

For a Revolutionary Workers Party

Labor Showdown in Ontario



SC photo

120,000 trade unionists from throughout Ontario rally in Hamilton, February 24, for mass labor demonstration.

Defend Jobs, Social Services!

MARCH 3—As the contracts of nearly a million organized workers begin to expire, crucial battles are looming between Ontario unions and the rabidly anti-labor Conservative regime of Mike Harris. In late February, 50,000 Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) members struck against the government, which has declared its intention to eliminate 70,000 public-sector jobs, including up to 27,000 OPSEU members. The Tories threatened to mobilize an army of 5,000 scabs to bust the strike and the union.

With its frontal assault on workers and the poor, the Harris government is leading the charge on behalf of the entire Canadian capitalist class. Having already slashed welfare by more than 20 percent and wiped out publicly funded day care,

Harris now wants to deal a body blow to the unions through one-sided class war. The nurses, secretaries, social workers and snow-plow drivers of OPSEU are the Tories' target of opportunity.

Only two days before the start of the strike, 120,000 workers from unions across Ontario rallied against the Tories in a huge march through the streets of Hamilton. Manifestly, OPSEU's battle with the government could provide the spark for a working-class counteroffensive. This is a fight that labor cannot afford to lose—OPSEU must not stand alone!

To begin with, picket lines mean don't cross! *Mass pickets* drawn from unions across the province should surround key worksites to shut the government down tight. Based on such actions, the strike can be extended to other unions. The union-busting Social Contract, imposed by Bob Rae's NDP three

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B.C. NDP's War on Refugees and the Poor

VANCOUVER—Following his installation as provincial NDP leader, on February 22 Glen Clark swore allegiance before the queen's lieutenant-governor and became B.C. premier. Just 24 hours later, he announced that he would be slashing 2,000 government jobs. Clark was crowned by the NDP establishment to replace Mike Harcourt, who warned at the start of his term in 1991, "Let's get one thing clear—we're going to run a fiscally tough government." Harcourt raved against "welfare cheats and deadbeats," cut health care and broke teachers strikes.

Now Clark is determined to carry on with a vengeance. While preparing public-sector wage controls, he's continuing the NDP's attack on the most vulnerable, with welfare policies so vicious that even Ralph Klein's Alberta Tories hypocritically clucked their tongues. Last December, the NDP imposed a residency requirement, under which refugees and impoverished job-seekers from other parts of Canada must somehow survive for three months before they can apply for the pittance that is welfare. Not only is this illegal under federal law but, in targeting refugees, transparently racist.

Fleeing terror and violence in their homelands, refugees arriving in B.C. can get neither food nor shelter. Forbidden to work for six months, they cannot even get relief at the food banks, which demand ID with an address. Emergency shelters are overflowing and refugee assistance organizations cannot cope with the demand. The UN High Commission for Refugees has complained that B.C.'s rules violate international agreements meant to ensure that refugees' basic needs are met. Labor must fight this anti-immigrant racism, and demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees.

Under the NDP's cynically named "Youth Works" and "Welfare to Work" program, 170,000 young people are being forced into "workfare" schemes for a benefits check even smaller than its Ontario counterpart, while their "employers" get virtual slave labor plus an \$8,000 bonus. A host of degrading regulations gut other social assistance allowances, and now welfare recipients must reduce whatever meager possessions they have to a value of no more than \$500.

Despite the NDP's escalating attacks, there has been virtually no protest. When Clark announced a cut of a further 1,000 jobs—mainly unionized workers—B.C. Government

Employees Union president John Shields *praised* his approach because among Clark's first cuts were some managers! The last B.C. Federation of Labour convention lauded the "farsighted" NDP government and issued only an empty *pro forma* statement against workfare. The B.C. Fed tops today claim that they've just had the best five years of labor relations since World War II. Tell that to the building trades workers who were jailed under the NDP's labor laws for defending their picket lines. Instead of mobilizing the powerful B.C. working class to fight these attacks, the labor bureaucrats are working overtime to suppress class struggle, so as not to damage the NDP's electoral fortunes.

Like the labor bureaucracy, the main anti-poverty groups in Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA) and End Legislated Poverty (ELP), are part of the tightly woven political and organizational fabric of the social democracy. The cover of a recent DERA newsletter praised Harcourt's "legacy" of a handful of low-cost housing units. Long-time NDPer Jean Swanson edits ELP's newspaper, *The Long Haul*, which is partly financed by the very Ministry of Social Services whose attacks ELP allegedly opposes!

Playing on workers' real fears about losing their jobs, the NDP and its loyal friends at the top of the labor unions eagerly pit organized workers against the poor, the unemployed, the foreign-born. Clark, like Harcourt before him, openly fuels anti-Québécois chauvinism. Echoing Preston Manning and his Social Credit blood-brothers, he even denounces Ottawa's latest sop of "distinct society" status to Quebec. Deploying the army and the RCMP against Native protesters at Gustafsen Lake, the NDP appealed to and inflamed anti-Native racism, which, together with virulent anti-Asian hysteria, has been a bedrock of the bosses' rule throughout B.C. history.

The labor brass proclaim that no matter what the NDP does, "they're better than the Liberals." While the New Democrats are based in large part on the organized working class, their leadership is thoroughly wedded to maintaining the bosses' rule. Like their social-democratic counterparts around the world, the NDP and labor tops serve to chain the workers to capitalism. We need our own multiracial, revolutionary workers party to weld together labor's fight with the struggles of all the oppressed against the whole rotting system. ■

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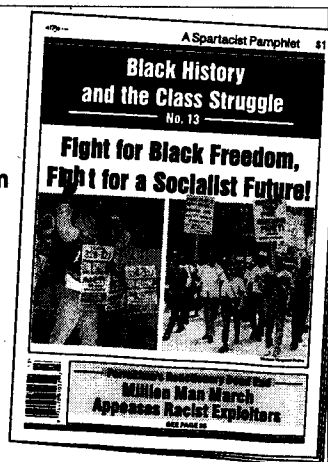
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Freedom Now for Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Appeal Filed in Pennsylvania Supreme Court

On February 9, attorneys for U.S. death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal filed an appeal on his behalf in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in Philadelphia. The 119-page legal brief documents 26 constitutional and procedural errors in challenging Judge Albert Sabo's 15 September 1995 ruling against Jamal's petition for a new trial under the state's Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA).

A former Black Panther Party leader, MOVE supporter, award-winning journalist and outspoken advocate for the oppressed, Jamal was wrongly convicted and sentenced to death for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner in a frame-up trial presided over by Judge Sabo, a notorious "hanging judge" who has sentenced more people to death—32, all but two of whom were racial minorities—than any other sitting judge in the U.S.

The PCRA hearings began in Sabo's court on July 26, only three weeks before Jamal's scheduled execution date of August 17. On August 7, Sabo granted a stay of execution, the result of mounting publicity and an international outcry of protest. For millions of minorities, youth and working people around the world, Mumia's case has come to symbolize the barbaric death penalty. The fight to save Jamal and to abolish legal lynching is part of the struggle for black equality in America. In fighting for Jamal's freedom, the Partisan Defense Committee has stressed the need for mass mobilizations of blacks, Hispanics and all the intended victims of capitalist repression, centrally seeking to unlock the social power of the integrated labor movement.

In a news conference following the filing of the appeal, Jamal's lead attorney, Leonard Weinglass, stated that "these papers indicate Mumia never had a trial in any real sense of the word.... The conclusion is irresistible: that Mumia Abu-Jamal needs a new trial." Also speaking at the press conference were Rachel Wolkenstein, one of Mumia's co-counsel as well as counsel for the Partisan Defense Committee, Karl Baker of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Mumia's son Jamal.

As the appeal brief states, throughout the PCRA hearings Sabo showed "a bias so open and notorious that it became a matter of public scandal":

"Judge Sabo rushed the proceedings in order to debilitate Jamal's efforts to present all of the evidence supporting his constitutional claims. The judge repeatedly and without warrant castigated Jamal's attorneys, routinely issuing threats of contempt, and ultimately incarcerating one and fining another. He quashed defense subpoenas at the behest of the Commonwealth.... Virtually every single defense objection was overruled and every single Commonwealth objection sustained—logic, consistency, and the rules of evidence mattered not at all."



