

Economic Crisis Rips Europe



AFP

Health workers march in Athens against austerity cuts during two-day general strike, October 2011.

This article was written by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany. It was first printed in Workers Vanguard No. 992 (9 December 2011), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

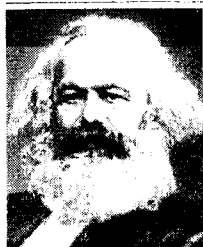
The economic crisis intensifying in Europe—a particularly severe expression of the world capitalist crisis—was triggered in the spring of 2010 as global financial capitalists, fearing that heavily indebted Greece would default on its loan obligations, began spurning Greek government bonds. These fears have extended not only to Portugal and Ireland but also to the much larger economies of Spain and Italy, which are both having trouble refinancing their state debts. Now France, which along with Germany is central to the European Union (EU), has been threatened with a downgrad-

ing of its government debt. Frenzied efforts by the EU to devise new “rescue packages,” as well as futile appeals to Brazil and China to step in and help with a bailout, have all proved insufficient. A headline of the financial news service Eurointelligence (22 November) describes “a slow motion train wreck” of the euro, the euro zone (consisting of the 17 countries in the EU that use the euro as a common currency) and probably the EU itself.

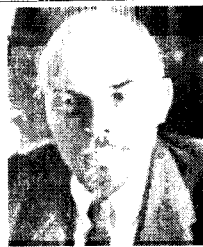
Fears over a spreading “credit crunch” in Europe have unsettled international financial markets, threatening to drive the world economy into another major downturn. U.S. banks have been reducing their holdings in European government bonds, while American money market funds have been closing the spigot of money they lend to European banks. This

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Down With the European Union! For a Socialist United States of Europe!



Marx



Lenin



Trotsky

Rosa Luxemburg, Heroic Woman Communist Leader

To mark International Women's Day, March 8, we publish an excerpt from a 1905 article by Rosa Luxemburg, "Socialism and the Churches." Luxemburg—a Polish woman, a Jew, leader of the revolutionary wing of German Social Democracy and later founder of the German Communist Party—fought tenaciously for the program of revolutionary Marxism against the reformist leaders of the Second (Socialist) International. She and her close comrade-in-arms Karl Liebknecht were assassinated in January 1919 by the reactionary Freikorps as part of the German Social Democratic government's suppression of the Spartakist uprising.

The clergy, no less than the capitalist class, lives on the backs of the people, profits from the degradation, the ignorance and the oppression of the people. The clergy and the parasitic capitalists hate the organized working class, conscious of its rights, which fights for the conquest of its liberties. For the abolition of capitalist misrule and the establishment of equality between men would strike a mortal blow especially at the clergy which exists only thanks to exploitation and poverty. But above all, socialism aims at assuring to humanity an honest and solid happiness here below, to give to the people the greatest possible education and the first place in society. It is precisely this happiness here on earth which the servants of the Church fear like the plague....

The clergy has at its disposal two means to fight social democracy. Where the working-class movement is beginning to win recognition, as is the case in our country (Poland), where the possessing classes still hope to crush it, the clergy fights the socialists by threatening sermons, slandering them and condemning the "covetousness" of the workers. But in the countries where political liberties are established and the workers' party is powerful, as for example in Germany,

France, and Holland, there the clergy seeks other means. It hides its real purpose and does not face the workers any more as an open enemy, but as a false friend. Thus you will see the priests organizing the workers and founding "Christian" trade unions. In this way they try to catch the fish in their net, to attract the workers into the trap of these false trade unions, where they teach humility, unlike the organizations of the social democracy which have in view struggle and defense against maltreatment.

When the czarist government finally falls under the blows of the revolutionary proletariat of Poland and Russia, and when political liberty exists in our country, then we shall see the same Archbishop Popiel and the same ecclesiastics who today thunder against the militants, suddenly beginning to organize the workers into "Christian" and "national" associations in order to mislead them. Already we are at the beginning of this underground activity of the "national democracy" which assures the future collaboration with the priests and today helps them to slander the social democrats.

The workers must, therefore, be warned of the danger so that they will not let themselves be taken in, on the morrow of the victory of the revolution, by the honeyed words of those who today from the height of the pulpit, dare to defend the czarist government, which kills the workers, and the repressive apparatus of capital, which is the principal cause of the poverty of the proletariat.

In order to defend themselves against the antagonism of the clergy at the present time, during the revolution, and against their false friendship tomorrow, after the revolution, it is necessary for the workers to organize themselves in the Social Democratic Party.

And here is the answer to all the attacks of the clergy: the social democracy in no way fights against religious beliefs. On the contrary, it demands complete freedom of conscience for every individual and the widest possible toleration for every faith and every opinion. But, from the moment when the priests use the pulpit as a means of political struggle against the working class, the workers must fight against the enemies of their rights and their liberation. For he who defends the exploiters and who helps to prolong this present regime of misery is the mortal enemy of the proletariat, whether he be in a cassock or in the uniform of the police.

—Rosa Luxemburg, "Socialism and the Churches"
(1905), reprinted in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*
(Pathfinder Press, 1970)

SPARTACIST CANADA

Newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste
Canadian section of the International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)

Editorial Board: C. Galarneau, Arthur Llewellyn, Tynan Maddalena (Editor, Young Spartacus pages), John Masters, Miriam McDonald (Editor), Andrew Shilling, Russell Stoker (Production Manager)

Circulation Manager: Arthur Llewellyn

Published four times a year by Spartacist Canada Publishing Association, Box 6867, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X6. Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
The closing date for news in this issue is March 4.

Printed in a union shop by union labour.

Publications Agreement No. 40050911 ISSN: 0229-5415
Spring 2012 Date of issue: March 2012

Spartacist

English edition
No. 62
Spring 2011

\$1.50

(64 pages)

**Spartacist is sent to all
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Defend the Unions Through Class Struggle!

Capitalist War on Public Sector Jobs, Services

Claiming a need to “balance the budget” and “keep Canada competitive,” the ruling class is bringing down the austerity axe on tens of thousands of government jobs from coast to coast. As in the U.S. and throughout Europe, the capitalists are trying to make the working class pay for the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression—a crisis that was caused by the capitalist system itself. This one-sided class war has brought massive unemployment and poverty, which the rulers have wielded to further weaken the trade unions.

First the capitalists ravaged the private sector unions, whose leaders have proved utterly incapable of mounting an effective defense. Now they are targeting what the *Globe and Mail* editorialists haughtily call the “voracious public sector unions.” With 71 percent of public sector workers in unions, governments at every level are intent on extracting huge concessions, putting labour’s hard-won gains—seniority rights, pensions, health plans, sick benefits—on the chopping block. Unless there is some serious working-class struggle, which alone can beat back this ruling-class offensive, it is about to get much worse.

With cuts of \$4 to \$8 billion planned for this year alone, the Harper Conservative government’s onslaught against workers and the poor continues unabated. While rewarding their friends with tax cuts and other largesse, the Tories have already cut housing, job training and health care for Natives, as well as programs for the elderly and unemployed and more. So deep are the cuts to Service Canada that hundreds of thousands of already desperate unemployed workers are being made to wait weeks, and in some cases months, for their first EI cheque. According to the Public Service Alliance of Canada, federal government cutbacks will lead to more than 100,000 job losses over the next three years.

In recession-ravaged Ontario, Dalton McGuinty’s Liberal government is preparing an austerity campaign that could well exceed the brutal cuts of the Mike Harris Tory regime in the 1990s. A government-commissioned report by former TD Bank chief economist Don Drummond calls for a wrenching 16.2 percent cut to Ontario government spending over the next seven years. Drummond, a key player in the federal Liberals’ massive cuts to jobs and social services in the 1990s, calls his hatchet job “pretty much unprecedented in Canadian post-war history.”

Drummond took particular aim at health care and education. Teachers will be forced to work more years and get lower pensions on retirement; some 10,000 non-teaching staff face the loss of their jobs. Drummond proposes that when collective agreements are renewed, the government take away accumulated sick time from teachers—a larcenous grab of some \$1.7 billion. After years of cutbacks and layoffs of nurses and other front-line staff, hospitals are to be further starved of funds and the door to privatization of health care opened wider. The



Talotta/Toronto Star

Unions, community groups protest cuts in Toronto, April 2011. Organized working class has power to defeat capitalist austerity attacks.

bosses will be able to get rid of large numbers of workers by eliminating programs, gutting seniority rights and expanding management’s right to discipline and fire.

As the rulers take aim at the pensions of those who still have them, old people are being vilified for every imaginable fiscal woe. Harper & Co. are now planning to make the already paltry Old Age Security program unavailable before the age of 67. Truly, the capitalist class destroys the human beings whose labour it exploits: workers must either die in the harness or live out their days as paupers. And with the ravages to the health care system, there may well be fewer people around to collect such pensions as still exist. Ghoulishly, Drummond’s report advises doctors to start talking to their middle-aged patients about “end of life health care.”

The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) is right that these attacks will “guarantee levels of destitution and desperation not seen in Ontario in living memory.” But what the ruling class gets away with depends on the level of working-class opposition. An effective defense of jobs, pensions and unions requires hard *class struggle*—including preparation for strike action across the public sector—that draws in the unemployed, oppressed minorities and the poor.

Instead of such urgently necessary class struggle, the union tops offer their own solutions to the capitalists’ budget deficit. Typical is OPSEU’s call for “higher taxes and at the very least a fair tax system.” The union misleaders couple an acceptance of capitalist austerity with loyalty to the NDP social democrats or even the capitalist Liberals. It is a bitter irony that in the 2011 provincial election, nurses and teachers unions backed the McGuinty Liberals, who are now unleashing this firestorm on them.

Like most of the union misleaders, the reformist left slavishly backs the New Democrats. The Fightback group, which is an organic part of the NDP, perennially calls for the “NDP to power on a socialist program.” Such calls simply breed

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Our beloved comrade Fred Zierenberg died in Berlin of brain cancer on January 19, two weeks before his 63rd birthday. Fred fought for 35 years as a communist cadre and leader of our party. At the time of his death, he was a member of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) and of the Central Committee of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD). All the sections of our international feel pain and sorrow at Fred's death. Our thoughts are with his wife and comrade, Birgit, and their best friend, Wolf.

Fred was born 3 February 1949 in West Berlin, NATO's front-line city in the Cold War. His parents were metal workers. Like thousands of students and working-class youth, he was politicized in the 1960s during a wave of radicalization spurred in large part by the May 1968 general strike in France and revulsion against the U.S. war in Vietnam. In Germany, this layer of youth began to reject the anti-communism of the Social Democratic Party (SPD).

But those in search of a path to genuine Marxism in Germany were hindered by the complete break in revolutionary continuity that was precipitated by the Nazi destruction of the German workers movement. Trotskyist cadre in Europe were killed, imprisoned or driven underground by the Nazis, as well as being targets of the Stalinists. As a result, developments in the Trotskyist movement internationally from 1933 to 1945 were not accessible to those emerging from the wreckage of Nazi Germany. Nor were Trotsky's writings widely available.

Toward the end of 1968, Fred and other youth coalesced into a group that became the International Communists of Germany (IKD) and its affiliated Communist Youth Organization (KJO). In his early twenties, Fred became a leader of the KJO, which at times mobilized thousands of students and working-class youth. The IKD/KJO were formed in opposition to the policy of deep entrism into the SPD that had been championed by the Pabloist United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel. In the course of making a complete break from liquidationist Pabloism, which rejects the necessity of building independent Trotskyist parties worldwide, Fred was won over to the Spartacist tendency's fight for the rebirth of the Fourth International. Fred also had to break from the idea, shared by much of the left, that the SPD was a capitalist party, becoming convinced of Lenin's analysis that it is a bourgeois workers party. He came to understand that the strategic task of revolutionaries in Germany is to split the proletarian base of the SPD, a historic mass party

Fred Zierenberg



Spartakist



1949-2012

of the working class, from its pro-capitalist leadership.

In 1975 Fred became a sympathizer of the Trotskyist League of Germany (TLD), a predecessor of the SpAD. After joining in 1977, he made decisive contributions to building the German section and forging our international tendency, helping to restore revolutionary continuity in Germany by bridging the gap in knowledge about the Marxists of the 19th century and those of the early 20th. In 1979, he became a full member of the TLD's Central Committee. Later, as an International Executive Committee member, he also intervened into key political fights in other sections, especially in France, where he lived and worked in the mid 1980s. Fred also worked closely with the Spartacist Group of Poland, playing a central role in advancing the Marxist education of our comrades in Warsaw.

At a January 1980 student government teach-in on Afghanistan at Frankfurt University, Fred suffered a near-fatal knife wound to his back when Maoists and reactionary Islamists staged a deadly attack on TLD comrades and sympathizers. The prior month, the Soviet Army had intervened into Afghanistan at the invitation of the left-nationalist Afghani government to prevent a CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalist takeover of the country. Uniquely on the left, our party forthrightly declared, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!" During Fred's months-long recovery, there was a huge outpouring of protest internationally against the cowardly attack, including from dozens of trade unionists.

