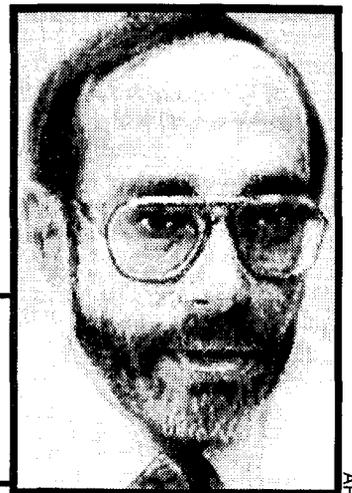


Down With War On Abortion Rights!



SC photo

Dr. Barnett Slepian (below) was murdered in October for his courageous commitment to women's right to abortion. At left, 1989 abortion rights demonstration in Toronto.



Free Abortion on Demand! Free, Quality Health Care For All!

On the night of October 23, American physician Dr. Barnett Slepian was shot in the back in his own kitchen, murdered by a sniper lurking in the shadows outside his suburban Buffalo home. The 52-year-old abortion provider was gunned down in front of his wife and their four sons, only moments after returning from the synagogue where he had offered a memorial (*yahrzeit*) prayer on the anniversary of his father's death. Dr. Slepian's assassination follows the near-fatal wounding of three physicians in Canada over the last four years: Garson Romalis in Vancouver in 1994; Hugh Short in Ancaster, near Hamilton, in 1995; and Jack Fainman in Winnipeg in 1997. All these attacks have occurred around Remembrance Day ("Remember the Unborn Child" Day, to anti-abortion bigots), and all are part of the bloody

war on women's right to abortion carried out by "right to life" terrorists.

"To my mind this is criminal terroristic activity," Dr. Henry Morgentaler, a survivor of Hitler's Auschwitz death camp, said of Dr. Slepian's assassination. "[It] is designed to scare off abortion providers and gives the message that, 'if you continue to help women, your life is in danger'" (*Toronto Star*, 27 October). Morgentaler's own Harbord Street abortion clinic in Toronto was firebombed in 1992. Long a target of vile anti-Semitic abuse by "pro-life" fascists and Christian reactionaries, he spent ten months in prison and underwent six years of trials—despite three jury acquittals—before the Supreme Court ruled Canada's abortion law

(continued on page 8)

Canadian Imperialism's APEC Scandal

As heads of state assembled at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver for last year's Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) summit, the federal government was determined that neocolonial dictators like Indonesia's now-deposed Suharto would not be exposed to protests. When hundreds of demonstrators gathered on the campus, the RCMP savagely attacked them with pepper spray and police dogs, arresting dozens and strip-searching the women. Jean Chrétien joked about the cop assault at a press conference, saying "For me, pepper, I put it on my plate." Later, he congratulated the police for using "more civilized methods" than baseball bats to attack the students.

At the hands of the RCMP, the UBC protesters got a small taste of the treatment that is regularly meted out to striking workers, Native people and other minorities by the bourgeois state. The purpose of that repressive machine, of which the cops are a core institution, is to serve the class interests of the wealthy rulers through a monopoly of armed violence. Marxists understand that the state cannot be reformed in the interests of the oppressed, but must be smashed through workers revolution.

After numerous complaints of police misconduct, a sham "inquiry" was duly launched by the RCMP's own Public Complaints Commission (PCC) to whitewash the whole affair. The whole purpose of such commissions, as well as police review boards and the like, is to strengthen illusions in the role of the bourgeois state, by presenting a facade of "democratic accountability" or "civilian control." But when documents were unearthed showing that the Prime Minister's Office had itself authorized the RCMP attack, the federal Liberals found themselves mired in scandal. The New Democrats blocked with the right-wing Reform Party to hound the Liberals in parliament, cynically professing shock at the direct government involvement. Eventually, Solicitor-General Andy Scott had to resign, after a friend swore in an affidavit that Scott had told him the RCMP commander on the spot would "take the fall." The inquiry was abruptly shut down.

Speaking at a recent forum on the APEC affair at UBC, NDP spokesman Svend Robinson railed against Canada's support for "foreign dictators." Portraying the racist rulers of this country as potential champions of democracy in imperialism's Third World neocolonies, Robinson seeks to shore up the collapsing facade of a supposedly peace-loving and peace-keeping Canadian capitalism. However, the cop riot at



Grabowski/Globe and Mail

Cops douse anti-APEC protesters with pepper spray.

UBC was a pale domestic reflection of Canadian imperialism's bloody crimes against the world's oppressed, from its "peacekeeping" torture-and-murder mission in Somalia to its full participation in the U.S.-led 1991 Persian Gulf slaughter against Iraq.

Like Robinson, many of the protest organizers at the APEC summit hoped to pressure Canadian imperialism to stop supporting dictators and to adopt a foreign policy that would promote democratic rights abroad. For example, APEC-Alert spokesman Jaggi Singh demanded that the government in Ottawa arrest Indonesian strongman Suharto for war crimes. Instead, it was Singh himself who got arrested. As we noted at the time (*SC* No. 115, Winter 1997/98):

"It is obscene to look to the war criminals who run the Canadian capitalist state—the butchers of Somalia—as any kind of force for 'democracy' and 'justice.' The RCMP who laid siege to Native militants at Gustafsen Lake (at the B.C. NDP attorney-general's request) and the Vancouver cops who recently beat up Guatemalan refugee Hugo Hernández are on hand to protect Suharto, not to bust him."

Imperialism is not a question of right-wing government policies which can be democratically changed in the interest of workers and the oppressed. More than 80 years ago, V.I. Lenin showed how imperialism is "the highest stage of capitalism." Lenin noted that it is marked by the dominance of monopolies, by the concentration and export of finance capital, and by competition among the advanced capitalist countries to control markets and spheres of exploitation. This competition is conducted through nationalist trade wars and, inevitably, interimperialist shooting wars. The grinding oppression of workers and peasants in the neocolonial world is a *necessary* product of the global system of exploitation created by 20th century capitalism.

The brutal crimes of the neocolonial bourgeois regimes of countries like Indonesia are committed on behalf of imperialism, including Canadian-based corporations like Inco. Tied

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SPARTACIST CANADA

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Canadian section of the International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)

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Correction

A photo caption in our article "Labor Must Defend Native Rights!" (*SC* No. 118, Fall 1998) incorrectly identified Nisga'a chief Joseph Gosnell. We regret the error.

Down With Fundamentalist Terror!

Defend Taslima Nasrin!

Sections of the International Communist League joined in protests in late October initiated by the Worker-communist Parties (WPI) of Iraq and Iran in defense of Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin. Faced with an arrest warrant as well as a *fatwa* (religious edict) death threat for her outspoken opposition to Islamic fundamentalism, Nasrin fled the country in 1994. Returning this September to visit her dying mother, she was again subjected to threats of imprisonment and death and forced into hiding.

On October 30, our comrades participated in protests in New York City, Los Angeles, London and Sydney, Australia. The following day, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste joined demonstrations in Toronto and Vancouver. Also among the hundred people who turned out in Toronto were representatives of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers as well as supporters of Socialist Action and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. A TL speaker linked the threats against Nasrin with religious anti-woman terror in the U.S. and Canada. TL signs included the calls, "Defend Taslima Nasrin! Bangladesh Government Keep Your Hands Off!" and "Down With Anti-Woman Bigotry—Free Abortion on Demand!" The TL contingent, joined by WPI supporters and others, then joined a nearby protest against the murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian by "right to life" terrorists.

Below we reprint a leaflet issued by the TL/LT on October 29 and distributed by the ICL internationally.

* * *

Taslima Nasrin is a passionate advocate of women's freedom and an opponent of religious reaction and murderous communalism. Today, the Bangladeshi woman writer is in hiding, threatened with death by Muslim fundamentalists and with imprisonment by the government in Dhaka for "blasphemy" and "insulting Islam." In Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries on earth, capitalist oppression falls hardest on women, millions of whom are locked away in *purdah* (seclusion) under Islamic law, and kept as the mostly illiterate property of fathers or husbands. Nasrin's writings have been a special target of fundamentalist wrath because of their outright challenge to male dominance and their blunt critique of Islam.

As Nasrin herself said in a statement dated October 25, "Women in Bangladesh...are taught for centuries that they would be the slaves of men. I wanted to wake [them] up so they can struggle for their freedom." The defense of this courageous woman is vital to the fight for women's emancipation throughout Asia. The Trotskyist League and International Communist League therefore commend the initiative of the Worker-communist Parties of Iran and Iraq (WPI) in organizing protests in defense of Nasrin internationally.

The WPI's position is in stark contrast to most of the intelligentsia and self-proclaimed feminists in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the Islamic world, who have ignored Nas-



Taslima Nasrin with her mother in 1994, before fleeing Bangladesh in face of threats of imprisonment and death.

rin's case, or even actively denounce her. These people fear Taslima Nasrin because, in confronting head-on the explosive questions of women's oppression and religious bigotry, she threatens to disturb the pipedream of an orderly, liberal capitalist development for neocolonies of imperialism like Bangladesh.

Worse yet, some so-called leftist organizations have embraced the very forces of Islamic reaction which today scream for Nasrin's death. Notably, the International Socialists (I.S.) have been all but silent on the plight of Taslima Nasrin for more than four years. This is hardly an oversight. The I.S. *supported* the Islamic "mass movement" which took power in Iran in 1978-79, an unparalleled disaster for women, workers and oppressed nationalities like the Kurds. Earlier this year, the I.S. outrageously defended agents of the Iranian regime against militant protest at the Toronto International Women's Day fair. The Trotskyist League stood together with the WPI, who initiated the action which drove out the agents of this deeply misogynist torture regime.

