobs, wages and working conditions—No to privatization!

The strike began March 8, when the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) launched rotating walkouts against Canadian Pacific. In response, CP locked out track maintenance workers across the country. When shop workers organized by the CAW refused to cross picket lines, they too were locked out. On March 18, the United Transportation Union and other operating unions struck Canadian National and Via Rail.

The social-democratic CAW leadership,
(continued on page 11)



Ian Smith/Vancouver Sun

Striking railworkers block scab train in Surrey, B.C.

Fish Wars...

(continued from page 3)

columnist Lysiane Gagnon noted:

"Isn't it a remarkable coincidence that at a time when the country seems to be unravelling at the seams, the Canadian government suddenly discovers an external threat? It wouldn't be the first time in history that the rulers of a divided kingdom waged war against a foreign enemy to return harmony to the land."

—*Globe and Mail*, 18 March

Everyone from former Tory minister John Crosby to Newfoundland premier Clyde Wells, fishermen's union tops, Greenpeace and Lucien Bouchard seemed united behind "St. Brian Among the Turbot" (as the *Globe* dubbed the fisheries minister). As Gagnon remarked, "For a few days, the country was united indeed—from Newfoundland to the Gaspé to the Magdalen Islands to the Pacific coast, where fishermen have an axe to grind against American and Asian trawlers. Even the Bloc Québécois sided with Ottawa."

Thus, even as the Liberals prepared to cut thousands more unemployed east coast fishermen off social assistance, crowds lined the St. John's docks singing *O Canada!* to watch the *Estai* escorted into port. Her captain, Enrique Davila González, was met with a barrage of obscenities and eggs as he disembarked. Fueling the nationalist lynch-mob atmosphere, Earle McCurdy, head of the Fisheries, Food and Allied Workers of Newfoundland, wished "capital charges" could be laid against the *Estai's* captain and owners.

The turbot are Ottawa's sucker bait. Such deadly chauvinist outbursts serve only to chain Canadian workers to their own exploiters, the capitalists who have destroyed the already ravaged economy of Newfoundland and the Maritimes in pursuit of a fast buck. Down with national chauvinism! Defend Quebec's right to independence! For international workers unity against capitalism!

Dangerous Rise of Imperialist Rivalries

Capitalist governments on the other side of the Atlantic are playing the chauvinist card, too. In Madrid, crying "Viva España!" 50,000 Spanish fishermen and their supporters hurled eggs and dead fish at the Canadian embassy. Denouncing "Canadian pirates," the tottering social-democratic regime of Felipe González suddenly discovered the existence of desperately poor Galician fishermen.

In Britain, along with Spain a member of the European Union (EU), the conflict buoyed "little England" chauvinism. Cornish fishing vessels began flying the Maple Leaf (donated by the grateful from across Canada), while the black-and-white flag of Cornwall fluttered over Toronto City Hall. Evoking the reactionary defeat of the French/Spanish fleet at Trafalgar in 1805, British tabloids demanded the Royal Navy be dispatched to back up the brave colonial boys. Trying to ride this anti-European wave, the scandal-ridden Tory government of John Major vetoed proposed EU sanctions against Canada.

Comic-opera aspects aside, the fish wars reflect the intensifying interimperialist rivalries unleashed by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. The very existence of the USSR and the deformed workers states in East Europe following World War II required the muting of imperialist competition in the interest of anti-Soviet "unity," under the aegis of the United States. Imperialism's victory in the Cold War—a devastating defeat for working people worldwide—has laid the



Paul White/AP

Fishermen in Spain protest seizure of *Estai*.

basis for renewed sharp rivalries in the New World Disorder.

Underlying the Grand Banks fish war are the growing tensions between a German-dominated Europe and the North American NAFTA bloc centered on U.S. imperialism. Thus, despite the frequent clashes between Spanish and other European fleets, the seizure of the *Estai* sent EU governments into paroxysms of diplomatic outrage and threats of trade sanctions against Canada. At the same time, despite previous Canadian arrests of U.S. fishing vessels on both coasts, Washington gave silent support to its NAFTA partner against Europe. (Not coincidentally, Spain seeks to be a player in Mexico, whose pillage is supposed to be a U.S. preserve under NAFTA.) Similarly, the support for Ottawa's actions offered by the Bloc Québécois expresses the Quebec sovereignists' loyalty to Fortress North America, in which they seek to make a sovereign Quebec an imperialist junior partner.

The current all-sided national-chauvinist furor poisons the necessary international struggle of the working people against all of the capitalist profiteers. Nationalism and protectionism are founded on the lie that working people have the same interests as "their" bosses. As long as capitalism remains, there will be no end to economic and ecological devastation, to poverty. Trade war will lead to shooting war.