A key to becoming a Marxist revolutionary in Germany is breaking free of the pervasive view that the entire German people—regardless of class—were responsible for the Nazis, World War II and the Holocaust. Fred, along with other comrades in the SpAD and ICL, fought for years to arm our German section against this lie of "collective guilt." In a 2005 educational, he explained that "collective guilt" is a central ideological means used by the German bourgeoisie, the SPD and the Greens to "let those who are really guilty off the hook: the German bourgeoisie, the ruling class at that time and today."

At the ICL's Second International Conference in 1992, Fred gave a presentation on the fight for the continuity of the Fourth International, in which he emphasized the destructive role of Pabloism in Germany. He dedicated his last two years to deepening his study of the history of German Trotskyism, especially that of our tendency. Fred sought to make comprehensible, particularly to younger comrades, the debates within post-war German Trotskyism and how and why he

Islamist Furor over *Persepolis*

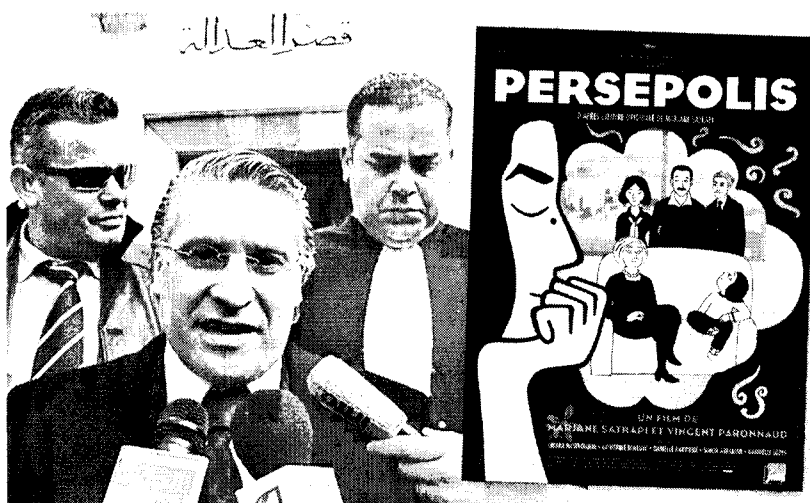
Tunisia

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 996, 17 February, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Following on the popular revolt that ousted hated despot Ben Ali early last year, a ruling coalition dominated by the Islamist Ennahda party was brought to power in elections last fall. In an ominous sign of what the Islamists have in store for the Tunisian population, Nabil Karoui, the director of the TV station Nessma, is facing up to eight years in prison. His “crime” was to air the French movie *Persepolis*, which recounts the childhood of an Iranian woman during the last years of the Shah and brilliantly captures the terror that followed the rise to power of the Islamic hierarchy under Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. Following the broadcast, thousands of Islamists stormed the TV station, setting it on fire. They later firebombed Karoui’s house, claiming that the fantasy scenes in the movie where God is seen talking to a young girl are an insult to Islam. Ennahda leader Rached Ghannouchi hailed these reactionaries as “defenders of Islam.”

Karoui has been charged with “insulting sacred values, offending decent morals and causing political unrest.” While the government is eager to prosecute him, it was forced to postpone the trial several times in the face of massive support for Karoui. Huge crowds of supporters have been gathering at the courthouse, and on January 28, thousands marched through the capital, Tunis, in one of the biggest demonstrations in recent months. On February 1, the National Union of Tunisian Journalists joined with media associations such as Independent Radio Stations in a one-day nationwide strike in support of press independence and freedom of expression and in defense of the rights of journalists and communicators. As we demanded in our article “Tunisian Elections: Victory for Islamic Reactionaries—Workers Must Fight for Their Own Class Rule!” (WV No. 993, 6 January): Drop the charges! Stop the persecution of Nabil Karoui!

Persepolis is an award-winning animated film based on the Iranian artist Marjane Satrapi’s autobiographical graphic novel, which has sold over a million copies and been translated into dozens of languages. The movie, which has been seen by millions, is alive with humor and warmth. What might have infuriated the Islamists is not the depiction of God as an old bearded



TV executive Nabil Karoui, prosecuted for blasphemy for broadcasting animated film *Persepolis*, leaves Tunis courthouse, January 23.

man; rather it was the movie’s presentation of Satrapi as a rebellious, fiercely independent young woman straining against the forces of intolerance and superstition. When she is not preaching communism, she is predicting her future as a religious prophet, or she is out in the streets of Tehran buying contraband western pop tapes and wearing a Michael Jackson button. When she was 14 years old, her parents sent her to Europe to study, where she discovered boys, booze and drugs.

More galling for the reactionaries are the representations of her intellectual family: her charismatic father, who adores his wine and life of luxury as much as his Marxist-Leninist ideology; her thoroughly modernized mother; her sexy grandmother, who used to bathe her breasts in a bowl of ice water to keep them firm; and her beloved uncle, a Communist who was involved in the establishment of the short-lived Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan during World War II and was later executed by the mullahs’ regime. The Islamists were no doubt further incensed by Satrapi’s depiction of a dream where Karl Marx gets God to repeat: “The struggle continues.”

Since the fall of the Ben Ali regime, Islamists in Tunisia, which was long regarded as the most secular country in North Africa, have been targeting unveiled women, secular intellectuals and journalists. In February 2011, hundreds armed with Molotov cocktails and knives raided the red-light district of Abdallah Guech Street in Tunis, torching the brothels, yelling insults at prostitutes and declaring that Tunisia was now an

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came to Spartacist politics.

In November 2009, shortly before he was diagnosed with cancer, Fred was the main reporter at an SpAD day school in Berlin focusing on our fight in 1989-90 against capitalist counterrevolution in the East German deformed workers state. This struggle for the revolutionary reunification of Germany represented the largest-ever deployment of our forces internationally, and Fred was part of its leadership. Printed in *Spartakist* No. 181 (January 2010), his talk concludes, “Our banner is unsullied. We say that we are the party of the Rus-

sian Revolution, which means: We have maintained the continuity of the Bolshevik program of Lenin and we strive to apply it in class struggles. Our task is to reforge the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution.”

Fred was loved and respected for his breadth of knowledge as well as his humor, warm humanity and integrity. There can be no better tribute to Fred than to continue the struggle to which he devoted his life: the building of an internationalist revolutionary workers party.

—Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 995, 3 February

Lessons of Caterpillar Union Busting **For United International Class Struggle!**



Chidley/Canadian Press



London Free Press

CAW members in Ingersoll, Ontario, block locomotive from Caterpillar plant (left). Right: 10,000-strong union rally in London, January 21. Canadian nationalism pushed by union bureaucracy undermines struggle against capitalist union busting.

Caterpillar's move to lock out the 465 members of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 27 at its London, Ontario, Electro-Motive plant on New Year's Day marked a further escalation in the capitalists' war on labour. The company, notorious for union busting in the U.S. Midwest in the 1990s, demanded that the CAW swallow a pay cut of nearly *55 percent*—from \$35 to \$16.50 an hour—along with the elimination of the pension plan. CAT is meanwhile rolling in profits, some \$4.9 billion last year alone.

Rejecting these outrageous demands, the CAW set up round-the-clock pickets and called on the labour movement to hot cargo (boycott) any locomotives sent out of the plant. Flying pickets from CAW Locals 27 and 88, which organizes workers at the nearby CAMI auto plant in Ingersoll, managed to block one locomotive, keeping it under guard on a rail siding for nearly a week. On January 21, 10,000 workers descended on London for a mass protest, testament to the widespread anger at the base of the unions.

But Caterpillar dealt its final blow two weeks later by announcing the permanent closure of the factory. Production is to be shifted to a retooled, non-union plant in Muncie, Indiana, where workers will be paid \$12.50 to \$14.50 an hour. The announcement came two days after the Indiana state legislature adopted an anti-union law that bans the closed shop.

Caterpillar's steamrolling of the CAW is a big defeat for

the labour movement that will reverberate far beyond the London area. Some 450,000 manufacturing jobs have been destroyed in Canada since 2006. Southwestern Ontario, long the country's industrial heartland, increasingly resembles the adjacent U.S. Rust Belt with its abandoned, hollowed-out factories. Unemployment in cities like London and Windsor is around 10 percent. Many workers who still have jobs have been forced to take huge cuts in pay and benefits. This race to the bottom was kicked off by the CAW leadership's surrender of \$19 to \$22 an hour in givebacks to General Motors and Chrysler three years ago as part of the auto company bailouts engineered by the U.S. and Canadian governments.

CAT's union busting is one of a spate of lockouts by corporations seeking to wrest ever bigger concessions from the unions, or to eliminate them altogether. Members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1005 in Hamilton were locked out for nearly a year, finally surrendering last October to U.S. Steel's demand to gut the pension plan. The same day the Electro-Motive lockout began, Rio Tinto Alcan locked out 800 USW workers at an aluminum smelter in Alma, Quebec, demanding the right to vastly increase the subcontracting of jobs at half the normal pay rate.

In the U.S., 1,300 workers at American Crystal Sugar, the country's largest sugar beet producer, have been locked out since August. A three-month lockout of 1,050 USW unionists at Cooper Tire in Ohio ended in late February when

Nationalism Poisons Labour's Fight

workers voted to accept a contract that includes major givebacks. Victory to the Rio Tinto Alcan and American Crystal workers! Defend the unions!

Nationalism Undermines the Unions

There are crucial lessons to be drawn from the Caterpillar defeat. Central among them is the understanding that there can be no “partnership” between labour and the capitalists, whose sole aim is to line their pockets through savage exploitation of the workers. The nationalism and class collaboration promoted by the union bureaucracy and its allies in the social-democratic NDP have only poisoned and derailed labour’s struggle. They foster deadly illusions that Canadian capitalists are, or can be, the workers’ allies, while scapegoating workers elsewhere, in this case in the U.S., for job losses at home. The assaults of the U.S. and Canadian capitalists can only be fought through united international class struggle!

Like much of North American industry, locomotive production has long been thoroughly integrated across the Canada-U.S. border. Another Caterpillar-owned locomotive facility in suburban Chicago is organized by the United Auto Workers (UAW), as are nearly 10,000 other CAT workers in various U.S. cities. But rather than appeal to American workers for a common fight against a common enemy, the CAW bureaucrats claimed that Canadian-nationalist protectionism is the answer and called on the Tory government in Ottawa to tighten restrictions on foreign ownership.

In fact, the London Electro-Motive factory has always been foreign owned, first by GM, then by a hedge fund and since 2010 by Caterpillar. Employment in the London plant greatly expanded two decades ago when GM closed much of its Illinois locomotive facility—which once employed 13,000 skilled workers—in the wake of the 1988 U.S.-Canada free-trade deal. Back then, the cost of labour in Canada was much lower than in the U.S., mainly due to a weak Canadian dollar and cheaper health-care costs. The CAW misleaders sought to use this to their advantage, pleading for GM and other U.S. companies to expand their facilities north of the border.

The bureaucratically-engineered split of the CAW from the UAW in 1984-85 was based on just such pernicious nationalism. As we wrote at the time:

“Once the most powerful union in North America, the UAW has been criminally weakened and undermined by the misleaders on both sides of the border. Decimated by plant closures and massive layoffs, the ranks of the union have had their pockets picked by these labor traitors in givebacks of billions of dollars and entire programs won in past struggles. Now the bureaucrats divide the union along the artificial border between Canada and the U.S....”

—“Bureaucrats Split UAW,” *SC* No. 63, April 1985

Playing on such divisions, the capitalists have successfully whipsawed the workers against each other along national lines, driving down wages and working conditions everywhere. Today, with the Canadian dollar at par and American unions even weaker than those in this country after decades of bureaucratic sellouts, companies like CAT and GM are moving investment back to the U.S., which is seen as a bastion of low pay and paltry benefits. When the workers are divided, only the bosses win.

The nationalism of the CAW leaders was in full evidence at the January 21 rally, which featured hundreds of Canadian flags held alongside CAW union flags; organizers were hand-

ing out both as the workers arrived. NDP placards demanded “Canadian jobs first,” and interim NDP leader Nycole Turmel and various CAW and other union bureaucrats pushed the same theme from the speakers platform. A delegation of United Electrical unionists at a General Electric locomotive plant made the trip from Pennsylvania, but there was no visible presence at all from the UAW, even though London is only about two hours drive from Detroit. The UAW tops didn’t so much as post a token “solidarity” message for CAW Local 27 on their union website.

Also welcomed to the platform was London mayor Joe Fontana, who recently mobilized the cops to evict Occupy London protesters. Fontana was formerly labour minister in the federal Liberal government of Paul Martin. It was the sweeping attacks on social programs by the Chrétien/Martin Liberals in the 1990s and early 2000s that paved the way for today’s slash-and-burn Tory regime. For their part, the New Democrats enforce capitalist rule against the workers whenever they get the chance, including today in Manitoba and Nova Scotia where they run provincial governments.