While we join with the WPI in the urgent fight to save Taslima Nasrin from murderous religious reaction, we do take issue with one of the demands raised in their campaign call. The WPI demands that the Bangladesh government "guarantee the safety of Taslima Nasrin and her mother while they are in the country." We on the other hand demand that this regime *keep its hands off* Taslima Nasrin. We note that it is precisely the "secular" Bangladesh government which, bowing to pressure from Muslim religious leaders, has issued the warrant for Nasrin's arrest.

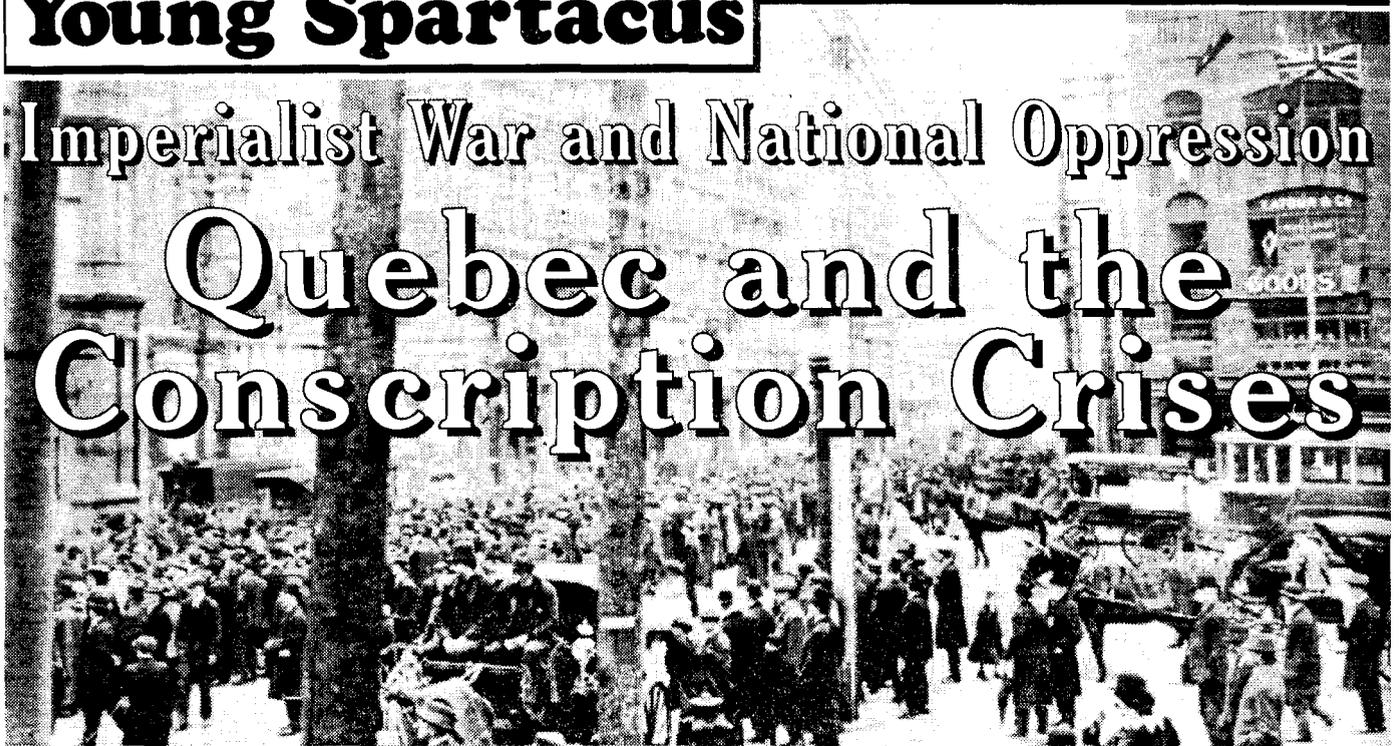
The WPI's evident hopes in the potential neutrality of the capitalist Bangladesh state is in keeping with their program for Iran, entitled "A Better World." This document raises an extensive series of reform demands, calling to "impose on capitalism the most far-reaching reforms." Such calls feed dangerous illusions in a supposed progressive potential of

(continued on page 11)

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Young Spartacus

Imperialist War and National Oppression Quebec and the Conscription Crises



Public Archives of Canada

Anti-conscription demonstrators march in Montreal in 1917.

The re-election of the Parti Québécois government in late November has set the stage for a possible new referendum on Quebec independence, following the narrow defeat of the last such vote in 1995. The PQ's victory, achieved despite widespread anger with its slashing of social programs and other austerity "reforms," underlines once again the strong hold of bourgeois nationalism among the Quebec working class. This is fueled by the steady barrage of chauvinism from English Canada, exemplified by Jean Chrétien's threat that a narrow majority vote in favor of sovereignty would not be respected. Among the workers of English Canada, anti-Quebec chauvinism is fostered by the Maple Leaf patriotism of the New Democratic Party and its allies in the labor bureaucracy.

The forcible retention of the Québécois nation in the unitary Canadian capitalist state has served to line up workers on both sides of the Ottawa River behind their "own" bourgeois rulers, poisoning the prospects for united anti-capitalist class struggle. While the English Canadian working class is in the clutches of Anglo chauvinism thanks to the NDP and union tops, Quebec's own labor bureaucracy acts as a "critical" ally (i.e., a tool) of the PQ, restraining the workers from struggling against the austerity onslaught of "their" bourgeois-nationalist government. The Trotskyist League opposes the reactionary ideology of nationalism in all its forms, first and foremost the Anglo-chauvinism which dominates this society. We call for *independence for Quebec* to remove the national question from the agenda, in order to make clear to workers in both English Canada and Quebec that their own capitalist rulers are the enemy, not each other.

Today's deep national animosities are a product of more than two centuries of oppression of the French-speaking Québécois following the English Conquest of 1759-63. This was particularly highlighted this century in the "conscription crises" of World Wars I and II, in which the Québécois overwhelmingly opposed being drafted to kill and be killed in wars "for the English." Our Leninist opposition to inter-

imperialist wars is outlined in the declaration of principles adopted at the recent International Conference of the International Communist League:

"In interimperialist wars such as WWI and WWII, and in other wars between two relatively equally developed capitalist states, our basic principle is *revolutionary defeatism*: irreconcilable opposition to the capitalist slaughter and a recognition that *defeat of one's own bourgeoisie is a lesser evil*. As Wilhelm Liebknecht said, 'Not a man and not a penny' for bourgeois militarism."

—"Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program," *Spartacist* (English edition) No. 54, Spring 1998

Youth are used as the cannon fodder for the wars and other military adventures of the capitalist rulers. As part of our opposition to the bourgeois military we oppose conscription. At the same time, our position is counterposed to the pacifists or those who seek exemptions from the draft through student deferments, etc. In many countries, today or in the past, military service is an obligation imposed on working-class youth by the capitalist state. In such circumstances, we go in with our class with the purpose of winning proletarian soldiers to the program and purpose of communist revolution. In a revolutionary situation we understand that key to proletarian victory is the splitting of the conscript army along class lines. In the words of the revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, our goal is "the transformation of imperialist war into civil war" against the capitalist rulers.

We reprint below an edited version of a presentation on Quebec and conscription crises given by comrade Nevin Morrison at a gathering of the Toronto and Vancouver Spartacus Youth Clubs during last summer's Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste national conference.

* * *

In this talk I want to discuss the conscription crises in Canada in the two world wars, focusing on Quebec. In Canada, World War I was popular at first, largely because it

was taking place far away in Europe and because many people did not expect it to last very long. It was not so popular, though, as to make masses of people want to go and fight in it. And, of the 36,267 volunteers of the first Canadian contingent to go overseas, more than 23,000 were British-born. Only 10,880 were born in Canada.

The oppressed Québécois did not share the enthusiasm for the war effort of British imperialism. In August 1914 crowds may have cheered in the streets of Montreal and sung the French national anthem, "The Marseillaise," but it was short-lived. It was clear to all that Canada was in this war as British subjects commanded by the King of England. A character in the novel on the national question, *Two Solitudes*, by Hugh McLennan, put forward the Québécois view of the war:

"He thought of the war and the English with the same bitterness. How could French-Canadians—the only real Canadians—feel loyalty to a people who had conquered and humiliated them, and were Protestant anyway? France herself was no better; she had deserted her Canadians a century and a half ago, had left them in the snow and ice along the Saint Lawrence surrounded by their enemies, had later murdered her anointed king and then turned atheist.... If a people deserted God they were punished for it, and France was being punished now."

Anti-French Bigotry and Nationalist Protest

By 1916, as the war dragged on, French-English relations in Canada were at their most hostile since Louis Riel, francophone Catholic leader of the Métis rebellion in the West, was hanged in 1885. An additional factor was the battle over the Ontario government's attack on French-language education, during which schools teaching in French were defended by mothers armed with hat-pins.

Throughout the war, there were hardly any Québécois volunteers for the army, and only one French Canadian regiment was sent overseas to fight at the front. Chauvinism was stoked in English Canada to build support for the introduction of conscription: if the French would not volunteer then they would be made to fight.

