

## National Chauvinism Is Poison to Class Struggle

# For Quebec Independence!



Steve Liss

no credit

**1970 army occupation (right) underscored forcible subjugation of Québécois. At left, nationalists demonstrate in Montreal. Trotskyists advocate Quebec independence to open road to anti-capitalist class struggle.**

Twenty-five years ago, in October 1970, Quebec Liberal cabinet minister Pierre Laporte and British diplomat James Cross were kidnapped by a small group of Quebec separatist militants, the Front de Libération du Québec. Using the "FLQ Crisis" as a pretext, the federal government under Pierre Trudeau imposed the War Measures Act and sent the army to occupy Montreal. Ottawa's troops stormed houses and apartments, rounded up hundreds of trade unionists and left-wing activists at gunpoint and threw them in prison where they were held incommunicado. Their "crime": an association with the belief that the oppressed Québécois nation had the right to determine its own fate. Thus martial law starkly exposed the

enforced subjugation of Quebec, which is a foundation stone of the Canadian capitalist state.

The existence of two separate and increasingly divergent nations, one oppressing the other, continues to define the political landscape in this country, and has terribly undermined working-class struggle. As revolutionary Marxists, we unconditionally defend the national rights of the Québécois people and at the same time oppose all manner of nationalism and chauvinism, which strangle the fight against capitalist exploitation. We seek to advance the cause of all working people through building a revolutionary workers party that is a tribune of the

*(continued on page 6)*

**Pour l'indépendance du Québec ! ..... pages 12-19**

# Vancouver Sun Smears Anti-Fascist Militants

On July 20, an article in the *Vancouver Sun* leveled false, violence-baiting accusations against the Partisan Defense Committee and other anti-fascist activists. The article appeared in the midst of lurid coverage of the mail bombs supposedly sent by the hitherto unknown "Anti-Fascist Militia" to fascists Ernst Zundel and Charles Scott, as well as the right-wing Mackenzie Institute and the offices of Alta Genetics in Calgary.

One week after the *Sun's* smear job, the Vancouver weekly *Georgia Straight* (28 July) printed a similar attack on the PDC, full of lies, false amalgams and scurrilous innuendos, all directed at portraying the PDC and the Trotskyist League as secretive and violence-prone. Then on 28 July the local CBC Radio morning program maliciously targeted the PDC with lying smears.

The 11 August *Georgia Straight* printed a much-edited version of the PDC's 1 August response to them. As the PDC wrote there in regard to the "anti-terrorist" witchhunting campaign:

"We have no idea who is sending bombs through the mail—cop provocateurs (remember Grant Bristow?), Nazis who want to murder their own and obscure their tracks, or some misguided individual(s) who draw no distinction between fascists, right-wing ideologues and animal genetics labs. What is beyond doubt is that the powers-that-be and their media mouthpieces are using these incidents and the appalling Oklahoma City bombing to equate leftist opponents of this racist capitalist state with the fascistic network of 'patriot militias,' abortion clinic bombers and KKK/Nazi killers."

We print below the full text of the PDC's protest letter to the *Vancouver Sun*, which published a truncated version in its 1 August issue.

\* \* \*

21 July 1995

*Vancouver Sun*

To the Editor:

On behalf of the trade union locals, community, church and student groups and other organizations and individuals who have attended rallies, demonstrations and meetings organized by the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), we are

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compelled to respond to your violence-baiting of our organization.

The July 20 article "Anti-racists condemn letter bombs" falsely states that "members" of the PDC and other anti-racists "stormed the hotel" where a gang of Nazi skinheads were holed up on January 22, 1993. In fact, the Hitler-lovers were prevented from holding a hate rally at the Art Gallery by 3,000 anti-fascist demonstrators. Upon learning of the fascists' whereabouts, some 500 demonstrators then marched to the Century Plaza Hotel. As reported by your own Doug Ward, the skinheads ran "like terrified prey out a side entrance" at the very spectre of these protesters outside the hotel ("White supremacist skinheads flee hotel," 23 January 1993).

The article is a rehash of your previous editorial attacks on the mass mobilization that stopped the fascists. At the time, your editorialists denounced the anti-racist protesters as "no better than the skinheads." This obscene equation of fascists and their intended victims was echoed by a spokesman for the B.C. Organization to Fight Racism in the July 20 article. The fascists "speak" with chains, lead pipes and guns—and ultimately with gas chambers. Stopping them is a matter of life or death—something well understood by the unionists, minorities, socialists and others who came out in January 1993 in response to our widely distributed call "For a Mass Labor/Minority Mobilization, All Out to Stop the Fascists." Driving the Hitler-lovers off the streets was a *victory* for all their intended victims.

This violence-baiting smear comes at a time when the Partisan Defense Committee is heavily involved in organizing to save U.S. black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal from "legal" lynching. We have been in the forefront of the fight to prevent the state murder of Jamal, a former Black Panther, MOVE supporter and journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless" for his compelling exposure of racist oppression in the U.S. Jamal is an innocent man who has been imprisoned on death row for 13 years, falsely charged with the killing of a Philadelphia policeman. Adding their voices to those of hundreds of thousands worldwide—from South Africa to Italy to Japan—locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Postal Workers, the Christian Task Force on Central America (B.C.), the *Afro/Carib News* and many, many others in the Lower Mainland have joined with the PDC to demand "Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die!" Yet just as this campaign has reached a critical stage following the setting of August 17 as the date for Jamal's execution, the *Sun* smears the PDC. It is necessary to ask: who benefits?

All who have worked with us, encompassing a multiplicity of divergent political views, know that we are exactly what we say we are: 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. We demand a retraction of your smears against us, our supporters and all those who would work with us on the side of working people and their allies in struggle against their exploiters and oppressors.

Miriam Scribner  
for the Partisan Defense Committee

# Rallies for Jamal Across Canada

Around the world, the summer of '95 turned into a hot one for the racist U.S. rulers who want to execute Mumia Abu-Jamal. Following the signing of a death warrant on June 1, international support for Jamal swelled. Outraged protests from thousands of individuals, and from trade-union and other organizations representing millions more, flooded the office of Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge. In Rome, 100,000 people signed a petition demanding Jamal's release. From Canada, Buzz Hargrove added his voice on behalf of the Canadian Auto Workers, as did the federal New Democratic Party and the New Democratic Youth of Canada (NDYC).

Angry protests erupted far and wide. On July 22, 5,000 people marched in Berlin. On August 9, 200 participated in a labor/black rally for Jamal in Volta Redonda, Brazil, initiated by our fraternal comrades of Luta Metalúrgica. In Paris the same day, another 1,000 joined a demonstration sponsored by the French Communist Party and the CGT union federation.

In Canada, too, militant demonstrations have demanded "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" On July 29, 800 people rallied for Mumia at the Ontario legislature in Toronto. Some 500 then marched down University Avenue to the U.S. Consulate, with a PDC banner reading "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal" in front. This action, initiated by the NDYC and heavily built by the PDC and others, immediately followed a demonstration against looming attacks on the poor and working people from the newly elected provincial government of right-wing Conservative premier Mike Harris.

On August 10, three days after judge Sabo issued a stay of execution, some 250 mostly youthful protesters rallied in Vancouver, and on August 13 an integrated demonstration of 200, marched in Montreal. Representing area trade unions and a broad spectrum of minority communities, 100 more demonstrators turned out in Vancouver on August 14 for a protest co-sponsored by the PDC, the Vancouver Local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and the NDYC.

CUPW put out a special issue of its *Bulletin* to mobilize postal workers for the demonstration. Local vice president Jim Loughheed told demonstrators: "The Vancouver Local's support for Mumia is absolute. We will continue to have demonstrations such as this until Mumia is set free." Representatives of the NDYC, the Somaliland Friendship Society and the Association of Students of African Descent also spoke, as did Angela Summers for the Trotskyist League and Spartacus Youth Club. Summers linked the fight to free Mumia to the struggle against racist capitalism here at home:

"A lot of people say: Canada is different; the cops are less brutal; racism is less raw. But it's just not so. Look at the cases of Guy Paul Morin, or the Micmac Indian Donald Marshall and David Milgaard....

"This is the *capitalist* state. Various liberals and the NDP say it can be reformed, patched up. No way: in fact, the B.C. NDP government is strengthening the powers of the state and the police. Their Criminal Records Check law and their proposed super-ID cards are just two examples. "As Marxists, we understand that it will take nothing less than a workers revolution to sweep away this machinery of state repression and terror and violence whose sole purpose is to keep the profits flowing into bosses' coffers from Wall Street to Howe Street."

The same day, a crowd of 250 rallied at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto, braving heavy thunderstorms. Undaunted by the

downpour, the demonstrators made their chants of "Mumia, Mumia, Must Go Free!" ring out for two full hours. CUPW members unfurled their union banner alongside those of the PDC, the OSSTF teachers union and the Law Union of Ontario. Speakers from the PDC, Anti-Racist Action and the



**Carmeta Gentles, whose son Robert was murdered by prison guards in Kingston Penitentiary two years ago, speaks out for Mumia Abu-Jamal at August 14 Toronto protest.**

SC photo

Toronto Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—co-sponsors of the demonstration—emphasized the urgent need to keep fighting until Jamal is free. David Bleakney, a CUPW Toronto Local vice president, called on the whole union movement to take action. Carmeta Gentles, whose son Robert was murdered by guards in Kingston Penitentiary, spoke movingly of Robert and Mumia as victims of racist injustice.

Native American political prisoner Leonard Peltier sent a representative to express his solidarity. Brian Wright-McLeod of the American Indian Movement and the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee pointed to the iron link between the rule of a wealthy few and racist state terror against the impoverished majority. "This is a class system based on class political lines," McLeod told the protesters. "And we see this economic structure widening. They have no jobs for you. You are the new Indians. They have no reservations for you. They have a prison for you."

Internationally, Jamal's case has come to symbolize opposition to the racist barbarism of capital punishment. As PDC representative Peter Stevens said at the Toronto protest:

"The death penalty is a very public act of state terror. It's not about crime, it's about repression.... That's what Ottawa's racist crackdown, its 'law and order' crusade targeting immigrants, is all about. That's what the Reform Party means in its rabid campaign to bring the noose back to this country. And because this racist death penalty is about wholesale repression and fear, working people have a side and a stake in the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. And they have the power to do it. The racially integrated, organized working class have their hands on all the levers of economic power. The ruling class understands that and fears it. For working people, fighting for Mumia Abu-Jamal points toward the necessary fight for a workers state through socialist revolution. In the end that is the only road to freedom." ■

# Young Spartacus

## Down with Political Exclusions and Thuggery!

# Anti-Communist Smears Target Jamal Campaign

The signing of a death warrant against black journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal on June 1 touched off a series of worldwide protests, mobilizing many thousands against this naked state frame-up and the racist death penalty. And this has some ruling-class circles seeing red.

In the U.S., the 16 June *Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page article entitled "Not Much Left: 'The Movement' Is Pretty Still Nowadays," which sneers at a range of "secretive" organiza-



SC photo

**Spartacus Youth Club helps build united front protests in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal.**

tions with "hardly familiar names," including the Spartacist League, the American sister section of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste. Having proclaimed the left dead, the author nevertheless complains that, "The radical-left groups also have a new hero, Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and a convicted cop-killer from Philadelphia who has written a book called 'Live From Death Row.' His dreadlocks currently adorn the cover of almost every radical-left publication."

The *Wall Street Journal* is fully aware that a lot more than the "radical left" has taken up the fight to save Jamal from execution. But the point of this mocking piece is to denigrate and diminish this struggle as it intensifies, by portraying Jamal's supporters as a bunch of wild-eyed crazies grooving over a "cop-killer." This was followed on July 9 by smears and false accusations against left organizations including the SL/U.S. in a *San Francisco Examiner* editorial. And then the *Vancouver Sun*, the weekly *Georgia Straight* and CBC radio chimed in with their own violence-baiting attacks on the Partisan Defense Committee and other anti-racist activists (see page 2).

Sneers and all, articles like the *Wall Street Journal's* indicate

some angst among the powers-that-be over the wave of protests for Jamal. The fact that revolutionary Marxists are playing a prominent role in a campaign against the racist rulers is considered a crime against nature by the capitalist press; it just doesn't jive with the supposed "death of communism."

For over eight years, we have been out front in mobilizing support for Jamal. The TL, PDC and Spartacus Youth Clubs have initiated united-front defense actions on Mumia's behalf, seeking to mobilize others, centrally labor and minorities, to take up his cause. To their credit, in Canada, sections of the anarchist milieu, notably those around Prison News Service, have also actively fought against Jamal's persecution for a number of years. Since the signing of Jamal's death warrant, many other leftist organizations have joined this fight, along with a growing number of trade unions, parliamentarians and civil rights organizations around the world. This is all to the good—the task now is for every organization siding with labor and the oppressed to throw its weight into mobilizing mass protests to stop the execution of this courageous fighter.

### "Leftists" in the Service of the State

At least everyone knows where the bought-and-paid-for bourgeois newspapers are coming from when they try to witch-hunt the left. However, these ruling class attacks on Mumia and his defenders also find their echo among quite a few pliant "leftists," who, like the capitalist exploiters, don't like to see open communists in the forefront of social struggle.

The U.S. co-thinkers of the International Socialists, the International Socialist Organization, fleshed out the insidious intent of this anti-communist witchhunting when, a day after the *Wall Street Journal* article appeared, they violently attacked Spartacist and PDC supporters in Chicago. While our comrades ably defended themselves, the ISO went on to launch a lying campaign, primarily through the Internet, slandering us as "violent" "thugs" who want to "destroy" the workers movement...i.e., people you'd better keep far away from.

As we said then, "The ISO's gangsterism is devastating evidence that their 'support' to the campaign for Jamal isn't worth the paper it's printed on." But SC readers don't have to take our word for it. A recent issue of the Canadian "I.S. Notes" says it all:

"Internationally, there has been growing support for the campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal from the death penalty. Unfortunately, until very recently it was completely dominated by the Partisan Defense Cttee, a Spartacist League front group and some equally unfriendly anarchist groupings.

"With the approach of the date set for Abu-Jamal's execution, Aug. 17, there has been an opening to organize around the issue—preferably without the PDC."

Condemned out of their own mouths, the I.S. manages, unintentionally, to pay tribute to the PDC's work. In contrast, until April 1995, the I.S. didn't breathe Jamal's name. They refused numerous offers to participate in PDC-initiated

united-front activities in his defense. Why?