Despite the dominant nationalism, there was openness to an internationalist class perspective among the workers in London. Supporters of the Trotskyist League were able to sell more than 350 copies of our Marxist press, chiefly an issue of *Spartacist Canada* (No. 171, Winter 2011/2012) headlined “We Need a New Ruling Class—The Workers!” As a comrade reported: “It was fairly easy to puncture the nationalism on a superficial level, by pointing out that workers in the U.S. were suffering the same attacks as in Canada, often more severe given the weakness of the unions there, and that the only way to take on the capitalist offensive was through joint class struggle across the border. Such arguments often sorted out who would buy the paper, though the contradiction is captured by the fact that a lot of the same workers also held Canadian flags.”

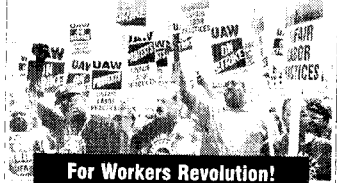
As well as opening its new facility in Muncie, CAT is moving to set up a locomotive plant in Brazil and has a long-standing agreement with Montreal-based Bombardier to build locomotives at a plant in Mexico. The labour tops also direct their ire against workers in such underdeveloped countries, accusing them of “stealing jobs.” Thus on the eve of the Caterpillar lockout, CAW president Ken Lewenza railed to a reporter from the *London Free Press* (27 December 2011), “They want to kick the sh-- out of our members to fill their

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Defend the Unions!...

(continued from page 3)

illusions that capitalism can be reformed to serve the interests of the working class. The NDP aims not to champion the cause of the workers (let alone establish socialism), but to administer the system of capitalist exploitation. In this spirit, Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath answered Drummond's report by repeating her election vow to balance the Ontario budget. Another NDP MPP, Sarah Campbell, called it "a starting point." Two decades ago, Bob Rae's NDP government, ruling as the open agents of the capitalist class, ripped up union contracts, jailed striking workers and went after welfare mothers, immigrants, the old and the sick.

There have been protests, most recently against the austerity blitzkrieg of right-wing Toronto mayor Rob Ford. But the potential power of the unions has not been brought to bear. For the labour movement to beat back these attacks it will take a bullheaded fight based on the understanding that in this class-divided society, the interests of capital and labour are counterposed and irreconcilable.

Toronto: Ground Zero in War on Public Sector Unions

The recent course of events in Toronto offers a painful cautionary tale of how a quiescent and defeatist labour leadership disarms and weakens the potentially powerful unions in the face of concerted attack. Rob Ford came into office over a year ago vowing to get rid of 7,000 workers, contract out union jobs and slash social services. Ford is a crude buffoon, but his goal of dealing a body blow to Toronto's civic unions is widely shared by the bourgeoisie and he has so far met with few obstacles.

There was a great outcry against Ford's demand that every city agency and department cut its budget by 10 percent. Many of the proposed cuts, such as eliminating nutrition programs for 14,000 poor kids and slashing HIV prevention programs, were gratuitously cruel. Others, like the huge cuts to transit, were simply irrational. The city unions had a significant role in these protests, but their fighting power was dissolved by the union tops into the "community," mirroring the "99 percent" populism of the Occupy movement. A tiny fraction of the most egregious budget cuts were shelved, but overall the city bosses got what they wanted: deep cuts to jobs and services. Criminally, this outcome was trumpeted as a victory by various union leaders and fake leftists. Typical of the latter were the International Socialists (I.S.), who made the absurd claim that this was "a huge setback to the Ford agenda" and "showed that people can fight City Hall" (*Socialist Worker*, February 2012).

The city played hardball from the start, threatening to lock out the workers and run scabs to enforce their union-wrecking. In the face of this, Mark Ferguson, president of Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 416, representing outside workers, quickly offered a three-year wage freeze and other givebacks. By his own account, the union "was making offers from the start: on wages, hours, scheduling and employment security" (*National Post*, 11 February). The only question was whether Ferguson could give away enough to satisfy the labour-haters at City Hall. As it turned out, he could and did.

In mid-February, when the city's negotiators threatened to impose a contract that would have all but destroyed the



Binch/Reuters

Toronto, June 2009: Joint strike by city workers unions beat back worst of attacks by social-democratic mayor David Miller.

union, the union tops cried uncle. With their backs to the wall and with no perspective of struggle, Local 416 members approved a contract that makes unprecedented concessions including a significant erosion of job security. The deal eliminates many of the impediments to contracting out and getting rid of unionized city workers. At the ratification vote, the union leadership declared, "We Beat Them Back." To the contrary. Even though the union was not busted and its fighting capacity was not destroyed, this contract is a big defeat. Its consequences will reverberate throughout the labour movement, most immediately against the 23,000 inside workers in CUPE Local 79 and 2,300 library workers who are facing equally harsh demands.

Ford's election was prepared by multiple anti-union attacks under former mayor David Miller, a social democrat associated with the NDP who was backed by both the union bureaucrats and the reformist left. In 2006, when transit workers in the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 113 were driven to a wildcat strike, Miller joined the anti-union hysteria, demanding massive fines from the union. Two years later, when the ATU struck again, the city demanded the province enact strikebreaking legislation, for which the provincial NDP caucus voted unanimously.

In 2009, Miller & Co. targeted Locals 416 and 79, aiming to destroy sick benefits and gut seniority rights. Though the city bosses won a crucial concession in terms of sick benefits, the two unions—which struck together—were able to beat back the worst of the attacks *because they fought tenaciously*. The 2009 strike subsequently became a lightning rod for the bosses' media and right-wing city councillors in their campaign of anti-union vitriol. Since then, it's been open season on city workers. As public taunting of transit workers became a local blood sport, Ford got the McGuinty government to pass a law making transit strikes illegal. This easy win against the ATU—achieved with the acquiescence of the Local 113 leadership—paved the way for the broader drive against city workers. Epitomizing the labour tops' abject defeatism, a few months ago Local 416 leader Ferguson told the media, "we learned our lesson in 2009" as he offered to seek "efficiencies" and help the city save money off the backs of the workers.

An all-out fight that mobilized the power of the city unions in defense of the transit workers could have turned the tables

on Ford and his cronies. But such a struggle, breaking through all the laws designed to tame the labour movement, would have meant a confrontation with the government and the capitalist state—centrally the cops and courts. Such a perspective is anathema to the labour misleaders, many of whom regard bourgeois law as holy writ. Worse yet, they embrace the police and prison guards—the armed fist of the capitalist state—not just as allies of the working class, but as fellow union members. These labour-hating thugs have no place in the unions! Yet OPSEU actually organizes prison guards, while Ferguson addresses the Toronto police as “brothers and sisters.” The one exception to Ford’s budget slashing was the cops, who got an 11.5 percent pay hike.

Playing by the bosses’ rules assures defeat. Take compulsory arbitration, which today is promoted by sections of the union misleadership as being in the interest of the workers. The whole purpose of arbitration is to take away the workers’ most powerful weapon—their ability to withdraw their labour through strike action. Beginning with the very right to form unions, all the major gains that labour has wrested from the bosses in the past century were once “illegal” by the norms of bourgeois “law and order.” Hard-fought strikes galvanize the rest of the labour movement and, when victorious, tear up the bosses’ anti-strike laws and injunctions.

There Will Be Class Struggle or Defeat

The social power of public sector workers is not that of industrial workers, who can directly stop the wheels of production and thus of profit from turning. But public sector

unions include transportation, utility and other workers who provide the means and services by which the economy runs—the infrastructure vital for a modern industrial economy. A serious labour counteroffensive would put paid to the supposed “public outrage” against the trade unions. Such a struggle would find many allies among those whose lives and futures have been blighted by the capitalists and who know on some basic level that a defeat for the unions will only bring them further ruin.

This truth highlights that for the working class to beat back these attacks and triumph over the bankrupt rule of capital it must consciously organize the active support of all the oppressed. The working class must champion black youth facing police terror, desperate refugees and immigrants, Muslims targeted by the imperialists’ “war on terror,” Native peoples, women and gays. It must advocate independence for Quebec in order to clear the road to anti-capitalist class struggle in both English Canada and Quebec. Such a perspective requires, in the first instance, a struggle to replace the current pro-capitalist misleaders of the unions, who have brought defeat after defeat, and a sharp break with the politics of the NDP.

We desperately need a revolutionary workers party. Such a party—multiracial and internationalist—would mobilize the power of the working class to smash the bosses’ austerity attacks across the country. Armed with a vision of struggle for a new society, the working class can rally all of the oppressed in a victorious war against the oppressor of all—the capitalist system. For workers revolution and a socialist North America! ■

Caterpillar...

(continued from page 7)

pockets.... I guess today is Muncie and next week will be Mexico.”

When the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was being negotiated in 1991, the Grupo Esparquista de México, Spartacist League/U.S. and Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste of Canada—sections of the International Communist League—issued a joint statement calling to “Stop U.S. ‘Free Trade’ Rape of Mexico.” We explained that U.S. imperialism wanted to “turn Mexico into a giant *maquiladora*, or free trade zone—‘free’ of unions, and ‘free’ for capital” (*SC* No. 85, Fall 1991).

In contrast, the labour bureaucracy’s national-chauvinist tirades against NAFTA served to set U.S. and Canadian workers against their Mexican class brothers and sisters, as well as each other. Over the past two decades, NAFTA has meant increased profits and power for the U.S. rulers and their Canadian junior partners through the superexploitation of Mexican workers, while also bringing about the economic ruination of Mexican peasants.

Rebuild the Unions Through Class Struggle!

The labour bureaucrats have for the most part abandoned the class-struggle methods that built the North American industrial unions in the 1930s and ‘40s. Instead they push reliance on capitalist governments, sapping the fighting strength of the unions and demoralizing the workers. Indiana is a case in point. The state was the site of many pitched labour battles that made it a stronghold of the UAW, Steelworkers and other unions. But it has seen a steep decline in

union membership in recent decades. Even before the new anti-labour law, barely ten percent of the workforce was unionized, and workers there as elsewhere in the Rust Belt have seen a sharp drop in wages and benefits. Barely paying lip service to the need to organize the unorganized, the prostrate union officialdom has only further whetted the appetites of those trying to bust the unions.

Alongside the call to hot cargo Electro-Motive locomotives, a plant occupation backed up by mass pickets could have shown a road to victory in London. Holding CAT’s facilities to ransom through such militant action could have forced a settlement on the union’s terms, and would certainly have galvanized broader labour struggle. The CAW has organized such occupations in the past, notably at a GM plant in Oshawa during a 1996 strike. This time, however, the only large-scale union protest was the January 21 rally, an exercise in blowing off steam in a park eight kilometres from the plant.

The unions must be rebuilt as combative instruments of the working class. That requires a fight for a new leadership that breaks with national chauvinism in all its forms and upholds the program and the methods of class struggle. While the Canadian labour tops promote the pro-capitalist NDP or even the Liberals, in the U.S. they tie workers to the imperialist order via support to the capitalist Democratic Party. Multiracial revolutionary workers parties must be forged on both sides of the border committed to the struggle to overthrow the class of exploiters. Only a workers government where those who labour rule can put an end to the irrational capitalist profit system that consigns so many to poverty and degradation, and rebuild society in the interests of the vast majority. ■

Young Spartacus

SYC Speaker at PDC Holiday Appeal **State Repression** **Targets Protesters, Youth**

On January 20, the Partisan Defense Committee held its annual Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners in Toronto. A Spartacus Youth Club spokesman, comrade H. Adil, gave the following speech, which has been slightly edited for publication.

The Occupy demonstrations that started in New York City in the fall and then spread around the world showed the anger and frustration that many people in society feel toward the gross injustices and inequalities that exist under capitalism. They also showed the nature of the state, which sought to crush these protests with brute force from Oakland, California to New York City. In these cities, the cops and courts fulfilled the identical function of arresting, charging and jailing protesters. Even these populist protests, which never went beyond the framework of reform of the capitalist system, were too much for the bourgeois rulers to tolerate.

In Canada, the police crackdowns were not as brutal as, for example, the crushing of the Occupy Oakland protest, but only someone with a short-term memory would argue that this is due to the benevolence of the Canadian rulers. It was only a year earlier that the Canadian state mobilized a huge army of 20,000 cops to guard the G20 summit in Toronto. In what was the largest mass arrest in Canadian history, 1,100 people were arrested, most of whom were never charged with anything. Among those who did face serious charges was Amanda Hiscocks, a long-time anarchist activist who on January 13 was sentenced to 16 months in prison. At her sentencing hearing, she was defiant, saying:

“Throughout this farcical legal process that’s coming to an end today, the accused have been told that our actions were an attack on the rule of law.... Well good. Our society is racist and colonial, it’s rooted in wealth and power, and so is the rule of law that upholds it.”

Another G20 activist, Alex Hundert, also faced trumped-up “conspiracy” charges before pleading guilty to lesser charges of “counselling” to commit mischief and obstruct police. He expects to face 13 ½ months in jail. The police identified him by going undercover and infiltrating protest groups. Conspiracy charges have historically been levelled by the capitalist state against its perceived enemies such as militant trade unionists and activists when no evidence exists of an actual crime being committed.