In late 1916 and early 1917, a voluntary national registration was conducted, aimed toward conscription. Tory prime minister Robert Borden asked for conscription legislation in May 1917. This was the stage when the conflict in Europe was stalemated in bloody trench warfare, with massive slaughters on both sides as at Passchendaele (the "Flanders Fields" of John McRae's jingoist verse).

The call-up of conscripts began late that year when the Military Service Act was passed. The night the act was passed there was a riot in Montreal, with angry crowds breaking the windows of *La Patrie* and *La Presse* newspapers. In Quebec City the *Chronicle* and *L'Événement* got the same treatment. Thousands gathered in both cities for public meetings against conscription. The bourgeois nationalist Henri Bourassa warned that conscription would "soon transform the most peaceable, perhaps the most orderly, population of the two Americas into a revolutionary people." Noting that many English-speaking workers and farmers were also against the draft, he urged a referendum as "the only safety valve to prevent a dangerous explosion."

The *History of Quebec* by Léandre Bergeron gives this account of the days that followed:

"All summer at rallies in communities throughout Quebec, the cry: 'Vive la Révolution!' can be heard on all sides. Another popular slogan is 'Down with Borden!' The people charge through government buildings, break windows and fire blank

German Marxist leader Karl Liebknecht, 1914. Liebknecht organized revolutionary opposition to WWI, saying "The Main Enemy Is At Home."



cartridges. At one of these demonstrations, the speakers urge the people to take up arms. The police charge into the crowd. One demonstrator is killed. On the 9th of August, property in Cartierville belonging to Lord Atholstan is blown up. Bourassa bemoans sterile violence that only serves to arm the enemy, the English."

The Anglo-chauvinist trade-union leaders consciously worked to demobilize opposition to the war. At first, representatives from the Trades and Labour Congress had met with Borden to demand that conscription not be imposed, threatening that workers "would lay down...tools and refuse to work" the day the conscription bill was passed. Such labor action would have been a powerful blow against the imperialist war effort. But when it came time for the bureaucrats to put their money where their mouth was, they bowed to the war aims of their capitalist masters.

When conscription became law, the union tops abandoned their promised struggle against it with the excuse that "under our representative form of government, it is not deemed either right, patriotic, or in the interests of the Dominion or of the Labour classes" to resist enacted legislation. The only other "action" taken against the draft by the Trades and Labour Congress was support to anti-conscription candidates in the December 1917 election, in which the vote was denied to conscientious objectors, pacifists and many immigrants.

By coming out in support of the war, the patriotic Canadian labor tops played a role similar to that of the European parties of the Second International, who betrayed the cause of socialist internationalism by supporting their "own" bourgeois rulers. Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Russian Bolsheviks, called for a *break* with these "traitors to socialism" and the forging of a new, revolutionary Communist International. Lenin's struggle to build an internationalist vanguard party of the working class was the decisive factor in the victory of the Russian Revolution in October 1917, the world's first successful socialist revolution.

The Easter 1918 Anti-Conscription Riots

After Borden got his conscription law passed, about
(continued on page 6)

Conscription Crises...

(continued from page 5)

45,000 draftees actually reached the battlefields. Yet by April 1918 there were 107,559 exemption claims granted or pending across the country, of which 47,313 were in Quebec. Power to grant exemptions was in the hands of local tribunals, which in many cases granted exemptions to Québécois while applying conscription against the Anglo minority.

Borden pressed the Quebec appeal courts to work faster to overturn this, and increased efforts to arrest defaulters. This pressure spurred days of rioting in Quebec City over the Easter weekend (28 March-1 April). The spark was the seizure by military police of a young man with no military service exemption papers. According to one account, an RCMP station was burned down, while crowds attacked the military service registry and threw records out into the snow, then started smashing windows of English-owned businesses and a few newspapers (who evidently went through a lot of windows in this period).

The federal government called in heavy infantry reinforcements, provocatively bringing in a Toronto unit of 700 soldiers. It passed an order-in-council under the War Measures Act that suspended habeas corpus for those arrested, drafted any man who participated in the riot, and gave summary court-martial powers to the military in any area in Canada designated by the Governor-in-Council. At least four civilians were killed by troops. Many more were injured, and 58 arrested.

Québécois resistance to conscription during World War I had a profound impact on the country, spawning the still-living Anglo-chauvinist hatred of "French traitors." The capitulation of the English Canadian union misleadership to their own ruling class deepened the divide between the Québécois and Anglo workers. The crisis also destroyed the Tories in Quebec, in turn setting the stage for the creation of the reactionary clerical-nationalist Union Nationale of Maurice Duplessis.

The Second Imperialist World War

Like the First World War, WWII was essentially a bloody contest between imperialist rivals for control of colonies and markets. On this aspect of the conflict, the Marxist followers of Trotsky had *no side* and fought to turn the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war against both the fascist regimes in Germany and Italy and the "democratic" imperialist butchers in Britain, the U.S. and Canada. At the same time, the Trotskyists gave unconditional military defense to the Soviet workers state, despite its degeneration under Stalin. For its proletarian internationalist opposition to the war, the small Canadian Trotskyist group, the Socialist Workers League, was declared illegal and its press banned.

On September 10, 1939 Canada declared war on Germany, closely following after Britain. On June 21, 1940 the National Resources Mobilization Act was passed into law. This act authorized "special emergency powers to permit the mobilization of all the effective resources of the nation, both human and material, for the purpose of the defence and security of Canada." For the moment, this amounted to conscription for domestic service only, allowing more of the volunteers to be sent overseas. There was little protest against it, though the mayor of Montreal, Camilien Houde, was arrested and interned in the Petawawa concentration

camp for refusing to comply with the government's National Registration of August 1940.

While the Canadian ruling class went to war to protect the Anglo-American spheres of influence, its claim to defend "democracy" against fascism was a sham. More than 20,000 Japanese Canadians were stripped of their property and interned in 1942. Throughout the 1930s, Canada had repelled Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany, saying that "none is too many." Encouraged by the reactionary Orange Order elite, fascist gangs were active in Ontario and elsewhere. The working class and Jewish and other minority communities had to mobilize to defeat Nazi provocations, most famously at Toronto's Christie Pits in the summer of 1933. The 15,000-strong anti-fascist mobilization (led in part by the Trotskyists) centered on Jewish workers from the needle trades, and the August battles on the Beaches and at Christie Pits, remain a model of working-class and minority self-defense against the fascist terrorists (see "1933: When Toronto Workers Smashed the Fascists," SC No. 70, February 1988).

Meanwhile in Quebec, fascist sympathies ran high among the clerical-nationalist elite layers of francophone society. Among the intimate advisors of Premier Duplessis was Adrien Arcand, leader of the fascist Blueshirts, while the openly anti-Semitic priest Lionel Groulx was widely revered as the nationalist "little father of the people." (To this day, this Catholic bigot has a major Montreal subway station named after him.)

On January 22, 1942 Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King announced a conscription plebiscite to release him from his earlier promises not to impose the draft for overseas service. These promises had been made in an attempt to appease Quebec, and were to be overturned by the vote of English Canada. As in World War I, there was an upsurge of anti-French chauvinism, based on the low rate of French Canadian volunteers for the army and the unpopularity of the war in Quebec.

The plebiscite was held on April 27, 1942, with predictable results: Quebec voted no, English Canada voted yes. In Quebec, only 27 percent voted yes, as against 80 percent in most of English Canada. The general sentiment in Quebec was that this was another "war for the English," in which the Québécois had no interest. In the aftermath, King's Mobilization Act was amended to remove the limitation of conscription to domestic service, though the government didn't immediately use its new powers at this point, in the interest of maintaining peace at home, especially in Quebec. King's famous phrase was, "Not necessarily conscription, but conscription if necessary."

Once again, the pro-capitalist union tops capitulated to the pro-war frenzy. They were joined by the social-democratic Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), predecessor of the NDP, which came out in favor of the draft. CCF leader M.J. Coldwell, speaking one week before the plebiscite, declared:

"I, who abhor war, I, and those associated with me, who have denounced the policies which led up to this great struggle, call upon you to go to the polls on Monday next and vote to release not only the government but the overwhelming majority in parliament from any pledge or promise the keeping of which might interfere in any way with our prosecution of this war."

Coldwell tried to put a "left" face on this social-chauvinism by adding the call for "conscription of wealth" in order to

better prosecute the war. Underlining its support for racist Canadian capitalism, the CCF supported—and even helped to organize—the internment of Japanese Canadians.

Similarly, the Stalinized Communist Party (CP) supported the draft and the internment of Japanese Canadians. Earlier, during the period of Stalin's supposed "peace" pact with Hitler in 1939-41, the Canadian CP opposed the war and had a brief flirtation with the anti-war, anti-conscription Quebec nationalist movement. But once Germany invaded the USSR, the Stalinists dubbed it a "war against fascism" on the part of Anglo-American (including Canadian) imperialism. Swinging over hard in the direction of Anglo-chauvinist Canadian nationalism, they eventually lost almost all their French Canadian members, effectively killing off the CP in Quebec.

As the war dragged on, 1943 saw the biggest strike wave in Canada since 1919, the year of the Winnipeg General Strike. The WWII strike wave was largely over recognition of unions. When the more-patriotic-than-thou CP denounced these strikes in the name of prosecuting the war, the CCF saw a rise in popularity among the workers. Many of the social welfare programs that are being dismantled today were initiated around that time to buy class peace on the home front.