Workers Vanguard

Death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal at Pennsylvania's SCI Greene maximum security prison.

Noting "the court's allegiance to the Fraternal Order of Police," of which Sabo, an undersheriff for 16 years, is a retired member, the brief states: "The court not only permitted but encouraged off-duty FOP members to carry loaded firearms in court, stating the FOP 'are in here for my protection'." As Weinglass told the press, "If the system were just and fair, Judge Sabo would not be a sitting judge."

The brief lashes into the "confession" supposedly made by Jamal which was a central prop in the state's frame-up. The PCRA testimony of Officer Gary Wakshul exposes this fabrication. Assigned to guard Jamal from the time of his arrest until his hospital treatment for the critical injury inflicted from a gunshot fired by Faulkner, Wakshul reported to homicide detectives shortly afterward that Jamal "made no comments." The story of Jamal's "confession" was not recorded until 64 days later, after a "round table" prep meeting conducted by prosecutor Joseph McGill with the police officers involved in the case. Wakshul testified that police officers were asked "to raise their hands if they had heard" Jamal confess "and Wakshul responded"—a clear contradiction to his earlier written report.

During the 1982 "trial," Wakshul was said by the prosecution to be on vacation and unavailable for questioning. But in the PCRA hearing, Wakshul testified that in fact he had remained in Philadelphia and "did not go away." He said this was "in compliance to a request to stay while cases were going on." The brief explains that Wakshul's testimony showed "how law enforcement wilfully fabricated testimony about a confession to secure a conviction," and supported defense assertions "that law enforcement coaxed and coerced eyewitnesses and corrupted the physical evidence tests."

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From the Swamp of Anglo-Chauvinism

“Bolshevik Tendency” Opposes Quebec Independence

Last October, the Anglo-chauvinist rulers of English Canada were running at full tilt in their campaign to bolster the No side in the Quebec sovereignty referendum. Economic and political threats against any move by Quebec to secede were combined with a massive Maple Leaf flag-waving “unity” demonstration in Montreal three days before the referendum. Echoing the call for a No vote was the Bolshevik Tendency (BT), in a 20 October 1995 statement.

In contrast the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste called on class-conscious workers in Quebec to vote Yes. As we wrote in our leaflet “Break the Grip of National Chauvinism—Independence for Quebec!”:

“The prospects for anti-capitalist class struggle in Canada today are deeply poisoned by nationalist bigotry. Spawned by the oppression of the Québécois under the heel of the unitary Canadian state, and fueled by the bourgeois nationalists of the Parti and Bloc Québécois who seek to be exploiters of their ‘own’ working class, these animosities have bitterly divided the working class of English Canada and Quebec. As revolutionary internationalists who seek to clear the road for common struggle against their common capitalist enemy, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste calls for an independent Quebec.”

At a debate on the “Quebec Referendum and the Left” in Toronto on October 19, long-time BT leader Tom Riley scoffed that to say there was deep national animosity was “ridiculous” and sneered that to cite examples like the vile attack on the home of a French-speaking family in Ontario was “just a joke.” The BT invoked the call “For Working Class Unity—Not National Unity!” to alibi its capitulation to the Anglo-dominated status quo in this country. While blithely dismissing the very real national divide between the working class of English Canada and Quebec, which has undermined common class struggle, the BT’s appeals for “unity” apparently did not fall on deaf ears. According to the BT’s former member in Quebec—who quit, unable to stomach their call for a No vote in the referendum—the BT was officially invited to participate in the October 27 “Canadian unity” demonstration in Montreal by the rally’s federalist organizers!

In early January, the BT’s ex-member in Quebec, Marc D., wrote a letter to John Masters, editor of *Spartacist Canada*. This letter largely included extensive excerpts of a previous letter Marc had sent to Riley explaining why he stood on his previously submitted resignation from the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT):

“Considering the strong class polarization so much in evidence in Quebec during the recent referendum, I believe the ‘no’ perspective advocated by the IBT was a misguided, politically damaging and unfortunate position for a revolutionary organization to defend, placing you in a de facto bloc with the Canadian bourgeoisie....

“As I have already related to you, I was pushed by the class polarization to pick a side. I believe I made the proper choice. I found it somewhat ironic that at the same time as I was

being subjected to a great deal of pressure from my employers to line up with the ‘no’, take time off work to go to federalist rallies, etc., which I rejected openly and encouraged other employees to reject, I was being pressured by the IBT to campaign vigorously for the ‘no’ and contribute in particular to this propaganda effort. This dilemma contributed heavily to my decision to offer my resignation. I had not yet resolved what I would support, but I was determined not to campaign for the ‘no’.

“I would contend that in these circumstances your obligation, first and foremost, was to defend Quebec’s right to decide on its own future, free from the blatant threats and quite apparent heavy-handed intervention from Canadian business interests and the Canadian state, rather than throwing your weight into the balance in favour of a ‘no’ victory. Given the narrow margin of the ‘no’ victory, the weight of even a small organization such as the IBT was not insignificant. “This apparently was the conclusion drawn by the Canada-wide organizers of the October 27 demonstration in Montreal for Canadian unity, whose ties to the business community were so transparent that even the bourgeois press couldn’t disguise the fact, nor did they seek to. So desperate were they for support that they extended their invitation to all quarters, including the IBT. To be fair, you quite properly rejected the invitation, but it shouldn’t have been made in the first place. The issue this raises is how the IBT’s propaganda effort was perceived by the ‘Canadian Unity’ business lobby. You were viewed as standing on the ‘right side’ of the political divide.”

In introducing these excerpts Marc D. noted that he and the International Communist League “have had our differences in the past and will likely continue to do so in the future. I certainly don’t subscribe to much of what the ICL has written about the IBT, and I would suspect that many in the ICL feel that there is excessive polemical exaggeration in such political characterizations.” To be sure, the IBT seeks cover against our polemics and only-too-true characterizations of them by screaming that these are smears and lies.

The IBT was largely formed from embittered ex-members of our international tendency who quit as individuals in the early 1980s when the imperialists’ renewed drive to destroy the former Soviet Union turned up the heat on those who claimed to be the “red” opponents of their “own” ruling class. Since their inception as a “tendency” one of their defining political characteristics has been a sneering indifference to fighting against racial, national or other forms of oppression. When we initiated mass labor/black mobilizations that successfully interdicted fascist mobilizations in the U.S. and established labor/black struggle leagues to build on those actions, they accused us of abandoning “trade-union work” in favor of “community organizing.” When we polemicized against them over this, they accused us of calling them racists. Not so, but if the shoe fits wear it. And in the IBT’s call for a No vote in the Quebec referendum, the shoe of Anglo-chauvinism fits all too well. ■

Young Spartacus

Defend the Queen's Park Four!

At the February 7 student Day of Action in Toronto, hundreds of demonstrators staged a 40-minute sit-in at the Queen's Park legislature. As the protesters were leaving the building, they were attacked by scores of club-wielding cops. Four students were arrested. High school students Michelle Vladislavova and Jesse Black-Allen, U of T student Charles Kernerman and Shiraz Rawat from Ryerson University, are facing numerous criminal charges. The most serious is the archaic offense of "intimidating a Legislature," which carries a maximum sentence of 14 years. Metro police spokesman Stan Dziemianko made no bones about its repressive intent: if "similar actions take place, you're going to see a lot more of this charge cropping up" (*Globe and Mail*, 9 February). *Drop all the charges against the Queen's Park Four!*



Toronto Star

Cops prepare to assault students protesting cuts to education at Ontario legislature, 7 February.

The February 7 protest against the gutting of education funding has been denounced in the bourgeois press as a "riot."

At the bail hearing for the Four, Justice Hugh Locke threatened: "If people participate in what can only be described as mob rule...they can expect at least these consequences" (*Toronto Star*, 10 February). By going after four student protesters, the capitalist state—racist cops and lofty courts—has targeted *everybody* who would fight back against Chrétien/Harris' slash-and-burn offensive. Defeating the capitalist onslaught will require the mobilization of the social power of the working class. Students: Ally with labor!

Social Struggle and Capitalist Intimidation

The anti-democratic charge of "intimidating a Legislature" was first put on the books in the Treasonable Practices Bill of 1795 in George III's England, two days after the king was confronted by starving plebeian petitioners crying "No war! No king! Peace!" Queen's University historian Bob Shenton (*Globe and Mail*, 16 February) noted: "It is here, then, with a mad king terrified of his own subjects, that we find the first version of the law under which the Queen's Park Four...were charged by Toronto police."