But what’s the “crime” of breaking a few bank windows or burning down a few police cars, compared to the crimes of the capitalist system: the harassment and deportation of undocumented immigrants, the racist police targeting of Native and minority youth, the torture and indefinite imprisonment in Guantánamo Bay and secret detention centres, and the imperialist bombings of neocolonial countries. These protesters,



SC photo

SYC and PDC call for defense of arrested G20 protesters at October 2010 University of Toronto demonstration.

including the Black Bloc anarchists, did not commit any crime from the standpoint of the working class and should never have spent a day in jail. We demand that all the G20 protesters be freed and that all charges be dropped immediately!

The G20 mass arrests marked an intensification of criminalization of dissent and were clearly meant to intimidate anyone who would oppose the violence, poverty and war that are endemic to the capitalist system. These cases of brutal state repression did not come as a surprise to us. The Marxist understanding of the state teaches that the state is an organ of oppression of one class by another. The capitalist state, at its core consisting of the cops, courts, military and prisons, exists to maintain the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie. It is the dictatorship of capital over the working class and oppressed. It cannot be reformed to serve the interests of those it oppresses; instead, it must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced by a new kind of state, a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This revolutionary understanding of the state and the fact that it must be overthrown does not come automatically to a young activist or worker, no matter how many times they attend protests or how many times they confront the cops. It requires the intervention of a revolutionary vanguard party, armed with the Marxist program, which is rooted in historical experience and a scientific understanding of capitalist society. In our interventions into the Occupy movement, we always stressed two things: one, the centrality of the working class in the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system, as against the

(continued on page 15)

Victory to Quebec Student Strike!

Since mid-February, tens of thousands of Quebec college and university students have been on strike against the provincial Liberal government's plans for a 75 percent increase in tuition. As of March 1, the strike had spread to nearly 100,000 students with many more set to join in the coming days.

Montreal and other cities have seen a series of mass protests, starting last November when 35,000 students took to the streets. On March 1, several thousand student protesters marching toward the National Assembly in Quebec City were attacked by police riot squads and tear gas. On February 23, police using pepper spray attacked student protesters who had shut down Montreal's Jacques Cartier bridge during afternoon rush hour. Six days earlier, the administration of CÉGEP du Vieux-Montréal called the cops on a student occupation, leading to 37 arrests. **Drop all charges now!**

Typically, the English Canadian bourgeois media outside Quebec has been almost totally silent on these very large student protests. University tuition in Quebec is much lower than in most other provinces, in part due to repeated waves of student protests over the last decade and a half. In 1996, a widely-supported student strike forced the then Parti Québécois government to abandon a proposed tuition hike. Similarly in 2005, the Liberal regime had to drop plans for big cuts to student grants in the face of militant protest. The government did manage to end the tuition freeze two years later, but faced with yet another round of protests it was only able to implement a small increase.

A statement by the CLASSÉ student federation, which has been leading many of the current strikes, noted that the government's proposed hikes "would deny 30,000 students from low-income families and other socioeconomic groups their right to education." The capitalist rulers maintain elite schools to ensure quality education for their children and to train the managers and technicians needed to administer the capitalist system. When it comes to the working class and the poor, the capitalists seek to spend on education only what they calculate they can get back in profit. In order for education to be truly accessible to all, we fight for the abolition of all fees and for open admissions plus a government-paid living stipend for students.

Today, the bourgeois-nationalist PQ claims it would freeze tuition if it wins the next provincial election. This is a cynical maneuver by a party that only recently was criticizing the Liberal government for failing to balance the budget through cutbacks. Marxists advocate independence for Quebec and oppose English Canadian chauvinism in all its forms. At the same time, we seek to break Québécois workers and radical youth from any illusions in the PQ, which represents the interests of the Québécois capitalists.

For their part, leaders of the petty-bourgeois Québec Solidaire have joined the student protests. But during the militant 2007 student protests, QS actually solidarized with the campus administrations, writing: "These institutions are of course protecting the security of their personnel and property" (quebecsolidaire.net, 16 November 2007)! Most of the pseudo-Marxist left in Quebec has joined QS and gives it more or less uncritical support. But these petty-bourgeois nationalists are another trap for workers and youth, as shown most recently by QS leaders' on-and-off discussions with the bourgeois PQ over a no-contest pact for the next Quebec elections.



Santiacon/La Presse

Montreal, February 23: Thousands of students protest Quebec Liberal government's massive tuition fees hikes.

The way forward for students battling tuition hikes, and for all those victimized by the vicious capitalist offensive, lies through mobilizing the power of the working class. Student struggle can provide a spark for the broader social struggle necessary to beat back these attacks. What's needed is an alliance with the working class, which must be mobilized independently of the PQ and all other capitalist parties. Due to its central position in social production—in the factories, transport and service industries—the working class uniquely has the power to strike real blows against the bourgeoisie's profit system, and to provide leadership to all the many victims of racist capitalism.

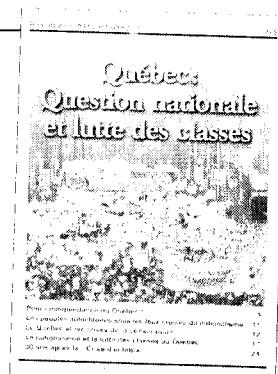
Securing the right of all to free quality education, health care, decent jobs and housing will become possible when the working class has seized the mines, factories and banks and placed them in the service of meeting the needs of the working people instead of a tiny handful of capitalist exploiters. That requires socialist revolution to sweep away the capitalist state and expropriate the bourgeoisie. The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight to win students and other youth to the perspective of forging a multiracial, binational revolutionary workers party to lead such a struggle. ■

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Free the Class-War Prisoners!

“The labor movement must be awakened from its slumber and must be roused to the menacing significance of the attempt of the capitalists to break the morale of the working-class by imprisoning its best fighters.”

—International Labor Defense Resolution, 1925

The Partisan Defense Committee’s annual Holiday Appeal was held in Toronto on January 20. Together with benefits in several U.S. cities and in Vancouver, participants raised funds for the PDC’s program of annual stipends and holiday gifts to 16 class-war prisoners. These include former Black Panther Party members, American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier and others imprisoned by the ruling class for standing up to racist capitalist oppression. Our support to these prisoners is an expression of non-sectarian, class-struggle defense: it is the duty of the workers movement to defend such victims of capitalist repression regardless of their particular political viewpoints.

The program was preceded by a screening of the powerful PDC documentary *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*, which traces the FBI and Philadelphia cops’ campaign during the 1970s to target Mumia, an award-winning journalist and broadcaster known as “the voice of the voiceless” for his outspoken opposition to police terror and his defense of the MOVE organization. The racist state vendetta against Mumia culminated in his frame-up conviction and death sentence for the shooting of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. The video was followed by the taped confession of Arnold Beverly, stating that he, not Jamal, shot and killed Faulkner. On display on the PDC’s literature table were materials extensively documenting Mumia’s innocence and the international fight for his freedom.

With the December 7 announcement by the Philadelphia district attorney that he won’t seek another death sentence, Mumia is no longer under threat of execution. We share the joy of his close friends and family, who are now allowed physical contact with him, free from the inhuman restrictions of death row for the first time in decades. But it remains an abomination that this innocent man, who has spent 30 years entombed, is condemned to a living death in prison.

A statement by Jaan Laaman was read to the meeting. Laaman, with Tom Manning, is the last of the Ohio 7 anti-imperialist activists still in prison—convicted for bank “expropriations” and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism in the late 1970s and ’80s. During the Vietnam antiwar movement, many young radicals shared their politics, having written off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program. But the Ohio 7 came to be spurned by the “respectable” left. From the standpoint of the proletariat, these men and women committed no crime, and it is our duty to defend them regardless of our substantial political differences. Laaman, who remains unbowed, warmly acknowledged the PDC’s support in his moving letter. To the torment of Laaman’s isolation from his family has been added the terrible news of the tragic death last October of his son Rick in Boston, thousands of miles from the Arizona federal prison where he is being held.

Around the room were posters, letters and displays hon-



Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier, two of the class-war prisoners honoured at PDC’s annual Holiday Appeal.

ouring the 15 other class-war prisoners, whose plights must not be forgotten. Leonard Peltier has now spent more than 35 years in prison for his activism on behalf of North America’s oppressed Native peoples. Eight MOVE members (Chuck, Michael, Debbie, Janet, Janine, Delbert, Eddie and Phil Africa) are in their 34th year of prison—for the sole “crime” of having survived a massive cop assault on their Philadelphia home in 1978.

Former Black Panther Party supporters Ed Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, framed up in the FBI’s deadly COINTELPRO operation against the Panthers, have been languishing behind bars for more than 40 years. Hugo Pinell, a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing, is the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison—he has been there since 1964. Also honoured was radical lawyer Lynne Stewart, long known for her defense of the Black Panthers and other leftists. Stewart was convicted in the witch-hunting aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks for conducting a vigorous defense of her client, a blind Egyptian cleric imprisoned for his alleged role in plotting to blow up New York City landmarks in the early 1990s. U.S. Democratic president Barack Obama’s Justice Department intervened to quadruple Stewart’s original sentence to 10 years—and this for a 72-year-old woman with cancer. The examples above by no means exhaust the causes and cases for which the working class needs to mobilize.

Two guest speakers, both union leaders, travelled from out of town to address the participants. Dave Bleakney, a national representative of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), which has been a longtime supporter of the fight to free Mumia, highlighted the intensified attacks on unions in the current political climate. Bleakney described recent instances of RCMP and police harassment against CUPW, including its national officers, following government strikebreaking against the union last spring. He remarked: “It’s very much an indication of the increase in boldness of the capitalist state right now to basically go after mainstream trade union organizations in this country.”

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Mumia Is Innocent—Free Him Now!

Drive to Execute Mumia Halted

The following statement was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S. on 10 December 2011 following the decision by the Philadelphia district attorney not to seek a new death sentence for Mumia Abu-Jamal. No sooner was Mumia transferred from death row to SCI Mahanoy in Frackville, Pennsylvania, than he was vindictively placed in solitary confinement under onerous special conditions which included inadequate food, denial of commissary access and shackling whenever leaving his cell—even to shower. As the PDC's letter to prison superintendent John Kerestes protesting this outrage pointed out: "It is patently clear to many around the world that the imposition of these draconian conditions is retaliation for Mr. Abu-Jamal's successful efforts to stop his legal lynching." According to freemumia.com, some 5,500 people signed petitions or wrote statements in Mumia's defense prior to his release on January 27 into the general prison population.

On December 7, the Philadelphia District Attorney announced that he will not seek another death sentence for Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class-war prisoner. The announcement by D.A. Seth Williams comes in the wake of the October 11 U.S. Supreme Court decision rejecting the D.A.'s petition to reinstate the death sentence that was overturned in 2001. This means Mumia, framed up for the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981, will be sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole. While it is welcome that Mumia will no longer be under the threat of state execution, it is an abomination that this innocent man, who has already spent 30 years entombed, is condemned to a living death in prison!

The government's drive to execute Mumia has run aground, but the vendetta of the prosecution, cops and capitalist politicians, both Democratic and Republican, against Mumia continues. There is a mountain of evidence, including Arnold Beverly's confession that he shot and killed Faulkner, that demonstrates Mumia is an innocent man who should never have spent one day in prison. The courts have refused to consider this evidence because it exposes Mumia's frame-up as not just some aberration of a rogue cop or a bad judge, but the result of the workings of a whole "justice" system whose real purpose is the repression of workers, minorities and the poor on behalf of the capitalist rulers (see the July 2006 Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!*).

Beginning in the late 1960s, Mumia was targeted by the police and FBI as a Black Panther leader and later as a MOVE supporter and journalist renowned for his searing exposés of cop brutality and racist oppression. The prosecution railroaded Mumia to death row in 1982, building its case on the basis of phony ballistics and other manufactured "evidence," a "confession" concocted by cops and prosecutors, massive police intimidation of witnesses and racist jury rigging. His trial was overseen by "hanging judge" Albert Sabo, who was overheard saying he would help the prosecution "fry the n---r." To secure the death sentence, prosecutors

pointed to political statements made by Mumia as a 16-year-old Panther.

In December 2001, federal judge William Yohn overturned Mumia's death sentence as unconstitutional based on improper jury instructions while simultaneously upholding every aspect of the 1982 frame-up conviction. As for the Supreme Court, its 2009 denial of Mumia's petition essentially put an end to his legal efforts to overturn his conviction on constitutional grounds.

During the decades of his unjust imprisonment, Mumia has remained unbowed, speaking out for the oppressed and the impoverished through his death row commentaries. Mumia's cause has been an international focal point of the fight for abolition of the death penalty, which in the U.S. is the legacy of black chattel slavery and represents the pinnacle of state terror. When Mumia faced a death warrant in the summer of 1995, massive publicity about his case and worldwide protests that were endorsed by trade unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers played a crucial role in staying the executioner's hand.