Under the irrational capitalist system of production for profit, "resource management" can only be a euphemism for ecological rape. As we wrote in SC No. 89 (Fall 1992) following the closure of the Atlantic cod fishery:

"Here's the bottom line on capitalism's profit-mad North Atlantic melee: a resource plundered, an industry destroyed, boats and factories worth millions turning to rust, tens of thousands of jobs wiped out. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were right. Capitalism long ago led society into a dead end, its bankruptcy exposed for all to see. The only way out is for the working class to take power and establish what Engels in his *Principles of Communism* described as 'a completely new organization of society' directed 'by the whole of society according to a fixed plan and according to the needs of all.'"

Ottawa's fish fight with Spain is reactionary through and through. In fighting to mobilize the working class in revolutionary struggle against rapacious and hypocritical Canadian imperialism, we say: The main enemy is at home! Workers of the world, unite! ■

Protest Outrageous Slanders Against Trotskyists in Moscow!

We print below a protest statement issued by the International Communist League in response to ominous slanders by Ukrainian authorities against our Trotskyist organization aired on Russian TV. Sections of the ICL held protests outside Ukrainian government offices in Toronto, New York, Chicago, Berlin, London, Melbourne and Paris in the first week of April.

* * *

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) in Moscow vigorously protests the outrageous slanders against our Trotskyist organization. On Saturday evening, April 1, a broadcast was aired on the *Vremya* news program

with the lurid opening, "The overthrow of the government in the Ukraine was planned by four ideological Trotskyists representing the International Communist League." The broadcast claimed that supporters of the ICL had been banned from visiting the Ukraine. A two-year-old photograph of some of our supporters, taken at a birthday party in Moscow, was shown on the air. This photograph was somehow secured by the authorities, surreptitiously and unlawfully. Also shown was an array of our literature, openly published and distributed to working people throughout the former Soviet Union for several years now. This, then, is supposed to be the evidence of a secretive conspiracy for the overthrow of the Ukrainian government, by *four people*, no less, none of whom even resides in the Ukraine!

We are not surprised by the recourse to such revolting techniques. To get an idea of these crude methods, we urge those who have doubts to read the 1925 book by Victor Serge (Viktor Lvovich Kibalchich), *What Every Revolutionist Should Know About State Repression*. Marxists, who rely on the open and conscious mobilization of the workers and oppressed, are again accused of "conspiratorial terrorism" and "violence" by the very regimes which practice real conspiracies, terrorism and violence in the service of the gangs of new exploiters in power. In the guise of even-handed combat against all "extremism," *the current authorities are in fact preparing to crack down on all working-class militancy and leftist dissent*. That is the meaning of the current vile campaign against the International Communist League.

We have for some time clearly been subjected to the most invasive surveillance and police attention. Those Russian and Ukrainian youth who have expressed interest in our literature and political views have been subjected to harassment, interrogation and threats. Three years ago, on 9 February 1992 our beloved comrade Martha Phillips was murdered in Moscow in the prime of her life in sinister and mysterious circumstances. Despite repeated and vigorous appeals and demands by ourselves and others on various police

agencies in Moscow to pursue an investigation into this heinous crime, the authorities responded with indifferent sloth and crude arrogance. We demand the reopening of the investigation into the murder of Martha Phillips, *with particular emphasis on the role of the security agencies*. In this regard, we recall the recent assassination of a journalist who was investigating charges of corruption within the Russian military.

What is behind the *Vremya* broadcast? And what is behind the intricate, time-consuming and unlawful attention which the security services both in Russia and in the Ukraine, undoubtedly in collusion, devote to tiny handfuls of internationalist fighters for the cause of the working class? What is behind such

spurious and outlandish smears, even as thousands of innocent people are killed and sent to their deaths in an unwanted and criminal war in Chechnya? And even as disease, hunger and poverty claim the lives of uncounted

numbers of children and elderly throughout the land? Apparently, the capitalist authorities are haunted by the spectre of our Trotskyist program, which corresponds to the real interests of the overwhelming masses of dispossessed and impoverished working people. Our aim is the reconstitution of the working class as a class capable of taking power through struggle and organization throughout the former Soviet regions.

The urgent social and political discontents of the peoples of the former Soviet Union are being falsely converted into a monumentally microscopic conspiracy. This smells of security
(continued on page 10)

Reviving Stalin's Smears in the Service of Impoverishing the Working People



SC photo
April 6 Trotskyist League demo at Ukrainian Consulate in Toronto denounces *Vremya* slanders of ICL.

MOSCOW...

(continued from page 9)

organs that have decomposed to the point of dementia. Let us all recall that the people, unnamed and unknown, who manufacture and publicize such slanders were trained in the Stalin school of falsification. Let us all recall that a hallmark of the notorious purge "trials" of the 1930s—which led to the deaths of millions—was outlandish and utterly unfounded accusations against the closest comrades in arms of V.I. Lenin. To the day of his death, L.D. Trotsky stood for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against all imperialist powers and all the internal "fifth columns" seeking to foment counterrevolution. Yet in those dark years Trotsky, founder of the Soviet Army and a cofounder of the Soviet state, a man who was a lifelong revolutionist of international renown and proven integrity, was vilely slandered as an agent of the Japanese Mikado, the Nazi Gestapo and the French Deuxième

sin's pro-imperialist coup in August 1991, which led to the restoration of capitalism.