Constantly revised, the English law was designed and used to intimidate and suppress social struggle—against Corn Law protesters, the working-class Chartist republicans, the Irish. In 1868 Sir John A. Macdonald, who later ordered the legal lynching of Louis Riel, transported the legislation to Her Majesty's new Dominion as a weapon against Cape Breton coal miners, Irish Fenian nationalists and the Manitoba Métis. We demand the abolition of this reactionary statute. All the relics of English feudalism—Queen, Governor General, Senate, oath of allegiance—remain potential rallying points for reaction. *The Spartacus Youth Clubs say: Down with the monarchy!*

In Ontario, provincial and federal cuts to colleges and universities over the next two years will translate into 20 percent hikes in tuition fees which already run into thousands of dollars. Defending education means a fight to the finish against the rapacious capitalist rulers, who see no profit in educating poor, working-class and minority youth for whom there are no jobs. The SYCs fight for free, quality education, open admissions and a living stipend for all students. What is required is a revolutionary workers party that can draw all oppressed sectors of society, including youth, behind the power of the working class in a struggle for socialist revolution.

The Queen's Park Four are out on \$1,000 bail, after spending two days in jail. They are scheduled to appear in provincial court on March 29 to set trial dates. All those in the government's crosshairs, every opponent of political state repression, must take up the defense of Vladislavova, Black-Allen, Kernerman and Rawat. While the very respectable MPs-in-training who staff the U of T Student Administrative Council have grandly presented \$1,000 of students' money to reglaze Queen's Park, the SYCs say: An injury to one is an injury to all! Drop all the charges!

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee, the legal and social defense organization associated with the Trotskyist League, sent a protest to the Ontario Attorney General, and has made a financial contribution to the Queen's Park Four's defense. A defense fund has been established, and we urge our readers to contribute to it. Donations should be made out to "CFS Students' Legal Defense Fund" and sent to Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, 720 Spadina Ave., Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T9. ■

Marxism and the National Question

Capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR and East Europe has been marked and driven by a resurgence of national antagonism, most spectacularly shown by the bloody strife in the former deformed workers state of Yugoslavia. With the imperialists building up and reinforcing all that is most backward and reactionary, long-simmering and/or semi-resolved national questions have re-risen. We print below, edited for publication, part one of a talk by Oliver Stephens of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Central Committee at a December 1995 Spartacist educational in San Francisco.

* * *

I want to start by setting out a general framework, a context for the discussion here today. In *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9 we state: "The purpose of the Spartacist League/U.S. is to achieve communism over the whole earth by class-struggle centered means that are at once *proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist* as defined by the SL's 'Founding Declaration of Principles'...." And in the Declaration of Principles we state:

"Only the proletariat, through the seizure of political power and the destruction of capitalism in all countries, can lay the basis for the elimination of exploitation and the resolution of the contradiction between the growth of the productive forces of the world economy and national-state barriers. Capitalism has long since outlived its progressive historical role of creating a modern industrial economy. Now in order to maintain their rule, the national capitalist classes must intensify national and racial divisions, through imperialism oppress the colonial peoples and impoverish the masses of the entire world, engage in continual wars for the maintenance and redivision of the world markets in order to prop up the falling rate of profit, and attempt to smash the revolutionary struggle of the workers wherever it breaks out.... "On the other hand, the victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of social classes, and eliminate forever the drive for war inherent in the world economic system of capitalism. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, the limitless expansion of freedom in every area, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all."

This is decidedly *not* the perspective and program of other organizations who claim to stand for Marxian socialism.

Some anecdotes: About 20 years ago in Chicago there was a young supporter of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat. He was a member of the Internationalist Tendency, a leftward development attracted to the centrism of the USec European majority against the deep reformism of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. This guy really liked to argue with us—I think we were the Revolutionary Communist Youth then, not yet



Labor Herald

Red International of Labor Unions banners: "Workers of the World Unite!" Early Communist International fought for equality of nations, languages.

the Spartacus Youth League. One day we got into a dispute about Ireland. And as these things tend to, it got rather heated. And I can remember this guy shouting, quite red in the face, that the only answer was to "Smash the Six Counties of the North! And if that means wiping out the Protestants, then too bad for them!" For him, the Protestants were an "oppressor people," and, therefore, had no right to exist.

A couple of years later in Canada, the air traffic controllers struck over the Trudeau government's introduction of "bilingualism" in air traffic control—that is, that French would be an official language of the air in addition to the universally accepted English-based lexicon. The controllers rightly complained that this would jeopardize safety. They were ordered back to work by the government, and pilots internationally, in solidarity, refused to fly. Except for a group of Quebec pilots and controllers calling themselves the Gens de l'Air. They scabbed. Both the USec majority and the SWP group in Canada (respectively the Revolutionary Marxist Group and the League for Socialist Action at the time) had sympathy with the scabs in the name of defending the national rights of the oppressed Quebec people. They called us racists, apologists for the oppressor—for drawing the class line.

Today there are people who call themselves Marxists who line up behind U.S. imperialism's assault on the Bosnian Serbs, all in the name of defending a mythical multi-ethnic "Bosnia." It is certainly piquant, to say the least, that Tuzla, the destination point for the fake-lefts' "Workers Aid to Bosnia," is to be the base camp for the American imperialist intervention.

All of these people are very, very far from what the founders of scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, fought for. As they wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848:

"The communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire prole-

tariat, independent of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole."

The concluding call of the *Manifesto*, "Workingmen of all countries, unite!" was not just a pious wish, but an urgent, burning necessity that alone offers a future for humanity—doubly, trebly so today.

Heretofore, our species has developed and advanced over mountains of human skulls. It is a history of those with better or more food, better or more weapons—at bottom and in a nutshell, a higher level of economic development—conquering and killing, driving out or enslaving other peoples.

But the development of capitalism introduced something new (again, from the *Manifesto*):

"Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind....

"But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians....

"What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own gravediggers."

With the creation of the proletariat, it becomes possible to put an end once and for all to the cycle of conquest and slaughter. Our approach to the national question, as to all other questions, is how best to advance the triumph of the proletariat.

Darwin, DNA and Marxism

A fundamental premise of any nationalist is that "we" are different from, that is to say superior to, "they," i.e. that there are inherent differences between groups of people coming from differing cultural, linguistic, or—to use the most loaded term—racial backgrounds. At its extreme, these differences have been used to justify everything from the (largely) 18th and 19th century extermination of the aboriginal peoples of North America, Australia and the attempted effort in New Zealand (where the Maoris managed to fight them off) to the 20th century mechanized genocide of "untermenschen" by the German Nazis before and during World War II.

In South Africa, the white supremacist apartheid regime developed an exquisitely detailed series of laws manufacturing innumerable levels of racial distinctions. But not only there. There was recently an obituary in the *New York Times* (29 November 1995) for a woman by the name of Thyra Johnston, a blue-eyed, fair-skinned woman who looked as Irish as any of her neighbors in Boston. But because one of her great-grandparents was classified as black, she was listed as "Negro" on her birth certificate. Her husband, a prominent



New York Public Library

Human equality is a fact. Charles Darwin, founder of science of evolution. Skull of *Australopithecus robustus*, part of our family tree.

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doctor, was listed on his birth certificate as white, but he had a mixed background and went to medical school as one of two black students admitted under a quota system. He became a prominent doctor and was offered a commission by the U.S. Navy in 1940—until they took it away when Navy Intelligence uncovered reports that Dr. Johnston had "colored blood." Apparently there was a movie made about this in 1949, which I have not seen, titled "Lost Boundaries."

Now, racism was not invented in America. In India, for example, there are not only caste distinctions, but those of skin color as well—the darker the skin, the lower your social standing. In Japan, there is a different phenomenon: the burakumin. These people are confined to ghettos, suffer intense discrimination and your sister had better not want to marry one. The burakumin are the descendants of the people who held what were considered the "unclean" jobs: tanning, sanitation. But you can't tell who they are by looking at them—they are ethnically indistinguishable from "real Japanese." So an entire industry has grown up for the purpose of checking on the backgrounds of people to find out if they come from burakumin areas.