During October and November of 1944 the federal government faced another crisis of military manpower. Although the war was coming to an end, this was largely due to the advances of the Soviet Red Army against Germany. The U.S. and Britain, worried about the spread of "Communism" in the wake of Red Army victories, had rushed through their plans for a continental invasion from England ("D-Day"). The Canadian military brass was looking for 50,000 reinforcements. Of the 60,000 conscripts, who were in no hurry to die in Europe, only a few hundred could be made to volunteer. So the first 16,000 conscript soldiers were ordered overseas.

In response, there was rioting in Montreal and Quebec City, though not at the level of 1917, and desertions and near-mutinies in some of the conscript camps. At Terrace, B.C., a brigade of conscript soldiers mounted guns on the only rail line and declared themselves on strike. In the end, only 2,463 conscripts made it to the front lines.

Conscription and the Quebec National Question

Given the national divide that exists in this country, the Canadian bourgeoisie has had little success in making conscription work for them. The military manpower that they were able to gain the two times the draft was used was pretty negligible, and it caused big political problems for the governments enacting it. More broadly, the conscription crises served to sharply heighten nationalist sentiments among the Québécois.

In WWII in particular, popular opposition to the war and to conscription reflected *both* widespread hatred for another war on behalf of the English oppressors *and* support by the sections of the Catholic nationalist elite for fascism and clerical nationalism, notably the pro-Hitler Vichy regime of Marshal Pétain in France. This was highlighted a couple of years ago, when the Quebec lieutenant-governor (the official representative of the English queen) resigned after a scandal over his participation in a 1942 anti-conscription demonstration in Montreal which turned into an anti-Jewish riot. In our article "Ottawa's Royal Agent Exposed as Fascist Sympathizer" (SC No. 111, Winter 1996/97), we quoted a report

from an interview with the disgraced lieutenant-governor, Jean-Louis Roux, in *l'Actualité* magazine:

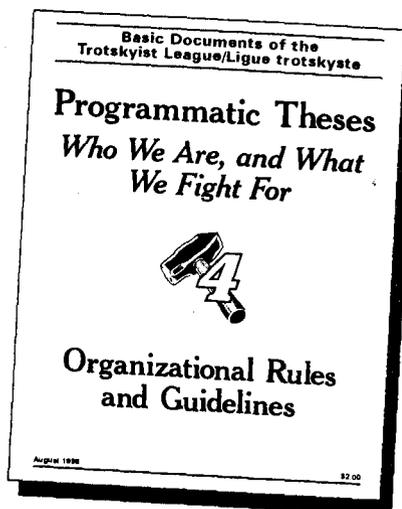
"Anticipating the questions, it was he who had revealed that he had been a Pétainist, Francoist and supporter of Mussolini.... He saw himself once again in the street in 1942, at age 20, amidst an anti-conscription riot on its way to sack the offices of *The Gazette!* On Rue Ste-Catherine, the windows of all the shops with foreign-sounding names—'especially *israélite*,' he specified—were smashed to pieces. He found himself on the front lines, facing the police...."

The appointment of Roux had been part of the Chrétien government's hard-line "Plan B" against Quebec independence—only it blew up in the prime minister's face. The institution of the monarchy and its lieutenants-governor and governors-general is no mere relic, but can become a rallying point for reaction in a time of social crisis.

The two conscription crises took place in a context where francophone society was pretty mired in priest-ridden backwardness and Quebec nationalism was overwhelmingly clerical. It was crucial for revolutionary Marxists, who opposed these imperialist wars, to forthrightly denounce Anglo chauvinism and uphold the right of self-determination for Quebec—as the Trotskyists did on the eve of WWII. Only by standing hard against the Anglo oppressor could there be any basis to win Québécois workers away from the grip of clerical reaction and turn the broad anti-conscription sentiments among Quebec workers in the direction of a revolutionary assault against capitalism.

In the decades since WWII, Quebec society has dramatically changed. The grip of the Catholic church was broken, as the "Quiet Revolution" of the 1960s saw the rise of both a modernizing francophone Québécois bourgeoisie and a potentially powerful labor movement, whose struggles were fueled in large part by opposition to national oppression. At the same time, it is clear that the working class of this country is today more than ever divided along national lines.

The continued forcible retention of Quebec within a necessarily Anglo-dominated Canadian capitalist state acts as a huge barrier to class consciousness and class struggle. That is why we call today for independence for Quebec, seeking to lay a basis to bring the decisive class questions to the fore. Only by resolutely opposing all manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism will it be possible to forge an internationalist revolutionary workers party, the indispensable instrument of socialist revolution. ■



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Abortion Rights...

(continued from page 1)

unconstitutional in 1988.

Dr. Morgentaler's heroic personal dedication came to symbolize the struggles which led to legalization of abortion for Canadian women. Yet only a decade later, the formal right to a vital medical procedure is increasingly denied in practice, especially to poor and working women. In this, the anti-abortion terrorists are playing their deadly part across North America. Barnett Slepian was the only staff physician at the only clinic providing abortions in Buffalo, a city of 300,000, and the only facility in all of western New York state where the procedure is available to poor women on Medicaid. After his murder, the only clinic providing (first trimester) abortions in Ontario's Waterloo Region canceled all operations for the month of November. Joseph Brant Hospital, in Burlington near Hamilton, has performed no abortions at all for over a year and a half, citing fear of attacks.

In the U.S., Dr. Slepian's name is the seventh on the roll call of doctors and clinic workers killed in the line of duty by anti-abortion terrorists since 1993. And only two weeks before the shooting of Barnett Slepian, 21-year-old Matthew Shepard was sadistically tortured to death by anti-gay thugs in Wyoming. Just as Shepard's murder was directly prepared and incited by a vicious crusade by the Christian fundamentalist right, so the killing of the heroic doctor in Buffalo was the result of a frenzied war on abortion waged by bigoted mobs on the streets and promoted by "respectable" politicians of both the Republican and Democratic parties.

Murderous anti-abortion violence in this country is fueled by the wholesale attacks on social programs and health care carried out by capitalist governments at all levels, attacks which strike at women first and hardest. As Ivor Shapiro noted in a telling article in *Chatelaine* (September 1998):

"It's not just abortion. For thousands of pregnant Canadian women who choose to *have* their babies, a crisis of access to specialist care is looming. And for those who choose to *prevent* conception, access to sterilization and other contraception services is threatened too."

As part of its austerity onslaught, Mike Harris's Ontario Conservative government specially targeted Toronto's Women's College Hospital for closure. The Toronto Wellesley, which specialized in care for AIDS patients, was amalgamated into St. Michael's—where the Catholic Church calls the shots! Abortions and vasectomies are now banned in this major downtown hospital, along with birth-control information.

In the Ontario legislature, NDP leader Howard Hampton denounced Harris's "campaign to shut down access to safe, legal abortions." But it was the previous provincial NDP government of Bob Rae, in which Hampton was attorney-

general, that began the assault on social services and greased the skids for Harris. In Saskatchewan, the NDP government of Roy Romanow has closed dozens of rural hospitals. A few years ago, the NDP regime there attempted to remove abortion from the list of insured medical services. And in NDP-ruled B.C. today, premier Glen Clark is attacking health care with a ferocity worthy of his Ontario Tory counterpart, provoking strikes by nurses and other health care workers. NDP governments, no less than Tory or Liberal regimes, are *capitalist* governments, committed to maintaining the repressive bourgeois order. The fight to defend abortion and other hard-won rights and services requires mobilizing the social power of the working class. To do so means a struggle against all those (not least the NDP) who shackle labor to the capitalist state and uphold the social values of the bourgeois rulers.

Capitalism and Women's Oppression

Bourgeois feminists argue that the full equality of women can be achieved under capitalism through the extension of formal legal rights, the suppression of sexist ideas (including through reactionary means like state censorship), and the removal of the "glass ceiling" which keeps women from the top levels of male-dominated spheres like politics and business. Thus they look to the capitalist state as a bulwark of women's rights. But the capitalist state—cops, courts, governments—is a machine for the repression of any social struggle that would challenge the bourgeois order, of which the oppression of women is a cornerstone.

Preferring to rely on their NDP (and Liberal) "friends in high places," the feminists have consciously *demobilized* struggle against the attacks on abortion rights. Following Dr. Slepian's murder, they again called for the police and governments to defend women's rights. Yet in B.C. three years ago, a cop was caught handing over personal information on abortion clinic staff and patients to the sinister bigots of the Campaign Life Coalition. In late November, the same bourgeois courts to which the feminists appeal jailed a pregnant Ontario cocaine addict explicitly to "protect her child," sentencing her to an additional day in jail after her fetus had been carried to term. And anti-picketing injunctions and so-called "bubble laws" around clinics, demanded by feminists, have been used to arrest defenders of abortion clinics.

The oppression of women, the oldest social inequality in human history, goes back to the beginning of private property and will not be ended short of the abolition of class-divided society. The fundamental social institution oppressing women is the family, whose function in the raising of the next generation must be superseded, with women's household labor replaced by collective institutions in a socialist society. As the Trotskyist League's Programmatic Theses emphasize:

"Our perspective is therefore for *women's liberation through socialist revolution*...."

"We oppose all of the bourgeoisie's reactionary crusades that seek to shore up the family. We demand equal pay for equal work, and an end to the legislated inequality of women and gays. We call for: free 24-hour child care; free quality health care for all; and free abortion on demand without age restrictions, parental-consent rules or hospital review boards."