We are compelled, but also eager, to reply to the slanderous and ludicrous notion that four Marxists were plotting the overthrow of the government of the Ukraine; only a fool or a madman could entertain such ridiculous fantasies. The sense of reality revealed in this report is about on a par with the UFO spotters who see a flash of light in the sky and posit a Martian invasion which will destroy the earth. It is our opinion that, unfortunately, before the downtrodden and embittered Ukrainian working masses come to power, the present Ukrainian government and likely several of its successors will have been long gone. They will disappear as a consequence of their own weaknesses and incapacities and through repercussions of their disastrous capitalist policies and demented nationalist arrogance in numerous vital fields. In fact, the historical probability is that in a revolutionary situation there may well be little government to "overthrow"—we recall the way the Kerensky government fell to pieces. The assumption that the current government of the Ukraine will still be in existence at that future time seems to us to be the flimsiest speculation. We are Marxists, not putschists; we rely on the forces of the working class and we will fight against these malicious and provocative attempts to distort and defame our politics.

This harassment and intimidation is intended to prevent workers and others from joining with our presently small number of supporters in the lands of the former Soviet Union. But the agents of the Ukrainian and Russian governments have no need to spy on us or people interested in our ideas in order to find out what we really stand for politically. We are exactly what we say we are and all of it can be found in the published and publicly disseminated issues of our *Biulleten Spartakovtsev*. Four issues of the *Biulleten* and eleven supplements have been published and widely distributed in the former Soviet Union since autumn 1990. In November 1993, we also published for the first time in Russian the book, *The Communist International After Lenin*, Trotsky's critique of the 1928 draft Program at the Sixth Congress of the Communist Inter-

national, which presents further information on the political views and aims which we openly espouse. The broadcast made much of the "approximately 50 kilograms of propagandistic literature" allegedly seized by the authorities. A set of the Collected Works of Marx and Engels weighs some 47 kilos depending on language and binding. A set of the Collected Works of V.I. Lenin weighs 32 kilos. One does not usually think this way but it gives some insight into the minds of the security organs. Far from hiding our views, we have sought to disseminate them widely. Thus, in July 1992, our comrade Victor Granovsky was interviewed on the half-hour television program *Mister/Comrade*. This program was broadcast repeatedly to a mass audience throughout the former Soviet Union. Our comrade stated clearly what we stand for: "We're for full workers



We Marxists openly proclaim our revolutionary views. Russian-language Spartacist Bulletins (left), "Leninist Party—Tribune of the People" and "What Is Trotskyism?" Last year we published for the first time in Russian Trotsky's *The Communist International After Lenin*.

Bureau. Let us all recall that the smears against Trotsky were a prelude to his murder at the hands of Stalin's assassins.

We have also been told that, in a similar fashion, the authorities of the capitalist Ukrainian state are today circulating allegations that ICL supporters are "CIA agents." We view these lying charges with complete contempt. If the Kiev authorities entertained the slightest belief that our comrades were CIA agents, they would have given us the keys to the city and bestowed on us all the favors at their command, in the hope of reciprocal largesse from those they look to in Washington and Wall Street. Those who only recently were Stalin's political and bureaucratic heirs presided over the collapse of the Soviet Union, and many of them now hope to be greedy capitalist exploiters in the new capitalist order. We Trotskyists, in contrast, openly called on the working class to resist Yelt-

democracy, for a multi-party system within the framework of the dictatorship of the proletariat." That is in the tradition of Lenin's Bolsheviks, who fought to forge a hard vanguard party united on a programmatic basis, in counterposition to the conception of a "party of the whole class" advanced by the Mensheviks, who ultimately ended up supporting counterrevolution. Our comrade explained: "All genuine communists, that is, Trotskyists, around the world have always felt a sense of duty toward the Soviet working class, toward the heroes of the October Revolution, of the Civil War and the war against German fascism."

Throughout our propagandistic work in the former Soviet Union, we have openly proclaimed the need for the working people of Russia and the near abroad to return to the path of Lenin and Trotsky. We have emphasized the need for all the working people to join together in struggle against capitalist exploitation and all manifestations of oppression and tyranny, against national subjugation and anti-Semitism and against the oppression of women and homosexuals. In short, we have sought to act, in Lenin's words, as a "tribune of the people." Today, in our quest for the democratic rights of the working people and all nationalities to be asserted and defended, we believe that a plebiscite on national affiliation is in order in the Crimea and Chechnya.

We demand full access to the television news programs to respond to the absurd and sinister accusations which have been made against us.