Through the ages, any notions of human equality have necessarily been shaped by the prevailing economic and social conditions. The Athenian democracy posited the equality, if you will, of the slaveowning males. Feudal society had many gradations of rank and privilege, starting from the King who ruled by Divine Right. In the epoch of classic bourgeois-democratic revolutions, the rising French bourgeoisie proclaimed "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" in 1789 in their struggle for power. Napoleon did destroy monarchies in his path and his army tore down the walls of Jewish ghettos. But the new French rulers were not exactly ecstatic when their colonial slaves in Haiti rose up under the same watchwords.

Likewise, the rather more conservative American slaveholders, while proclaiming "all men are created equal" in 1776, nonetheless constitutionally disenfranchised all but propertied white males and consecrated the continued existence of black chattel slavery, whose victims were accorded a mere 3/5 accounting in determining the allocation of seats in their masters' "House of Representatives." The slave-holders of course would have preferred their slaves to count as a full

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National Question...

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person (for purposes of apportionment), but 3/5 is what they settled on in exchange for the recognition of the continued existence of slavery. Women, of course, didn't even figure into the equation.

But contradictions between the rising bourgeoisie's formal egalitarian pronouncements and its sordid practice spurred the development of the forerunners of modern socialism. One thinks of people like Owen and Fourier who attempted what were to be utopian experiments to realize an egalitarian society in advance of the maturation of the only class which could achieve the required social revolution. These people were undoubtedly sincere in their commitment to human equality, but necessarily came at it from an idealist or "moral" angle.

Only in the last two decades or so, with the revolution in the techniques and discoveries in the field of molecular biology, has it become possible to put a firm materialistic and scientific foundation to the idea of human equality. The arguments still go on in the technical literature about the statistical analysis of phylogenetic "trees" deduced from the sequence comparisons of mitochondrial DNA, but the bottom line is more or less accepted (except, of course, by the creationists and others who reject the science of evolution altogether). We as a species originated not all that long ago (several hundred thousand years), most likely from an ancestor in Africa.

The DNA evidence is also supported by the fact that most of the key hominid fossils have come from the same region of the world. Stephen Jay Gould, for example in his book *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981), does an excellent job in debunking the various attempts to "prove" a supposed "ladder" of hominid "progress" from the apes to modern humans—one which, given the racial biases explicitly or even unconsciously held by their authors, somehow always managed to put blacks on the bottom, Asians and Native Americans somewhere in the middle and Caucasians on top.

Latter-day racists have generally retreated from some of the most untenable of their measures (e.g., craniometry), but such pseudo-scientific criteria as "IQ" are still employed. We dealt with a recent manifestation of this in our article on "The 'Bell Curve' and Genocide U.S.A." (see *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12). A common theme of all such attempts to justify the racist ideology and practice of the ruling class is to smother the essential biological facts under a miasma of class- and race-biased "data." But the basic facts, as cited by Gould, show that there is no basis for race (or nationality!) as a *biologically determined* category. Such superficial differences do retain considerable potency in the realm of social and political relations, as in the black question in the United States. Alternatively, look at Bosnia, where the contending forces are ethnically identical and speak the same language.

Gould does raise an interesting case—what if the other stems and branches on the hominid tree had *not* become extinct and in fact we coexisted with "a human species of distinctly inferior mental capacity. What would we have done with them—slavery? extirpation? coexistence? menial labor? reservations? zoos?"

So the essential point is that human equality is a contingency—the film of evolution could have easily run differently. But human equality is how it turned out, and the mounting evidence from molecular biology only confirms scientifically the gut reaction we all have against any aspect of



no credit

Barricades in 1848: Terrified by plebeian uprisings, bourgeoisie recoiled from leading national revolutions.

racial or national oppression. It is also a powerful argument against the academic racists, who see in their "bell curves" a genetic inferiority in the black population. These pimps for bourgeois reaction naturally blame the victims rather than the system. For them, all of the nutritional, educational and general social factors which influence a child's development from the womb to puberty are cynically dismissed. They smell the political winds and write whatever is necessary to give "scientific" cover to the needs of their paymasters.

A number of years ago one of these types at the University of Western Ontario, J. Philippe Rushton, ranked the "races" on something like 17 measures (including penis size). He agreed to a debate with a well-known Canadian geneticist, Dr. David Suzuki. But instead of ripping this racist charlatan apart with the tools of science, Suzuki gave a moral lecture, leaving the field of so-called fact to this racist academic. I personally don't think this was unrelated to the fact that Suzuki gave up his scientific career to become the man known as Canada's leading environmentalist.

Lateness of Socialist Revolution

The founding manifesto of the Fourth International ("The Transitional Program"), written in 1938 by Leon Trotsky, declared:

"All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet 'ripened' for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened'; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind."

One sign of that "rottenness" is the fact that racial and national antagonisms have risen, and indeed re-risen in some cases. The various national questions are really derivative, in the sense that they represent tasks which should have been solved by the bourgeois-democratic revolution. But the emergence of imperialism at the end of the 19th century marked definitively the end of the bourgeoisie as any kind of progres-

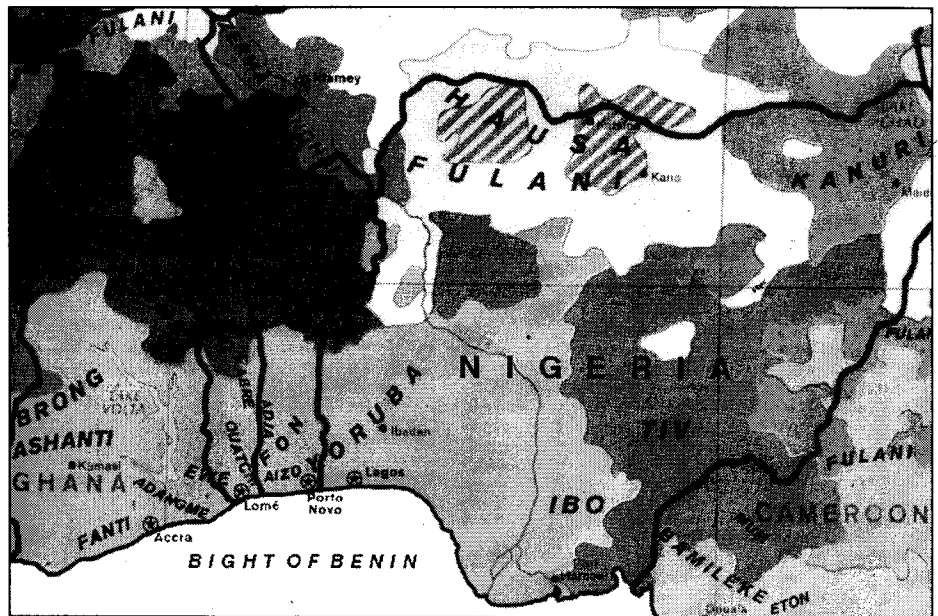
sive class. The imperialists build up and reinforce all that is most backward and reactionary. In their crusade against the Soviet Union, for example, they armed tribal chieftains, mullahs and khans in Afghanistan. In dividing up their spheres of influence, they carved state boundaries through the living bodies of populations around the world. And tied by a thousand threads to the imperialists, the capitalists of the colonial and neo-colonial countries are incapable of achieving the general democratic tasks, including national self-determination, that were carried out by the bourgeoisie in an earlier historical epoch. Only the proletariat, leading behind it the rural masses and all the oppressed, can accomplish these tasks, as Trotsky lays out in the theory of permanent revolution.

The lateness of the socialist revolution (thanks in no small part to the efforts of the reformist social-democratic and Stalinist misleaders of the working class) has left us with our own "Augean stables" to clean-up. Or as comrade Robertson quipped, it's sort of like falling out of the bottom of the privy and into the cesspool. Questions which socialist revolution would quickly have relegated to the scrap heap of the feudal epoch are again with us now. A lot of long-simmering and/or semi-resolved national questions have come back with a vengeance, even in the "advanced" countries.

For example, in the last two generations or so the French-speaking population of Quebec has developed its own class-divided society and decisively opted for separation rather than assimilation. The national divide which is the legacy of Anglo-chauvinist rule over Quebec has deeply poisoned the prospects for class struggle. The antagonisms between the Flemish and the Walloons in Belgium have also deepened, rather than attenuated, in recent decades. I just found out yesterday from a report by some comrades that there is a main university in the center of Brussels, divided ethnically in half, where the maps on one side of the campus do not show the other side of the campus because that's "them"!