While venomous hostility against the Spartacists certainly plays a part, there is also the fact that the I.S. is an organization with pervasive illusions in the capitalist state. In Canada they tell anti-fascist protesters to rely on police in the face of fascist attack. The American ISO supports cop "strikes" and calls for cop "unions," while their British mentors brag about their readers circles for prison guards. Such chumminess towards the state's murderous thugs sure doesn't square with the defense of a black militant falsely convicted of killing a cop.

In Vancouver, the I.S. found their "opening" to organize "without the PDC." They discovered a newly formed "Coalition to Save Mumia" started by the Third World Alliance (TWA), a small campus-based group which has issued literature in Jamal's defense for several years, and had participated in PDC-initiated events on behalf of Jamal.

Spartacus Youth Club members attended the first Coalition meetings in early July and pointed to the need to draw the racially integrated working class into the struggle. We stressed that the cause of fighting to save Jamal has been taken up by many and diverse organizations and individuals who otherwise do not share much in common politically. We argued that building the broadest and most powerful united defense possible requires upholding the right for all participants who have come together to save Jamal to raise their own particular views in their own name. Coalitions, on the other hand, necessarily narrow the basis of struggle, and, too often, enforce their own bureaucratic censorship.

As if to prove our point, at the Coalition's first meeting the Communist League, backed by the TWA, outrageously argued that the Coalition should *not* make abolition of the racist death penalty one of its slogans. In pursuit of the "lowest common denominator" to define the Coalition, these people stand in opposition to Mumia Abu-Jamal himself, who has unceasingly tied his own fight to that of the thousands who sit on death row.

Who are these people trying to attract by dropping opposition to the racist death penalty? Is the TWA sensitive to the fact that they harbor at least one member who says that the courageous Bangladeshi woman writer Taslima Nasrin should be put to death at the hands of Islamic fundamentalists? Is the CL hoping to win over pro-death penalty Reformers?

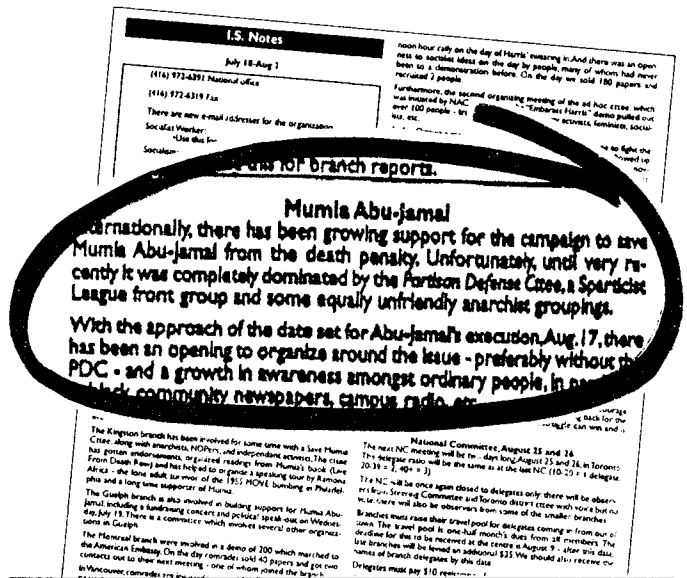
### SYC/PDC Gagged

At the Coalition's first demonstration on July 17, a PDC speech received loud applause. But, in the wake of the bourgeois media's violence-baiting of the PDC and others, some elements in this Coalition saw their chance to go after the communists. On August 4 the SYC went to the Coalition's meeting seeking to coordinate activities around the August 14 demo sponsored by the PDC, the New Democratic Youth of Canada and the Vancouver local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (which the Coalition had previously voted to endorse).

The response? The I.S., CL and TWA moved to bar us from speaking at the Coalition's planned August 10 demonstration. This outrageous gag order passed by only 11-7, and it prompted the first vice president of the Vancouver CUPW to write in protest: "Political exclusionism is not the way to achieve victory in this case. Especially at a time when we need the broadest base of forces dedicated to Mumia's defense." It is noteworthy that while the PDC mobilized the largest contin-

gent on August 10, the CL/I.S./TWA ostentatiously boycotted the PDC-initiated August 14 action.

Like the bourgeois media, who snidely write that Mumia's case is nothing more than "radical chic," these "leftists" are often openly contemptuous of the working class. It is inconceivable to them that the unions and labor officials representing hundreds of thousands of workers would see the fight



### Misnamed 'International Socialists' seek to divide and squander forces rallied to defense campaign.

against Jamal's execution as *their* fight also. In response to our urging the Coalition to participate in the PDC/CUPW/NDY demonstration, one I.S.er whined that he was "tired of hearing about CUPW and mobilizing labor support"!

Anti-communism and exclusionism have always been poison to effective united class struggle, from unionization drives to defense campaigns for class-war prisoners. In the 1930s, liberals led by the NAACP joined with the capitalist press in a campaign of lies against the Communist Party and the International Labor Defense during the campaign to save the Scottsboro Boys—nine black youths in Alabama faced with execution after being falsely accused, in a racist frame-up, of raping two white women. While the CP/ILD mounted an international protest campaign, with millions of workers conducting strikes and mass demonstrations, the NAACP denounced the CP's agitation and propaganda and preached complete reliance on the courts—which meant putting faith in Southern lynch-law "justice." But it was precisely the mass protest of workers and the oppressed around the world—and not the workings of the racist "justice" system—that saved the Scottsboro Boys from legal lynching.

We are revolutionary communists and, absent a broader tide of revolutionary social struggle, larger forces to our right will try to exclude us from any issue they choose to interest themselves in. Now that Jamal's case has become prominent, some leftists would be happy to assist in pushing us reds aside. In doing this they only fuel the red-baiting campaign of the *Wall Street Journal* and their ilk, which is aimed at *spiking the necessary mass protest that is essential in fighting for Jamal's freedom.* We say: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■

## For Quebec Independence!...

(continued from page 1)

oppressed. The forcible confinement of Quebec within Canada has poisoned relations between the English Canadian and Québécois working class. The recognition by the workers of each nation that their respective capitalist rulers—not each other—are the enemy can only come through an independent Quebec.

In the late 1960s/early '70s, opposition to the suppression of national and language rights fueled militant proletarian struggle in Quebec. The Québécois working class emerged as the most combative in all North America. This was underlined in the near-insurrectionary general strike of 1972, which saw whole towns taken over and run by striking workers. But in English Canada, the anti-Quebec chauvinism of the trade-union officialdom and the NDP served to tie the workers to their "own" bourgeoisie in the name of "Canadian unity." This Anglo chauvinism helped impel the Québécois workers increasingly into the arms of the Parti Québécois, the political representative of Quebec's newly emergent francophone bourgeoisie.

Since our inception, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste has actively championed Quebec's right to independence. As we wrote in 1978, when Trudeau again threatened to "use the sword" against Quebec:

"Labor must proclaim its unconditional support for the Québécois' right to self-determination...."

"The Quebec working class is today the most combative on the North American continent. This gives burning importance to the defense of Québécois national rights by English-Canadian and U.S. labor. Such a revolutionary program which combats all forms of social oppression, including the national oppression of the Québécois, is essential to truly unite the English- and French-speaking proletariat of North America."

— "Trudeau Threatens War on Quebec," SC No. 23, February 1978

While unconditionally defending Quebec's national rights, we did not then advocate the separation of Quebec. Our perception was that national antagonisms had not yet become so intense as to make Quebec independence the only means of cutting through these hostilities and bringing the class struggle against capitalism to the fore.

But within the context of an Anglo-chauvinist unitary Canadian state, the national divide *has* poisoned relations between the working class of English Canada and Quebec. The depth of this schism can be amply seen in the parties that currently occupy the opposition benches in parliament. On the one side is the rabidly Anglo-chauvinist Reform Party. On the other is the *indépendantiste* Bloc Québécois. The long-ruling federal Tory party has been obliterated, and the Liberals rule only by virtue of having swept Ontario in the last elections.

The same mutual national suspicions and hatreds which led to this parliamentary shake-up reach deep into the working class. Hundreds of thousands of unionists and other working people in English Canada, disillusioned at the NDP's wholesale capitulation to Bay Street's austerity diktats, abandoned "their" party and cast their votes for the unvarnished chauvinism of Preston Manning's Reform Party in 1993. In Quebec, working-class militancy and combativity has been dampened, submerged into support for the PQ, which was elected for the third time last fall pledging to hold an early referendum on

independence.

These events only confirm that nationalism and chauvinism are, and have long been, a decisive brake on the workers' struggle in both nations. Through an extensive internal discussion on the Quebec national question, the Trotskyist



Canadian Press

**Bigots trample Quebec flag in Brockville, Ontario.**

League/Ligue trotskyste re-evaluated our previous position. A motion adopted at a July plenum of our Central Committee noted in part:

"As revolutionary Marxists who seek to advance the cause of proletarian internationalist class struggle, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste advocates independence for Quebec. Our historic position of upholding Quebec's right to self-determination, while not advocating independence, was at best based on a superficial appreciation of the evolution of a self-conscious Quebec nation and the class struggle within it. Although the question of independence has yet to be put to a referendum vote of the Québécois population, the question was effectively resolved with the implementation of French-only language laws in the 1970s (i.e., the choice of assimilation or separation was decided in favor of the latter)...."

"For Leninists, the advocacy of an independent Quebec is the means to get this question 'off the agenda,' particularly to combat the orgy of Anglo chauvinism in English Canada, but also to foil the aims of the bourgeois nationalists in Quebec who seek to tie the historically combative Québécois proletariat to their coattails. This is the only road to bringing to the fore the real social contradictions between the working class and their 'own' bourgeoisie in either nation, and thereby laying a genuine basis for common class struggle in the future."

### The Development of the Quebec Nation

Quebec was forcibly incorporated into British North America following the defeat of the French garrison on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The British conquerors, who had expelled the French-speaking population of Nova Scotia (the Acadians) some years earlier, subjugated the rest of New France through a deal with the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Centuries of dynastic and commercial warfare between France and England made



anti-French chauvinism a defining feature of the consciousness of the English ruling class. Thus the true founders of the Anglo Canadian state—counterrevolutionary British Loyalist refugees fleeing the American War of Independence—poured into Ontario and the Maritimes with truly hardwired arrogance and bigotry toward the conquered French.

Isolated from the rationalism and anti-clericalism of the Enlightenment, and from the French Revolution of 1789, for well over a century Quebec remained largely a priest-ridden rural backwater. Any indigenous French-speaking bourgeoisie was eliminated as a factor. In 1837, a national-bourgeois revolt, the *Patriote* rebellion, was brutally crushed. Through the nineteenth century, Anglo Canadian (later joined by American) capital gradually displaced the British overlords.

Significant industrialization and urbanization began to change the character of Quebec society by the end of the century, but it took many decades for these developments to find political expression. The weak francophone bourgeoisie was thoroughly integrated with dominant English Canadian capital, while the petty-bourgeois elite remained tied to the church.

The Catholic hierarchy maintained an iron grip on Quebec society, including the working class. For a period in the late 1800s, membership in the Knights of Labour union organization was even declared to be a “mortal sin.” The church continued to exercise direct or indirect control over much of the labor movement right up to the 1950s.

Throughout the long rule of Maurice Duplessis beginning in the 1930s, a period known as the “Great Darkness,” virtually all social discontent was met with state repression. But from World War II on, a series of strikes—notably the illegal five-month battle by 5,000 miners in Asbestos and Thetford Mines in 1949—showed that the proletariat was beginning to stir. Then the death of Duplessis in 1959 gave rise to a sea change in Quebec society.

With the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, a Québécois bourgeoisie emerged, striving to cohere an autonomous political economy of which they would be the apex and chief beneficiaries. The Liberal government of Jean Lesage carried out a series of major nationalizations. Hydro-Québec in particular became the symbol of the growing power of Québécois capital. The new Caisse de Dépôt et de Placement state pension fund created a huge capital pool to invest in building up Québécois-owned industry. Socially, the dominance of the Catholic hierarchy was broken. Birth rates plummeted, from one of the highest in the world to one of the lowest. French-language education was secularized and vastly broadened, including new francophone universities and Cégep junior colleges.

Politically, two distinct trends emerged, reflecting the choices confronting the rapidly modernizing Quebec society: toward assimilation (leading to the eventual disappearance of the nation) or toward separation and the creation of an independent state. The chief representative of the former trend, Pierre Trudeau, sought to use the federal government in Ottawa to incorporate and submerge Quebec into the rest of Canada. Trudeau couched this program in “liberal” trappings of “bilingualism and biculturalism,” necessarily weighted in favor of the economically and politically dominant English-speaking people. While government services in French became available for the first time in much of the country, the mere appearance of French in everyday life (e.g., French translations on cereal boxes) drove English Canadian bigots into a frenzy.

Meanwhile, Trudeau’s answer to *indépendantiste* agitation in Quebec was to send in the army in 1970 and to threaten again in later years to invade Quebec. Today, this legacy is carried forward by his lieutenant, Jean Chrétien.

The key weapon of those who sought to counter the assimilation of Québécois society became language legislation. A common political economy requires a common language, which is also then the vehicle of the culture. Beginning in the late 1960s, the Quebec National Assembly began to pass a series of ever more discriminatory laws, culminating in the PQ’s 1977 Bill 101 which declared, in effect, a unilingual French Quebec. French was made the official language of work, while “foreigners,” including English speakers from elsewhere in Canada, were required to send their children to French schools.

Large sections of Anglo Canadian capital and hundreds of thousands of English speakers decamped down the highway to Toronto and beyond. Not only did the historic anglophone population, centered on the West Island of Montreal, decline sharply, but new immigrants began to be assimilated into French-speaking society. In 1971 only 15 percent of children whose mother tongue was neither French nor English were registered in Quebec public schools where French was the language of instruction. Around this time, there were significant protests among immigrant communities, notably Italians in the Montreal suburb of St-Léonard, for the right to continue to send their children to English schools. But by 1989, over 70 percent of such allophone children were in French-language schools.

In the decades since the Quiet Revolution, Quebec society has been reshaped. The decisive pinnacles of industry and finance are no longer in Anglo Westmount. As the Québécois bourgeoisie continues to consolidate its own separate political economy, the logical end product is the creation of an independent state, a new minor imperialist power à la Austria or Denmark.

### National Chauvinism: Poison to Class Struggle

The utterly anomalous situation where Canada is split on national lines while Quebec has not yet separated produces deep nationalist animosity. The workers in both nations have been driven ever deeper into the clutches of their respective bourgeoisies, undermining the class struggle against capitalism.

The Quebec General Strike of 1972 was the most explosive class conflict in the Canadian state since 1919. Yet it was *opposed* and *denounced* by the leadership of English Canadian labor. In the midst of the strike, the Canadian Labour Congress executive waved the flag of Anglo chauvinism against Quebec labor militancy, declaring:

“It is, therefore, essential that the Congress and its affiliated unions oppose those elements, in any part of Canada, which advocate the destruction of Confederation or a reduction of the federal powers as a means of pursuing selfish regional aims.”