Now the state authorities hope with the latest decision that Mumia's cause will be forgotten and that he will rot in prison hell until he dies. This must not be Mumia's fate. As the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have always insisted, fighters for Mumia's freedom must look to link his cause to the class struggles of the multiracial proletariat. Trade unionists, opponents of the racist death penalty and fighters for black rights must continue the fight to *free Mumia* from the racist dungeons of Pennsylvania and to abolish the racist death penalty. ■

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Greetings to the PDC by Mumia Abu-Jamal

A recording by Mumia of the following greetings was heard at the January 20 Toronto Holiday Appeal.

Partisans of the PDC! *Ona Move!*
Fraternal Greetings!

This Holiday Season is perhaps the direst in memory; not because of my situation, but because of *our* situation.

A deliberately-created slump in the economy; soul-sucking wars abroad; the very real specter of imperialism and aggression around the world via NATO, and, here at home, joblessness, foreclosures, crony capitalist looting gone wild, and the growing, biting repression of the State—prisons bursting at the seams, and police attacking the People like storm-troopers who've fed on gunpowder—and blood.

All of this under the authority of the nation's first Black president, who, despite his blackness is but a Clinton clone. A

servant of big business, and a cudgel against the Black Movement, which has been rapped into a rare silence—making them aiders and abettors of imperialism abroad and powerlessness at home.

And when the historically most progressive movement in the nation is stymied, other movements take the hint, lowering their voices, tempering their demands (if there *are* demands!), while their lives, hopes and neighborhoods slide into the abyss.

I thank the PDC for bucking this trend; for continuing to raise hell, and for their long and principled support of Jamal ibn Mumia—my son.

This season will continue to be bleak, until we change the temperature—and rumble like it's summertime. The only thing we have to lose, is our chains!

Ona Move!

From "slow" Death Row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Class-War Prisoners...

(continued from page 12)

Bruce Allen, vice president of the Niagara Regional Labour Council, spoke forcefully of how Mumia's imprisonment "mirrors the retribution" meted out to the Angola 3, former Black Panther Party members who have spent decades in solitary confinement in Louisiana. Allen commended the PDC's annual Appeal for Class-War Prisoners, saying:

"It attests to your fearless defense of political prisoners, most of whom receive little if any support from most of the left, and certainly not sustained support predicated upon the understanding that offering such solidarity is a matter of fundamental political principle as well as an expression of class solidarity.

"This is exemplified by your unwavering and three-decades-long support for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Such support is as necessary as ever, given the retribution being systematically inflicted upon Mumia in the wake of the state's abandonment of efforts to execute him for a crime he never committed and was in fact clearly framed for."

Sophia Florence spoke for the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, placing the current all-sided attack on workers

across the country squarely in the context of the Canadian imperialists' crimes abroad. "The very day CUPW was forced back to work," she noted, "foreign affairs minister John Baird visited Canadian NATO troops in Italy, where he signed a bomb destined for use against Libya that included the message: 'This postal service don't strike'." Emboldened by the imperialists' success in Libya, Ottawa is joining Washington and Tel Aviv in war threats against Iran. The grand prize for imperialism, however, is the re-enslavement of China, which remains a workers state, though deformed by a parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. As Florence pointed out: "It is in the interest of workers everywhere to stand in defense of China and the gains of the 1949 Revolution."

The PDC means it when we say "An injury to one is an injury to all!"—the slogan originally championed over a century ago by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Before taped greetings to the gathering from Mumia were played to wrap up the formal part of the gathering, a PDC spokesman concluded her remarks by pointing to the work of former IWW militant James P. Cannon, who carried this tradition forward:

"James Cannon was the secretary of the International Labor Defense (ILD) and he was a leader of the Communist Party in the U.S., and later the founder of American Trotskyism. He wrote many articles for the ILD in defense of labour militants and revolutionary political figures. This included anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti—innocent men who were executed by the American ruling class. Time after time, in these articles Cannon said: 'No faith in capitalist justice and institutions.'

"For us, as for Cannon, class-struggle defense work is a 'school for the class struggle.' In that spirit, we understand that the state cannot serve the interests of the working class. A socialist revolution will sweep it away, and replace these barbaric institutions with a society in which those who labour rule."

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste. To support the PDC's work, including in defense of the class-war prisoners, write/send your contributions to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 314, Station B, Toronto ON M5T 2W1.



RGASPI



James P. Cannon in Moscow, 1928. Right: Cover of ILD's Labor Defender.

State Repression...

(continued from page 10)

petty-bourgeois populism of the protests; and two, the cops are not your friends! But illusions in bourgeois democracy and, by extension, in the bourgeois state, permeated the Occupy protests. There was the widespread view that cops are “part of the 99 percent.” In Toronto, the organizers of the protests even thanked the cops for showing “restraint” as they were being kicked out of their encampment in St. James Park.

Reform vs. Revolution

There were fake-left groups that were in or around these protests, and their everyday activity only served to reinforce the illusions that most protesters had in the state. Recall that in the aftermath of the G20 protests, the social-democratic Fightback organization refused to defend the Black Bloc anarchists from the brutal police crackdown, instead slandering them as police provocateurs. We took a principled stand of defending those caught in the state’s crosshairs, despite the fact that we disagree with their political views. But Fightback’s position on the G20 was in line with their long-standing support for cop “unions,” which they say can bring the cops closer to the workers (maybe, close enough to wield a baton). We say: the police are not “workers in uniform.” All cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

The history of state repression in Canada goes back way further than the last two years. It is not just a case of the current right-wing Harper Conservative government. It was a Liberal government under Pierre Trudeau that sent the army with armoured cars to occupy Montreal during the “October Crisis” of 1970. What followed was the jailing of hundreds of militant fighters for Quebec independence, leftists and trade unionists. The oppression of Quebec remains the key issue dividing workers in English Canada from Québécois workers. We oppose the prevailing Anglo chauvinism and advocate Quebec independence in order to get the national question off the agenda and pave the way for united class struggle by workers of both nations.

Not so with the NDP. Anglo-chauvinist to the core, the NDP has always represented the interests of Canadian imperialism, from the invasion of Afghanistan to the recent bombing of Libya. And NDP governments in power rule for the bosses and are every bit as guilty of repression as Liberal and Conservative governments, from the jailing of striking postal workers by the former NDP government of Ontario to attacks against Native protesters by its provincial partner in British Columbia.

The historically pro-Zionist NDP has taken a hard line against anyone who would defend the oppressed Palestinians. When the “Freedom Flotilla II” convoy was sent to help the Palestinians in Gaza, the ships were detained in Europe and one was attacked by Israel with the full support of the Canadian government. Only two NDP MPs voiced support for the Palestinian aid convoy, and the full weight of the NDP leadership, including Jack Layton himself, was brought to bear to force them in line with the party’s official program, which is support for Israel and opposition to defense of the Palestinians.

The anti-Palestinian witchhunt also extends to those supposed bastions of free speech, the campuses. In Toronto, the Graduate Students’ Union at the University of Toronto threatened to remove funding from the Ontario Public Interest Research

Group, which had been described as “not represent[ing] student interests,” notably over its support for Students Against Israeli Apartheid. In Vancouver, the student government at the University of British Columbia allied with the Zionists in attempting to prevent the group Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights from receiving a donation for the Canada Boat to Gaza, even going so far as to call on CSIS to “investigate” supposed “links to terrorism” of the pro-Palestinian groups.

In our work on campuses, we have always stridently opposed all attempts by the administration, student bureaucrats or right-wing groups to stifle dissent, including through our call for cops off campus. So for example at a campus sale a few months ago, we jumped to the defense of another group that had stacks of its literature grabbed by a Zionist, loudly sloganeering for the defense of the Palestinians and their supporters on campus. At the same time, we opposed any illusions that the campus police would intervene on the side of the pro-Palestinian activists. These examples illustrate the repression of dissent on campus, an ominous turn toward making it more difficult for opponents of capitalist oppression to do work or even exist on campuses.

The bottom line is that the myriad forms of oppression, exploitation and injustice that have sparked protests around the world have one thing in common: they are the direct products of the capitalist system which is based on the exploitation of labour and production for profit. What’s needed is a revolutionary internationalist workers party to lead the struggle to overthrow capitalism through world socialist revolution. This is the only way to eliminate economic crises, mass poverty and imperialist wars and build an economy based on production for human needs, jobs for all and free education for all. The role of the Spartacus Youth Clubs is to bring Marxism to a new generation of youth and to win them to the side of the working class.

Concretely, that means allying with the power of labour against the bosses, from Rob Ford’s war on city workers to the attacks against teaching assistants at U of T to Harper’s war on the CUPW postal workers. Picket lines mean don’t cross! We call to abolish the university administration and for worker/student/teacher control of the universities and for open admissions and free tuition for all. If you want to fight for a communist future, check out our press, come to our events, and get involved with the activities of the Trotskyist League and the Spartacus Youth Club. ■

Toronto Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Marxism and World Revolution

Class 4: Thursday, March 15

For Free Abortion on Demand!

For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

University of Toronto, Sidney Smith
(100 St. George Street), Room 2116

Class 5: Thursday, March 29

**NDP, Union Tops: Defenders of Capitalism
Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

University of Toronto, location TBA.

All classes at 6:00 p.m.

For more information and for readings, contact the TL/SYC: (416) 593-4138; spartcan@on.aibn.com or P.O. Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8

On the Call for a Constituent Assembly

The following is adapted from Workers Hammer No. 217 (Winter 2011-12), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain. For more in-depth Marxist analysis of the situation in North Africa, see "Tunisian Elections: Victory for Islamic Reactionaries," Workers Vanguard No. 993 (6 January) and "Egypt: Military and Islamists Target Women, Copts, Workers," WV No. 994 (20 January), also available on our website, www.icl-fi.org.

In our propaganda on the overthrow of Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak, the International Communist League stressed the need for the proletariat to come forward as a leader of all the oppressed in the struggle for socialist revolution. We explained, "Elementary democratic rights such as legal equality for women and the complete separation of religion and state; agrarian revolution to give land to the peasants; ending joblessness and grinding poverty: the basic aspirations of the masses cannot be met without the overthrow of the bonapartist capitalist order" ("Egypt: Military Takeover Props Up Capitalist Rule," SC No. 168, Spring 2011). However, we also raised the call for "a revolutionary constituent assembly based on universal suffrage," as we did in our material on the overthrow of Ben Ali in Tunisia.

Subsequently, we in the ICL have re-evaluated this position. We have concluded, in light of historical experience, that the call for a constituent assembly is not valid or principled from the standpoint of the proletarian revolution. A resolution recently adopted by our International Executive Committee stated:

"While the Constituent Assembly played a progressive role in the great French bourgeois revolution of 1789, historical experience since has demonstrated that this ceased to be the case thereafter. Beginning with the revolutions of 1848, in

every situation where a constituent assembly or similar bourgeois legislative body was convened in the context of a proletarian insurgency its aim was to rally the forces of counterrevolution against the proletariat and to liquidate proletarian power. This was evident in the Paris Commune of 1871, the October Revolution of 1917 and the German Revolution of 1918-19. Though never subsequently codified by the CI [Communist International] as a general statement of principle, the thrust of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky's leadership following the October Revolution was to treat the constituent assembly as a counterrevolutionary agency."

In Russia in the spring and summer of 1917, the Bolshevik party advocated a constituent assembly, while the bourgeois provisional government refused to allow it. After the working class seized power in October, under the Bolshevik-led government, elections for a constituent assembly were held. However, voting returned a majority to parties hostile to the Revolution, who refused to recognize the victorious soviet power. The constituent assembly had to be dispersed.

Trotsky himself raised the call for a constituent assembly at times, years later. Like our Trotskyist forebears, we have used this demand many times. We motivated it as a means to address the democratic aspirations of the masses in countries under dictatorial rule, as a lever to mobilize the working class, drawing the oppressed behind it, in the struggle for socialist revolution. However, the call for a constituent assembly is not a democratic demand. A constituent assembly is a form of bourgeois government and has as its purpose the administration of bourgeois class rule. For communists to raise this demand can only create the illusions in capitalist democracy that it is our task to combat. The call for a constituent assembly in fact runs counter to the program of permanent revolution. ■

Islamist Furor...

(continued from page 5)

Islamic state. Brothels in other cities were also attacked. The red-light districts in Tunisia have thrived since they were regulated and legalized by the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century.

Islamists occupied a university campus in Manouba, near the capital, for two months until their eviction last month. They were demanding segregation of the sexes in classes and the lifting of the ban on wearing the full-face veil on campuses. We are opposed to the veil, no matter what form it takes, as both a symbol and instrument of women's oppression. At the same time, we are equally opposed to state bans or restrictions on it. The reality is that these bans mean the expulsions of Muslim girls and women from schools, universities and the workforce, deepening their isolation from society and oppression within the confines of the family.

As Marxists, we uphold the democratic principle of separation of religion and state, everywhere. Islamic fundamentalists will use any easing of bans on the veil to exert social pressure on women to cover themselves. Nonetheless, we oppose state interference in private religious practices, which paves the way for broader intrusions by the state into other aspects of social life. It is the task of the workers movement to champion the rights of women and all those under attack by the

forces of religious reaction.