Another, different example is England, Scotland and Wales. At one time, the latter two were economically important to England: coal from Welsh pits powered factories in England and Scotland. National differences between these peoples had pretty much been attenuated. But with the decline of British capitalism, Scotland and Wales are no longer so important to the bourgeoisie. The English rulers, epitomized by Margaret Thatcher's reign, have become more consciously "national"—deliberately destroying the coal industry, imposing the poll tax first exclusively on Scotland and so on, all of course supported by the venal Labour Party social democrats. In the epoch of imperialist decay, British capitalism is re-igniting national antagonisms, leading to a resurgence of Celtic nationalism. This is particularly the case in Scotland where, by the way, there was keen interest in the recent Quebec referendum on independence.

It would be a terrible, fatal mistake to ignore or dismiss the depths of national feelings engendered in various populations



SC graphic
In dividing up their spheres of influence, imperialists carved state boundaries through the living bodies of many peoples, as in West Africa.

by their real and even imagined grievances. Ongoing and seemingly intractable examples of national conflicts, such as Northern Ireland and Israel/Palestine, make this a paramount question for proletarian revolutionaries in the present epoch.

This is also true in a different sense and context. In the "New World Order" of increasing rivalries amongst the leading imperialist powers (the U.S., Germany and Japan), the ruling class in each country seeks to line up the population behind them—at bottom, preparation for interimperialist war. Rising anti-immigrant racism is a common feature in the "advanced" capitalist world, and it is closely connected to the protectionist poison pushed by the trade-union bureaucrats and social democrats. Anti-Québécois chauvinism, "English only" laws, the Canadian Labour Congress' cry of "Canadian jobs for Canadian workers," the Canadian New Democratic Party's attacks on refugees, California's racist Proposition 187, are all examples of the North American rulers' drive to rally "us" against "them." But as the German revolutionist Karl Liebknecht proclaimed in the midst of World War I, "The main enemy is at home," the bourgeoisie of your "own" country.

What is a Nation?

So what, exactly, is a nation? That's a really good question. It's in a sense like asking: what is pornography. As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart wrote: he can't say what it is, but he knew it when he saw it. (And believe me, he probably looked at a lot of it. The old joke is: "What are they doing under those black robes?")

That is actually more helpful in some ways than the capsule definition that J.V. Stalin wrote in 1913 in his article "Marxism and the National Question": "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture." And he adds: "It must be emphasized that none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. More than that, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics" (continued on page 10)

National Question...

(continued from page 9)

teristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation."

Given that Stalin later emerged as a rabid Great Russian chauvinist and the suppressor of nationalities, it is certainly an irony of history that this "definition" has maintained such a long currency. In fact, just this October the Bolshevik Tendency's speaker at a debate in Toronto on Quebec opined: "Certainly it's true that Quebec is a nation, and fits Stalin's definition of a nation, and as a result has the right to self-determination."

"Fits Stalin's definition"—that encapsulates the methodology. Stalin's approach to the national question was that of a "checklist." If a group of people meets the criteria—one, two, three—then, voilà, they are a nation, and thereby have the right to self-determination. Not only is this profoundly undialectical, but it can, taken literally, lead to real idiocies. For example, the Hasidic Jews of Brooklyn fit that definition to a tee. I grew up in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and I can assure you that my friends and I, most of whom were from secular Jewish families, found a hell of a lot more in common, and vice versa, with the black and Puerto Rican kids of the neighborhood than with what we thought were the really weird kids of that ultra-Orthodox sect.

Life does not fit into unchanging, neat, razor-sharp categories. There are all kinds of peoples on the face of the planet who are betwixt and between, if you will: "hill peoples" such as Berbers, Chechens, Abkhazians, Ossetians, the Swiss. So how does Stalin's criterion help in approaching questions involving such people? It doesn't.

In Canada a lot of the left has a slogan, "Self-Determination for the Native Indians" or the "First Nations." But this has no basis in material reality. The fact is that the colonialists nearly obliterated the aboriginal peoples in North America, leaving shattered remnants of different tribes who continue to be viciously degraded and abused. They ensured that these peoples could *not* develop into modern-day nations. Nevertheless, today the Canadian government demands that they in essence prove they are and were nations—if a band can't produce records of continuous, sole occupation of specific geographical areas, its land claim is tossed out the window.

Instead of bandying about the term "self-determination,"

we addressed this question in the concrete in an article in *Spartacist Canada* No. 105: "The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste upholds the right of the Native peoples to decide their own fate. In areas where they are the concentrated population, we assert their right to the fullest possible regional autonomy, i.e., the genuine right to govern their territories and to control the land and resources therein." And we concluded: "Ultimately, only socialist revolution can shatter the heavy chains of racist capitalist oppression which have dragged the Native peoples into degradation and misery, and usher in an egalitarian socialist society which can redress centuries of injustice."

Also not conveniently fitting into Stalin's schema are groups like the Tutsis and Hutus in Africa, who were traditional castes. You were a Tutsi if you owned cattle (I think it was ten) and a Hutu if you didn't. A Hutu who managed to acquire cattle became a Tutsi, and a Tutsi who lost his cattle became a Hutu. And there is a much, much smaller third group as well. It was the colonialists who manufactured a myth of "national" differences, and proceeded to use these in their divide-and-rule schemes.

There's also the phenomenon of a people-class or people-caste, which Abram Leon wrote about in his book *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*. Which leads me to note that social catastrophes can lead to the creation of nations. During the Holocaust of World War II, denied refuge by Germany's imperialist enemies, a large number of East European Jews went to Palestine. They recreated a dead language, Hebrew, and compacted a nation, at the direct expense of the Palestinian Arab nation.

The Development of Nations

The formation and divergence of nations is a product of historical development. What is decisive is contiguous mutual economic exchange continued over a more or less lengthy period of time which develops into a coherent political economy.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels traces the development of the peoples around the Mediterranean. The Roman Empire obliterated

"any distinctions of nationality, no more Gauls, Iberians, Ligurians, Noricans; all had become Romans. Roman administration and Roman law had everywhere dissolved the old bodies of *consanguinei* and thus crushed the last remnants of local and national self-expression. The new-fangled Romanism could not compensate for this loss; it did not express any nationality, but only lack of nationality. The elements for the formation of new nations existed everywhere. The Latin dialects of the different provinces diverged more and more; the natural boundaries that had once made Italy, Gaul, Spain, Africa's independent territories, still existed and still made themselves felt. Yet nowhere was there a force capable of combining these elements into new nations; nowhere was there the least trace of any capacity for development or any power of resistance, much less of creative power."

It took the Germanic invasions (representing, in Engels' terminology of the time, the upper stage of barbarism) to clear away the old, dying social order. Speaking of the period from the fall of Rome in the 5th century, Engels writes: "Moreover, unproductive as these four hundred years [since then] appear to have been, they, nevertheless, left *one* great product behind them: the modern nationalities, the refashioning and regrouping of West European humanity for impending history."

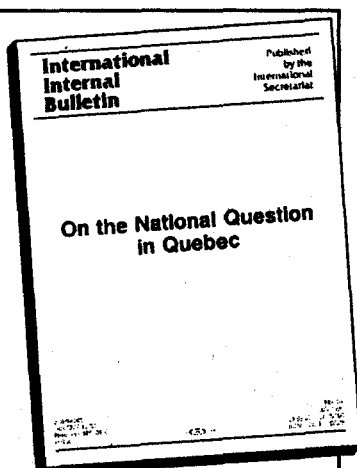
It was the development of capitalism, first in its mercantilist

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and then in its industrial stage, which drove the formation of the nation-state in the modern sense. As Lenin put it so clearly:

“Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose populations speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes and, lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer.

“Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of *national states*, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The most profound economic factors drive towards this goal, and, therefore, for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the national state is *typical* and normal for the capitalist period.”