—quoted in *Globe and Mail*, 15 May 1972

As for the NDP, federal leader David Lewis publicly applauded the jailing of the Common Front strike leaders. Betrayed and abandoned in that pivotal struggle by the leadership of English Canadian labor, the militancy of Québécois workers was channeled toward the bourgeois nationalists, leading to the election of the first *péquist* regime of René Lévesque in 1976.

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## For Quebec Independence!...

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Six years later, Québécois workers got a taste of mass union-busting from their "own" PQ government, which slashed wages and ripped up union contracts in the public sector. Fifty thousand angry unionists demonstrated outside the National Assembly with signs reading "Duplessis-Lévesque: Like Father, Like Son." In an article entitled "For a Quebec General



no credit

**In 1983, Common Front public sector workers protest massive union-busting by Lévesque's PQ.**

Strike!" (printed in French and English in *SC* No. 57, March 1983), we wrote: "This critical showdown between Quebec labor and the PQ provides an unprecedented opportunity to win this militant labor movement to a perspective of multinational revolutionary class unity where it is destined to play a *vanguard* role." But the nationalist union tops called off the strikes and the PQ was able to carry through its sweeping attacks, dealing Quebec labor a blow from which it has yet to recover.

Today all three Quebec labor federations are locked in a deadly nationalist embrace with the *hauts bourgeois* Jacques Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard. In rallying round the PQ and Bloc, Québécois workers are responding to the pervasive, ugly Anglo chauvinism that dominates English Canada. Five years ago, the Meech Lake Accord collapsed amid ranting and raving in English Canada against the simple statement that Quebec is a "distinct society." Then came the federal Tories' Charlottetown Accord, supposedly the final attempt to resolve the "constitutional crisis" and end the "Quebec problem." It was rejected by majorities in both nations.

Following the election of the latest PQ government last fall, another upsurge of bigotry has erupted in English Canada. A Québécois woman tourist whose car broke down in an upscale Vancouver neighborhood was brutally beaten by thugs who spotted her Quebec license plates. This summer in Owen Sound, Ontario, a Québécois woman and her family were virtually driven out of town when their home was pelted with eggs and defaced with "Frogs Go Home" written in excrement

on the living room window.

While there have been episodic examples of common class struggle, for example in the federal public-sector strike of 1991, the national divide goes very deep in the organized working class. The vast majority of unions in Quebec are either entirely separate from those in English Canada, or exercise nearly complete autonomy. And it speaks volumes that during this year's rail strike, former Tory cabinet minister Bouchard could get away with grandstanding as a "friend of Quebec workers" by initially opposing federal strikebreaking legislation.

National animosity cripples working-class struggle. As Karl Marx said a long time ago, a nation which oppresses another cannot itself be free. Marx's arguments for Irish independence from England, despite the different particulars, are instructive for the situation in Canada today:

*"...it is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland.... The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland.... The English reaction in England had its roots (as in Cromwell's time) in the subjugation of Ireland."*

—Letter to Engels, 10 December 1869

### Leninism and the National Question

Twentieth-century capitalism has intensified national oppression and exacerbated reactionary national conflicts. Nationalist reaction was a driving force for capitalist restoration in the former workers states of East Europe and the Soviet Union. At the same time, in the wake of counterrevolution, nationalist hostilities have exploded worldwide, along with an escalation of interimperialist rivalries.

The drive by major powers to redivide the world into regional trade blocs and the increasing offshore production in low-wage "Third World" countries underscores the need for communists to champion the rights of oppressed nations. Only by standing forthrightly against the nationalism of an oppressor nation can the proletarian vanguard claim the moral authority to call on workers of an oppressed nation to fight their "own" nationalist leaders, who seek to solidify their place among the exploiters and oppressors.

In a series of major writings, Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin developed the Marxist approach to the national question in the epoch of imperialism, i.e., the epoch of capitalist decay. The tsarist empire was a prisonhouse of peoples, the Great Russian autocracy lording it over millions of Ukrainians, Poles, Georgians and a multitude of other oppressed nationalities. In his "Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (February-May 1914), Lenin wrote:

*"In this situation, the proletariat of Russia is faced with a twofold or, rather, a two-sided task: to combat nationalism of every kind, above all, Great-Russian nationalism; to recognise, not only fully equal rights for all nations in general, but also equality of rights as regards polity, i.e., the right of nations to self-determination, to secession. And at the same time, it is their task, in the interests of a successful struggle against all and every kind of nationalism among all nations, to preserve the unity of the proletarian struggle and the proletarian organisations, amalgamating these organisations into a close-knit international association, despite bourgeois strivings for national exclusiveness.*

*"Complete equality of rights for all nations; the right of nations to self-determination; the unity of the workers of all nations—such is the national programme that Marxism, the experience of the whole world, and the experience*



of Russia, teach the workers.”

While upholding the right to independence, Lenin emphasized that the question whether or not to advocate separation can and must be judged only in the concrete: “The party of the proletariat must decide the latter question quite independently in each particular case, having regard to the interests of social development as a whole and the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism” (“Resolution on the National Question,” May 1917). In Russia, it was clear that national separation or the attainment of any other substantial democratic demand was inconceivable without a thoroughgoing revolution. Thus Lenin advocated to the non-Russian nationalities a course of common struggle against the tsarist autocracy.

Marxist revolutionary Leon Trotsky took a similar position in Spain in 1930-31, where again the possibility of revolution was rapidly unfolding. While upholding the right of Catalonia to self-determination, Trotsky noted that even the most fervent Catalan-separatist worker would find it acceptable to not “divide their forces in the present crisis, which opens such sweeping opportunities to the Spanish proletariat...since it is completely obvious that in the event of the victory of the revolution, it would be ever so much easier than it is today for Catalonia, as well as for other regions, to achieve the right of self-determination” (“Tasks of the Spanish Communists,” May 1930).

But there was a sharp change in the situation a few years later when a new rightist government in Madrid began moving against the Catalan Generalitat regional government. Seeing Catalonia as a crucial bastion against the growing Spanish reaction and fascist danger, Trotsky then called upon his followers to go over to agitating for the proclamation of an independent republic of Catalonia and to demand, in order to guarantee it, the immediate arming of the whole people. This was the way that the proletariat could gain leadership of the oppressed masses, exposing the hesitations of the Generalitat, and thus deal a defeat to reaction. In this specific situation advocacy of independence was a powerful lever to advance the class interests of the proletariat.

In each case the question for Marxists is: how best, under the given historical circumstances, to break the hold of nationalism and chauvinism and turn the workers against their own bourgeoisie, opening the road to revolutionary struggle. The answer is not the same at all times and in all places, nor can a policy for one country be mechanically transposed to another. The differences between English Canada and Quebec are much greater, for example, than those between the Swedes and Norwegians, who separated peaceably in 1905, or between the Russians and Ukrainians, whose Slavic languages are largely mutually intelligible (not to mention the Croats and Serbs who speak the *same* language!).

The closest contemporary parallel would appear to be the Walloon-Flemish division that is Belgium. National/linguistic antagonisms in that country have significantly deepened over recent decades, and are today a strategic obstacle to working-class struggle against capitalism.

In Canada and Quebec, the experience of at least the past two decades demonstrates clearly that successful proletarian struggle demands separation into two independent nation-states. Thus regardless of the outcome of the coming referendum, and in general in the future, we will continue to advocate Quebec independence. At the same time, we recognize that

self-determination is a bourgeois-democratic right and as such is subordinate to the broader interests of proletarian revolution. Thus our position advocating Quebec independence could dramatically change in any case or at any juncture where this would cut against the historic interests of the proletariat.

For example, in 1916 Lenin, who had fought Rosa Luxemburg’s rejection of the slogan of Poland’s right to self-determination, opposed calling for the independence of Poland in the context of World War I. He emphasized that Poland’s “independence today is ‘impracticable’ without wars or revolutions. To be in favour of an all-European war merely for the sake of restoring Poland is to be a nationalist of the worst sort...” (“The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up,” July 1916).

Later, following the Russian Revolution of 1917, the newly independent bourgeois regimes in the Caucasus secured direct imperialist military backing, posing a mortal threat to the new Soviet workers state. The Bolsheviks eventually took power in the region through a combination of local uprisings and Red Army intervention, over the opposition of “nationalist” counterrevolutionaries. As Trotsky wrote two decades later, “Forceful sovietization was justified: the safeguarding of the socialist revolution comes before formal democratic principles” (“Balance Sheet of the Finnish Events” [April 1940] in *In Defense of Marxism*).

Another example is provided by the Ukraine on the eve of World War II. In the spring and summer of 1939, Trotsky proposed the slogan of an “independent Soviet Ukraine.” Through this, he sought to undercut and reverse the growth of right-wing Ukrainian nationalism, while at the same time believing that the fight against national oppression could serve as a stimulus for workers political revolution in the Ukraine in advance of the Russian core of the Soviet degenerated workers state. But this was the moment when the fate of all the peoples of East Europe was about to be decided by the looming war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Under these circumstances, there was simply no room to create an independent workers and peasants Ukraine—giving Trotsky’s proposed slogan (which he dropped with the Stalin-Hitler pact and the onset of the Second World War) an unreal quality. (See “On Trotsky’s Advocacy of an Independent Ukraine,” *Spartacist* No. 49-50, Winter 1993-94.)

## Quebec and the Left

The history of the left in Canada vis à vis Quebec is not a good one. The founding Canadian Communist Party, which had essentially no roots among Québécois workers, failed to assert the right of self-determination for Quebec. After its Stalinist degeneration, the CP thoroughly embraced Canadian nationalism, and today its rump remnants in English Canada continue to proclaim the need for a “united” Canada.

The Mao-Stalinist organizations which grew explosively in Quebec in the 1970s—and blew apart just as explosively a few years later—also capitulated to the unitary Anglo-chauvinist state. Their Canadian nationalism flowed from the anti-Communist position that the Soviet Union was the “main enemy” of the oppressed. Thus, they fell right into the arms of their own “democratic” imperialist rulers. The grievously misnamed Workers Communist Party went so far as to call for strengthening the Canadian armed forces to counter the “Soviet threat” to Canadian sovereignty!

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## For Quebec Independence!...

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"Canadian unity" has of course long been the cry of the wretchedly right-wing social-democratic NDP and its Cooperative Commonwealth Federation predecessors. And "left" social democrats like the International Socialists (I.S.) follow in the wake of their NDP big brothers. Three years ago, the I.S. actually called for a Yes vote to the Tories' Charlottetown Accord, the only ostensibly Marxist group to rally around this defense of the status quo in imperialist Canada. Not surprisingly, the I.S. today denies that national antagonisms are of much consequence, blithely declaring that "anti-Quebec sentiment in English Canada is wide, but not deep" and similarly, "Nationalism has wide appeal among Québécois but the roots don't run deep" (*Socialist Worker*, October 1994). Their pompous and empty "unite and fight" rhetoric merely covers their capitulation to the Anglo-chauvinist status quo.

Beginning in the 1930s, the Trotskyists in Canada did uphold Quebec's right to self-determination, though the national question was far from the center of their propaganda and agitation. By the 1960s, when a serious reassessment of the question began in the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSA/LSO), the organization had undergone political degeneration in the direction of tailing non-proletarian forces, denying the necessity of building a Leninist revolutionary party. In the ensuing splits, unifications and re-splits, all sides embraced Québécois nationalism.

The LSA/LSO proclaimed that, at least for Quebec, "consistent nationalism leads to socialism." But Marxists understand that nationalism is a bourgeois ideology which asserts that one's own people has special, pre-eminent rights over others. Thus, in fact, consistent nationalism leads to fascism. In Quebec this century, this is personified by figures like the anti-Semitic bigot and clerical-nationalist Abbé Lionel Groulx, and Adrien Arcand, an intimate of Duplessis who led the fascist Blueshirt bands in the 1930s. And while Arcand may be currently out of favor in leading Quebec nationalist circles, Abbé Groulx retains an honored place in the bourgeois nationalists' pantheon.

The LSA/LSO championed mainstream Quebec nationalism, centering their agitation on the call for a unilingual French Quebec. Their factional opponents in the Revolutionary Marxist Group and Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire (RMG/GMR), aligned with the centrist European majority of the United Secretariat, chased after more left-wing elements within the nationalist movement. Both wings supported the anti-democratic French language laws, and often denounced the PQ for not being nationalist enough. The RMG in English Canada and the GMR in Quebec were completely separate organizations, an open repudiation of Lenin's fight to build one, *multinational* revolutionary party to take on and defeat the existing capitalist state power.

Today, with any "radical" edge to the Quebec national movement long a thing of the past, the GMR's descendant, Gauche Socialiste, has abandoned its rhetorical references to revolutionary class struggle. Three years ago, Gauche Socialiste even tried to build a joint youth group with the bourgeois PQ. And now they have thoroughly submerged themselves into the social-democratic nationalist Parti de la Démocratie Socialiste (formerly the Quebec NDP).

From the origins of our tendency in Canada in the early

1970s we correctly attacked the fake-Trotskyists' capitulation to nationalism, counterposing the struggle for Marxist proletarian internationalism. Our 1976 document "Quebec Nationalism and the Class Struggle" (see SC No. 12, January 1977) unconditionally defended Quebec's right to self-determination, upheld equal language rights for all including francophones in English Canada and anglophones in Quebec, and asserted the need for common class struggle pointing toward North American socialist revolution.

Throughout, we have sought to chart a course of revolutionary class struggle for the proletariat in both nations, emphasizing that this required a hard fight against chauvinism in English Canada and a break with bourgeois nationalism in Quebec. However we erred in not recognizing, from the outset, that it was in fact necessary to call for the independence of Quebec. We tended to slip into accepting a false equation of advocacy of independence with our fake-Trotskyist opponents' political support to nationalism. And we underestimated the sheer depth of the national divide separating the working class of English Canada and Quebec.

### Quebec Independence and Canada's Future

There is much speculation that Quebec's separation could accelerate already strong centrifugal forces, leading to the breakup of English Canada and its unification in whole or in part with the U.S. We are strategically indifferent to such a development, and certainly think it has absolutely no bearing on the question of advocating independence for Quebec.

The unification of English Canada with the U.S. poses no particular question of principle for Marxists other than it be democratically arrived at. We are far from indifferent, however, if the principal aspect of such an act is to strengthen American imperialism, particularly in the face of the sharp rise of inter-imperialist rivalries. In this regard, the statement in the document adopted by the Second International Conference of the International Communist League that "we are opposed to the disintegration of English Canada which at present could only strengthen the power of U.S. imperialism" is truncated and correspondingly potentially one-sided.