The historic aim of the Ennahda party is to establish a theocratic state ruled by *sharia* (Islamic law). Following the October election, Rached Ghannouchi pledged to maintain a secular course, declaring that his party has no interest in establishing *sharia*. However, Hamadi Jebeli, secretary general of Ennahda and currently the head of the government, was more forthright when he told a rally in the city of Sousse: "We are in the sixth caliphate, God willing," referring to reviving an Islamic state. One can practically hear Mahdi, the hero of Haydar Haydar's Arabic-language novel *Banquet for Seaweed*, screaming, "In the age of the atom, space exploration and the triumph of reason, they rule us with the laws of the Bedouin gods and the teaching of the Koran. Shit." (For a review of this book, see "Islamist Furor in Egypt Over 'Heretical' Novel," WV No. 770, 7 December 2001).

The aftermath of the mass upheavals in Tunisia and Egypt last year has been marked by the growing influence and dominance of Islamic fundamentalists. In the absence of an established revolutionary Marxist leadership, the working class in Tunisia and Egypt, whose strikes played a major role in bringing down their despotic rulers, has been politically engulfed by the forces of Islamic reaction and bourgeois nationalism. The fight against such reactionary forces is integral to the proletariat becoming a class for itself, fighting for the liberation of all the oppressed. ■

Economic Crisis...

(continued from page 1)

has forced banks in Europe to tighten lending standards, hoard capital to shore up their balance sheets and withdraw financing from longtime customers. Governments are promising ever more severe budget cuts in the hope of pacifying bond markets. The net effect has been a “credit crunch and a squeeze on aggregate demand that is forcing Europe into recession” (*Economist*, 26 November). Industrial orders in the euro zone fell by 6.8 percent in September, the steepest decline since December 2008.

While initially bourgeois politicians in Germany refused to admit the possibility of a Greek default, fearing that this would destabilize the euro, German chancellor Angela Merkel is now openly threatening to expel Greece from the euro zone. On December 5, Germany and France issued their first joint call for amendments to the EU’s treaty to introduce more centralized oversight of the euro zone and additional penalties for countries that violate the rules of “budget discipline.”

Over the past several weeks, governments deemed insufficiently zealous in enforcing capitalist austerity have found themselves unceremoniously tossed out of power. In Greece, Prime Minister George Papandreu of the bourgeois Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), whose credibility was waning with a populace infuriated by the cutbacks, was removed in a political coup organized by EU leaders and domestic opponents, including members of his own party, after he suggested that there should be a referendum on economic policies. The new government, which now incorporates the main opposition party, New Democracy, as well as PASOK and a small, fascist-infested organization (LAOS), has pledged to continue the austerity program. Similar methods were used to get rid of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy. In Spain, fury over the austerity policies of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero’s Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) government led to the election of Mariano Rajoy’s right-wing Popular Party.

The concern of all wings of the bourgeoisie in the major EU countries is not at all to rescue countries like Greece but to bail out their own banks. The bottom line is that the workers and poor must pay for the capitalist crisis. Underlining that Germany is the pre-eminent power in the EU and calls the shots, Merkel has dictated hardline austerity budgets for debtor countries seeking financial assistance. Governments have engaged in an orgy of spending cuts, with layoffs of public employees, pay cuts, reductions in welfare expenditures, privatizations, etc. In Greece, wages have decreased by 15.4 percent, while the official unemployment rate now exceeds 18 percent. In Spain it is close to 23 percent.

We Trotskyist internationalists are opposed on principle to the EU and any other imperialist alliance. Recognizing that the euro would be an instrument of the EU imperialists, we opposed its introduction. We also opposed the Eastern extension of the EU because it was clear that it meant increased exploitation of the workers of East Europe. At the same time, we have fought against the chauvinist discrimination against East European workers in West Europe.



Spartakist

SPARTACIST CANADA

For a Workers Europe—
For Socialist Revolution!

Down With Maastricht! No to Social-Democratic Front Men for Capitalist Austerity!

Summer 1997

ICL has consistently opposed EU imperialist trade bloc. German Trotskyists raise call “For a Socialist United States of Europe!” at 1982 demonstration in Bonn.

As Marxists, we understand that an imperialist alliance or bloc can hold together for some time, but since capitalism is based on the nation-state, these alliances must break up under their own internal contradictions. Our opposition comes from the basic standpoint of opposing capitalism and imperialism. We fight for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through socialist revolution and for an internationally planned economy that will overcome the limits of the nation-state. Our call is for a *Socialist United States of Europe!*

To date, the Greek working class has carried out 14 one- or two-day general strikes, trying to fight back against the joint offensive of the European imperialists and its own bourgeoisie. While these strikes have made it more difficult for the government to enforce austerity measures, the attacks on jobs and living standards are unrelenting. In the Italian capital of Rome on October 15, hundreds of thousands of workers and youth demonstrated against the much-discredited Berlusconi government and the measures it was trying to introduce, such as privatizations and raising the pension age. After Berlusconi fell, the leaders of the liberal opposition supported the new government in the name of national unity in order to enforce the very same measures against which the masses had demonstrated a month earlier. In Portugal, a one-day general strike on November 24 stopped nearly everything in the country. But the “Communist” opposition undermines workers struggle with its appeal to the national interest, complaining about “relinquishing the sovereignty of the country” (*Junge Welt*, 25 November).

The reformist labor leaders cannot lead effective class struggle against capitalist austerity because they politically support the EU and more broadly are wedded to the bourgeois order. The leaders of the main body of Spanish trade unions are allied to the PSOE, while in Greece the main union federations are run by PASOK supporters—i.e., the very parties that until very recently were spearheading the austerity drive in those countries. The reformists accept the class-collaborationist lie that the workers and their exploiters have a common “national interest” and therefore the workers must make their “fair share” of sacrifices when the economy goes bust. But workers and capitalists have *counterposed class interests*. The boom-bust cycle is endemic to the capitalist system and will be eliminated only when the proletariat

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Economic Crisis...

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takes power and seizes the productive property of the bourgeoisie.

Class struggle in Germany as well as France in solidarity with Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese workers would not only broaden their struggles against austerity but also would help workers throughout Europe to free themselves from nationalism and break from their own bourgeoisies. In Germany, the class-collaborationist policies of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) have played a significant role in enabling the German bourgeoisie to increase its competitiveness against its rivals. The coalition of the SPD and the bourgeois Greens, in power from 1998 to 2005, was instrumental in increasing German competitiveness by slashing wages and working conditions and carrying out attacks on the “welfare state,” centrally through a series of measures known as the “Hartz” reforms that greatly reduced unemployment and social welfare benefits. The use of temporary labor increased dramatically and a huge low-wage sector was created. With the median figure for real wages declining 7.4 percent between 2000 and 2010, now 1.4 million people with full-time jobs need additional welfare in order to survive.

While Germany already had the largest economy in Europe, its increased competitiveness explains why it can run the show on the continent. It is clear that German capitalism’s increased profitability comes directly out of the pockets of the German working class. This points to the connection between the struggle against imperialism abroad and the fight against capitalist rule at home. Above all, what is necessary is forging revolutionary internationalist parties in Germany and elsewhere that can lead the working masses in their struggles for life’s necessities as part of the fight for workers rule.

EU: From Anti-Soviet Alliance to Imperialist Consortium

Dominated by Germany and France, the EU exists centrally to advance the interests of these imperialist powers and their junior partners in exploiting their own working class



Authenticated News International

NATO jets, part of imperialists' Cold War arsenal that was aimed at Soviet Union.

and to use the more dependent states, such as Greece and many East European countries, as their summer holiday resorts or low-wage manufacturing backyards. We have been consistent in our political opposition to the EU and its predecessors. Thus, we wrote in “Labor and the Common Market” (WV No. 15, January 1973): “In the imperialist era, alliances between capitalist states, including their economic aspects, are directed against other states, advanced as well as backward states. The Common Market is essentially an unstable alliance between French and German capitalism on the basis of the most reactionary economic policies.”

The EU is a fragile formation exposed to continuous tensions stemming from the disparate national interests of the European imperialists, which are constantly threatening to tear it apart. Nor can it be otherwise. Although the productive forces have long since outgrown a national framework, capitalism is a system that rests essentially on nation-states: each of the various national capitalist classes needs its own state to push through and defend its interests at home and abroad. Hence under capitalism, the goal of political union or a European superstate is necessarily reactionary and an empty utopia.

As V.I. Lenin, the leader of the proletarian October Revolution in Russia in 1917, wrote:

“Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists...but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America.”

—“On the Slogan for a United States of Europe”
(August 1915)

Lenin emphasized that the division of profits among imperialist rivals is ultimately determined by *force*. This understanding was counterposed to the claims of German social democrat Karl Kautsky, whose fantasy of “ultra-imperialism” posited the peaceful resolution of such conflicts, obviating the need for proletarian revolution. Lenin stressed: “Under capitalism there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics.”

The origins of the European Union go back to the 1950s, when the West European imperialists under U.S. leadership attempted to stabilize their alliance against the Soviet Union through closer economic cooperation. Issuing out of the October Revolution, Soviet Russia remained a workers state—based on the expropriation of the capitalists and the collectivization of the means of production—despite its degeneration under J.V. Stalin. With a planned economy, the USSR provided jobs, housing, medical care and education for all, in sharp distinction to the ravages of capitalism that are all too obvious today. We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet Union militarily against the imperialists, who always desired to destroy it.

Our opposition on principle to both NATO—the post-World War II military alliance against the Soviet Union—and the EU and its predecessors was linked to our defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of the DDR (East Germany) and East Europe. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the EU/NATO’s anti-Soviet function disappeared. The EU remained an imperialist trade bloc. The U.S. retains military hegemony, although not the same economic clout it once had.

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, French president François Mitterrand made France’s acquiescence to



AP

German chancellor Angela Merkel and French president Nicolas Sarkozy at recent G20 meeting in Cannes.

German reunification, achieved when capitalist West Germany swallowed up the DDR, dependent on the two countries' agreement on a common currency. This was supposed to restrain a newly strengthened Germany from running roughshod over other European states, principally France. Additionally, the currency would be a weapon against the international hegemony of the U.S. dollar. But the unity between these two imperialist powers is itself fraught with conflict, as the disputes over how to deal with the current crisis in the euro zone demonstrate.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 authorized the introduction of the euro, which was first traded in 1999 before being introduced as actual money for consumers in 2002. The French Communist Party (PCF) originally opposed the treaty, fearing that it would lead to the dominance of German imperialism over French imperialism, i.e., they opposed it from the reactionary perspective of French nationalism. Later, the PCF made its peace with the euro. So has pretty much the entire European reformist left, which either explicitly supports the EU or claims that it is a framework that can be utilized to better the situation of working people (a "social Europe").

The forerunner of the League for the Fifth International and its British group Workers Power took an abstentionist position on the 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. They were enthusiastic over the EU "social charter," with its empty promises of guaranteeing workers rights, sexual equality and such, as was the British Labour Party. *Workers Power* (June 1992) argued that "the terms of the Maastricht Treaty can also be a basis for extending rights and gains from states where the working class never won those gains, or where it has lost them," and they continued that "to some extent European workers will be better armed to fight back on a continental scale after the implementation of the terms of Maastricht." The French group Lutte Ouvrière (LO) similarly wrote in 2005, "Even as is, on a capitalist basis, with all the accompanying injustices and insufficiencies, the European Union represents progress in a certain number of areas." Workers Power and LO are latter-day Kautskyites, flunkeys for capital, with touching faith in "democratic" imperialism and its various alliances.

Opposition to the EU and the euro does come from some bourgeois quarters, however. A section of the German bourgeoisie has always been very skeptical about the euro, thinking that German imperialism could function better with the

deutschmark. There are strong anti-EU sentiments among the British Tories, while various fascist and right-wing populist groups oppose the EU from the standpoint of national chauvinism. In effect, the reformist left has conceded opposition to the EU—correctly seen by many workers as an instrument of capitalist austerity—to the reactionary right wing.

German Imperialism's Third Try to Rule Europe

In a 1997 statement, the International Communist League stressed that a common currency without a common state is not viable:

"Control over the quantity of money within its boundaries is a basic economic prerogative of a bourgeois state, one necessarily closely linked to other instruments of economic policy. A stable monetary system based on the 'euro' would require tight and permanent restrictions over taxation and government expenditure in all the EU member states.... But since capitalism is organised on the basis of particular national states, itself the cause of repeated imperialist wars to redivide the world, it is impossible to cohere a stable pan-European bourgeois state. A European imperialist 'superstate' can be achieved only by the methods of Adolf Hitler.... Should the Maastricht project for a common European currency come into being, it would amount to only a brief, conflict-ridden episode."

—"For a Workers Europe—For Socialist Revolution!"

WV No. 670, 13 June 1997

We now have the first really serious world economic crisis since that statement was written, and the conflicts that have arisen in Europe threaten to bring the EU rapidly to the point of implosion. Behind this open fragmentation is the built-in instability in the monetary system of the EU and the fact that it is formed of competing national states with different levels of labor productivity. These differences, exacerbated by the crisis, have been reflected through the differentials in public borrowing and interest rates on state bonds.