— “The Right of Nations to Self-Determination”

Lenin’s stress on the role of language in the development of nations is important as, along with religion, it is one of the key ways peoples assimilate or diverge. Language is the bearer of a common culture. It’s no accident that in Quebec the main expression of the political battles for separation occurred over the language laws. Up until basically the 1970s, the language in which workers had to address the bosses, of all contracts and of all business was English. The Quebec bourgeoisie asserted itself through imposing a series of ever-stricter language laws (e.g., Bill 101), culminating in the declaration of French as the sole official language. As Marxists we stand against privileges for any nation or language. We are for full and equal language rights—including for French-speakers in English Canada and for English-speakers in Quebec.

By the way, Lenin’s emphasis on Western Europe is no accident, for it was there that the processes he outlined actually took place to their fullest extent. In Central and especially East Europe/Russia national development was arrested by the relative strength of the feudal aristocracy vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie. In these areas, the revolution in the mode of production was retarded—by the late 1800s, when proletarian revolution was on the agenda in Western Europe (e.g., the Paris Commune), Central and East Europe were still faced with the medieval rubbish which should have been swept away by a bourgeois-democratic revolution like that in France in 1789.

The main point was captured by British historian Eric



Remiorz/CP

Nationalist parade in Montreal. TL/LT advocates independence to fight Anglo-chauvinism, cut through national divide.

Hobsbawm in his book *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*—that the basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its *modernity*. We are dealing with a phenomenon which is *not* drawn from the shrouds of antiquity, but one which is actually quite recent. Just note that the consolidation of what we call the German nation-state occurred only in the later 1800s. The French national state was the product of some 500 years of almost uninterrupted warfare which culminated in the consolidation of a culturally homogenous French nation in the 19th century.

We are also dealing with a very dynamic, evolving situation, in the historical sense. For the vast majority of human history, people’s view of the world and their place in it has been constrained by the low level of the productive forces. Before 1800, most of our species were tied to *agricultural* production—they not only lived off the land upon which they were born, but most often were tied to it literally by the bonds of slavery or feudalism. Widespread literacy is fairly new. Remember that one of the demands of the *Communist Manifesto* is for compulsory education.

So the concept of a nation, as we know it in the latter 20th century, is historically a recent development. This of course has not prevented various nationalists from inventing a glorious “history” for their particular nation. Most of this is nonsense, but the Scots may be an exception to the rule. In 1320, the Scottish lords petitioned the Pope—in writing, quite a novelty at the time!—for succor against the predations of the English king. In their “Declaration of Arbroath” they noted that:

“...we find that among other famous nations our own, the Scots, has been graced with widespread renown. They journeyed from Greater Scythia by way of the Tyrrenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain among the most savage tribes, but nowhere could they be subdued by any race, however barbarous. Thence they came, twelve hundred years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, to their home in the west where they still live today.... In their kingdom there have reigned one hundred and thirteen kings of their own royal stock, the line unbroken by a single foreigner.”

[To Be Continued]

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

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Ontario Labor...

(continued from page 1)

years ago, runs out at the end of March. Rather than waiting for Harris to pick them off one at a time, the other provincial public-sector unions should strike jointly with OPSEU *now*. A serious struggle by labor could draw into action broad layers of the poor and oppressed who depend on the services public-sector workers provide.

Among those unions coming into the Tory line of fire are the Ontario Hydro and Toronto transit workers. Toronto bus and subway drivers can paralyze the financial headquarters of Canadian capitalism; the Power Workers Union can pull the plug on the stock exchange and every bank and factory, quickly bringing Canada's industrial heartland to a standstill. This kind of social power can turn back the Tory onslaught. But unleashing it requires a class-struggle union leadership willing and able to take on the bosses and their state.

Global Capitalist Offensive

For much of the period since World War II, the bosses in Canada generally chose not to wage all-out war on the unions. They looked instead to utilize the pro-capitalist labor leadership, together with the NDP social democrats, to contain working-class struggle. For decades, the existence of the Soviet Union—a bureaucratically degenerated workers state—acted as a counterweight to global imperialist domination, and undercut the capitalists' ability to carry out wholesale anti-working-class attacks at home.

The bosses sought to prettify their brutal system of exploitation and ward off serious social discontent through a network of social programs, the so-called "welfare state." But the destruction of the Soviet Union has unleashed renewed turmoil among the imperialist powers, as rival capitalist states step up their competition for markets and profits. The postwar world is coming unstuck, as the capitalist thieves fall out among themselves. The NAFTA agreement, for example, is an attempt to create a U.S.-dominated protectionist fortress against Europe and Japan throughout the Americas. While the Canadian and U.S. bosses hack away at jobs, social programs and unions, the biggest victim of NAFTA "free trade" is Mexico, which has been laid open to wholesale rape by North American corporations.

The bosses today feel they have free rein to grind the workers and poor without much need for the mediating influence of the social-democratic labor misleaders or expensive social programs. Harris & Co. are out to break the back of the union movement in Ontario. Canadian Auto Workers chief Buzz Hargrove, representing the purported "left" of the union bureaucracy, whines that the Tories' "confrontational relations" are "setting out a much more difficult environment for everybody." Together with the Ontario Federation of Labour tops, his answer is for workers to get back behind the NDP for the next election (in 1999!), now that Bob Rae has conveniently exited. But it was the NDP which *initiated* the bosses' austerity offensive from the Queen's Park government benches.

The current all-sided capitalist attack cannot be defeated by invoking mythical "good old days." The imperative need of Canadian capitalism to become internationally competitive drives *all* the parliamentary parties to participate in the war against working people and the poor. This—not individual

traitors like Bob Rae—is why NDP governments in power in Ontario, B.C. and Saskatchewan have vied with their Tory and Liberal counterparts to slash jobs and services.

It is necessary to build a new, internationalist, revolutionary leadership of the working class, one which understands that bankrupt capitalism cannot be reformed but must be overthrown. Instead of the present gang of union bureaucrats and parliamentary sellouts beholden to the bosses, we need a genuine workers party, based on the revolutionary perspective of Marxism and committed to establishing a workers government through anti-capitalist struggle.

Bureaucrats Walk Backwards

Accepting the framework of capitalism, the social-democratic union tops surrender in advance. Their attitude was summed up by Fred Pomeroy, president of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union, who described "collective bargaining" today as "walking backwards as slowly as you can." The OPSEU leaders *agreed* to the Tories' plans for mass layoffs, disputing only the terms of severance and pension packages. TV ads purchased by the union endorsed the need for spending cuts to deal with that bourgeois shibboleth, "the deficit." Union president Leah Casselman even ordered OPSEU members to scab on their own strike, signing a protocol which compels more than 10,000 "essential" workers to cross picket lines and report to work.

The labor tops' main concern has been to defuse the deep anger which the Tory offensive has provoked among workers and the poor. Blowing off steam was the central purpose of their "Days of Action" in London last December and Hamilton on February 23-24. The turnout in Hamilton was huge, far larger than the OFL tops anticipated. On the first day, 35,000 strikers shut down Steel City. On the second day, steelworkers, teachers, auto workers, public employees and tens of thousands of other unionists took over the downtown core for hours in one of the largest labor demonstrations in Canadian history.

The OFL tops kept this gigantic march under tight control, making it more a docile parade than a display of labor power. On the eve of the pivotal OPSEU strike, what was needed was a mass meeting centered on OPSEU, with elected delegates from other unions, to hammer out a battle plan and elect a strike committee to be the central command for joint strike action. This would require a revolutionary leadership to prepare the workers for the inevitable confrontation with the state.

Labor Struggle and the Capitalist State

Prior to the Hamilton Days of Action, the Harris government and its bought-and-paid-for media warned ominously of potential "violence." On February 24, hundreds of Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police stood behind concrete barriers, while hundreds more from Toronto and elsewhere were kept on call. Riot cops and mounted units were ostentatiously deployed outside the Hamilton Convention Centre, where Harris and his Tories were holed up for their annual policy meeting.

To win labor's battles, worker militants need to know where the class line is drawn—who our allies are, and who our enemies are. The primary, most dangerous enemy of working people is the capitalist state. Any effective class struggle must come up against the guardians of the capitalist order—cops, courts and jails. Yet OPSEU "organizes"

thousands of jail guards (union president Casselman is herself a former detention center guard). On Day One of the OPSEU strike the screws marched in Toronto with signs calling for tougher prison sentences, i.e., campaigning for the bosses' racist "law and order" crusade. On February 28, "strikers" in Barrie dropped their placards to suppress a protest by inmates who had been locked down and denied even the most basic human amenities.