The dependence of bourgeois feminism on the good graces of the oppressor is exemplified by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). NAC is now facing collapse as the federal Liberals slash their government subsidies. From their wilful reliance on the state flows the feminists' political bankruptcy. This is expressed

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in the "What, me worry?" attitude of former NAC boss (and NDP electoral candidate) Judy Rebick, who simpers that "In Canada, access has improved.... I think it's important to focus on what we have" (*Chatelaine*, September 1998).

From the likes of NAC and Rebick, a pro-capitalist chain extends down through the social-democratic left. Thus, after Barnett Slepian's murder Carolyn Egan, a spokeswoman for the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics who writes a regular column in the International Socialists' (I.S.) *Socialist Worker*, declared that "strong statements from the government both in the funding of services and statements decrying these attacks is what's called for" (*Globe and Mail*, 27 October). Such touching faith in the capitalist state is death to struggle, and literally death to women.

Anti-Communism and Women's Rights

Nowhere is this clearer than in the deeply shared anti-Communism of the ruling class, the feminists and the reformist left. Throughout the 1980s Cold War by the imperialist powers (including Canada) against the deformed/degenerated workers states of the former Soviet bloc, self-styled "revolutionaries" like the I.S. joined with feminists, the NDP and the imperialist rulers in support of every counterrevolutionary movement which aimed at the destruction of the remaining gains of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

While Henry Morgentaler suffered jail and anti-Semitic abuse for his courageous struggle for abortion rights in this country, the I.S. and other fake-left outfits supported the anti-Semitic clerical nationalists of Solidarność in Poland. Even as bourgeois feminists, NDP social democrats and their left tails marched for abortion rights here, they howled with the imperialist wolves against the Soviet army intervention in Afghanistan. There, the Red Army fought in support of a modernizing nationalist regime that wanted to teach girls to read. The I.S. was particularly effusive in hailing the Islamic fanatics, who skinned teachers alive as they waged their reactionary, CIA-funded war.

The bourgeois feminists and fake-leftists got what they wanted. The Red Army was withdrawn from Afghanistan, leaving the women of that benighted country in the hands of the Taliban Islamic cutthroats. Solidarność came to power in Poland—hand in hand with pope Karol Wojtyła—and proceeded to extinguish women's rights, not least the right to abortion. And finally, the Soviet Union itself was destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution.

More than anything else, it was this world-historic defeat that opened the floodgates of reaction internationally in the 1990s. The existence of the Soviet Union forced the imperialists to grant limited reforms to buy social peace on the home front. Today, in contrast, the rulers feel free to reverse those gains through massive attacks on health care, social services and abortion rights. Reformist leftists like the I.S. hypocritically deplore these attacks. Yet in 1991 they greeted counterrevolution in the USSR with joyful headlines. The newspaper of their British godfathers cheered: "Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

In contrast, we Trotskyists fought to defend the deformed/degenerated workers states against capitalist restoration. We said "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" in Poland. We hailed the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, calling to extend the social gains of the Russian Revolution to the Afghan peoples. At the same time, we sought to mobilize the proletariat of the Soviet Union and East Europe in work-



Ian Smith/Vancouver Sun

Striking B.C. nurses. Cuts to health care by NDP provincial government have led to huge job losses.

ers political revolutions against the nationalist Stalinist regimes. Decades of Stalinist betrayals on behalf of imperialism eroded the historic advances inaugurated by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution—not least for women. In the end, these betrayals led to the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state itself.

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Asked to relate his worst experiences before abortion was (partially) legalized in 1969, Garson Romalis, the physician maimed by a "right to life" sniper in Vancouver in 1993, told *Chatelaine*: "I will never forget a 17-year-old girl lying on a stretcher, with six feet of small bowel protruding from her vagina. She survived. I will never forget the jaundiced woman with liver and kidney failure who was in endotoxic shock.... We were unable to save her." This is the reality to which the "pro-life" terrorists seek to return women.

For many, in fact, the right to abortion has scarcely existed at all. For women outside of a major urban center, especially rural poor and Native women, the feminist watchword of "choice" has always been a cruel hoax. In Ontario today, there are no abortion services in the vast expanses north of Sudbury. The one doctor who provides them in Sudbury, a regional center of 150,000, is over 70 years old. Abortions have *never* been available in Prince Edward Island ("the law" notwithstanding), forcing women to travel hundreds of miles and pay hundreds of dollars for the procedure. And in the North West Territories in 1985, it was revealed that racist anti-abortion "doctors" had been deliberately torturing their patients, most of them Native, by performing abortions without anesthetic.

The emancipation of women requires a socialist revolution which will uproot the private property system and replace the family with socialized childcare and housework to bring women fully into social and political life. The fight to mobilize the multiracial proletariat in defense of the rights of women, immigrants, Native people, gays and all the oppressed is critical to forging the Leninist vanguard party needed to lead the working class in a struggle which sweeps away this system of wage slavery and all-sided oppression. **Free abortion on demand—Free, quality health care for all! For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■**

APEC Scandal...

(continued from page 2)

by a thousand threads to imperialism, and terrified of the masses they oppress, such regimes are incapable of conceding even the most basic democratic demands. Suharto was removed from office earlier this year in the face of huge protests by students and the plebeian poor of Indonesia. But nothing fundamental has changed. Indeed the same regime, now led by Suharto's henchman Habibie, continues to implement IMF austerity dictates. While the army guns down protesters in the streets, the government and Islamic fundamentalists work to divert struggles against poverty and oppression into chauvinist attacks on the ethnic Chinese minority.

Worried that "Indonesia is teetering," Liberal foreign affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy offered to "assist in an international inquiry into the treatment of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia" (*Vancouver Sun*, 1 August 1998). Any imperialist intervention would not be aimed at protecting the Chinese minority from government-inspired pogroms, but at containing the struggles of the Indonesian masses against the regime. We say: Imperialist powers, keep your bloody hands off Indonesia!

Neocolonial despots like Habibie must be overthrown through socialist revolution, bringing to power the proletariat at the head of all the oppressed. That is the only way to throw off the yoke of imperialist exploitation. At the same time, the inevitable hostility of imperialism—exemplified by the long and dirty Vietnam War and the ongoing drive toward counterrevolution in the Cuban and Chinese deformed workers states—requires that socialist revolution be spread internationally, not least to the imperialist heartlands. This is the

Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution.

Carrying out such a perspective requires internationalist Trotskyist parties in every country. Here in Canada, a revolutionary workers party must be infused with the understanding that Canadian capitalism is a deadly enemy of the oppressed. Such a party can only be built in implacable struggle against the open Maple Leaf chauvinism of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats and their party, the NDP. The labor bureaucracy is itself a creation of imperialism. Raised above the proletariat by the superprofits extracted from the blood and sweat of neocolonial workers and peasants, the labor tops see the world through the prism of Canadian imperialism's interests. Their role is to tie the working class to those interests, not least through fostering illusions in "Canada the Good." Thus, after the police attack on the APEC protests, the leaders of the B.C. Federation of Labour gasped: "This is what we'd expect in Indonesia, not in Canada."

Wrong. Police violence is exactly what the oppressed can expect from the Canadian imperialist state, as the Mohawks of Oka, for example, know only too well. Trading one capitalist government for another won't change that. The union tops present the social-democratic NDP as the alternative to the Liberals, Tories and Reform. But while the New Democrats are linked to organized labor, when in power they act as enforcers of racist capitalism against workers and the oppressed. The 1990-95 Ontario NDP government slashed wages, tore up union contracts and jailed striking postal workers for defending their picket lines. And the social democrats have backed to the hilt every one of the military adventures of Canadian imperialism. Meanwhile the NDP's soulmate in Europe, Tony Blair's British Labour Party government, is among the foremost proponents of bombing Iraq back to the Stone Age.

The social democrats also aggressively support their bourgeois masters in their drive to destroy those states where capitalism has been abolished. Their central target today is China, where the nationalist, anti-working class policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy have undermined the gains of the 1949 Revolution and brought the country to the brink of capitalist restoration. When Chrétien prattled about "human rights" during a recent trade mission to Beijing, he was hailed by NDP spokesman Bill Blaikie: "I think it's important to promote Canadian business, but it is important to do it in a context that doesn't compromise our values or set them aside. My sense now is that the Prime Minister is finally getting this message" (*Globe and Mail*, 20 November). When anti-APEC protest organizers like APEC-Alert complain that "Canada even outdoes America when it comes to overlooking human rights abuses within countries such as China" ("APEC Myths," undated leaflet), they offer themselves as shills in the imperialists' anti-Communist crusade. We Trotskyists call for unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution, and for workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy that is selling Chinese workers and peasants back into capitalist slavery.

It will take international workers revolution to defeat the imperialist rulers, to avenge their countless crimes against the oppressed at home and abroad. Together with our comrades throughout the International Communist League, we fight to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. Only such a party can link the struggle for the emancipation of the toilers of the former colonial world to the fight for socialist revolution in the imperialist centers. ■

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Taslina Nasrin...

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the capitalist state, which is in fact the central weapon for upholding bourgeois rule against the working class.

At bottom, this perspective reflects the WPI's failure to transcend the framework of "revolution by stages." In the "first stage," the working class in the neocolonial world is called upon to support (or look to) bourgeois nationalist forces to undertake the task of creating an independent capitalist "democracy." However, the weak local bourgeoisies of countries like Iran and Bangladesh, tied by a thousand threads to imperialism and terrified of their "own" oppressed masses, *cannot* achieve even democratic tasks such as agrarian revolution, political democracy and the separation of state and religion. As has been repeatedly shown—from China in 1925-27 to Indonesia in 1965 and Iran in 1978-79—the "first stage" ("democratic revolution") does not lead toward socialism but means the massacre of communists and devastating defeat for the oppressed.