In the 1970s, American ruling circles expressed concern about the instability which could be ushered in by the creation of an independent Quebec. While Washington hardly considered René Lévesque a Fidel Castro of the north, it was worried by the widespread labor and leftist radicalism which was shaking Quebec at the time. More broadly, in the context of international Cold War, the U.S. sought to maintain Canada as a reliable forward base for war against the USSR.

Now, with the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, this is no longer so important, especially as Parizeau, Bouchard & Co. have sworn fealty to NATO and other military pacts. Additionally, the North American Free Trade Agreement creates a framework for continued and strengthened economic ties whether Quebec is independent or not—not least, access to relatively cheap hydro-electric power.

Nonetheless, during his recent visit to Canada, U.S. president Clinton again made clear Washington's preference for a "united" and independent Canada. Ottawa has proved extremely useful over the years as a soft cop for American imperialism, the "peacekeepers" who have provided a front for the U.S. from Korea to Vietnam to Africa and the Middle East. But in the end, Wall Street could care less whether Montreal bank-

# Native Peoples Caught in Nationalist Crossfire

In 1990, the Quebec Sûreté police staged an armed assault on Mohawks seeking to protect an ancestral burial ground near Oka. Native defenders fought back and drove off the cops. Liberal premier Robert Bourassa, supported by the Parti Québécois, then appealed for federal military intervention. The army deployed thousands of soldiers backed by armor and air support, surrounding the Mohawk community of Kanasetake for weeks. While Ottawa's army laid siege to Kanasetake, howling mobs of up to 5,000 gathered in Châteauguay, near another Mohawk community, Kahnawake, on Montreal's South Shore. Egged on by racist demagogues including Klansmen, this pogromist *racaille* hurled rocks, burned Natives in effigy and shouted nationalist slogans like "Québec aux Québécois!"

Five years later, the same racist capitalist rulers in Ottawa who sent the army against the Oka Mohawks, who created and maintain the brutal reservation system and the dehumanizing Indian Act, are now trying to manipulate the Native peoples of Quebec as a chauvinist wedge against Quebec independence. For their part, Quebec's nationalist leaders intend to forcibly incorporate "their" Native peoples into an independent Quebec. They have particularly asserted "national" claims to vast areas of northern Quebec which were never part of the historic territory of the French-speaking population.

Both Quebec City and Ottawa, from mutually hostile perspectives, understand the basic economic fact that the rivers of northern Quebec are the lifeblood of modern Quebec industry, feeding the power generating stations of the James Bay basin. And this land has been occupied for centuries by Native peoples, today scattered in small communities across the Northern Shield. Thus, inevitably, they have become a football in a cynical, high stakes, chauvinist game. No matter who wins it, the Native peoples will surely lose.

To sweeten the pot, Ottawa continues to hold out the promise of "Native self-government." Coming from those who have crushed the aboriginal peoples underfoot since before Confederation, this can in most cases only mean

"transforming" the barren reserves into South Africa-style bantustans. Such "self-governing homelands" will still be stalked by the poverty and unemployment, the disease, alcoholism and early death which have been the fate of Native peoples under racist Canadian capitalism. Yet, grotesque as it seems just five years after Oka, some aboriginal leaders have bought into Ottawa's fraudulent "liberalism" toward Native demands, suggesting that in the event of Quebec separation they would appeal for intervention by the Canadian army. Trotskyists, of course, would adamantly oppose this.

Almost all major Native groups—among them the Inuit, Cree, Mohawks and Montagnais—plan to hold referendums on whether or not to remain in an independent Quebec. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste upholds the right of the Native peoples to decide their own fate. In areas where they are the concentrated population, we assert their right to the fullest possible regional autonomy, i.e., the genuine right to govern their territories and to control the land and resources therein. These rights may run up against developments—railways, hydroelectric projects, oil pipelines—which are in the broader interest of working people in society at large. In such cases, the Native peoples should receive generous compensation based on their completely consensual agreement.

However, in addressing the current, concrete "choice" between being part of an independent Quebec or remaining a part of English Canada, our primary point of departure is to underline that within the framework of racist capitalist rule this simply means the "right" of the aboriginal populations to determine by whom they will be oppressed and brutalized. In fighting to build a revolutionary party that acts as the "tribune of the people," we seek to mobilize the proletariat in both English Canada and Quebec in defense of Native rights. Ultimately, only socialist revolution can shatter the heavy chains of racist capitalist oppression which have dragged the Native peoples into degradation and misery, and usher in an egalitarian socialist society which can redress centuries of injustice. ■

ers and industrialists speak French or English—as long as the dividends and interest payments are in convertible currency and are paid.

## For North American Socialist Revolution!

As in 1980, there has been much jockeying and maneuvering among Quebec's separatist leaders over the wording of the question to be put to a referendum vote this fall. Not surprisingly, the Québécois are a bit ambivalent about departing—especially with one-quarter of the Canadian national debt as their inheritance from having been under the English for so long. Comedian Yvon Deschamps captured the contradiction in his famous quip that what the Québécois really want is "an independent Quebec within a strong and united Canada."

But whatever the conjunctural sentiment, the fact remains that Quebec has, in all concrete ways, insisted on *la survivance* (survival), necessarily through compacting an insular franco-phone culture and society. And in English Canada, the chauvinist outcry against Quebec's assertion of national sovereignty erects profound barriers to proletarian class struggle. It

is necessary, and has been for quite some time, to cut the Gordian Knot.

Nationalism and chauvinism have been the key strands in the ropes which bind the English-speaking and French-speaking workers to their "own" capitalist enemies, setting them against each other, and against anyone else who is "not us." Thus French-speaking Haitians in Montreal, English-speaking Jamaicans in Toronto, Asians in Vancouver, aboriginal peoples struggling to assert their rights, are all victims of racist abuse and open state terror "justified" in large part by the vicious logic of nationalism which currently defines and bedevils this country.

We advocate independence for Quebec to help clear the way for united struggle by the racially integrated working class of the whole continent against the system of exploitation and oppression that threatens the future of all humanity. For an independent Quebec! For class struggle against *all* the capitalist exploiters, from Bay Street and Ottawa, to Rue St-Jacques and Quebec City, to Wall Street and Washington! Forward in the fight for North American socialist revolution! ■

## Chauvinisme national : poison pour la lutte de classe

# Pour l'indépendance du Québec !

En octobre 70, il y a vingt-cinq ans, le ministre du cabinet libéral Pierre Laporte et le diplomate britannique James Cross étaient kidnappés par le Front de libération du Québec, un petit groupe de militants séparatistes québécois. Utilisant le prétexte de la «crise du FLQ», le gouvernement fédéral de Pierre Trudeau imposait la loi des Mesures de Guerre et envoyait l'armée occuper Montréal. Prenant d'assaut maisons et appartements, les militaires d'Ottawa raflèrent, l'arme au poing, des centaines de syndicalistes et d'activistes de gauche et les jetèrent en prison, où ils furent détenus au secret. Leur «crime» : l'association avec l'idée que la nation québécoise opprimée a le droit à disposer d'elle-même. De fait, l'assujettissement du Québec, une des pierres angulaires de l'État capitaliste canadien, était brutalement mis en lumière par l'imposition de la loi martiale.

L'existence de deux nations séparées de plus en plus différentes, dont l'une opprime l'autre, continue de dessiner le paysage politique de ce pays et a affreusement sapé les luttes de la classe ouvrière. En tant que marxistes révolutionnaires, nous défendons inconditionnellement les droits nationaux du peuple québécois, tout en nous opposant à toute forme de nationalisme et de chauvinisme, qui étranglent la lutte contre l'exploitation capitaliste. Nous cherchons à faire avancer la cause de tous les travailleurs par la construction d'un parti ouvrier révolutionnaire, tribun des opprimés. Le confinement forcé du Québec à l'intérieur du Canada a empoisonné les rapports entre les travailleurs canadiens anglais et québécois. Seul un Québec indépendant peut permettre de montrer aux travailleurs de chaque nation que leurs ennemis sont leurs dirigeants capitalistes respectifs et non les travailleurs de l'autre nation.

À la fin des années 60 et au début des années 70, l'opposition à l'étouffement des droits nationaux et linguistiques alimenta, au Québec, une lutte prolétarienne combative. La classe ouvrière québécoise émergea en fait comme la plus combative d'Amérique du Nord. Une illustration en est fournie par la grève générale quasi insurrectionnelle de 1972 au cours de laquelle les travailleurs en grève s'emparèrent et prirent la direction de villes entières. Mais, au Canada anglais, le chauvinisme anti-québécois des responsables syndicaux et du NPD servit, au nom de «l'unité canadienne», à enchaîner les travailleurs à «leur» propre bourgeoisie. C'est ce même chauvinisme anglophone qui aida à pousser de plus en plus les travailleurs québécois dans les bras du Parti québécois, le représentant politique de la nouvelle bourgeoisie francophone émergeant au Québec.

Dès sa fondation, notre organisation, la Ligue trotskyste/Trotskyist League, s'est faite activement le champion du droit du Québec à l'indépendance. Comme nous l'écrivions en 1978, quand Trudeau menaçait à nouveau d'utiliser «l'épée» contre le Québec :

«La classe ouvrière doit proclamer son soutien inconditionnel au droit des Québécois à l'autodétermination [...]. «La classe ouvrière du Québec est aujourd'hui la plus combative du continent nord-américain. Cela donne une importance décisive à la défense des droits nationaux des Québécois par le mouvement ouvrier canadien-anglais et américain. Un tel programme révolutionnaire, qui combat toute forme d'oppression sociale, y compris l'oppression nationale des Québécois, est indispensable pour réaliser vraiment l'unité du prolétariat anglophone et francophone d'Amérique du Nord.»

— «Trudeau menace de faire la guerre au Québec»,  
SC n° 23, février 1978

Tout en défendant les droits nationaux du Québec, nous ne plaidions pas alors pour sa séparation. Notre perception de la situation était que les antagonismes nationaux n'atteignaient pas encore le degré d'intensité faisant de l'indépendance du Québec le seul moyen de contrer ces antagonismes et mettre en avant la lutte de classe contre le capitalisme.

Pourtant, dans le cadre de l'État canadien unitaire et anglo-chauvin, la division nationale a *bel et bien* empoisonné les rapports entre les travailleurs au Canada anglais et au Québec. La profondeur de ce schisme est clairement illustrée par les partis qui occupent présentement les bancs de l'opposition parlementaire. D'un côté, on trouve le Parti réformiste, chauvin anglophone forcé, et, de l'autre, le Bloc québécois indépendantiste. Aux dernières élections, le Parti conservateur fédéral a été éliminé après un long règne, et les Libéraux ne durent la victoire qu'à leur raz-de-marée en Ontario.

La haine et la suspicion nationales réciproques qui ont amené ce réaligement parlementaire pénètrent aussi dans les



Presse canadienne

**Des soldats de l'armée canadienne occupent l'hôtel de ville de Montréal pendant les luttes sociales de 1969.**

profondeurs de la classe ouvrière. Des centaines de milliers de syndicalistes et d'autres travailleurs du Canada anglais, désillusionnés par la totale capitulation du NPD devant les diktats d'austérité de Bay Street, ont abandonné «leur» parti en 1993 et voté pour le chauvinisme sans équivoque des Réformistes de Preston Manning. Au Québec, la combativité de la classe ouvrière a été étouffée et dévoyée dans un soutien au PQ, élu à l'automne dernier pour la troisième fois en promettant l'organisation rapide d'un référendum sur l'indépendance.

Ces événements ne font que confirmer que le nationalisme et le chauvinisme constituent un frein décisif à la lutte des travailleurs des deux nations, et ce depuis longtemps. Après une importante discussion interne sur la question nationale québécoise, nous, Ligue trotskyste/Trotskyist League, avons réévalué notre position antérieure. Une résolution adoptée par un plénum de notre comité central en juillet notait, entre autres :

«En tant que marxistes révolutionnaires cherchant à faire avancer la cause de la lutte de classe internationaliste prolétarienne, la Ligue trotskyste/Trotskyist League appelle à l'indépendance du Québec. Notre position historique en défense du droit du Québec à l'autodétermination, mais sans appeler à l'indépendance, était au mieux fondée sur une appréciation superficielle de l'évolution d'une nation québécoise consciente d'elle-même et de la lutte des classes en son sein. Même si la question de l'indépendance n'a toujours pas été soumise par référendum à la population québécoise, la question a été effectivement résolue avec la mise en œuvre de lois imposant l'unilinguisme français dans les années 70 (en d'autres termes, le choix entre l'assimilation et la séparation a été fait au profit de cette dernière) [...].

«Pour les léninistes, l'appel à l'indépendance du Québec est le moyen de retirer cette question "de l'ordre du jour" afin, surtout, de combattre l'orgie de chauvinisme anglophone au Canada anglais, mais également de déjouer les visées des nationalistes bourgeois au Québec, qui cherchent à s'enchaîner le prolétariat québécois historiquement combatif. C'est le seul moyen de mettre en lumière les véritables contradictions sociales entre les classes ouvrières des deux nations et "leurs" propres bourgeoisies, jetant ainsi les bases véritables d'une lutte de classe commune dans l'avenir.»

## Le développement de la nation québécoise

Le Québec fut incorporé de force dans l'Amérique du Nord britannique suite à la défaite de la garnison française dans les plaines d'Abraham en 1759. Les conquérants britanniques qui avaient, quelques années plus tôt, expulsé la population francophone (acadienne) de Nouvelle-Écosse se soumièrent le reste de la Nouvelle-France, en concluant un marché avec la hiérarchie catholique romaine. Des siècles de guerres dynastiques et commerciales entre la France et l'Angleterre firent du chauvinisme anti-français l'une des caractéristiques fondamentales de la conscience de la classe dirigeante anglaise. Ainsi, les vrais fondateurs de l'État anglophone canadien, des réfugiés contre-révolutionnaires loyaux à la Couronne britannique fuyant la Guerre d'indépendance américaine, se déversèrent dans les Maritimes et l'Ontario et y apportèrent une arrogance et un chauvinisme purs et durs contre les Français conquis.

À l'écart du rationalisme et de l'anticléricalisme des Lumières et de la Révolution française de 1789, pendant plus d'un siècle, le Québec n'était en majeure partie qu'un arrière-pays rural infesté de curés. Toute bourgeoisie francophone indigène avait été éliminée en tant que facteur. En 1837, la révolte nationale bourgeoise des Patriotes fut écrasée sans pitié. Au



Ryan Remiorz/Presse canadienne

## Parade de la Fête nationale, Montréal, 24 juin 1995.

cours du XIXe siècle, le capital anglo-canadien (rejoint plus tard par le capital américain) supplanta graduellement les maîtres britanniques.