—International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)
Moscow, 3 April 1995

Transcript of *Vremya* News Program 1 April 1995

"...Dealing with the Crimea, [the Ukrainian government] was obliged at the same time to defend their own supreme power.

"The overthrow of the government in the Ukraine was planned by four ideological Trotskyists representing the International Communist League.

"They passed themselves off as scholars wishing to study archives. At one of the apartments of the visitors in Kiev, the Struggle Against Terrorism Division of the Ukrainian Security Service seized approximately 50 kilograms of propagandistic literature of the revolutionary Trotskyists.

"According to operatives' information, four foreign citizens—two from Germany, one from France and one from America, attempted to organize in Ukraine a section of the International Communist League whose headquarters are located in New York, and whose closest affiliate is in Moscow.

"Furthermore, they openly called for the overthrow of the constitutional order in the Ukraine and the seizure of power, as was confirmed by our fellow countrymen, who the Trotskyists tried to recruit.

"As a result, travel into the Ukraine for the four revolutionary leaders from abroad is officially closed."

Rail Strike...

(continued from page 7)

which has long postured as a "progressive" left wing among the labor officialdom, played a pernicious *scabherding* role throughout the strike. National president Buzz Hargrove publicly denounced the BMW strikers, demanding they take down their pickets so CAW members could go to work, then called on his members to cross BMW lines and clock in. Thousands of rank and file CAW railworkers ignored this scabherding edict, staying out and often joining the pickets.

Condemning the BMW for "provoking" government intervention, the CAW tops effectively supported Ottawa's strike-breaking, calling it "the best of a bad situation." Hargrove & Co. begged only that binding arbitration by a government-appointed panel not apply to CAW members, because they were not on strike, just locked out. "We're not the ones shutting down the country," whined CAW honcho Bob Chernecki. Meanwhile, the federal NDP initially "opposed" the back-to-work bill—because it applied only to workers at CN, and not CP and Via Rail as well! When the strikebreaking law was extended throughout the industry, the New Democrats voted to support the Liberals' union busting.

In fact, the only parliamentary "opposition" came from the bourgeois-nationalist Bloc Québécois, which cynically postured as a party that "defends the workers" against the federal government. This took chutzpah, coming from a party whose leader, Lucien Bouchard, just a few years ago sat in Brian Mulroney's Conservative cabinet. It was the Mulroney Tories who began the current frenzy of social service cuts and opened

the offensive against the federal public sector unions. It was also Mulroney's Tories who signed NAFTA, which has meant the wholesale rape of Mexico, not to mention the loss of hundreds of thousands of industrial jobs in Canada.

Less than two weeks before Ottawa broke the rail strike, Bouchard and his Bloc were happy to vote for the back-to-work legislation against the ILWU in B.C. And they made clear they would support strikebreaking against the rail unions too, if the terms were altered to include mediation rather than binding arbitration. Friends of the workers, indeed!

The rail strike was a lost opportunity for the Canadian labor movement—thanks, above all, to the pro-capitalist labor tops and the Liberals' NDP lapdogs. The working class desperately needs a leadership that fights for *internationalist class struggle*, uniting workers across Canada in powerful anti-capitalist labor action, alongside their class brothers and sisters in the U.S. and south to Mexico. As we emphasized last issue (*SC* No. 102, March/April), in an article distributed at rail strikers' picket lines, rallies and meetings:

"Defeating government strikebreaking is at bottom a *political* question. The unions must seek to rally around them all those millions who are targets of the bosses' austerity drive. That means taking up the cause of all the oppressed, upholding Quebec's right to independence and defending immigrants and other minorities against racist scapegoating.

"Such a perspective requires a break with pro-capitalist social democracy and the forging of a new class-struggle leadership of the labor movement. Most of all, we need a revolutionary workers party to lead the fight for a *workers government*." ■

Racist "Law and Order" ...

(continued from page 1)

several recent murders, in particular the brutal shotgun slaying of Vivi Leimonis by black robbers at a Toronto café last year. Meanwhile the press and TV run story after story claiming a massive upsurge in "immigrant crime" and "foreign gangs."

Riding this racist wave, the cops continue to kill unarmed black youth and other minorities. Most recently, the blood-stained body of Wayne Johnson, a 34-year-old black man, was found in the Rideau River after he was chased down by Ottawa police. In Vancouver, the Police Board has declared that the cops are fully justified in "taking down" *any* black male if a black person is a suspect in a crime.

For all the scaremongering, the fact is that violent crime in Canada has *decreased* in recent years. The true intent of gun-control legislation like Bill C-68 is not to "fight crime," but to ensure that *only* the capitalist state has arms. The rulers of this and every other capitalist country are a tiny minority, who ultimately rule through force: the army, cops, prison guards, etc. As Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin explained in his 1917 pamphlet *The State and Revolution*, the state consists of "special bodies of armed men" whose purpose is to maintain the present class system through a monopoly of armed violence.