The WPI has sometimes explicitly appealed to the UN or other imperialist agencies to intervene on the side of the oppressed. For example, a statement by the Worker-communist Party of Iraq for a September 14 demonstration in London defending Iraqi political prisoners called for a "team of international inspectors to visit Iraqi prisons" to investigate prison conditions. And a 25 May Internet posting by the Iraqi WPI demanded a UN-supervised plebiscite on Kurdish independence, claiming that UN observers would "give legitimacy to the results of the referendum."

In the neocolonial world, Trotskyists fight for the program of *permanent revolution*: the overthrow of imperialist domination through workers revolution, uniting all of the oppressed behind a revolutionary internationalist Leninist vanguard party. In particular, such a party will mobilize the revolutionary determination of women workers, as the Bolsheviks did throughout the Muslim East following the Russian Revolution of 1917. In Bangladesh today, women comprise fully 80 percent of the manufacturing workforce. Throughout Asia, the millions of proletarian women will be a motor force for socialist revolution.

This struggle is inextricably tied to the fight for proletarian power in the imperialist centers themselves. Indeed, the stranglehold of religious reaction has been deliberately strengthened by the imperialists in order to secure their domination. For example, in the 1980s, the U.S. armed reactionary Islamic forces in Afghanistan in their "holy war" against "godless Communism" represented by the Soviet Red Army. The CIA funneled millions to their Afghan cutthroats, who waged war to reimpose the head-to-toe veil—symbol and instrument of the enslavement of women—and who murdered teachers for teaching young girls to read.

The horrors of Taliban rule in Afghanistan today are the direct result of the victory of that imperialist-backed anti-Communist *jihād*. Anti-Soviet "leftists" like the I.S. hailed the CIA's religious assassins. In contrast, we hailed the Red Army in Afghanistan, demanding "Extend social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!" We condemned the 1989 withdrawal of Soviet forces by the disintegrating Stalinist bureaucracy, a treacherous appeasement of imperialism which helped pave the way for the destruction of the Soviet Union itself.

Since capitalist counterrevolution engulfed the Soviet



SC photo

Toronto, 31 October: Trotskyist League joins with WPI in defense of Taslima Nasrin.

Union in 1991-92, religious reaction has been sharply on the rise in the imperialist centers as well. As Taslima Nasrin has said, "Every religion oppresses women." In North America, women's rights—especially the right to abortion—are central targets of violent Christian fundamentalist bigotry. Fanatical right-wing outfits like Campaign Life and the Christian Coalition have whipped up a crusade to ban abortion again, rabidly denouncing doctors and clinic workers as "serial killers."

Such ravings are an open incitement to murder. Only a week ago, respected Buffalo physician Dr. Barnett Slepian was gunned down by an anti-abortion fanatic. Four other doctors who provide abortions have been wounded by sniper attacks in cities across Canada and in upstate New York. The fight for abortion rights is on the cutting edge of the fight against religious and capitalist reaction in North America today. The WPI's declaration that "The Worker-communist Party is against the act of abortion" ("A Better World") puts them on the wrong side of this vital question.

We Trotskyists fight for free abortion on demand, including access in areas where it is not presently available, as part of a necessary struggle for free quality health care for all. In this, as in all social struggles, we look not to the reactionary bourgeois state but to the social power of the working class. Women's liberation requires the overthrow of capitalism. Liberals and pseudo-leftists seek to invest the forces of imperialism with a supposedly "democratic" mission. This has been repeatedly displayed in calls by self-proclaimed leftists for UN or NATO intervention against Iraq and most recently Serbia! In sharp contrast, we say that the imperialist rulers are the main enemy of the world's working people.

We commend the WPI for its initiative in actively campaigning in defense of Taslima Nasrin. Recognizing our differences, we are pleased to unite in action today in defense of this fighter for women's rights against the deadly threat to her life by fundamentalist reactionaries.

As part of our fight to reforge Leon Trotsky's Fourth International, the essential instrument for the liberation of humanity, we say: Defend Taslima Nasrin! Bangladesh government, keep your bloody hands off! Women's liberation through world socialist revolution! ■

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal



A Quiet and Deadly Violence

"The deadliest form of violence is poverty."
—Gandhi

It has often been observed that America is a truly violent nation, as shown by the thousands of cases of social and communal violence that occur daily in the nation.

Every year, some 20,000 people are killed by others, and an additional 20,000 folks kill themselves. Add to this the nonlethal violence that Americans daily inflict on each other, and we begin to see the tracings of a nation immersed in a fever of violence.

But, as remarkable, and harrowing as this level and degree of violence is, it is, by far, not the most violent feature of living in the midst of the American empire.

We live, equally immersed, and to a deeper degree, in a nation that condones and ignores wide-ranging, "structural" violence, of a kind that destroys human life with a breathtaking ruthlessness. Former Massachusetts prison official and writer, Dr. James Gilligan observes:

"By 'structural violence' I mean the increased rates of death and disability suffered by those who occupy the bottom rungs of society, as contrasted by those who are above them. Those excess deaths (or at least a demonstrably large proportion of them) are a function of the class structure; and that structure is itself a product of society's collective human choices, concerning how to distribute the collective wealth of the society. These are not acts of God. I am contrasting 'structural' with 'behavioral violence' by which I mean the non-natural deaths and injuries that are caused by specific behavioral actions of individuals against individuals, such as the deaths we attribute to homicide, suicide, soldiers in warfare, capital punishment, and so on." [Gilligan, J., M.D., *Violence: Reflections On a National Epidemic* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 192.]

This form of violence, not covered by any of the majoritarian, corporate, ruling-class protected media, is invisible to us, and because of its invisibility, all the more insidious. How dangerous is it—really? Gilligan notes:

"[E]very fifteen years, on the average, as many people die because of relative poverty as would be killed in a nuclear war that caused 232 million deaths; and every single year, two to three times as many people die from poverty throughout the world as were killed by the Nazi genocide of the Jews over a six-year period. This is, in effect, the equivalent of an ongoing, unending, in fact accelerating, thermonuclear war, or genocide on the weak and poor every year of every decade, throughout the world." [Gilligan, p. 196]

Worse still, in a thoroughly capitalist society, much of that violence became internalized, turned back on the Self, because, in a society based on the priority of wealth, those who own nothing are taught to loathe themselves, as if something is inherently wrong with themselves, instead of the social order that promotes this self-loathing. This intense

self-hatred was often manifested in familial violence, as when the husband beats the wife, the wife smacks the son, and the kids fight each other.

This vicious, circular, and invisible violence, unacknowledged by the corporate media, uncriticized in substandard educational systems, and un-understood by the very folks who suffer in its grips, feeds on the spectacular and more common forms of violence that the system makes damn sure that we can recognize and must react to.

This fatal and systematic violence may be called, *The War on the Poor*.

It is found in every country, submerged beneath the sands of history, buried, yet ever-present, as omnipotent as death. In the struggles over the commons in Europe, when the peasants struggled and lost their battles for their communal lands (a precursor to similar struggles throughout Africa and the Americas), this violence was sanctified, by church and crown, as the "Divine Right of Kings" to the spoils of class battle. Scholars Frances Fox-Piven and Richard A. Cloward wrote, in *The New Class War* (Pantheon, 1982/1985):

"They did not lose because landowners were immune to burning and preaching and rioting. They lost because the usurpations of owners were regularly defended by the legal authority and the armed force of the state. It was the state that imposed increased taxes or enforced the payment of increased rents, and evicted or jailed those who could not pay the resulting debts. It was the state that made lawful the appropriation by landowners of the forests, streams, and commons, and imposed terrifying penalties on those who persisted in claiming the old rights to these resources. It was the state that freed serfs or emancipated sharecroppers only to leave them landless." (52)

The "Law," then, was a tool of the powerful, to protect their interests, then, as now. It was a weapon against the poor and impoverished, then, as now.

It punished retail violence, while turning a blind eye to the wholesale violence daily done by their class masters.

The law was, and is, a tool of state power, utilized to protect the *status quo*, no matter how oppressive that status was, or is.

Systems are essentially ways of doing things that have concretized into tradition, and custom, without regard to the rightness of those ways. No system, that causes this kind of harm to people should be allowed to remain, based solely upon its time in existence. Systems must serve life, or be discarded as a threat and a danger to life.

Such systems must pass away, so that their great and terrible violence passes away with them.

19 September 1998

Free Mumia Now!...

(continued from page 16)

"This lynch mob needs to be stopped at all cost."

In the absence of a death warrant hanging over Mumia's head and with much of the reformist left boycotting the PDC-initiated united front, the turnout on November 21 was slightly smaller than that at a liberal Jamal demonstration in Chicago the week before. But where the previous rally consisted overwhelmingly of petty-bourgeois leftists and student youth, this one mainly drew black working-class militants who represent the promise of a class-struggle fight to free Jamal and bring down the whole system of racist capitalist rule. Demonstration co-chairman Brian Mendis of the PDC told protesters: "You guys are the hard core, and it is up to you to go back into your communities and your unions to organize and mobilize the thousands for the next demonstration to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty!"