Vers la fin du siècle, une industrialisation et une urbanisation importantes allaient commencer à changer le caractère de la société québécoise, mais ce développement n'allait trouver son expression politique qu'après plusieurs décennies. La faible bourgeoisie francophone était entièrement intégrée au capital canadien anglais dominant et l'élite petite-bourgeoise restait liée à l'Église.

La hiérarchie catholique maintint son emprise sur la société québécoise, y compris sur la classe ouvrière. Il fut même un temps, à la fin des années 1800, où être membre de l'organisation syndicale des Chevaliers du Travail était considéré comme un péché mortel. L'Église continua d'exercer un contrôle direct ou indirect sur une bonne partie du mouvement syndical jusqu'aux années 1950.

Au cours de la longue période du règne de Maurice Duplessis, à partir des années 30, qu'on dénomma la «Grande Noirceur», pratiquement toute forme de mécontentement social se heurtait à la répression de l'État. Mais, à partir de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, une série de grèves, dont en particulier la lutte illégale de 5 mois de 5000 mineurs d'Asbestos et de Thetford Mines en 1949, démontrèrent que le prolétariat commençait à s'agiter. Puis, en 1959, la mort de Duplessis provoqua un changement de cap dans la société québécoise.

La Révolution tranquille des années 60 a permis l'émergence d'une bourgeoisie québécoise, s'efforçant de mettre en place une économie politique autonome dont elle serait le centre et le principal bénéficiaire. Le gouvernement libéral de Jean Lesage effectua une série de grandes nationalisations. Hydro-Québec devint particulièrement le symbole de la puissance croissante du capital québécois. La nouvelle Caisse de dépôt et de placement, qui gérait le nouveau régime de retraite, créa un vaste réservoir de capital pour investir dans la construction d'une industrie possédée par les Québécois. Sur le plan social, la domination de la hiérarchie catholique fut brisée : le taux de natalité s'effondra, passant de l'un des plus élevés à l'un des plus bas au monde; l'enseignement en français fut laïcisé et

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## Québec...

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considérablement élargi, entre autres avec de nouvelles universités et les cégeps.

Sur le plan politique, on vit l'émergence de deux tendances distinctes, chacune reflétant l'une des options auxquelles faisait face une société québécoise en modernisation rapide : vers l'assimilation (menant à terme à la disparition de la nation) ou vers la séparation et la création d'un État indépendant. Le principal représentant de la première tendance, Pierre Trudeau, chercha à utiliser le gouvernement fédéral d'Ottawa pour incorporer et submerger le Québec dans le reste du Canada. Trudeau donna à ce programme des atours «libéraux», «le bilinguisme et le biculturalisme», qui favorisait nécessairement le peuple anglophone dominant sur les plans économique et politique. Tandis que, pour la première fois, on pouvait avoir accès à des services gouvernementaux en français dans de grandes parties du pays, la seule apparition du français dans la vie quotidienne, comme la traduction en français des indications figurant sur les boîtes de céréales, provoqua la colère frénétique des chauvins canadiens anglais. Au même moment, la réponse de Trudeau à l'agitation indépendantiste au Québec fut d'envoyer l'armée en 1970 et, plus tard, de menacer à nouveau d'envahir le Québec. C'est ce leg qui est aujourd'hui maintenu par son lieutenant, Jean Chrétien.

L'arme clé de ceux qui cherchaient à contrer l'assimilation de la société québécoise devint la législation linguistique. Une économie politique commune exige une langue commune, qui devient aussi de cette manière le véhicule de la culture. Dès la fin des années 60, l'Assemblée nationale du Québec commença à passer une série de lois, qui sont devenues de plus en plus discriminatoires et dont l'apogée fut la Loi 101 du PQ en 1977 qui déclarait, dans les faits, un Québec unilingue français. On imposa le français comme langue officielle au travail et on exigea des «étrangers», y compris des anglophones venant d'autres régions du Canada, qu'ils envoient leurs enfants à l'école française.

Une bonne partie du capital anglo-canadien et des centaines de milliers d'anglophones décampèrent, prenant l'autoroute qui mène à Toronto et au-delà. Non seulement la population anglophone historique, concentrée dans le West Island de Montréal, diminua fortement, mais aussi les nouveaux immigrants commencèrent à s'assimiler dans la société francophone. En 1971, seulement 15% des enfants dont la langue maternelle n'était ni le français ni l'anglais étaient inscrits dans des écoles publiques québécoises où le français était la langue d'instruction. Au cours de cette période, on vit d'importants mouvements de protestations dans les communautés immigrées, notamment chez les Italiens de St-Léonard, dans la banlieue de Montréal, pour le droit de continuer à envoyer leurs enfants à l'école anglaise. En 1989, néanmoins, plus de 70% de ces enfants allophones fréquentaient les écoles françaises.

Au cours des décennies qui ont suivi la Révolution tranquille, la société québécoise a été remodelée. Les grands décideurs industriels et financiers ne se trouvent plus dans les résidences anglophones de Westmount. La poursuite par la bourgeoisie québécoise de la consolidation de sa propre économie politique séparée mène logiquement à la création d'un État indépendant, une nouvelle puissance impérialiste mineure de type Autriche ou Danemark.

## Le chauvinisme national, poison pour la lutte de classe

La situation totalement anormale d'un Canada scissionné suivant des lignes nationales et d'un Québec ne s'étant pas encore séparé produit de profondes animosités nationalistes. Les travailleurs des deux nations tombent toujours plus profondément sous la griffe de leur bourgeoisie respective, sapant ainsi la lutte de classe contre le capitalisme.

La grève générale de 1972 au Québec fut le conflit de classe le plus explosif qu'ait connu l'État canadien depuis 1919. La direction du mouvement ouvrier canadien anglais s'est pourtant *opposée* à cette grève et l'a *dénoncée*. En plein milieu de la grève, le conseil exécutif du Congrès du Travail du Canada brandit le drapeau du chauvinisme anglais contre la combativité ouvrière québécoise et déclara :

«Il est donc essentiel que le Congrès et ses syndicats affiliés s'opposent aux éléments qui, où que ce soit au Canada, plaident pour la destruction de la Confédération ou pour une réduction des pouvoirs fédéraux afin de poursuivre des objectifs régionaux égoïstes.»

—cité dans le *Globe and Mail*, 15 mai 1972

Pour ce qui est du dirigeant fédéral du NPD, David Lewis, il a applaudi publiquement à l'emprisonnement des dirigeants des grèves du Front commun. La combativité des travailleurs québécois, trahis et abandonnés dans cette lutte centrale par la direction du mouvement ouvrier canadien anglais, fut canalisée vers les nationalistes bourgeois et conduisit à l'élection du premier gouvernement péquiste de René Lévesque en 1976.

Six ans plus tard, «leur» propre gouvernement péquiste, qui sabra dans les salaires et déchira les conventions collectives du secteur public, fit goûter aux travailleurs québécois du brisage de syndicat de masse. Cinquante mille syndicalistes en colère manifestèrent devant l'Assemblée nationale avec des panneaux disant «Duplessis-Lévesque : tel père, tel fils». Dans un article intitulé «Pour une grève générale au Québec !», publié en anglais et en français dans *SC* n° 57 (mars 1983), nous écrivions : «Cette épreuve de force cruciale entre les travailleurs québécois et le PQ fournit une occasion sans précédent de gagner ce mouvement ouvrier combatif à une perspective d'unité de classe révolutionnaire multinationale dans laquelle il est destiné à jouer un rôle d'avant-garde.» Mais les dirigeants syndicaux nationalistes annulèrent les grèves et le PQ fut en mesure de mettre en oeuvre ses attaques tous azimuts, portant au mouvement ouvrier québécois un coup dont il ne s'est pas encore remis.

Aujourd'hui, les trois centrales syndicales québécoises donnent un baiser de la mort nationaliste aux hauts bourgeois Jacques Parizeau et Lucien Bouchard. Le ralliement des travailleurs québécois autour du PQ et du Bloc est une réponse au chauvinisme vil et profond qui domine au Canada anglais. Il y a cinq ans, l'Accord du Lac Meech s'est écroulé sous les hauts cris poussés au Canada anglais contre l'affirmation toute simple que le Québec est une «société distincte». Puis vint l'Accord de Charlottetown des Conservateurs fédéraux, soi-disant la dernière tentative de résoudre la «crise constitutionnelle» et de mettre fin au «problème québécois», accord rejeté par la majorité des deux nations.

Suite à l'élection du dernier gouvernement péquiste à l'automne dernier, une autre poussée de chauvinisme a fait éruption au Canada anglais. Une touriste québécoise dont la voiture était tombée en panne dans un quartier huppé de



Vancouver a été brutalement frappée par des voyous qui avaient repéré sa plaque d'immatriculation québécoise. Cet été, à Owen Sound, Ontario, une Québécoise et sa famille ont été pratiquement chassées de la ville après que leur maison fut criblée d'oeufs et défigurée par le slogan «Frogs Go Home» écrit avec des excréments sur la fenêtre du salon.

On a vu plusieurs exemples épisodiques de luttes de classe communes, telle la grève des fonctionnaires fédéraux de 1991, mais le gouffre national est très profond dans la classe ouvrière organisée. La grande majorité des syndicats du Québec soit sont entièrement séparés de ceux du Canada anglais, soit fonctionnent avec une autonomie quasi complète. Cela en dit très long que l'ancien ministre du cabinet conservateur Bouchard ait pu facilement réussir à se faire passer pour «un ami des travailleurs québécois», en s'opposant initialement à la législation de brisage de grève fédérale lors de la grève du rail de cette année.

L'animosité nationale paralyse la lutte de la classe ouvrière. Comme l'a dit Karl Marx il y a longtemps, une nation qui en opprime une autre ne peut elle-même être libre. Les arguments mis en avant par Marx en faveur de l'indépendance de l'Irlande vis-à-vis de l'Angleterre sont, malgré les spécificités, riches d'enseignements pour la situation actuelle du Canada :

«Il est de l'intérêt direct, absolu de la classe ouvrière anglaise de se défaire de ses liens actuels avec l'Irlande [...]. La classe ouvrière anglaise ne fera jamais rien tant qu'elle ne se sera pas défaita de l'Irlande [...]. La réaction anglaise en Angleterre (comme du temps de Cromwell) avait son origine dans l'asservissement de l'Irlande.»

—Lettre à Engels, 10 décembre 1869

## Le léninisme et la question nationale

Le capitalisme du XXe siècle a intensifié l'oppression nationale et exacerbé les conflits nationaux réactionnaires. La réaction nationaliste fut une force motrice pour la restauration du capitalisme dans les anciens États ouvriers d'Europe de l'Est et d'Union soviétique. Au même moment, dans le sillage de la contre-révolution, les hostilités nationalistes se déchaînaient partout dans le monde, en même temps que s'aspéraient les rivalités interimpérialistes.

La ruée des grandes puissances pour rediviser le monde en blocs commerciaux régionaux et la croissance de la production à l'étranger, dans des pays du «tiers monde» à bas salaires, soulignent la nécessité pour les communistes de se faire les champions des droits des nations opprimées. Ce n'est qu'en s'opposant résolument au nationalisme de la nation opprimante que l'avant-garde prolétarienne peut prétendre à l'autorité morale lui permettant d'appeler les travailleurs d'une nation opprimée à combattre «leurs» propres dirigeants nationalistes, qui ne cherchent qu'à consolider leur place parmi les exploités et les oppresseurs.

Dans une série d'écrits importants, le dirigeant bolchévique VI. Lénine a développé l'approche marxiste de la question nationale à l'époque de l'impérialisme, qui est l'époque de la décadence capitaliste. L'empire tsariste était une prison des peuples, l'autocratie grand-russe dominant des millions d'Ukrainiens, de Polonais, de Géorgiens et une multitude d'autres nationalités opprimées. Dans «Du droit des nations à disposer d'elles-mêmes» (février-mai 1914), Lénine écrivait :

«Cet état de choses assigne au prolétariat de Russie une double tâche, ou plutôt une lutte sur deux fronts : lutter contre tout nationalisme et, au premier chef, contre le nationalisme grand-russe; reconnaître non seulement la complète égalité en droits de toutes les nations en général,



Sperling/APC

**Local syndical à Asbestos en 1949. La grève de l'amiante marqua l'entrée définitive de la classe ouvrière dans la vie politique du Québec.**

mais aussi leur droit égal à édifier un État, c'est-à-dire reconnaître le droit des nations à disposer d'elles-mêmes, à se séparer; et à côté de cela, précisément pour assurer le succès de la lutte contre toute espèce de nationalisme dans toutes les nations, sauvegarder l'unité de la lutte du prolétariat et des organisations prolétariennes et leur fusion la plus étroite dans une communauté internationale, en dépit des tendances de la bourgeoisie à promouvoir un particularisme national.

«Égalité complète des nations; droit des nations à disposer d'elles-mêmes; union des ouvriers de toutes les nations : voilà le programme national enseigné aux ouvriers par le marxisme, par l'expérience du monde entier et l'expérience de la Russie.»

Tout en défendant le droit à l'indépendance, Lénine soulignait que la question de savoir s'il fallait ou non appeler à la séparation ne peut et ne doit être jugée que dans le concret : «Ce dernier problème, le parti du prolétariat doit le résoudre, dans chaque cas particulier, d'une façon absolument indépendante, en se plaçant au point de vue des intérêts de l'ensemble du développement social et des intérêts de la lutte de classe du prolétariat pour le socialisme» («Résolution sur la question nationale», mai 1917). En Russie, il était clair que la séparation nationale ou la réalisation de toute autre revendication démocratique substantielle étaient inconcevables sans une révolution complète. Ainsi, Lénine appelait les nationalités non russes à s'engager dans une lutte de classe commune contre l'autocratie tsariste.

Le révolutionnaire marxiste Léon Trotsky prit une position similaire en Espagne en 1930-31, où, encore une fois, la possibilité d'une révolution se présentait rapidement. Tout en défendant le droit de la Catalogne à l'autodétermination, Trotsky remarqua que même le plus fervent des séparatistes parmi les ouvriers catalans jugerait «inopportun de disperser leurs forces, dans les conditions de la crise actuelle qui ouvre au prolétariat espagnol les voies les plus larges et les plus prometteuses [...]. Puisqu'il est clair qu'en cas de victoire de la révolution il serait infiniment plus facile qu'aujourd'hui de parvenir à l'autodétermination de la Catalogne, ainsi d'ailleurs que des

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## Québec...