The question is: Do you trust *this state* to have the monopoly of violence? Social democrats like the CLC's Bob White, liber-

als and most feminists answer "yes." Thus they support Bill C-68. They often cite the gruesome massacre of 14 women students at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique in 1989 to justify calls for tighter gun controls. But psychos like Marc Lepine will always be able to get hold of weapons when they want to. So too will the bigoted fanatics who have shot at and murdered abortion providers.

Gun control is no answer to such heinous crimes. It leaves guns in the hands of the cops, criminals and crazies (including the fascists), while workers, minorities and the poor are left defenseless. If some of the women and men who work at abortion clinics were armed, knowledge of that fact might put the fear of god into the bible-thumping "right to life" thugs. And mass murderer Marc Lepine might have been stopped dead if one of the Polytechnique students had a defense weapon, but they didn't. We Marxists, who champion the cause of all the exploited and oppressed, oppose gun control and uphold the right to self-defense from the standpoint of the struggle for workers revolution.

The Right to Bear Arms

A 1990 Justice Department pamphlet declares unequivocally that "No one in Canada has a 'right' to own firearms." That's because the individual right to bear arms was the product of *revolution*, conceived as a vital defense against government tyranny. The notion of an "armed people" grew out of the English bourgeois revolution of the mid-1600's, in which Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army established a bourgeois Commonwealth over the headless bodies of Charles I and his bishops. The individual right to bear arms (for Protestant men, anyway) was codified in the 1689 English Bill of Rights, even as the revolution was already ebbing.

Leaders of the American Revolution of 1776-83 expanded on the idea of an "armed people" in light of their own experience in the struggle against the British king. As Patrick Henry summed it up, "The great object is, that every man be armed." (For a comprehensive international history and analysis see "Revolution and the Right to Bear Arms: The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution," *Spartacist* No. 43-44, Summer 1989.)

But in Canada, there was no bourgeois-democratic revolution. This artificial country is a product of *counterrevolution*. Canada was founded on the conquest of the French in 1759-63, then peopled by tens of thousands of Loyalists who fled the American Revolution, pledging obedience to the British Crown. The insurrectionaries in America declared "unalienable Rights" to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The French bourgeois revolutionaries of 1789 proclaimed a struggle for "Liberté! Egalité! Fraternité!" as they seized weapons and ammunition from the arsenals of the old feudal regime. Canada, in contrast, got the 1867 British North America Act and its promise/threat of "Peace, Order and Good Government."

The history of gun control traces the record of the capitalist rulers' drive to suppress popular resistance to their rule. From Confederation on, firearms restrictions in Canada were particularly directed against oppressed minorities, especially the Native peoples. From 1885, the year of the insurrectionary Riel Rebellion by French-speaking Métis and plains tribes, no one in large areas of the North West could possess a firearm other than a shotgun without permission from the Lieutenant Governor. (No one, that is, except the North West Mounted Police.)

As Canadian capitalism developed beyond its mercantile

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Manitoba Archives

State enforces class rule. Above, Mounted Police unleashed against 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.

and agrarian colonial origins, producing by the early 20th century a working class which could be a potential contender for state power, restrictions on gun ownership increased apace, especially in periods of acute social struggle. Such was the case in 1919, when the government cracked down on firearms ownership in a direct response to the Winnipeg General Strike.

This pivotal class battle was in part inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1917, in which the working class for the first time successfully seized power from the bourgeoisie and held it. Canada's ruling class reacted to the Russian Revolution by unleashing police raids and repression against union organizers and immigrant workers, especially from Eastern Europe.

The capitalists denounced the heavily immigrant Winnipeg strikers—who were supported by soldiers returned from World War I and whose leadership was almost exclusively Anglo-Saxon—as “foreigners, principally aliens and Jews.” Just a week into the strike, one of the local bosses told the press: “What we should do is to line a few of these boneheads up against a wall and shoot them.” On June 21, the Mounted Police opened fire on a pro-strike parade, killing two people and wounding dozens. The strike was broken. Outraged that some of the strikers had returned police fire in an attempt to defend themselves, Ottawa tabled a law that made it illegal for any “alien” to own a firearm without a permit.

Passed amid a countrywide anti-immigrant frenzy, this legislation was part of an all-sided package of repression. In July 1919, the government created the Criminal Code's infamous Section 98, which repealed any pretense to the rights of free speech. The law declared left-wing organizations to be “unlawful associations” whose property could be seized without warrant or judicial proceedings. Not only was membership in such groups banned, but the mere distribution of forbidden literature carried a penalty of 20 years in jail.

Ottawa again strengthened the gun laws in the face of an upsurge of social protest and class struggle during the Great Depression of the 1930's. In 1933 the maximum penalty for a violation of the existing law was increased to five years, and the next year registration of all handguns was made mandatory. Again, gun control was just one component of a “law and

order” campaign, which resulted, in the words of historian Kenneth McNaught, in a “semi-police state atmosphere.”