Jail guards, like the cops, are a key component of the capitalist state's apparatus of repression. The jails are already full of black youth, Native and poor people, reflecting the brutal racism of capitalist class "justice." In periods of social struggle, the prison population is swelled by union militants—like former Toronto CUPW local president Andre Kolompar, imprisoned by the NDP during the last postal strike. *Get the jailer thugs out of OPSEU!*

The Bankruptcy of Canadian Capitalism

Throughout Canada, fury is building against growing poverty and the never-ending capitalist attacks. Thousands have rallied against federal cuts to UI in cities and towns throughout the Maritimes. In Hull, Quebec on February 15, a crazed Jean Chrétien physically assaulted anti-unemployment protester Bill Clennett. Defending Chrétien, deputy PM Sheila Copps railed against "separatists masquerading as unemployed workers."

From Chrétien to Harris, the same capitalist rulers who are waging war against jobs and social programs are seeking to whip up bigotry against the national aspirations of the Québécois. Yet during the sovereignty referendum last fall, the labor tops in English Canada and especially the NDP openly joined the "national unity" crusade against Quebec. Ontario NDP leader Bob Rae shared "united Canada" platforms with Mike Harris, publicly applauding the Tory premier's anti-Quebec ravings.

The various left organizations who orbit around the NDP—International Socialists, their recent "New Socialist" split-off, Labour Militant et al.—defer to the existing working-class misleaders, at most demanding more militancy on an economic level. In late January, representatives of a number of these groups gathered in Montreal for an "All Canada Conference" against the cuts, which was co-sponsored by Ontario and Quebec anti-poverty groups and drew delegates from unions and social justice organizations in both English Canada and Quebec. However, the various reformist left organizations studiously avoided all mention of the national oppression of Quebec.

Anti-Quebec chauvinism is the decisive barrier to anti-capitalist struggle in this country. It ties English Canadian workers to the Bay Street bosses, while driving Québécois workers deeper into the arms of bourgeois-nationalists like Lucien Bouchard. Spokesmen for the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste disturbed the dirty little consensus at the Montreal conference, intervening sharply with our call for Quebec independence as the means to cut through the deep national animosities generated by Anglo-chauvinist oppression.

To win its fight, labor must organize the active support of all the oppressed. Militant workers must advocate independence for Quebec in order to clear the road to anti-capitalist class struggle in both nations. They must take up the defense of black youth, refugees and immigrants, Native people, women, gays. Rather than meekly accepting job cuts, the



Lautens/Toronto Star

Ontario government workers contingent on February 23 mass labor rally in Hamilton. All labor must stand with OPSEU!

unions should reach out to the unemployed by demanding a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, and a sliding scale of wages and hours to share out the available work. Naturally, the bosses will resist such an attack on their sacred right to profit. The only solution is to replace their bankrupt rule—which today impoverishes more and more people in Canada and throughout the world—with a workers government and a socialist planned economy.

The ruling classes internationally have loudly proclaimed the "death of communism" and a "new world order." But the fight for communism lives on in the struggles of working people and the oppressed against the many-sided oppression of capitalism. There is a burning need to forge multiracial, internationalist *revolutionary workers parties* which can lead labor's current defensive struggles to victory. Building such a party here requires a fight to replace the pro-capitalist sellouts who today run the labor movement and who are committed to maintaining capitalist rule.

The fight for workers power is a political struggle. Labor battles which remain limited to simple economic demands will not be enough. The massive strike wave in France last December pushed the envelope of militancy, but because the strikers remained trapped within the framework and perspective of capitalism, they could not break its chains. Nor can labor's struggles remain nationally limited. They must be extended from the Yukon to the Yucatán and beyond. Only a labor movement with a vision of struggle for a new society, where those who labor rule, can rally all of the oppressed in a victorious war against the oppressor of all—capitalism. ■

Mumia Abu-Jamal...

(continued from page 3)

The appeal also underscored the important PCRA testimony of William Singletary, who saw a man other than Mumia shoot Faulkner and flee from the scene. The cops who questioned him immediately after the shooting repeatedly tore up his statements that the fleeing man, not Jamal, was the shooter. Hours later, under threats of physical violence, Singletary signed a false statement dictated by one Officer Green which claimed that he had not seen the shooting. Faced with relentless police harassment and suspicious vandalism to the gas station he owned, Singletary fled Philadelphia. His testimony demonstrated how the prosecution had suppressed evidence of Jamal's innocence, which in and of itself should be grounds for voiding a guilty verdict—but not in Sabo's kangaroo court.

The brief also notes that if Jamal had been able to present experts at trial, they would have established that there was simply no ballistics link between Jamal or his licensed .38 calibre gun and the shooting. Another key component of the appeal is the evidence of extreme incompetence on the part of Jamal's court-appointed attorney in 1982, which infringes on Jamal's Sixth Amendment right to legal representation. The brief also includes testimony of numerous other witnesses who could have demonstrated Jamal's innocence but were hidden from his court-appointed lawyer or intimidated into silence or given prosecutorial favors to change their eyewitness accounts.

As Rachel Wolkenstein said at the press conference, "We are representing an innocent man, someone who has maintained his innocence from the very beginning and has been subjected to a politically motivated and racially biased set of proceedings, both the original trial and the hearing that we had this summer." "Mumia," she continued, "is entitled to his freedom." Backing up evidence that Jamal was politically railroaded to death row was a "friend of the court" brief submitted on February 9 by the Philadelphia chapters of the



SC photo

Mobilize the power of labor and all the oppressed to free Jamal! Hundreds march in Toronto, 29 July 1995.

ACLU, National Conference of Black Lawyers and the NAACP. Describing the basis of the brief, Karl Baker assailed the D.A.'s use during the 1982 sentencing hearing of a statement, written by Jamal 12 years before as a Black Panther spokesman, that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

Baker noted the context of that statement: "In the past two years, 28 members of the Black Panther Party had been killed, and, just one month before, Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, the leaders of a chapter in Chicago, had been murdered...when the police broke in at 4:30 in the morning, firing over 90 shots, and killed them in their sleep." This is what Mumia meant, Baker added, "when he said, 'We know very well from the deaths of numerous of our members that in America political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.' To turn that around and use it against him and say that this is a reason that we should put him to death is the most cynical and manipulative effort on the part of the prosecution. This alone should be grounds to vacate the sentence of death."

Jamal continues to win support in his fight against the racist death penalty. His book, *Live from Death Row*, has been translated into at least five languages and is being published as a paperback. Gene Herson, labor coordinator of the PDC, said, "From the 800 pages of FBI files on Jamal dating from his Black Panther activities, to the 1982 frame-up conviction and sentencing, to the antics in Sabo's courtroom 13 years later, there is no room for illusions in the 'fairness' or 'impartiality' of the racist capitalist 'justice' system. The battle for Mumia's freedom—and to abolish the death penalty—must continue outside as well as inside the courtroom. Above all, this means looking to mobilize the integrated labor movement in defense of Mumia, as part of the struggle against the whole system of racist, anti-labor repression."

* * *

For more information on the campaign to free Mumia, contact the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 314, Station B, Toronto, ON M5T 2W1, or call (416) 593-4138. Contribute to the legal defense: make checks payable to the Partisan Defense Committee, earmarked "Jamal Legal Defense." These funds will be forwarded in full to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series TORONTO

The Fight for Revolution in the Post-Soviet World

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VANCOUVER

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Britannia Community Centre, Room L4,

1661 Napier (off Commercial Drive).

For more information: (604) 687-0353.

Northern Ireland...

(continued from page 16)

IRA give up its arms.

While the annual Loyalist marching season went ahead last summer under virtual martial law in Catholic neighbourhoods of Belfast and Portadown, the British government demanded that the IRA "decommission" its weapons as a precondition for negotiations with Sinn Féin. Major has been backed at every point by Tony Blair's Labour Party, and also finds allies among the venal ruling class of the Irish Republic who, along with the Irish Labour Party and Democratic Left, act as loyal servants of British imperialism in the North while brutally oppressing women and attacking the working class in the South.

Rejecting the U.S.-sponsored Mitchell Commission proposal that talks should proceed (and "decommissioning" would follow later), Major adopted the Unionists' demand for elections in Northern Ireland before any "talks." The vista of a return to Unionist-dominated provincial rule in the North sent shivers through the entire Catholic population.