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autres régions» («Les tâches des communistes en Espagne», mai 1930).

Cependant, quelques années plus tard, la situation changea brusquement lorsqu'un nouveau gouvernement de droite à Madrid commença à agir contre le gouvernement régional de la Généralité de Catalogne. Voyant la Catalogne comme un bastion crucial contre la montée de la réaction espagnole et du danger fasciste, Trotsky appela alors ses partisans à passer à l'agitation en faveur de la proclamation d'une république indépendante de Catalogne et d'exiger, pour la garantir, l'armement immédiat de l'ensemble du peuple. C'était la façon pour le prolétariat de gagner la direction des masses opprimées, démasquant les hésitations de la Généralité et conduisant ainsi à la défaite de la réaction. Dans cette situation particulière, l'appel à l'indépendance était un puissant levier pour faire avancer les intérêts de classe du prolétariat.

Dans chaque cas, la question pour les marxistes est de savoir comment au mieux, dans des circonstances historiques données, briser l'emprise du nationalisme et du chauvinisme et retourner les ouvriers contre leur propre bourgeoisie et ouvrir la voie à la lutte révolutionnaire. La réponse n'est pas la même en tout temps et en tout lieu, et la politique pour un pays ne peut pas être transposée mécaniquement à un autre. Les différences entre le Canada anglais et le Québec sont beaucoup plus grandes que celles entre Suédois et Norvégiens, par exemple, qui se sont paisiblement séparés en 1905, ou entre Russes et Ukrainiens, dont les langues slaves sont en grande partie mutuellement compréhensibles (sans parler des Croates et des Serbes qui parlent la même langue).

Le meilleur parallèle contemporain semblerait se trouver dans la division entre Wallons et Flamands qu'est la Belgique. Les antagonismes nationaux et linguistiques de ce pays se sont fortement approfondis au cours des dernières décennies et sont maintenant un obstacle stratégique à la lutte de la classe ouvrière contre le capitalisme.

Au Canada et au Québec, l'expérience des deux dernières décennies, au moins, démontre clairement qu'une lutte prolétarienne victorieuse exige la séparation en deux États-nations indépendants. Ainsi, quel que soit le résultat du référendum à venir et de façon générale à l'avenir, nous continuerons à appeler à l'indépendance du Québec. Nous reconnaissons cependant que l'autodétermination est un droit démocratique bourgeois et, en tant que tel, est subordonnée aux intérêts plus larges de la révolution prolétarienne. Notre position pour l'indépendance pourrait donc changer radicalement dans les cas et dans les moments où elle s'opposerait aux intérêts historiques du prolétariat.

En 1916 par exemple, Lénine, qui avait combattu le rejet par Rosa Luxemburg du mot d'ordre du droit à l'autodétermination de la Pologne, s'opposait à l'appel en faveur de l'indépendance de la Pologne dans le contexte de la Première Guerre mondiale. Il souligna le fait que l'«indépendance (de la Pologne) est actuellement "irréalisable" sans guerres ou révolutions. Être partisan d'une guerre générale en Europe pour le seul rétablissement de la Pologne, ce serait être un nationaliste de la pire espèce [...]» («Bilan d'une discussion sur le droit des nations à disposer d'elles-mêmes», juillet 1916).

Plus tard, à la suite de la Révolution russe de 1917, les régimes bourgeois nouvellement indépendants du Caucase ob-

tinrent l'appui militaire direct de l'impérialisme, ce qui mettait en danger mortel le nouvel État ouvrier soviétique. Les bolchéviks prirent finalement le pouvoir dans la région en combinant soulèvements locaux et intervention de l'Armée rouge contre l'opposition des contre-révolutionnaires «nationalistes». Comme l'écrivit Trotsky quelque vingt ans plus tard, «la soviétisation forcée était justifiée, le salut de la révolution socialiste se place au-dessus des principes formels de la démocratie» («Bilan de l'expérience finlandaise» [avril 1940], *Défense du marxisme*).

On trouvera un autre exemple en Ukraine à la veille de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Au cours du printemps et de l'été 1939, Trotsky proposa le mot d'ordre d'une «Ukraine soviétique indépendante». Ce faisant, il cherchait à couper l'herbe sous le pied du nationalisme ukrainien réactionnaire et ainsi à enrayer son développement. En même temps, il pensait que la lutte contre l'oppression nationale pouvait servir de stimulus provoquant en Ukraine une révolution politique prolétarienne qui aurait précédé une telle révolution dans le noyau russe de l'État ouvrier dégénéré soviétique. Mais c'était le moment historique où le sort de tous les peuples d'Europe de l'Est allait être déterminé par la guerre qui approchait entre l'Allemagne nazie et l'Union soviétique. Dans ces circonstances, il n'y avait absolument aucune place pour créer une Ukraine ouvrière et paysanne indépendante, ce qui donnait un caractère irréaliste au mot d'ordre qu'avait proposé Trotsky et qu'il cessa d'utiliser avec le pacte Hitler-Staline et le début de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale (lire «À propos de la prise de position de Trotsky en faveur d'une Ukraine soviétique indépendante», *Spartacist* édition française n° 28, hiver 1994-95).

## Le Québec et la gauche

La gauche canadienne n'a pas une bonne histoire sur la question québécoise. Le Parti communiste canadien, qui n'avait essentiellement aucune racine chez les travailleurs québécois, à sa fondation, n'a pas affirmé le droit du Québec à l'autodétermination. Après sa dégénérescence stalinienne, le PC embrassa complètement le nationalisme canadien et, aujourd'hui, ses résidus au Canada anglais proclament toujours la nécessité d'un Canada «uni».

Les organisations mao-staliniennes qui se développèrent à un rythme accéléré au Québec dans les années 70 (et qui explosèrent tout aussi rapidement quelques années plus tard) capitulèrent également devant l'État chauvin anglophone unitaire. Leur nationalisme canadien découlait de leur position anticommuniste que l'URSS était l'«ennemi principal» des opprimés. Ainsi, ils tombèrent directement dans les bras de leur classe dirigeante impérialiste «démocratique». Le mal-nommé Parti communiste ouvrier alla même jusqu'à appeler au renforcement des forces armées canadiennes pour contrer «la menace soviétique» pesant sur la souveraineté canadienne !

«L'unité canadienne» est évidemment et depuis longtemps le cri de ralliement du NPD social-démocrate misérablement droitier et de ses prédecesseurs de la Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. Et les sociaux-démocrates «de gauche» comme Socialisme International (S.I.) suivent les traces de leurs grands frères dans le NPD. Il y a trois ans, S.I. est allé jusqu'à appeler à voter oui à l'Accord de Charlottetown des Conservateurs; c'est le seul groupe soi-disant marxiste à s'être rallié à cette défense du statu quo dans le Canada impérialiste. Il n'est pas étonnant qu'aujourd'hui S.I. nie que les antago-

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# Les peuples autochtones sous les feux croisés du nationalisme

En 1990, la Sûreté du Québec s'est jetée à l'assaut, les armes à la main, des Mohawks qui tentaient de protéger un cimetière ancestral situé près d'Oka. Les défenseurs autochtones ont résisté et repoussé les flics. Le premier ministre libéral Robert Bourassa, avec l'appui du Parti québécois, a alors demandé l'intervention militaire fédérale. L'armée a déployé des milliers de soldats, soutenus par des blindés et des hélicoptères, et a entouré durant des semaines la communauté Mohawk de Kanestetake. Pendant que l'armée d'Ottawa assiégeait Kanestetake, une meute en furie, pouvant compter jusqu'à 5000 personnes, se rassemblait à Châteauguay, près de Kahnawake, sur la Rive-Sud de Montréal, où vit une autre communauté Mohawk. Poussée par des démagogues racistes, y compris des membres du Ku Klux Klan, cette racaille pogromiste jetait des pierres, brûlait des autochtones en effigie et scandait des mots d'ordre nationalistes comme «Le Québec aux Québécois !»

Cinq ans plus tard, les mêmes dirigeants capitalistes racistes d'Ottawa qui ont envoyé l'armée contre les Mohawks d'Oka, qui ont créé et qui maintiennent le système brutal des réserves et la déshumanisante Loi des Indiens, essaient aujourd'hui de manipuler les peuples autochtones du Québec pour en faire un instrument chauvin contre l'indépendance. Quant aux dirigeants nationalistes québécois, ils ont l'intention d'incorporer de force «leurs» peuples autochtones dans un Québec indépendant. En particulier, ils affichent des prétentions «nationales» sur de vastes zones du nord du Québec qui n'ont jamais fait partie du territoire historique de la population francophone.

Partant de perspectives mutuellement hostiles, Québec et Ottawa comprennent tous deux le fait économique fondamental que les rivières du nord du Québec sont les organes vitaux de l'industrie moderne québécoise qui alimentent les centrales hydroélectriques du bassin de la Baie James. De plus, ces territoires sont occupés depuis des centaines d'années par les peuples autochtones qui sont aujourd'hui éparpillés dans de petites communautés à travers le Bouclier du Nord. Il était donc inévitable qu'ils deviennent un pion dans le cynique jeu chauvin auquel se livrent Ottawa et Québec et dont les enjeux sont considérables. Quel que soit le gagnant, les peuples autochtones seront assurément les perdants.

Ottawa tente de faire avaler la pilule en avançant la promesse d'un «autogouvernement autochtone». De la part de ceux-là mêmes qui ont écrasé sans merci les peuples aborigènes depuis bien avant la Confédération, cela ne peut dans la plupart des cas signifier rien d'autre que de «transformer» les réserves arides en bantoustans comme ceux d'Afrique du Sud. De tels «bantoustans autogouvernés» resteraient la proie de la pauvreté et du chômage, de la maladie, de l'alcoolisme et de la mort prématurée qui constituent le lot des peuples autochtones sous le capitalisme raciste canadien. Pourtant, pour grotesque que cela puisse paraître tout juste cinq ans après Oka, il se trouve certains dirigeants aborigènes pour tomber dans le piège du «libéralisme» frauduleux qu'Ottawa affiche à l'égard des revendications autochtones et pour insinuer qu'en cas de séparation du Québec ils feraient appel à l'armée canadienne. Les trotskystes s'opposeraient évidemment avec force à une telle éventualité.

Presque tous les principaux groupes autochtones, dont les Inuits, les Cris, les Mohawks et les Montagnais, prévoient de tenir des référendums pour savoir s'ils demeureraient ou non dans un Québec indépendant. La Ligue trotskyste/Trotskyist League défend le droit des peuples autochtones à disposer d'eux-mêmes. Dans les régions où ils constituent une population concentrée, nous affirmons leur droit à l'autonomie régionale la plus complète possible, c'est-à-dire le droit de



Rob Galbraith/Reuters

**Le 26 septembre 1990 : la police militaire appréhende un Warrior Mohawk à Kanestetake.**

réellement gouverner leurs territoires et contrôler la terre et ses ressources. Ces droits peuvent se heurter à des projets - comme des chemins de fer, des constructions hydroélectriques ou des pipelines - qui sont dans l'intérêt plus général des travailleurs dans la société dans son ensemble. Dans de tels cas, les peuples autochtones doivent recevoir une compensation généreuse établie avec leur total accord consensuel.

Cependant, en ce qui concerne le présent «choix» concret entre faire partie d'un Québec indépendant et rester dans le Canada anglais, nous partons de la considération principale suivante, sur laquelle nous insistons : dans le cadre de la domination capitaliste raciste, il ne s'agira là que du «droit» pour les populations aborigènes de déterminer qui les opprimeront et les brutaliseront. Dans la lutte pour construire un parti révolutionnaire agissant comme «tribun du peuple», nous cherchons à mobiliser le prolétariat au Canada anglais et au Québec en défense des droits autochtones. En dernière analyse, seule la révolution socialiste peut briser les lourdes chaînes de l'oppression capitaliste raciste qui a précipité les peuples autochtones dans la dégradation et dans la misère, et jeter les bases d'une société socialiste égalitaire qui pourra réparer des siècles d'injustices. ■

## Québec...

(suite de la page 16)

nismes nationaux aient vraiment des conséquences importantes, déclarant allègrement que «le sentiment anti-Québec au Canada anglais est large mais peu profond» et aussi que «le nationalisme présente un large attrait pour les Québécois mais ses racines sont peu profondes» (*Socialist Worker*, octobre 1994). Sa rhétorique pompeuse et creuse appelant à «s'unir et lutter» ne fait que couvrir sa capitulation devant le statu quo chauvin anglais.

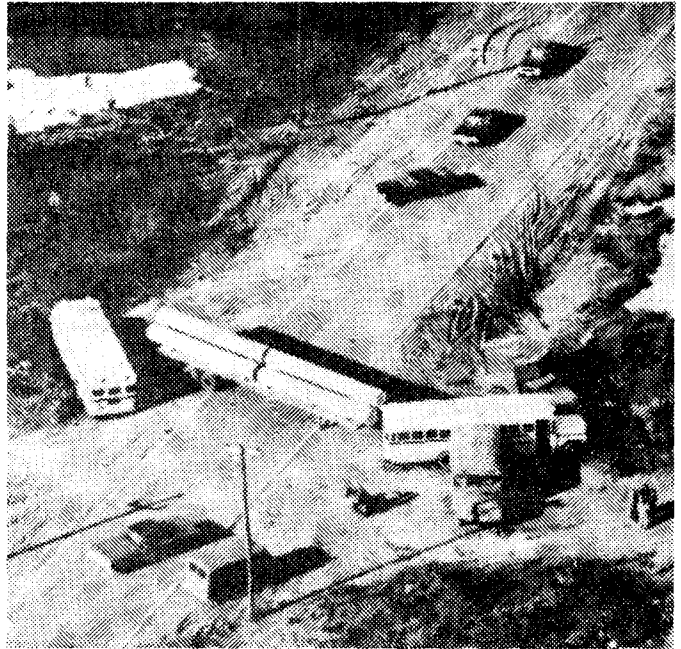
À partir des années 30, les trotskystes canadiens ont su défendre le droit du Québec à l'autodétermination; toutefois la question nationale n'était pas au centre de leur propagande et de leur agitation. Dans les années 60, lorsque la League for Socialist Action/Ligue socialiste ouvrière (LSA/LSO) entreprit une réévaluation sérieuse de la question, l'organisation avait subi une dégénérescence politique qui la mènera à suivre des forces non prolétariennes et à rejeter la nécessité de construire un parti révolutionnaire léniniste. Lors des scissions, unifications et nouvelles scissions qui ont suivi, tous les camps embrassèrent le nationalisme québécois.