The structure of the current law was laid down in 1968-69, a time of ghetto upheavals in the U.S., mass protests against U.S. imperialism's war in Vietnam, and widespread left-nationalist and working-class struggle in Quebec. Gun controls were then markedly expanded in 1976-77. To undercut opposition to its bill abolishing the death penalty, the Liberal government simultaneously tabled sweeping revisions to the Criminal Code in the name of getting tough on crime. Restricting parole, targeting “dangerous offenders” and broad wire-tapping and search-and-seizure powers were also part of the deal. Ontario's Chief Provincial Firearms Officer went out of his way to make clear that known leftists would be denied firearms permits.

Pacifism and the State

Middle-class liberals preach their pacifism from the relative safety of their suburban ranch houses—they don't expect to be targeted by the cops and the government. But the ruling class does not believe in pacifism. Recall the infamous Estevan Massacre of September 29, 1931, when the RCMP shot down striking Saskatchewan mine workers. In October 1970, Ottawa sent the army to occupy Quebec in defense of “Peace, Order and Good Government” under the War Measures Act. Hundreds of unionists, Quebec nationalists and leftists were rounded up, tossed in jail and held incommunicado. And only three years ago, the RCMP was unleashing shotgun volleys against striking gold miners in Yellowknife.

In the face of the new Liberal legislation, some members of the National Firearms Association “gun lobby” have taken to wearing T-shirts reading “All those in favor of ‘gun control’ raise your right hand,” with a picture of Hitler giving the Nazi salute. Calling the NFA “paranoiac,” the B.C. Coordinator for the Coalition for Gun Control lauds “the elected parliamentary government of Canada” and scoffs: “A case for armed insurrection by an armed citizenry? It's just ridiculous” (*Vancouver Sun*, 23 September 1994).

(continued on page 14)

SPARTACIST CANADA



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SC103

Protest RCMP Raid at Pathfinder Bookstore!

On April 20, using the excuse of the Oklahoma City bomb blast, four officers of the RCMP's National Security Unit staged a raid on the leftist Pathfinder Bookstore in Toronto. Police physically assaulted volunteer workers in the bookstore, including a Communist League candidate in the upcoming Ontario elections, in order to forcibly seize Nojan Emad, a 19-year-old leader of the Young Socialists. Emad, a Canadian citizen of Iranian origin, was dragged into a minivan which then drove off. Held against his will, he was interrogated and threatened.

An April 21 Pathfinder protest statement reports that the RCMP grilled Emad about his political views and activities, his religion and his reasons for a recent trip to Cuba on an international youth brigade. The cops asked: "Have you ever been to Oklahoma?" "Do you know how to make a bomb?" "Do you promote terrorism?" When a lawyer managed to contact Emad by phone, the police instructed Emad to tell him they were discussing an "immigration" matter. After the lawyer pointed out that Emad is a citizen, the cops claimed it was a "national security" matter. The Young Socialists leader was finally released with a warning not to contact his lawyer and told he could be picked up again at any time.

We print below a Partisan Defense Committee protest against this ominous attack on democratic rights. Further protests should be sent to Solicitor General Herb Gray, 340 Laurier Ave. W., Ottawa ON, K1A 0P8, fax (613) 952-2240.

23 April 1995

Herb Gray
Solicitor General of Canada, Ottawa

Dear Sir:

We vigorously protest the illegal seizure, detention and interrogation of Nojan Emad, a leader of the Young Socialists in Toronto, by officers of the RCMP National Security Unit on April 20. We further protest the RCMP's invasion of the Pathfinder Bookstore, and their assault on volunteer bookstore workers including John Steele, a Communist League candidate in the Ontario elections.

The RCMP's harassment of and threats against a left-wing political activist are an outrage which reeks of McCarthyite anti-communism. To tar this leftist with any alleged connection to the April 19 Oklahoma City bomb blast—by all appearances an act of nativist right-wing terrorism—is as ludicrous as it is obscene. The targeting of Mr. Emad, a Canadian citizen of Iranian origin, is of a piece with the racist state persecution of people of Middle Eastern descent which erupted during the Persian Gulf War. Such hysteria has again been fomented in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City carnage.

The Partisan Defense Committee demands: Hands off Nojan Emad and Pathfinder Bookstore!

Yours truly,
Peter Stevens
for the Partisan Defense Committee

Racist "Law and Order" ...

(continued from page 13)

The Mohawks of Oka didn't find the question of armed self-defense ridiculous in the summer of 1990. Attempting to stop an ancestral burial ground from being turned into a golf course, the Mohawks were first attacked by heavily armed police and then surrounded by 4,000 soldiers backed by armored vehicles and helicopters. As we wrote at the time:

"For daring to defend their rights, arms in hand, against the murderous capitalist state, the bourgeois press has ranted and railed about Native 'violence.' This is obscene. We are for the right of the population to bear arms. The Canadian rulers, who scream in horror over the Mohawks having guns, have sought to preserve their monopoly of arms through some of the most viciously restrictive gun control legislation in the world. We unconditionally defend Natives against a ruling class which has carried out a campaign of genocide against them."