German imperialism made huge profits through driving down wages at home and through the introduction of the euro, and they would like to keep things that way. For years, Germany has run a trade surplus, which was financed through massive private and public debt in other euro zone states and spurred by the fact that the common currency helps keep German industrial exports cheap throughout the euro zone. The German bourgeoisie is not about to reduce the surplus, arguing that this is the problem of the countries with a trade deficit.

Ordinarily, each country has its own currency, and a debtor country can get some relief and regain competitiveness by devaluing its currency. But this is not possible in a currency union. The German bourgeoisie demands that debtor countries slash wages, pensions and welfare. Another proposal is for German capital to lend more funds to the poorer countries in the euro zone—but this is vehemently opposed by the German bourgeoisie. In a *Financial Times* online (13 September) column on the breakdown in the euro zone, Martin Wolf wrote: "This is what I heard from an Italian policymaker: 'We gave up the old safety valves of inflation and devaluation in return for lower interest rates, but now we do not even have the low interest rates.'... And, not least: 'It would be better to leave than endure 30 years of pain.' These remarks speak of a loss of faith in both the project and the partners."

There is no way out for debtor countries like Greece under the setup dictated by the German bourgeoisie. The sharp cuts in public spending have had a predictable deflationary

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Economic Crisis...

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effect—the Greek economy has contracted by 7.5 percent over the past year. A smaller economy means less tax revenue, thereby increasing the deficit and prompting demands for more austerity. At the same time, many bourgeois pundits across the board have issued hysterical warnings on how bad things will be if Greece leaves the euro zone. But that depends on the conditions imposed. After Argentina pegged its currency to the U.S. dollar, its economy went into a deep recession and the country went bankrupt in 2001. Investors in Argentinean bonds lost 70 percent of their money, outraging international banking interests. Following the bankruptcy, Argentina stopped pegging its currency to the dollar and the economy recovered, albeit not until average wages had dropped 30 percent.

The example of Argentina shows graphically that Greece might be much better off if it defaulted and left the euro zone, reinstating its own currency. However, while this might provide relief from the downward spiral, leaving the euro zone will not insulate the Greek proletariat from the world economic downturn and capitalist devastation. In Britain (which is in the EU but not in the euro zone), the Tory government of David Cameron is just as intent on slashing spending as his counterparts on the continent. On November 30, British public sector workers staged a massive one-day strike against austerity measures, including threatened layoffs and an extension of the wage freeze. Socialist revolution is the only solution to unemployment, wage cuts, imperialist war and the other depredations of decaying capitalism.

German-French Axis Rattles Along Until It Breaks

Concerned about the stability of the euro zone (and the French economy), President Nicolas Sarkozy earlier supported the introduction of euro bonds—a scheme whereby the euro zone states would issue common bonds—or alternatively that the European Central Bank buy government bonds directly to bail out countries in trouble. But Merkel has not gone along, knowing that ultimately the money in these schemes will come from Germany. The Obama administration has also pleaded with Merkel to ante up more money. The bottom line is that nothing happens unless it is acceptable to Berlin. As a creditor nation, the Germans stress the need for a balanced budget and a strong euro (the deutschmark in drag), with inflation considered the worst thing in the world. This is justified by reference to two periods of German inflation in 1923 and after WWII, ignoring the equally disastrous deflationary policy during the depression of the early 1930s.

When EU Commission president José Manuel Barroso proposed introducing euro bonds under the name “stability bonds,” the German right-wing tabloid *Bild* (23 November) ran the headline: “Britain, America, and the Whole EU. They All Want Our Money.” Meanwhile in France, Jacques Attali, a former adviser to Mitterrand, charged that Germany twice led Europe into suicidal wars in the past century and said: “Today, it is again Germany’s turn to hold in its hand the weapon for the continent’s collective suicide.” The PCF



August 2011: African asylum-seekers clash with cops near immigration centre in Bari, Italy. AFP

chimed in by denouncing Sarkozy for giving in to Merkel over the crisis and accusing him of a “financial Munich,” a reference to the 1938 decision by France and Britain to refrain from going to war against Hitler’s Germany over its occupation of the Sudetenland.

At the EU summit at the end of October, the heads of state of the ten non-euro zone countries were excluded from a discussion on the euro crisis. This elicited a complaint from British prime minister Cameron, who noted that the crisis in the euro zone impacted elsewhere, including London, a world financial center. Sarkozy snorted at Cameron, who not too long ago was his brother-in-arms in the bombing of Libya: “You have lost a good opportunity to shut up. We are sick of you criticizing us and telling us what to do. You say you hate the euro and now you want to interfere in our meetings.”

The EU is falling apart under the tensions of conflicting national interests. These tensions can also be seen in the imposition of restrictions on the right of passage within the EU, supposedly guaranteed by the Schengen agreement. In 2010, about 400,000 people who wanted to migrate to the EU were stopped on its borders. In the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark and other countries in Northern Europe, populist anti-immigrant parties are gaining support, nurtured by chauvinist government campaigns carried out under the guise of the “war on terror” that largely targets Muslims. It is in the interest of the working class in each country to fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees!* *Down with the EU and racist “Fortress Europe”!*

SPD and Left Party: To Capitalism’s Rescue

In response to the capitalist attacks stemming from the crisis in the EU, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany recognized the urgent necessity for the working class of Europe, and especially the powerful German proletariat, to take class-struggle action. On May Day 2010, the SpAD intervened for “Solidarity with the Greek workers!” and for “Class struggle against the German capitalists!” (*Spartakist* No. 183, May 2010). The chief obstacles to such struggle are the reformist workers parties, SPD and Left Party, together with the trade-union bureaucracy, and the left groups that orient toward them.

In the summer, the SPD came out in favor of euro bonds.

Peer Steinbrück, a former SPD finance minister, gave the reasons in an interview with *Spiegel* (12 September):

“One has to explain to people that the EU in this form is the answer both to 1945 and to the 21st century, in a dramatically altered world with new heavyweights, and that Germany benefits from the continued integration of Europe in political, economic and societal ways. And, of course, that means the Germans will have to pay. But the money is well invested in both our future and Europe’s, in peace and prosperity.”

Steinbrück and the SPD are playing here with the fear of war, which is prevalent in many parts of Europe as a result of the two world wars. This takes real *chutzpah*: during the Balkans war in 1999 the SPD-led government was the first since WWII to introduce German troops outside the country. The SPD’s differences with Merkel are strictly tactical, amounting to a debate over what’s best for German imperialism. Its support to the euro bonds scheme reflects the fear that Merkel’s hardline policies could destroy the EU, thereby possibly killing the goose that has laid a golden egg for German capitalism and enabled the Social Democrats to continue supping at the table of German capital. The SPD exemplifies what V.I. Lenin called bourgeois workers parties: parties with a working-class base, especially through the unions, but with a thoroughly pro-capitalist program and leadership. The SPD besmirched the banner of workers internationalism by voting for war credits for German imperialism in 1914. Ever since, the SPD has been a vehement enemy of revolution.

The Left Party—a fusion of the former Stalinist ruling party of the DDR and a split from the SPD, including a section of the trade-union bureaucracy—is seen by many leftist and working-class militants as an alternative to the SPD. The Left Party might talk a bit more about solidarity with Greece, but like the SPD it accepts the framework of the EU and the common currency while arguing that this alliance of imperialist robbers should carry out more progressive policies. Thus, the Left Party also advocates euro bonds. But since when does workers solidarity with the embattled Greek masses consist of pleading with the government to offer bank loans at a fractionally reduced interest rate?

The left face of the Left Party is its vice chairwoman, Sahra Wagenknecht of the misnamed “Communist Platform.” Wagenknecht absurdly argues that government budgets must “be freed from their dependency on the capital markets.” To this end, she wants a public European bank to be set up, which would offer favorable interest rates. Only a dyed-in-the-wool social democrat could imagine that the budget of a capitalist government could be independent of the capitalist market! And there are already hundreds of publicly owned banks in Europe; all of them play by the rules of the capitalist profit system. Wagenknecht’s reformist schemes are white-wash to obscure the Left Party’s role in supporting capitalist exploitation. They ought to know about government budgets, since they have entered into governments in Berlin and other regions that have laid off workers and cut public spending.

The German trade-union federation DGB has spent lots of membership dues money to run ads in newspapers campaigning for “Yes to Europe! Yes to the euro!” Meanwhile, the DGB bureaucrats’ “solidarity” with the Greek working class fighting against the crisis has been limited to a few speeches on May Day and maybe a letter of support. No struggle has been waged against the German government and the German capitalists, who are the most outspoken proponents of the austerity measures that are hitting the Greek, Por-

tuguese and other working classes so hard.

The same social-democratic union bureaucracy has contributed to advancing German imperialism and its dominant role in the EU by presiding over a massive slashing of real wages. The union misleadership propounds the class-collaborationist lie that what is good for the company and Germany is good for the workers. Most recently, the labor tops agreed to a 20 percent wage cut for all new employees of Lufthansa at the new Berlin airport. In a short space of time, this sellout deal will serve to lower wages at Lufthansa generally. It is urgently necessary to defend wages and working conditions through class struggle: Organize the unorganized! Equal pay for equal work! For an end to the division between permanent employees, contracted workers and workers on short-term contracts! One company, one union, one wage scale! Forge a class-struggle trade-union leadership, linked to the building of a revolutionary party!

For the Socialist United States of Europe!

In 1929, Leon Trotsky, then the leader of the Left Opposition fighting for authentic Bolshevism against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Communist International, wrote:

“In the person of the Opposition the vanguard of the European proletariat tells its present rulers: In order to unify Europe it is first of all necessary to wrest power out of your hands. We will do it. We will unite Europe. We will unite it against the hostile capitalist world. We will turn it into a mighty drill-ground of militant socialism. We will make it the cornerstone of the world socialist federation.”

—“Disarmament and the United States of Europe”
(October 1929)

The Socialist United States of Europe, in conjunction with the conquest of proletarian power in the U.S., Japan and throughout the world, would lay the basis for a real international division of labor in a planned economy, thus enormously increasing the productivity of society. Establishing the genuine equality of the peoples of Europe, it would eradicate the source of the imperialist wars that have brought Europe so many times near extinction.

The multiethnic German working class, with its various components from Mediterranean lands, the Balkans and East Europe—who often bring with them more militant class-struggle traditions—possesses the living links to the struggles of Greek workers, of Turkish and Kurdish workers in Turkey and of workers elsewhere. Class struggle by German workers would resonate powerfully with the French proletariat and would be a beacon to the working class worldwide. Central to our perspective as Trotskyists is the reforging of the Fourth International as the world party of proletarian revolution, the task the International Communist League, and its German section, the SpAD, has set for itself. ■

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Creeping Police State...

(continued from page 24)

The State: "The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class other, subordinated classes."

"War on Crime" Targets Native People, Blacks

The most immediate victims of the "law and order" offensive will be Native people and blacks. In Western Canada in particular, Native people are the primary targets of police brutality, criminal proceedings and incarceration. The government's own Correctional Investigator reports that aboriginals, who make up 2.7 percent of the adult Canadian population, constitute 18.5 percent of inmates in federal custody. In Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, this number shoots up to 60 percent! And Native women represent 30 percent of all federal female inmates across Canada. Statistics Canada reports nearly identical numbers in provincial institutions.

In Ontario, change "Native" to "black," and the picture is starkly similar. Twenty percent of Ontario's federal inmates are black. The Toronto cops have carried out a decades-long reign of racist terror in minority neighbourhoods, going after black youth in particular. A recent instance was the 2010 police killing of Junior Manon, an unarmed 18-year-old black Latino youth who had tried to flee a traffic check. Several witnesses saw the brutal killing, which the cops are typically trying to cover up. This is business as usual for these thugs in blue, and not just in Toronto, whether the victims are aboriginal, black, South Asian or Latino.

Under the Tories' new law, mandatory minimum sentences will take away any hope of alternatives to jail even for minor drug offences. Chances for pardons will be eliminated or made much more difficult, and there will be more pre-trial detention. These ever more severe forms of legal retribution, combined with the habitual racism of the cops, are designed to make it even more difficult for minority communities to escape the vicious cycle of poor education, joblessness, mental illness, addiction, violence and prison. Federal and provincial governments are already planning to add close to 10,000 new prison spaces.

Other aspects of Bill C-10 have been decried by refugee, civil liberties and gay organizations. One provision could bar potential refugees from entering the country if the government deems they are "at risk" of being exploited—a definition that pretty much describes 99.9 percent of refugees. We say: full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it to this country!

One amendment to the criminal code would mean two years in jail for anyone who "wilfully does an indecent act in a public place in the presence of one or more persons." As the Queer Ontario group noted, "People of any gender could be charged and convicted of an 'indecent act' for engaging in consenting sexual acts on a beach, in a park, in a parked car, at a sex party or in a bathhouse." The CCLA also remarked that the "child pornography" provisions of the bill "criminalize, and would impose mandatory minimum jail sentences, for the consensual, legal sexual activities of youth and young adults."