La LSA/LSO proclamait que, au moins pour le Québec, «le nationalisme conséquent mène au socialisme». Mais les marxistes savent que le nationalisme est une idéologie bourgeoise qui affirme que son propre peuple possède des droits spéciaux et supérieurs qu'il ne reconnaît pas à d'autres. Ainsi, en fait, le nationalisme conséquent mène au fascisme. Au Québec au cours du présent siècle, ce phénomène est personnifié par des figures comme l'abbé Lionel Groulx, antisémite fanatique et clérical-nationaliste, et Adrien Arcand, un intime de Duplessis qui dirigeait des bandes fascistes dans les années 30. Arcand n'est peut-être pas actuellement vu d'un très bon œil dans les cercles nationalistes québécois dirigeants, mais l'abbé Groulx garde quant à lui une place d'honneur au panthéon du nationalisme bourgeois.

La LSA/LSO s'est faite le champion du nationalisme québécois dominant et a fait de la revendication du Québec unilingue français le centre de son agitation. Ses opposants fractionnels du Groupe marxiste révolutionnaire et du Revolutionary Marxist Group (GMR/RMG), alignés sur la majorité centriste européenne du Secrétariat unifié, couraient après des éléments plus à gauche à l'intérieur du mouvement nationaliste. Les deux ailes appuyaient les lois linguistiques françaises antidémocratiques et dénonçaient souvent le PQ pour son manque de nationalisme. Le RMG au Canada anglais et le GMR au Québec étaient des organisations totalement séparées, ce qui constitue un rejet ouvert de la lutte de Lénine pour la construction d'un parti révolutionnaire *multinational* afin de s'attaquer et défaire le pouvoir d'État capitaliste en place.

Aujourd'hui, alors que tout aspect «radical» au mouvement national québécois a disparu depuis longtemps, les descendants du GMR (Gauche Socialiste) ont abandonné jusqu'à leurs références rhétoriques à la lutte de classe révolutionnaire. Il y a trois ans, Gauche Socialiste est allée jusqu'à tenter de construire un groupe de jeunesse commun avec le PQ bourgeois. Maintenant, ils sont complètement immergés dans le Parti de la démocratie socialiste (anciennement le NPD-Québec) nationaliste social-démocrate.

Dès les origines de notre tendance au Canada au début des années 70, nous avons correctement attaqué la capitulation



Robson/Montreal Star

**Entrée de Sept-Îles bloquée par des travailleurs participant à la grève générale de 1972.**

des pseudo-trotskystes devant le nationalisme, y opposant la lutte pour l'internationalisme prolétarien marxiste. Notre document de 1976 «Le nationalisme québécois et la lutte des classes» (lire SC n° 12, janvier 1977) défendait sans condition le droit du Québec à l'autodétermination, réclamait des droits linguistiques égaux pour tous, y compris pour les francophones au Canada anglais et les anglophones au Québec, et affirmait la nécessité d'une lutte de classe commune, dans la voie de la révolution socialiste nord-américaine.

Nous avons cherché dès le début à tracer la voie de la lutte de classe révolutionnaire pour le prolétariat des deux nations et nous avons souligné que cela exige une lutte impitoyable contre le chauvinisme au Canada anglais et une rupture avec le nationalisme bourgeois au Québec. Nous nous sommes cependant trompés en ne reconnaissant pas dès le départ qu'il était en fait nécessaire d'appeler à l'indépendance du Québec. Nous avons eu tendance à accepter la fausse équation entre l'appel à l'indépendance et l'appui politique que nos opposants pseudo-trotskystes ont donné au nationalisme. De plus, nous avons sous-estimé la profondeur réelle de la séparation nationale qui divise les classes ouvrières canadienne anglaise et québécoise.

### L'indépendance du Québec et l'avenir du Canada

Il y a beaucoup de spéculations sur la possibilité que la séparation du Québec accélère des forces centrifuges déjà fortes et mène à la destruction du Canada anglais et à son unification avec les États-Unis, en partie ou en totalité. Du point de vue stratégique, nous sommes indifférents à un tel développement et nous pensons sans doute aucun que cela n'a absolument rien à voir avec la question d'appeler ou non à l'indépendance du Québec.

L'unification du Canada anglais avec les États-Unis ne pose aucune question de principe particulière pour les marxistes si ce n'est qu'elle se fasse de manière démocratique. Cependant, nous sommes loin d'être indifférents si l'aspect principal d'une telle éventualité est de renforcer l'impérialisme américain, par-

ticulièrement dans le contexte d'une montée abrupte des rivalités interimpérialistes. A cet égard, la déclaration adoptée par la deuxième conférence internationale de la Ligue communiste internationale comme quoi « nous nous opposons à la désintégration du Canada anglais qui, au moment présent, ne pourrait que renforcer la puissance de l'impérialisme US » est tronquée et donc potentiellement unilatérale.

Dans les années 70, les cercles dirigeants américains exprimaient des inquiétudes sur l'instabilité qui pourrait résulter de la création d'un Québec indépendant. Même si Washington ne voyait vraiment pas René Lévesque comme un Fidel Castro du nord, il s'inquiétait du radicalisme ouvrier et de gauche, très répandu, qui agitait le Québec à l'époque. De manière plus générale, dans le contexte international de la Guerre froide, les États-Unis cherchaient à conserver le Canada comme base avancée fiable dans sa guerre contre l'URSS.

Avec la destruction contre-révolutionnaire de l'État ouvrier dégénéré soviétique, cet aspect n'est plus aussi important, surtout que les Parizeau et autres Bouchard ont juré fidélité à l'OTAN et autres traités militaires. De plus, l'Accord de libre-échange nord-américain crée un cadre pour maintenir des liens économiques continus et renforcés, que le Québec devienne ou non un pays indépendant. Notamment, il permet l'accès à de l'hydroélectricité plutôt bon marché.

Néanmoins, lors de sa récente visite au Canada, le président américain Clinton a encore une fois clairement rappelé la préférence de Washington pour un Canada « uni » et indépendant. Ottawa s'est montré des plus utiles au cours des ans comme le « flic mou » de l'impérialisme américain, les « soldats de la paix » qui, de la Corée au Vietnam en passant par l'Afrique et le Moyen-Orient, ont fourni une couverture aux États-Unis. Cependant, en dernière analyse, Wall Street se fout pas mal que les banquiers et les industriels montréalais parlent français ou anglais, tant que les versements des dividendes et des intérêts se font en monnaie convertible et soient réglés.

**Pour la révolution socialiste nord-américaine !**

Comme en 1980, on voit beaucoup de manigances et de manoeuvres parmi les dirigeants séparatistes québécois au su-

jet de la formulation de la question à soumettre au référendum de cet automne. Il n'est pas étonnant que les Québécois manifestent quelque ambivalence sur leur départ de la Confédération, surtout avec un quart de la dette nationale canadienne comme héritage de la longue domination anglaise. Le comédien Yvon Deschamps a saisi cette contradiction avec sa célèbre plaisanterie disant que ce que les Québécois désirent vraiment, c'est « un Québec indépendant dans un Canada uni ».

Cependant, quels que soient les sentiments à un moment donné, le fait demeure que le Québec a insisté, dans tous les aspects concrets de la question, sur la « survivance », ce qui ne peut se faire qu'en resserrant entre eux les éléments d'une culture et d'une société francophone insulaire. De plus, au Canada anglais, le tollé chauvin contre l'affirmation par le Québec de sa souveraineté nationale érige d'abruptes barrières contre la lutte de classe prolétarienne. Il est nécessaire, et d'ailleurs depuis un bon bout de temps, de couper le noeud gordien.


Le nationalisme et le chauvinisme sont les éléments fondamentaux du cordon qui lie les travailleurs anglophones et francophones à « leurs » propres ennemis capitalistes, les dressant les uns contre les autres et contre tous ceux qui ne sont pas « nous ». Ainsi, les Haïtiens francophones de Montréal, les Jamaïcains anglophones de Toronto, les Asiatiques de Vancouver et les peuples autochtones qui luttent pour l'affirmation de leurs droits sont tous victimes de persécutions racistes et d'une terreur d'État ouverte, le tout « justifié » généralement par l'horrible logique du nationalisme qui caractérise et ronge présentement le pays.

Nous appelons à l'indépendance du Québec pour aider à dégager la voie du combat uni de la classe ouvrière racialement intégrée de l'ensemble du continent contre le système d'exploitation et d'oppression qui menace l'avenir de toute l'humanité. Pour un Québec indépendant ! Pour la lutte de classe contre tous les exploités capitalistes, de Bay Street et Ottawa à la rue St-Jacques et Québec, en passant par Wall Street et Washington ! En avant dans la lutte pour la révolution socialiste nord-américaine ! ■

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SC 105



## Battle for Mumia...

(continued from page 24)

edge off of a growing and militant anti-death penalty movement, in Philadelphia and beyond, thereby stymieing a series of planned demonstrations.

"Whatever the reasoning, let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all! *Down with the racist U.S. death penalty!*"

The protests for Jamal; the unabashed bias against him shown by Sabo, which has been reported in newspapers around the world; the brisk sales of Mumia's book, *Live from Death Row*, now in its sixth printing: all this has helped make Jamal's case an embarrassment for the U.S. ruling class. The sight of thousands marching against America's racist "justice" system is particularly untimely as the Democratic White House joins with the Republican Congress to beef up police powers and accelerate the rate of executions. This program was codified in Clinton's "anti-crime" legislation and now by the "counterterrorism" bill, which guts *habeas corpus* protections against wrongful imprisonment, the primary means by which death sentence reversals have been achieved. On July 26, Congress did its bit for death by eliminating funds for 20 regional law centers which specialize in death-penalty appeals.

Jamal has always linked his fight with the struggle to abolish the death penalty. Recently, Jamal pleaded with fellow Pennsylvania inmate Leon Moser to fight his execution, scheduled a few days before Mumia's. Moser, however, was killed by lethal injection on August 16 after the U.S. Supreme Court intervened twice in two days to reverse stays of execution granted by a U.S. district judge who was seeking a hearing on Moser's mental competency. (Moser had earlier been treated at Fairview State Hospital for the criminally insane.)

After the second stay was upheld by an appeals court at 9:00 p.m. on August 16, the U.S. Supreme Court acted at literally the eleventh hour to reverse it. Less than 30 minutes later, Moser was strapped to the gurney and the lethal drugs began to flow, while the federal judge's law clerk was in communication with Governor Ridge's general counsel, pleading to conduct the competency hearing by telephone! The week before, Oklahoma death row prisoner Robert Brecheen, who was scheduled to die in a few hours, tried to commit suicide. Prison guards promptly revived Brecheen...in order to carry out his execution by lethal injection. In Moser and Brecheen's cases, the state majestically declared it would brook no challenge to its sovereign "right" to kill its subjects.

In the wake of the swelling tide of protests for Jamal, important sections of the ruling class would prefer to see him locked away for life instead of killing him and turning him into a

martyr. They want to entomb Jamal in what he describes as "prison hell." Philadelphia's daily newspapers have repeatedly editorialized along these lines. They have now been joined by the *Washington Post* as well as the U.S. bourgeoisie's "paper of record," the *New York Times*, which wrote in a 17 August editorial, "[Jamal's] supporters are right to fight his execution." The *Times* continued, "They should be careful, however, in portraying him as the hapless victim of vindictive prosecutors and shoddy defense attorneys.... The trial record tells a different story."

In fact, the 1982 "trial" was a blatant frame-up based on a tissue of lies, presided over by a notorious hanging judge. It was held in a climate of vicious cop persecution of the black MOVE group, who in 1985 were to suffer eleven dead when the Philly cops, in league with the FBI, bombed their West Philly home. Getting Mumia was part of the cops' campaign to destroy MOVE, and was the culmination of years of FBI/cop targeting of Jamal going back to the government's war against the Black Panther Party.

### Sabo: "Justice Is Just an Emotional Feeling"

Jamal's defense team, headed by Leonard Weinglass, has been waging a herculean battle against a virulently hostile court to overturn the 1982 conviction and sentencing. The Post-Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) papers forming the core of Jamal's defense paint a clear picture of his innocence and the state's murderous vendetta against him, including evidence that was not available, or not made available, in 1982. A new book published by Common Courage Press, titled *Race for Justice*, includes these papers. An amended version of the PCRA submitted this month includes more new evidence.

On August 15, the PCRA hearing was recessed until September 11, when "findings of fact" will be presented and final oral arguments heard. While the prosecution pushed to have the defense rest its case, Jamal's attorneys argued that potential witnesses are continuing to come forward and must be heard. No one who has sat through any part of the hearings can expect Sabo, who presided over the original trial, to rule in favor of Jamal's appeal. Ever since refusing on July 12 to remove himself from hearing the case, Sabo has tried to thwart Jamal's defense in any way he can. Outrageously, he routinely ruled against defense demands for discovery of information which the prosecution has kept covered up. Sabo, a retired member of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), oozes with contempt for Jamal and his attorneys, at one point telling Weinglass, "Objection is overruled, whatever it was." Sabo has also threatened to arrest demonstrators outside, whose shouts of "Free Mumia!" and "Sabo Must Go!" have been heard in court.

When Sabo ordered evidentiary proceedings to begin on only two days' notice, Jamal's attorneys appealed to the state Supreme Court, which ordered Sabo to grant an extra week before the hearings began. Sabo quashed over 25 defense subpoenas for witnesses, refused to allow evidence on four claims of constitutional violations, and ruled for the prosecution and against the defense on virtually every objection raised in the hearing. In "L'affaire Mumia," an exasperated *Philadelphia Inquirer* (13 August) editorialized that Sabo "seemed to be fighting the last war—ridiculing, interrupting and generally feeding the worst suspicions of Abu-Jamal's supporters."

On August 2, when Wolkenstein objected to the quashing of subpoenas and the disallowing of any evidence challenging Pennsylvania's death penalty on the grounds of racial bias, Sabo ordered her taken into custody, handcuffed and thrown

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# Join the Campaign!

The international campaign of protest has temporarily stayed the executioner's hand, but Mumia Abu-Jamal is still under the shadow of death. The struggle for his freedom continues. As Mumia said himself in "The Stay," Judge Sabo's August 7 ruling was an attempt "to blunt the edge off of a growing and militant anti-death penalty movement.... Let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all!"

**1 Organize protest!** Pass motions demanding Jamal's freedom in your unions, campus, community and church organizations. Get your union or organization to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Jamal. Publicize Jamal's case in your union or organization's newsletter. Get on the Partisan Defense Committee phone tree to organize in your area.