—*Spartacist Canada* No. 80, Fall 1990

What happened to the Mohawks is a harbinger of what the capitalist rulers have in mind for any serious social struggle against their rule.

So long as capitalism exists, its rule will be maintained by armed violence. It's telling that, while slashing away at just about everything else, the recent Liberal austerity budget announced *increased* funding for the RCMP as well as prisons and "anti-smuggling" programs. The guns the working people

had better worry about today are those in the hands of the capitalist rulers and their hired police thugs—the assassins of Lester Donaldson, J.J. Harper and so many more.

Having guns is no magic talisman against the endemic violence of decaying capitalism. Indeed the desire for a socialist world order—the abolition of a society based on class division and racial and national oppression—is in part the desire that the use of firearms might become a mere hobby. But an unarmed population cannot resist a capitalist ruling class which has shown itself ready to use *its* arms to crush any fight for social liberation. The struggle of workers and the oppressed for justice can only be won through socialist revolution, smashing the entire bourgeois state apparatus of repression and replacing it with a workers state. No to Bill C-68! Down with Ottawa's racist "law and order" crusade! ■

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Strikes Across France...

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or keeping the workers in the dark about other strikes.

Throughout Europe, under the whip of inter-imperialist economic rivalries sharpened by the victory of capitalist counter-revolution in East Europe and the former Soviet Union, the bourgeoisie is determined to drive down labor costs. They have thrown up racist barriers around "fortress Europe" while attacking workers' salaries and what remains of the "welfare state"—unemployment benefits, retirement funds, public health insurance, etc.—which was put in place to counter the "communist threat" after World War II.

While the West European bourgeoisie trumpets the supposed "death of communism," from Italy to Germany and France workers and youth have been standing up to the capitalist offensive and have won some defensive victories on the economic plane. French Renault strikers pointed to the example of the German metal workers, whose militant strike in early March won a wage increase and reduction in the workweek.

However, to break the all-sided international capitalist offensive, "ordinary" trade-union struggle—however militant—is not enough. The bourgeoisie will necessarily seek to take back with the right hand any concessions which it is forced to grant with the left. The working class must consciously carry out its class battles under the banner of the struggle for power.

When he capitulated before the Air France strike in 1993, Prime Minister Balladur raised the spectre of May '68. And a banner in front of the auto plant at Choisy during the latest strike wave proclaimed: "1968-1995, Renault on Strike!" The general strike, plant occupations and mass student revolt of May-June 1968 brought France to the brink of revolution. But only to the brink. The Stalinist Communist Party, then the dominant force in the workers movement, succeeded in keeping this explosion of working-class power within the confines of economic demands. The strikers eventually went back to work in exchange for a hefty wage increase, which, moreover, was quickly eaten up by inflation.

The real lesson of May '68 is not that it can happen again but that this time it must go all the way to socialist revolution and a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie. To lead such a fight, it is necessary to forge a multi-ethnic and international revolutionary workers party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. The Ligue trotskyste de France (LTF), section of the International Communist League, is fighting to forge the nucleus of such a party.

Integrated Class Struggle Against Racist Bosses

Immigrant workers have repeatedly been in the forefront of class struggle against the Mitterrand popular front, notably in a number of auto strikes between 1982 and 1984. At that time, the Socialist government gave the green light for a nationwide campaign of racist terror when it branded the Flins strikers as "manipulated by the ayatollahs." But this time the bosses failed miserably in their attempt to divide the workers with racism, such as labeling Flins as "a strike by Arabs and Africans." Along with a large number of youth, many foreign-born workers came to the fore as local strike leaders, including a significant number who have been in France long enough to have participated in the May '68 general strike.

The strike at Flins started on March 8 after management offered the unions a measly pay increase of 1 percent, pleading poverty. This was shown to be a gross provocation when a few

weeks later management revealed that Renault had *tripled* its profits last year. The trade-union bureaucrats wanted to keep the lid on until a national "day of action" on March 14. But the workers saw things differently and walked off the job, shutting down the plant. The central demand of the strikers was for a 1500 Franc (\$400) monthly raise for everyone.

The union misleaders worked overtime to defuse the fight. They actually *encouraged* temporary workers (who constitute 10 percent of the workforce) to go to work, rather than organizing strike pickets to rally these undecided and young workers, who were only waiting for such a call in order to join the strike. No attempt was made to spread the strike by sending militant delegations to other plants, even though the vital need to do so was widely understood by the strikers and strikes were flaring up throughout the auto industry. The PCF tried to divert the militant strike action into electoralism, specifically the presidential campaign of party leader Robert Hue, who is seeking to pressure the Socialists to the left.