That means fighting to unleash the *social power* which the multiracial proletariat has as a result of its numbers, its organization and its role as the producers of all the wealth of this society. The proletariat is kept from wielding that power by the trade union misleaders who tie workers to the capitalist class enemy, its state and political parties. The PDC's call for the demonstration stressed:

"The unions are the only racially integrated mass organizations in this country. The bosses and their state hate and fear the integrated union movement because there lies the power to challenge the racial divisions they promote to weaken the working class. And it is precisely the power of the integrated trade unions that must be mobilized to free Mumia. In mobilizing to defeat the frame-up of Jamal, the unions will take a huge step forward in becoming instruments of struggle to defend not only their immediate interests but those of all the oppressed."

Fighting Racist Terror in "Segregation City"

In the weeks preceding the PDC-initiated protest, the issues of racist cop terror and the death penalty were very much at the fore in "Segregation City." Only three days before the rally, the Illinois Supreme Court granted a last-minute, 90-day reprieve to Willie Enoch, who was about to be executed on the basis of a murder conviction in which the prosecution had refused to turn over evidence to the defense. The weekend before, Chicago had hosted a much-publicized conference which featured dozens of people who had been released from years on death row after proving their innocence.

Demonstration organizers met with an enthusiastic

response. At one auto factory, 500 rally leaflets were quickly distributed and several people took large stacks to hand out inside the plant. A bus driver took a bundle of leaflets to pass out on her bus. The protest was heavily built by the Spartacist League, while the Spartacus Youth Club brought out students from the University of Chicago, DePaul and other local campuses. SYC speaker Michael Davidsson told the rally:

"This racist frame-up should resonate among youth because Mumia first joined the Black Panther Party when he was 15. Youth in racist capitalist America face not schools but prison, no welfare, no drinking, anti-sex and anti-smoking campaigns, no jobs. To end the misery and the racism of capitalism, to end the threat of imperialist world war, youth can and must mobilize behind the social power of labor."

An SYC banner at the protest read: "Capitalism Means Racism and War—For Socialist Revolution!"

The revival of labor militancy seen at UPS, GM and other recent strikes has left its mark on working people and the oppressed around the country. At the same time, the unions continue to be constrained by the AFL-CIO misleaders. And among the black masses, there is a widespread perception that there is no leadership representing any challenge to the racist status quo. The ephemeral enthusiasm over the middle-class "Million Man March" for black "atonement" organized by anti-Semitic and anti-Asian demagogue Louis Farrakhan three years ago has disappeared. One black trade-union speaker at the protest pointedly remarked, "I'm not talking about a voice of atonement, I'm not talking about a voice of reconciliation."

The resonance among Chicago's black working people of the PDC call for a labor-centered Jamal rally came out in the fact that Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition felt compelled to call the PDC and endorse the action. Jackson himself is in the hip pocket of Democratic president Bill Clinton, who has presided over a vast augmentation in the forces of racist "law and order," including a massive expansion of the death penalty. Democratic Congressman Danny Davis addressed the rally to affirm: "We are in disagreement with the death penalty, we are in disagreement with use of the death penalty and we are asking that we free Mumia Abu-Jamal." Also speaking was Norm Roth, a former president of International Harvester UAW Local 6 and long associated with the views of the Communist Party. Pointing to the Federal Building behind him, Roth urged: "Send delegations to see every Congressman there, regardless of how he voted."

The Communist Party has for decades pushed pressure politics and "fight the right" rhetoric in order to garner support for the Democrats. In this it echoes the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, whose allegiance to the Democratic Party is the chief expression of class collaboration in this country—as well as the chief obstacle to mobilizing labor's potential power in its own interests and those of all the oppressed. The PDC call underlined, "There must be no illusions that Mumia can get a fair trial in the capitalist courts.... Neither must there be any illusions in the Democratic Party, which is no friend of labor and blacks but a party of big business no less than the Republicans." Bernard Branche, spokesman for the Chicago Labor Black Struggle League, said at the rally: "It is the *duty* of the integrated labor movement to defend black rights. The fight to defend Mumia is today central to developing that consciousness throughout the working class." He continued:

(continued on page 14)

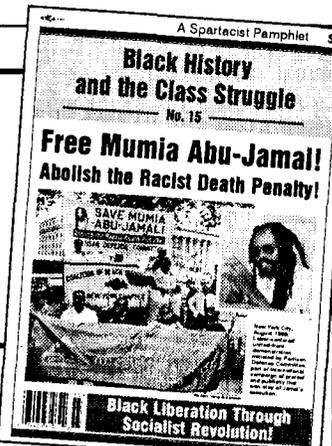
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Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

**Black Liberation Through
Socialist Revolution!**

Free Mumia Now!...

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"We are for the complete independence of labor from the bosses' parties, Republicans and Democrats. Working people need their own party, a party forged in the battle against the racist rulers."

Many of the black workers who turned out for the Jamal protest stayed all afternoon at a post-demonstration party to engage in argument and discussion with LBSL and SL comrades over such questions as whether Democratic Party politicians could be allies of workers and minorities, how the unions could be mobilized in struggle, how decent schools and jobs could be ensured for their children instead of a future of cop terror and despair. It is out of such militants that the LBSL will be built as a fighting arm of the multiracial revolutionary vanguard party needed to lead the workers to power. Branche read the statement by Karl Marx at the time of the Civil War, the second American Revolution, which is printed on the front of LBSL membership cards: "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." The LBSL speaker concluded: "It's going to take a third American Revolution, one that wipes away the rule of the racist capitalist class, to finally liberate the black population. There is no other road for black liberation or for working-class freedom. Join us in the Labor Black Struggle League in this fight!"

Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The Chicago protest was organized under the watchword of the united front—"march separately, strike together"—which is based on unity in action while allowing for the free debate of contending strategies and programs that is vital to advancing the consciousness of the working class, anti-racist youth and others. Similar labor-centered protests initiated by the PDC in the face of Mumia's threatened execution in the summer of 1995 were part of the international outcry, including by unions representing millions of workers, which stayed the executioner's hand. As Mumia wrote at the time, "Let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all!"

In the eleven years that the PDC has actively championed Jamal's cause, it has based itself on the class-struggle understanding of its forerunner, the International Labor Defense (ILD). As pioneer American Trotskyist James P. Cannon, an early leader of the ILD, wrote in his 1927 article "Who Can Save Sacco and Vanzetti?" amid the worldwide campaign of labor protest on behalf of the anarchist workers, the ILD followed the "policy of the class struggle":

"It puts the center of gravity in the protest movement of the workers of America and the world. It puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts..."

"The other policy is the policy of 'respectability,' of the 'soft pedal' and of ridiculous illusions about 'justice' from the courts of the enemy."

The *other* policy is precisely that pursued by the reformist left, notably including the International Socialist Organization [ISO—co-thinkers of the Canadian International Socialists], which some time ago launched a liberal "Campaign to End the Death Penalty." In the labor movement, the ISO promotes economism and worse, hailing "strikes" by cops and prison guards and jumping on the bandwagon of virtually

every bureaucratic "reform" movement which has invited the capitalist courts or Justice Department to meddle in the unions. The ISO abhors any hint of a perspective centered on mobilizing labor in the fight to free Mumia or combat racist oppression.

At an emergency united-front protest initiated by the PDC in New York City in October, ISO spokesman Sherry Wolf inveighed against "sectarian splits and divisions." Yet the viscerally anti-communist ISO not only refused to endorse the labor-centered protest in Chicago, but boycotted it. In fact, the ISO seemingly did all in its limited power to sabotage the broadest possible mobilization. Participants at a November 9 meeting of the Chicago Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal later told SL comrades that a majority of the committee voted to endorse the protest only in the face of the ISO's vehement *opposition*. To justify its petty sectarian sabotage, the ISO trotted out a timeworn slander—first raised during the campaign to stop Jamal's execution in 1995—that SL supporters had physically attacked one of its members (see "ISO Goons Beaten Back," *SC* No. 104, July/August 1995). Such violence-baiting smears serve only the Fraternal Order of Police and the other forces that want to see Jamal dead and his cause disrupted and destroyed.

Our fight to mobilize labor on Jamal's behalf is part of the fight for a class-struggle leadership of the labor movement forged in political combat against the pro-capitalist union tops. We strive to build a revolutionary vanguard party which will act, in the words of Russian Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin, as a tribune of the people. Such a party must fight every manifestation of oppression and tyranny—from the death penalty and the racist "war on drugs" to anti-gay and anti-woman bigotry—in order, as Lehin explained in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), to "produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation...in order to set forth *before all* [our] socialist convictions and [our] democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat." As the SL statement to the November 21 protest concluded:

"The way forward is to mobilize the working class to free Jamal, to smash the racist death penalty. The way forward is to forge the multiracial proletarian party necessary to lead the American socialist revolution. Only a victorious socialist revolution can end for all time bloodsoaked imperialist rule." ■

Mobilize Now to Free Mumia!

All fighters against racist repression, all opponents of the barbaric death penalty must join the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal now! Mobilize your unions, your student and community groups. Contact the Partisan Defense Committee. In Toronto: PDC, Box 314, Station B, Toronto ON M5T 2W1; phone (416) 593-4138. In Vancouver: PDC, Box 4932, Main P.O., Vancouver BC V6B 4A6; phone (604) 687-0353.

Urgently needed contributions for Mumia's defense should be made payable to the Partisan Defense Committee, earmarked "Jamal Legal Defense," and sent to the Toronto address above. These funds will be forwarded in full to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg PA 15370, USA.