Marxists oppose all laws against "crimes without victims" such as drug use, gambling, prostitution and consensual sex, including between adults and youth. We have long warned that the "child pornography" and "anti-pedophile" hysteria, endorsed by all manner of liberals, feminists and reformist leftists, is intended to jack up state repression against *everybody*. While

children and youth are victims of real abuse—mental, physical and/or sexual—this is most often at the hands of state agencies or within the confines of the nuclear family. The rulers' hypocritical moral crusades are intended to further regiment society and punish youth and adults for sexual relations that do not fall within the acceptable "norms" of religious and bourgeois morality. The only guiding principle in sexual relations should be effective consent—whether those involved were agreeable at the time—regardless of gender, number or age.

It's not surprising that the right-wing Tory regime would whip up such moral hysteria to push its racist agenda of police repression and more jails. This is, after all, a government teeming with anti-abortion bigots and death penalty advocates. While Stephen Harper keeps such ghouls in check (for now), the "anti-crime" bills are only the thin edge of the wedge. The government's revving up of military and monarchical symbols—with the English queen in every federal building—is grotesque, but it is only an expression of the bourgeois "values" embraced by all the "honourable" members of parliament, whether in government or in opposition, the NDP very much included. These values are rooted in the capitalist system of exploitation and war.

RCMP, CSIS, the Internet and You

Aside from C-10, a slew of "security" laws and measures will make it even more difficult to participate in any kind of public protest, including online. Left-wing activists and even mealy-mouthed environmentalists are being publicly vilified, slandered, spied on, and in some cases arrested and jailed. This reached a peak around the June 2010 G20 protests in Toronto, when nearly 20,000 cops descended on the city, arrested 1,100 protesters and held them in degrading conditions. Leftist organizers were seized and framed up on "conspiracy" charges, a device long used by the capitalists to persecute perceived opponents against whom there is no evidence of any crime.

Particularly since the September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, governments around the world have used the "war on terror" as a pretext to victimize both Muslim minorities and left-wing activists. In Canada, the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien (with then justice minister Irwin Cotler in tow) ramped up a series of "anti-terror" measures meant to instill fear, scapegoat minorities and curtail the right to protest. As we warned at the time:

"The rulers aim to shred the democratic rights of the whole population, starting with those who have the fewest rights to begin with—immigrants and refugees. Make no mistake: this campaign is aimed at regimenting and repressing everybody through fear, not least through fear of the state itself—and working people and their organizations are right in the gunshots.... Racism based on the terror scare is a wedge the capitalists intend to use to split and wreck any effective working-class resistance to their austerity plans."

—"Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!"

SC No. 132, Spring 2002

Harper's Tories picked up where the Liberals left off, with vicious "anti-terror" witchhunts and legislation of their own. Another new bill, the outrageously named "Protecting Children from Internet Predators Act," would give the cops unrestricted access to anyone's personal identity without a warrant and the capability to intercept any online activity. The outcry over public safety minister Vic Toews' smears against critics of the bill forced the government to recalibrate its pitch, but the legislation is expected to pass without fundamental



no credit

Junior Manon (above), beaten to death by racist Toronto police. Left: Alejandro Manon protests outside coroner's office in May 2010, two days after death of his son.

change (the Liberals earlier introduced similar measures). Also tightening the screws on the population is the Canada-U.S. "Beyond the Border" agreement, another project begun under the previous Liberal government. This promises almost limitless sharing of information among the RCMP, the Border Service Agency, U.S. Customs and Homeland Security—at a time when, for example, a staggering 85 percent of British Columbians are in the cops' computer database.

The government's "security" mania has it shooting in all directions, from the merely deranged to the outright monstrous. The spectacle of resource minister Joe Oliver going after groups like the lofty Sierra Club environmentalists as foreign-funded "radical groups" for opposing the Gateway pipeline project underlines how *anyone* can be a target. In a statement promoting the Tories' "anti-terrorism" strategy, Toews promised vigilance against "domestic extremism" including "the promotion of various causes such as animal rights, environmentalism, white supremacy and anti-capitalism" (*Globe and Mail*, 11 February). More ominously yet, it was recently revealed that the government has instructed CSIS to use information obtained under torture "in exceptional circumstances." This is no abstraction. Just recall the case of Maher Arar, an innocent Muslim citizen of Canada who was sent by the U.S. to torture chambers in Syria based on information and acquiescence from Canadian security services.

The ultimate target of the crackdown on dissent is the organized working class. The Tory government cites "national security" to justify its attacks on the labour movement. "War on terror" measures have taken particular aim at unionized workers in the ports and airline industry. In its own way, this testifies to the immense potential power of organized labour to throw back government repression and the attacks on the rights of the population.

A number of protests have taken place against the various "security" bills, in particular the omnibus crime bill. Most were organized in the wake of the Occupy movement that emerged in most major cities last year. Many of the youthful Occupy protesters have themselves been victims of police crackdowns, and it is to their credit that they seek to protest the larger implications behind the Tory bills. Yet they are mired in populist liberal politics which obscure the class line between workers and capitalists. Some even embraced the cops as part of the "99 percent." Such ideology is an obstacle to the necessary mobilization of the working class in its own name, rallying all the

oppressed in a fight against the capitalist system.

The main obstacles to such mobilization are the pro-capitalist labour bureaucracy and its political arm, the social-democratic NDP. Despite its current posture of opposing Harper's most egregious measures, the NDP has always supported the enforcement of capitalist "law and order." Four years ago, the New Democrats supported a Conservative "anti-crime" law that established mandatory minimum sentencing for "gun-related" offences and raised the age of consent from 14 to 16. In the election later that year, Jack Layton demanded "tough action on crime, gangs, and guns." Last year, the NDP again promised to hire thousands more cops, an unashamed pledge of fealty to the racist capitalist order.

The NDP has also always supported the Canadian rulers' national oppression of Quebec. Historically under the boot of British and then Anglo-Canadian rule, Quebec experienced mass social struggle in the 1960s and early '70s which led to throwing off the shackles of the repressive Catholic church. With the Québécois population generally more liberal on social issues than that in English Canada, bourgeois politicians of just about every stripe in Quebec have denounced the Tories' "crime" bills.

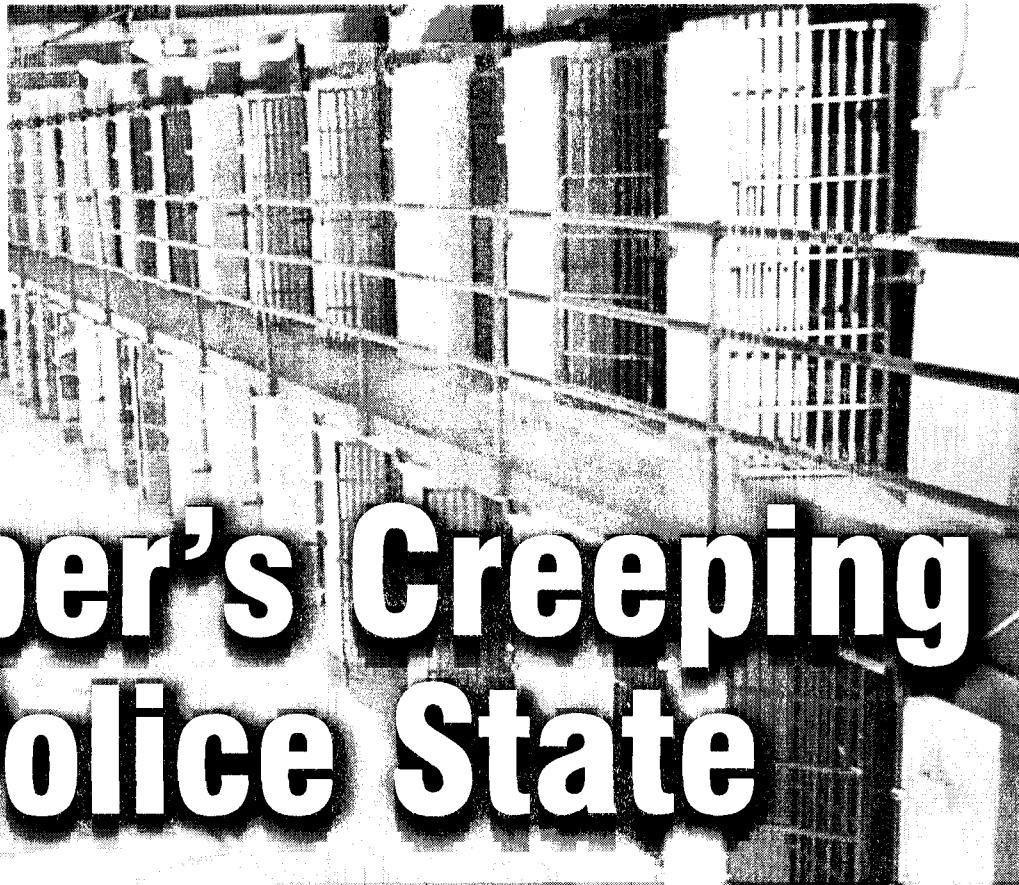
But Quebec has its own variants of racism and state repression. It is there that the furor against the right of Muslim women to wear the *niqab* (full-face veil) has been most intense. In the 1990s, the nationalist Bloc Québécois was the most vocal advocate for "anti-gang" laws, which were eventually adopted. Supposedly aimed against bikers, these have been used almost exclusively to justify cop terror against minority youth in Montreal—and to go after the construction unions. Marxists advocate independence for Quebec, in part because this would create the best conditions for workers in both nations to see the reactionary nature of their "own" capitalist exploiters.

Various labour federations have come out against the Tory crime bill. On the West Coast, the BCGEU public sector union issued a February 13 statement against the bill. But the BCGEU bureaucracy's sole concerns are about "cost" and the negative effect on screws and shifts! That's right, the BCGEU (and others such as Ontario's OPSEU) criminally organizes such forces which, as much as the cops, are enforcers of racist capitalist repression. Cops and jail guards are not workers—they have no place in the unions!

The organized labour movement has a crucial role to play in beating back the climate of racism and fear that is only getting worse amid today's deep-going economic meltdown. To do so, the working class must be won to the understanding that its own liberation from wage slavery and poverty requires defending the rights of *all* the oppressed and opposing *all* manifestations of state terror against minorities and the left. With its central position in social production, the working class has both the social power and the material interest to stop the creeping police state in its tracks. We Marxists fight for the forging of a multiracial revolutionary workers party, the necessary instrument to bring this understanding to the ranks of the proletariat. **Down with Harper's reactionary "crime" bills—Mobilize the power of labour! ■**



Best/Reuters



Harper's Creeping Police State

Cuddington/Ottawa Citizen

Collins Bay penitentiary in Kingston, Ontario. Conservative government's "war on crime" will mean massive rise in prison population.

Government Targets Minorities, Activists, Labour...Everyone

The Canadian state has a long and sordid history of violent repression, from the genocidal Indian wars of the French and English colonialists to the crushing of the 19th century Métis rebellion, the suppression of Quebec's national rights, racist police terror against ethnic minorities and, most significantly, the unending capitalist war on labour and the left. For over a century, such repression has been carried out by Tory and Liberal governments alike and, provincially, no less adamantly by NDP governments in Ontario, B.C. and elsewhere.

Today, as the economic crisis deepens and the working class is battered by devastating plant closures and mass unemployment, Stephen Harper's now-majority Tory government is poised to bring in some of the most draconian "anti-crime" and "security" laws Canada has ever seen. Aimed at ramping up state surveillance, spying and police repression, they will put many thousands more people in jail, overwhelmingly minorities and the poor, and roll back democratic rights across the board.

Hand in hand with the Tories' "war on crime" are mounting assaults on union rights and leftist political activity. The rulers of this country are fully aware that the grinding poverty

and gross inequality produced by their system are creating a huge pool of social discontent, anger and fear. So they are sparing no expense to increase their already considerable powers of repression. The message: dare to protest, and we'll throw you in jail too.

The scope and speed of the Conservatives' "security" agenda is truly scary. Everyone to the left of Don Cherry has decried the omnibus "anti-crime" Bill C-10 as costly, mean and irrational. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) called it "unwise, unjust, unconstitutional" and a "dangerous route that is unsupported by the social science evidence and has already failed in other countries." Former Liberal justice minister Irwin Cotler termed its mandatory minimum sentencing provisions "ineffective, unfair, injurious." After an Ottawa meeting on the bill, Quebec justice minister Jean-Marc Fournier fumed: "I don't recognize myself in this Canada. This is not a government of Canada. It is a government of the Reform Party." Of course, these bourgeois opponents of the bill would prefer a more "effective" and less costly approach to "fighting crime."

The reality is that under capitalism the state—at its core, the cops, courts and prisons—has but one purpose: to serve and protect the handful of filthy rich capitalists in power by suppressing the working class and the oppressed. As Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin pointed out in his 1919 lecture

(continued on page 22)