The March 14 "day of action" was a powerful demonstration of proletarian power with 25,000 Renault workers on strike, but the trade-union bureaucrats carefully broke down the mobilization into isolated local actions. It is a graphic indication of the Flins workers' combativity that despite such a no-win leadership, the strike retained overwhelming support and virtually no cars left the plant. By granting a pay increase of 2.5 percent, the bosses were finally able to restart the assembly lines at Flins. However, walkouts continue to flare up throughout the industry.

The powerful integrated class struggle in auto underscores the need to mobilize the power of the working class to fight the campaign of racist terror. As the LTF has repeatedly pointed out, immigrant workers are a key component of the French proletariat where they have enormous social power. But the PCF and the CGT union federation have further fueled the racist climate with their protectionist slogan "Produce French," which blames foreign workers for unemployment in France. They did not lift a finger to protest the racist deportations of "illegal immigrants," the Bayrou circular expelling girls who wear the Islamic headscarf from public schools, or the murder in February of a dark-skinned African in Marseille by fascist thugs of Le Pen's National Front.

Not surprisingly, Flins strikers were receptive to the idea of an elected strike committee to consolidate and extend the strike. But the real key to victory is a revolutionary party, based on a program of transitional demands which, starting from the workers' immediate needs, leads to socialist revolution. Strikers were often familiar with the demand for a sliding scale of wages and hours to distribute available work at no loss in pay. But they questioned how an equitable sharing of work is possible in this society. In fact, capitalism can no more satisfy this demand than it can do away with any of the injustice and oppression which is inherent in it. The defense of the workers' interests ultimately requires the liquidation of this system of exploitation and the setting up of a revolutionary workers government.

As our comrades of the LTF declared in a leaflet distributed to striking workers at Flins and elsewhere:

"Whether capitalism is managed by the right or the 'left,' it cannot satisfy the most elementary needs of the workers. That is why its regime of exploitation must be overthrown. And this fight is international. *For a May '68 which goes all the way! For a Workers Government! For a Socialist United States of Europe!*"

—Adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 620, 7 April

On Eve of Elections

Strikes Sweep Across France



Workers at government-owned Renault auto plants have spearheaded recent surge of militant labor struggle in France.

PARIS—Combative French workers launched a major class-struggle offensive in March and April. Strikes have repeatedly hit the auto industry, airlines, electrical service, public transportation and other sectors. Striking postal workers halted mail service in several regions, while a strike by public administration workers paralyzed the island of Corsica for more than a month.

Every day in the last week of March, central Paris was effectively taken over by demonstrators marching on the prime minister's office. The entire country was virtually brought to a standstill on March 30 by a one-day strike of the nationalized railroad and domestic airline as well as the Paris subways and buses. The previous day, several hundred striking auto workers sent Prime Minister Edouard Balladur packing after they broke into the Paris stadium where he was having an electoral rally.

The backbone of the strike wave has been in the government-owned Renault auto factories, especially the largest plant of the group at Flins, just outside Paris, which workers shut down for almost three weeks. So fearful was the bourgeoisie of the Flins strike spreading that the capitalist media virtually blacked out all news coverage. In particular, the bosses were horrified by the fact that it was led by "immigrants," workers of African or North African origin. For this government of "cohabitation" between Socialist president François Mitterrand and Gaullist conservatives—the hallmark of which has been racist attacks, expulsions and segregation—the exemplary class solidarity in this strike wave between French and foreign-born workers represents a powerful threat.

The reformist leaders of the working class have barely been

able to maintain control of the rising strike wave, for these class traitors are deeply discredited by 14 years of savage austerity and racist attacks. In 1981, Socialist Party leader Mitterrand was elected president of France under the banner of the Union of the Left—a popular-front coalition between the Socialists, Communist Party (PCF) and bourgeois Left Radicals—promising prosperity and sweeping social reforms. Instead, the Socialist-dominated governments of the 1980s presided over the highest levels of unemployment in postwar France, while seeking to divert working-class anger by racist demagoguery against the North African and black African communities.

Like the strike last fall at the GEC heavy machinery factory in Alstom, the Flins strike exploded spontaneously, and the trade-union leaders quickly jumped on board in order to maintain control. The strike wave has swept aside the unwritten rule of the Gaullist Fifth Republic that mandates class "peace" in pre-election periods. However, the critical lack of a leadership capable of leading the wave of strikes—to say nothing of the necessary struggle for workers power—has been cruelly obvious, despite the workers' militancy.

Auto workers occupied the Choisy plant and stormed a delivery barge, dumping the cargo in the Seine. At Chausson, 700 angry auto workers dumped the computers out the window. As in the Air France strike in the fall of 1993, striking airline workers on March 30 stormed onto the runways and fought a running battle with CRS riot police. At the same time, the trade-union bureaucrats have generally kept the strikes isolated from each other, often calling them on different days

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