Toronto Demos Against Racist State Terror

Mobilize Labor in the Fight to Free Jamal!

More than 200 protesters from a wide array of leftist and anti-racist organizations marched to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty outside the U.S. Consulate in Toronto on November 14. The demonstration followed an earlier emergency protest called by the Partisan Defense Committee together with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) on November 2. The University of Toronto Spartacus Youth Club also held a speakout in defense of Mumia on campus that same afternoon.

Central to the fight to free Mumia is the mobilization of the international working class on his behalf. It was particularly important that Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) members addressed both demonstrations. In a letter to the PDC which was read to the November 14 demonstration, CUPW Toronto Region education director Raylene Pileggi stated: "You can be assured that 8,000 postal workers in Toronto will demand that Mumia must go free; as well, we will be encouraging the 50,000 postal workers across Canada [to] stand up and echo our concern." The Vancouver CUPW local has also reaffirmed its support for Jamal's freedom, and made a donation to his legal defense.

The Toronto protests were united-front actions, in which all organizations agreeing with calls to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty could speak in their own name, carry their own slogans and distribute their literature. Among the many groups who spoke at the November 14 action were the PDC, Trotskyist League, OCAP, Anti-Racist Action, Friends of MOVE, Black Action Defense Committee, New Socialist Group, Young Socialists and International Bolshevik Tendency (BT). Actions like this allow not only for the greatest possible unity in struggle but also for the free debate of contending strategies and programs, which is vital to advancing the consciousness of the working class and anti-racist youth.

Too often, "unity" is bandied about as a pretext to suppress the views of revolutionary Marxists, in order to build liberal coalitions aimed at appealing to capitalist governments and their politicians. Take for example the shortlived Toronto "Free Mumia Now Coalition" set up in late 1997 by Socialist Action (SA), with the BT in tow. This coalition prominently featured SA's reformist call to "End police brutality." Only liberals and those who wish to foster illusions in the capitalist system of injustice believe *this* system will "end" the violence of the police against workers and the oppressed.

SA has long exhibited a touching faith that the racist, strikebreaking cops can be turned into allies of the oppressed. In *Socialist Action* (Spring-Summer 1996), SA leader Barry Weisleder even claimed that Toronto cops were "friendly" to striking public employees and "in many instances acted as benign mediators." SA's insistence in making support to its liberal plea to "End police brutality" a condition for support to a demonstration for Jamal was a sectarian maneuver aimed at excluding the TL and PDC. Not surprisingly, SA had only a token presence at the November



November 14 protest at U.S. Consulate in Toronto. SC photo

14 demonstration, and declined the opportunity to speak. So too did the International Socialists, a group which is notorious for its support to "strikes" by prison guards.

Speaking at the November 14 protest, TL spokesman John Masters emphasized that:

"The power to fight on behalf of the oppressed and sweep away the entire oppressive system lies in the multiracial working class. But for the social power of the working class to be unleashed, labor must be independent of the political parties and the state that represent the enemy class. Many groups have taken up the fight to free Mumia. We need the broadest possible forces to come together in united-front action. But this fight is *not* served by claiming, as do groups like Socialist Action and the International Socialists, that the racist cops are potential allies, or friendly to the labor movement, or that prison guards are really 'workers in uniform.' Winning the working class to the fight to free Mumia and oppose racist capitalism requires ridding the labor movement of cops and prison screws, part of a fight for a new anti-capitalist leadership."

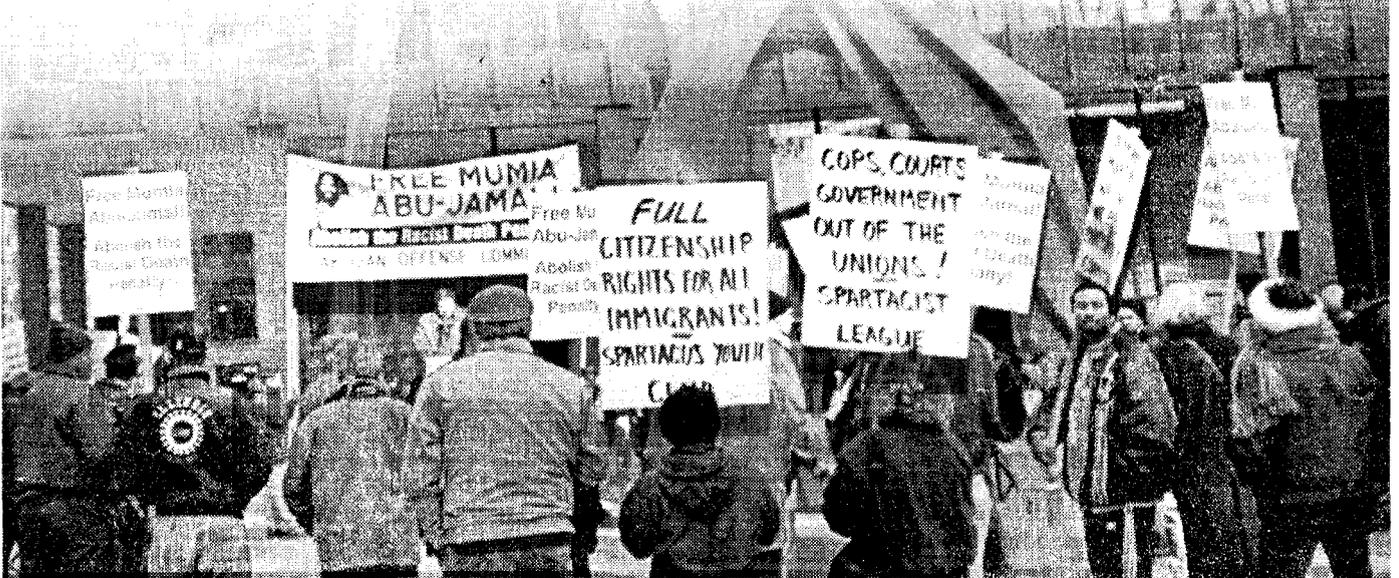
The TL speaker also linked the threatened legal lynching to Canadian imperialism's own racist atrocities and to Washington's latest war threats against Iraq:

"We cannot forget that Canada was a full participant in the Gulf War massacre of Iraq. We can't forget that every one of the Canadian parliamentary parties—the NDP included—supported the sanctions which are killing Iraqi children. And we can't forget that capitalist Canada is no less racist and brutal than the U.S. For every Mumia in America, we have innocent men like Miqmaq Indian Donald Marshall jailed by the racist system to the north."

Stressing the need for a revolutionary party, he concluded: "In taking up the fight for Mumia's freedom, the working class will be striking a blow against the entire system that murders black babies in Philadelphia, that kills Arab children in Baghdad, that brutalizes Native people, immigrants and other minorities here at home. We say: Mumia must go free! Abolish the racist death penalty! From Philadelphia to T.O., the racist system has got to go!" ■



Abolish the Racist Death Penalty! **Free Mumia Now!**



Workers Vanguard

Chicago, November 21: Demonstration to free Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty drew committed core of trade unionists. Mobilize labor in the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

We reprint below an article from Workers Vanguard (No. 702, 4 December), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S. It has been slightly adapted for space reasons.

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On Saturday, November 21, some 250 trade unionists, youth, socialists and other anti-racist activists rallied in Chicago's Federal Plaza in response to the Partisan Defense Committee call: "All Out to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" Endorsed by a wide range of trade unions from the Chicago area as well as nationally and internationally, the demonstration consisted at its core of black trade unionists who showed their commitment by arriving early and signing on as marshals to ensure a militant, disciplined protest.

With the October 29 Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling rejecting Jamal's legal appeal and rubber-stamping the racist frame-up that put him behind bars 17 years ago on false charges of killing a Philadelphia policeman, Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge could sign an execution warrant at any moment. In a statement from death row read to the demonstration, Mumia wrote: "On behalf of all of us facing death in America's gulags my thanks to all of you who have come out in Chicago to abolish the racist death penalty."

These workers came out because they saw in this united-front, labor-centered protest a chance not only to fight to free an eloquent spokesman for the oppressed from the clutches of the racist "justice" system and its machinery of death, but also to raise their voices against the whole array of

attacks which the ruling class has leveled against labor and minorities. They cheered when Marcellus Barnes, spokesman for Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 241 and president of the ATU's Black Caucus, declared from the podium: "This is what labor is all about. We represent the working people. We are the ones to stand in the forefront and carry on the message."

Joining Local 241 in endorsing the PDC-initiated protest early on was ATU Local 308. Groups of transit workers stood side by side with members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Locals 551 and 890 and Teamsters Local 705. Communications Workers (CWA) Local 4250 members held their union banner near the speakers platform. Union statements of solidarity came from as far as Australia, from the SNJ-CGT journalists union in France, the Berlin branch of the German IG Medien union (of which Jamal is an honorary member), the Media Workers' Association of South Africa and the Mexican Union of Electricians.

The call to mobilize for Jamal's freedom and against the racist death penalty struck a chord particularly among Chicago's black proletariat, who are fed up with decades of brutal attacks on the living standards and rights of workers, blacks, immigrants and the poor. That anger was evident in the solidity and huge popularity of the 1997 Teamsters strike against UPS and last summer's shutdown of the GM empire by Flint UAW workers. In a letter to the Chicago rally, a Flint UAW District Committee rep wrote with passion about the need to free Jamal from his would-be executioners:

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