The differences between U.S. and British imperialism are merely tactical. The U.S. considers that the best way to disarm the IRA is to exploit the divisions between the "ballot" wing of Gerry Adams and the more hardline Republicans. A week before the Canary Wharf bombing, former U.S. Senator George Mitchell publicly warned of the danger of a "fracture" in the nationalist camp. Minutes after the IRA declared an end to the ceasefire, Gerry Adams telephoned the Clinton White House to say he had heard "some very disturbing news."

The "armalite" and the "ballot box" wings of the IRA/Sinn Féin are symbiotic, reflecting two sides of a desperate nationalist strategy which has no perspective outside the framework of capitalism and looks to imperialism for a "solution." Having built up illusions in an imperialist-brokered settlement, the IRA ended their ceasefire complaining that "instead of embracing the peace process, the British government acted in bad faith," while still calling for an "inclusive, negotiated settlement."

The destruction of the Soviet Union through counterrevolution and the breaking of imperialism's Cold War anti-Soviet consensus led to increasing interimperialist rivalries. The Sinn Féin leadership saw in this the possibility to enlist the "good graces" of U.S. imperialism to pressure the British to negotiate. Such illusions in U.S. imperialism are deadly dangerous, the fruits of which have been witnessed from killing fields in Iraq, to U.S. troops mowing down black women and children in Somalia, to the terror bombing of the Serbs.

From the beginning, we have warned against any illusions in imperialist-brokered deals from South Africa to the Middle East to the Balkans. In Northern Ireland, within the framework of imperialism, the door is open to a "Bosnian solution" predicated on undoubtedly bloody forced population transfers. Under such a scheme, given their proportional weight in the population of Northern Ireland, the Protestants would get the bulk of the land centred around Belfast and the Catholics would get the area around Derry. To realize such an "ethnic cleansing" move is quite expensive, at least if it is to look "humane" to the viewers of CNN. The British don't have the money to do it, and the Americans won't spend the money to do it. But such a move would fit with Germany's drive for

mastery of Europe, except that the Fourth Reich is currently a little overextended after eating the former East German deformed workers state. In the absence of the shattering of the capitalist system, such is an idea of the options that are open.

The Catholics are an oppressed minority in Northern Ireland, but they live in the same territory as the Protestants who are a distinct community which very much fears becoming a minority that in turn would be oppressed and discriminated against in a capitalist united Ireland.

An old Irish saying recounted in a recent letter in the London *Guardian* says: "Anyone who has a solution to the Irish Question is not in possession of all the facts." That's because no just solution is obtainable within the status quo. In such situations of interpenetrated peoples, there can be no equitable resolution to national oppression outside of the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers rule.

We oppose both the forcible reunification of Ireland and the establishment of an "independent Ulster." We fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, forged through the revolutionary unity of the working class across national and religious boundaries, leaving open the question of the future development of the Protestant community. Integrated workers militias—incorporating both Catholics and Protestants, under a communist leadership—are vital in Northern Ireland to combat imperialist and Loyalist rampage as well as sectarian terror from any quarter—Orange or Green.

Genuine justice and equality will only come through working-class rule on both sides of the Irish Sea, through an internationalist struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, and which will also bring down the sectarian Orange statelet in Northern Ireland and the clericalist capitalist state in the South. As we said when the ceasefire was first declared: "What is critically necessary is the forging of Leninist parties on both sides of the Irish Sea, rooted in the proletariat of all the peoples of these isles" (*Workers Hammer* No. 142, September/October 1994). ■

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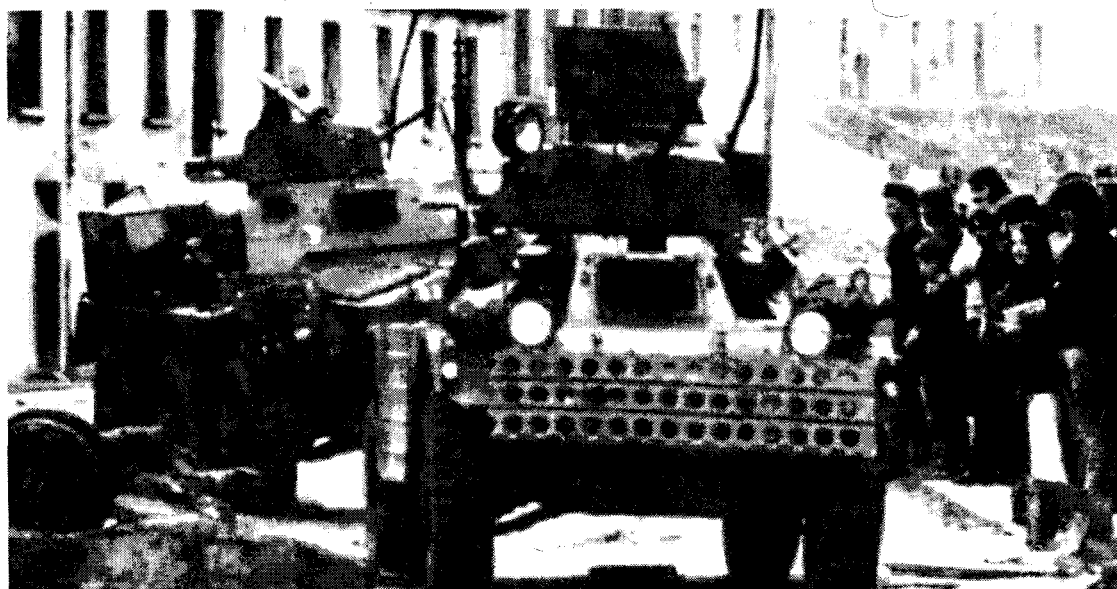
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SC108

Down With the Imperialist "Peace" Fraud

British Troops Out of Northern Ireland Now!

British troop carriers rumble through Catholic area of Derry, enforcing the bloody occupation of Northern Ireland.



Crescent Books

The following article is adapted from *Workers Hammer No. 149, February/March 1996*, published by our comrades of the *Spartacist League/Britain*.

At 5:30 p.m. on Friday, 9 February, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) announced the end of their 17-month ceasefire. Ninety minutes later an IRA bomb packed into a flatbed lorry exploded in an underground car park in East London's Canary Wharf complex, killing two people and injuring over 30. Within hours the sectarian Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was demonstratively patrolling the streets of Belfast with rifles and body armour. Police dragnets were quickly mounted within Britain and 500 more troops were dispatched to Northern Ireland. Within ten days, another IRA bomb exploded in a London bus, killing one person (presumed to be the bomb carrier) and injuring several passengers. Throughout Northern Ireland, both Catholics and Protestants live in fear of renewed sectarian violence; Catholics particularly dread a resumption of murder by Loyalist death squads.

The capitalist media howled about IRA "terrorists" jeopardising the "peace process," but said not a word against the main terrorist force stalking these islands, the British Army, behind whom stand the RUC and Loyalist terror gangs. From the standpoint of proletarian revolutionaries, the Canary Wharf bombing was indefensible—in no way a blow against the forces of British imperialism. Instead, it indiscriminately targeted civilians who simply happen to live or work in Lon-

don's Docklands.

Terrorism as a method of struggle reflects the aims of its petty-bourgeois practitioners to become a new ruling class of "their" people, by sowing nationalist hatred of another people that will last generations. It is antithetical to the task of mobilising the proletariat against its imperialist oppressors. Nonetheless, when the IRA strikes a blow against the forces of British imperialism or fascistic Loyalist killers, we defend the perpetrators of such acts against the capitalist state. But we take a fundamentally different attitude to indiscriminate terror. From a proletarian perspective, these are criminal acts which serve only to deepen hatred between Catholic and Protestant, English and Irish workers.

We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland as a precondition to any resolution of the "troubles" in Northern Ireland. As we warned: "Any imperialist 'deal' will be bloody and brutal and will necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority. And it would not do any good for working-class Protestants either" (*Workers Hammer No. 138, November/December 1993*). From the start of the IRA ceasefire, the British imperialists have been provocative and arrogant. Having been forced, finally, by the Clinton White House, Prime Minister John Major has sought to exploit genuine war-weariness and hatred of murderous sectarianism to make the

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