**2 Spread the word!** The current issue of the PDC's *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* is devoted to the struggle to save Mumia Abu-Jamal. And the new PDC pamphlet, *The Frame-Up of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, exposes in detail the prosecution's case of lies, the coercion of witnesses and the FBI's COINTELPRO terror campaign against Mumia and the Black Panther Party. Order bundles of the special campaign issue of *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* and *The Frame-Up of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, 25 copies of either publication for \$10. For only \$2, buy

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the PDC's new button: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" Get your local bookstore to stock Jamal's powerful *Live from Death Row*. Contact the PDC for speakers, to arrange showings of the PDC's video, *From Death Row, This is Mumia Abu-Jamal*. The video can be purchased for \$30 from the PDC at the addresses listed below. Contributions of \$5 or more to the PDC include a year's subscription to *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*.

**3 Send protests to:** Governor Tom Ridge, Main Capitol Building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Ridge changes his phone and fax number daily to try and stay ahead of the growing movement for Jamal! As we go to press, the numbers are: phone (717) 789-2500; fax (717) 783-3369.

**4 Funds are urgently needed!** To get a new trial and overturn the death sentence could cost over a million dollars. **Make a contribution to the legal defense today.** Make payable to the Partisan Defense Committee, earmarked "Jamal Legal Defense," and mail to the Toronto address below. These funds will be forwarded in full to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York.

**5 Write to Jamal to express your solidarity:** Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090.

Partisan Defense Committee,  
Box 4932, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 4A6,  
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into jail. In an interview with reporter Sally O'Brien, Jamal, ridiculing the charge that he had disrupted the 1982 trial, pointed out that "what should be clear to everyone is that the behavior of the judge hasn't changed one iota." On August 11, Weinglass was slapped with a \$1,000 fine for taking "too long" to hand over autopsy slides. "Explaining" these blatant attempts at intimidation, Sabo told the defense, "Counselor, justice is just an emotional feeling."

Jamal's attorneys began their case by calling character witnesses who testified to the enormous respect Mumia was held in as a youth and later as a journalist. One of those testifying, black Pennsylvania State Senator Dave Richardson, a longtime friend of Mumia's, died suddenly of a heart attack on August 18. *None* of these witnesses were presented when Mumia was railroaded 13 years before. His court-appointed attorney at the time, Anthony Jackson, also testified at the PCRA hearing, confirming defense claims that he was grossly ineffective as counsel and that he was provided almost no resources to conduct a defense.

Also called to the stand was Gary Wakshul, the cop who guarded Jamal from his arrest until he was treated in the hospital. A key element of the 1982 frame-up was the tale that Jamal had "confessed" before entering the hospital emergency room—a "confession" first reported *two months* after the incident. Wakshul, however, had submitted a report after his shift stating that "the negro male [Mumia] made no comments." On the stand, Wakshul incredibly claimed that he was too shocked by the "confession" to remember it...until a month or two later, at a meeting called by the D.A.'s office to orchestrate the cops' testimony. This was the first time this meeting had

ever been made public.

Several witnesses gave evidence that Jamal did not shoot Faulkner. One, William Singletary, said not only that he saw another man shoot the cop and run away, but that Jamal then approached Faulkner asking if he could help him. Singletary described being pressured to submit false testimony. He was held for hours at the Police Administration Building, where cops repeatedly "tore up" or "threw in the trash" the statements they did not approve. Finally, a Detective Green warned him "to write what he wanted me to write [or] they would take me in the elevator and beat me up."

Another witness, William Harmon, who was called to the stand by Sabo over defense objections that they had had virtually no time to interview him, testified that two men shot Faulkner, and that neither was Jamal. In order to denigrate his statements, prosecutors pointed to Harmon's criminal record, and even asked whether the fact that he had often been arrested without serving time had to do with his being a cop informant. But three out of four of the D.A.'s key witnesses in 1982 had criminal records. One of them, the prostitute Cynthia White, had 38 arrests to her name and was allowed to work the streets under police protection after giving their line. In contrast, Harmon, a black man currently in state prison, risks being denied parole for another six years as a result of speaking out.

Yet another witness, Arnold Howard, testified how he and two other black men were arrested the night of the shooting because police thought one of them might be the fleeing shooter. Police tested their hands for nitrates—to see if they had fired a gun—a test they didn't perform on Jamal!

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## Battle for Mumia...

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The final 1982 eyewitness to be called was Robert Chobert, a white cab driver whose license had been revoked and who had a prior conviction for arson, a fact which Sabo kept from the jury in 1982. Chobert first reported to police that he saw Faulkner's assailant run away. This could not have been Jamal, who was found sitting on the curb bleeding from his wound. Chobert changed his testimony for the trial, claiming that Jamal was the shooter. At the PCRA hearing, he admitted that then-prosecutor Joseph McGill had promised to "look into" getting his driver's license back. Chobert never did get it back, but managed nevertheless to drive without a license for the next ten years without being charged!

Central to the evidence exonerating Jamal are 800 pages of FBI files detailing years of FBI/cop surveillance and "dirty tricks," including an attempt to frame him for a murder in Bermuda that occurred while Jamal was working in Philadelphia. Sabo ruled these papers "irrelevant." When Wolkenstein attempted to submit a deposition from a Pennsylvania Corrections Department official showing that privileged correspondence between Jamal and his attorneys had been intercepted, opened and given to the governor's office, Sabo screamed that was not his doing and again threatened her with arrest.

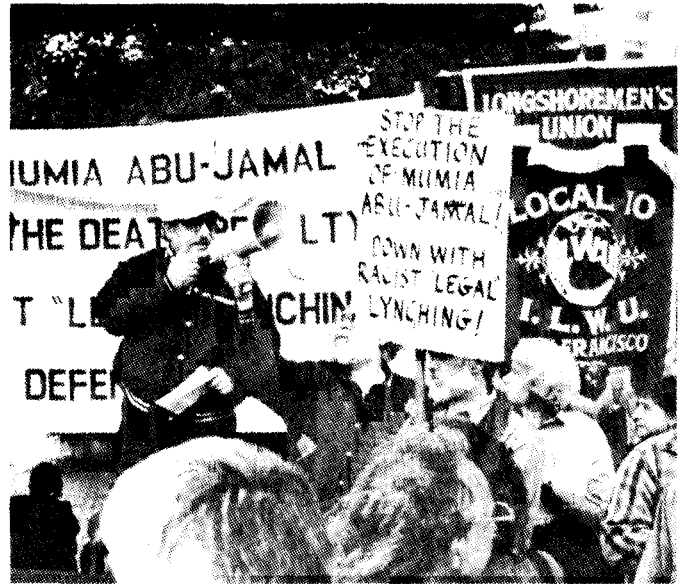
Many who have joined the protests for Jamal center their demands on the call for a "fair trial," which they feel would surely result in reversal of the death sentence. If things were being done strictly "by the book," even the truncated version of Jamal's defense allowed by Sabo should be enough to at least grant his petition for a new trial. But the capitalist legal system is anything but fair when it comes to such an outspoken black opponent of racism and exploitation. For many youth, what is happening in the courtroom and on the streets is a real eye-opener. The events daily demonstrate the truth of Russian revolutionary Marxist V.I. Lenin's description of bourgeois democracy as "democracy only for the rich, for the minority." In the U.S., with centuries of subjugation of black people first as chattel slaves and then as wage slaves, the state apparatus—cops, courts, prisons—is racist to the core.

### Protest Deportation of Ramona Africa!

On July 23, Ramona Africa, a prominent representative of the Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, was grabbed by Canadian immigration authorities at Montreal's Dorval airport, detained overnight and deported the following afternoon. Ramona, the sole adult survivor of the 1985 police bombing of the Philadelphia MOVE house, had been invited to address public meetings and protest rallies in defense of Jamal across Canada.

As the Partisan Defense Committee wrote in a protest statement to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration: "Tens of thousands of individuals and organizations representing millions more have joined the international campaign to save Jamal's life.... Your department's actions against Ramona Africa are an outrageous attempt to disrupt this important international effort."

Join in demanding that the ban on Ramona Africa's entry into Canada be rescinded!



Workers Vanguard

**Brian McWilliams, ILWU international president, addressing Oakland rally for Jamal on June 5.**

In these hearings, Sabo once again led a "legal lynching" posse with the D.A.'s office and the FOP. Early in the hearings, Wolkenstein protested that the FOP contingent in attendance was allowed to waltz into court with its weapons while Mumia's own family was harassed as they passed through a "Frisk-Em" metal-detecting gate. Portraying Mumia's supporters as some sort of terrorist band, Sabo responded that the cops were "protecting" him.

In a column printed in the *New York Times* (13 August), D.A. Lynne Abraham, whose office seeks the death sentence more than any other jurisdiction in the U.S., sneers that the notion that Mumia "was a famous journalist whom the police framed to silence his unpopular political views" is "ludicrous." What's ludicrous is that Abraham would write this when Philadelphia newspapers are filled daily with exposés of police frame-ups, corruption and violence. Currently, over 1,100 arrests may be overturned as a result of investigations into the 39th precinct in North Philadelphia alone.

Anyone coming out for Jamal in Philly is a potential target of the cops. The largest union in the city, hospital and health care workers Local 1199C, was besieged by 300 gun-toting cops for daring to rent its hall for a Jamal benefit in July. In Los Angeles, Boulder, Colorado, New York City and other places, dozens have been arrested for demonstrating for Jamal, some of whom face felony charges. We demand the dropping of all charges against these protesters!

Frame-ups, cop terror and judicial railroading are inherent in the capitalist system of racist injustice. It will take massive social struggle, tapping the power of the organized working class, to win his freedom. Nothing short of workers revolution will destroy this repressive machinery—and with it the racist death penalty—and open up the vista of freedom from oppression and human degradation.

### For United-Front Defense of Jamal

The protests calling to stop the execution of Jamal have made this issue front-page news around the world and a political question of growing importance. French president Jacques Chirac directed his ambassador in Washington "to take, in a strictly humanitarian sense, and respecting American law, any

step that might help to save the life of Mr. Mumia Abu-Jamal." German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel wrote to Pennsylvania governor Ridge to protest Jamal's impending execution as well as the death penalty. The Belgian government and Italian parliament called for stopping the execution. In South Africa, where there have been weekly protests outside the U.S. consulate in Cape Town, president Nelson Mandela, pointing to the recent abolition of the death penalty there, wrote to Governor Ridge to "use your power as Governor of the State of Pennsylvania to commute the death sentence imposed upon Mumia Abu-Jamal." There continue to be demonstrations throughout Germany and other European countries.

The Partisan Defense Committee has always stressed the centrality of mobilizing the labor movement in the fight for Jamal. In early August, a series of united-front demonstrations initiated by the PDC from New York, Oakland, Chicago and L.A. to Toronto and Vancouver, and Melbourne and Sydney, Australia brought out key trade unions which pledged to continue this struggle. A 1,000-strong demonstration in New York on August 3 drew contingents from Social Services Employees Union Local 371, AFSCME District Council 37, Local 1199 health and hospital workers union, Teamsters Local 808 and others. Among the more than 700 who marched the same day in Oakland, California were contingents from the ILWU longshore union and several locals of the SEIU service workers, along with speakers from the Alameda County and San Francisco Central Labor Councils.

The New York City rally tied the fight for Mumia with the struggle against racist cop terror at home. Margarita Rosario, whose son Anthony and nephew Hilton Vega were executed by cops, shot in the back while lying face down on the floor, spoke movingly: "We want justice for Mumia as much as I want justice for my son." In Oakland, Larry Wright, co-chair of the stewards council of ILWU Local 10, compared Jamal's case with Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, executed in 1953 in a climate of anti-Communist hysteria, calling it a "political attempted execution" that is racist and "against the working class.... That's why the Longshoremen have taken a strong stand to free Mumia."

United-front actions, where organizations can speak in their own name and carry their own signs and banners, are critical in building mass support for Jamal's freedom. Unfortunately, in a clear act of political censorship, organizers of the August 12 Philadelphia demonstration, initiated by the National People's Campaign (NPC), refused speakers for the PDC, Refuse & Resist and MOVE, all of whom have long been active in Mumia's defense. At the same time, a representative of crackpot ultrarightist Lyndon LaRouche was allowed to speak.

### Where to Take the Fight to Free Mumia

Such sectarianism is aimed above all at the Trotskyists who have long defended Jamal and play a key role in the campaign for his freedom. Thousands of workers and youth are debating which road to take in this struggle. Liberals call for a "fair trial" for Mumia, as if he could ever get such a thing in the racist courts. In Jamal's case, it's not hard to see the bankruptcy of this strategy, as the courts conspire with the governor's mansion and a national cop network to ram through Jamal's execution.

But what strategy should militants adopt? Following the August 3 New York rally, there was a spirited debate at the AFSCME DC 37 hall after a screening of the video, "From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal." Various anarchists,

Refuse & Resist supporters and others desperately looking at the approaching August 17 execution date advocated civil disobedience and symbolic acts like shutting off lights across the city at a given time. What the "radical" proponents of "CD" share with liberals is a lack of any perspective of mobilizing mass support for Mumia. In particular, they despair of bringing out the forces of organized labor, which has been hamstrung by its pro-capitalist leadership while the bosses have decimated the unions in their war against working people and the poor. It is precisely through getting the unions to fight for the masses of the ghettos and barrios that labor will steel itself for its own battles.

The core of the New York labor-centered rally on August 3 were the black- and Hispanic-centered unions. Several union speakers at the rally pointed to their own experience in fighting for freedom for Angela Davis in the 1970s, and in fighting union-busting today. As a PDC speaker at the rally remarked: "The struggle for workers' rights and black rights must go forward together or we will all fall back separately." This sentiment was echoed by Larry Adams, president of Mail Handlers Union Local 300, who declared: "To the degree that the trade unions take up this struggle is the degree to which we will forge the necessary social force to save Mumia, all political prisoners, and to in fact rid society of all forms of oppression and exploitation."

The labor-centered demonstrations initiated by the PDC have laid the basis for further organizing in the unions with the aim of pulling out many tens of thousands of workers in alliance with the minority poor. The need to unleash labor/black power is inseparable from the question of revolutionary leadership of the working class. As Don Alexander of the Spartacist League told the August 3 rally in Oakland, "The fight to free Mumia can be a turning point in reviving the labor movement, which is on its back because it is chained to the parties of the rich." What is needed, Alexander continued, is "a complete break from the Democratic Party and the pro-capitalist union leadership, and the forging in struggle of a revolutionary workers party."

*Spread the campaign—Free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty! ■*

## Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club

### Events

**TORONTO**  
SYC Meeting: **Capitalism Means Racist State Terror  
—Battle for Mumia's Freedom!**  
Thurs. 21 Sept., 7:30 p.m.  
International Student Centre,  
33 St. George, U of T.

**TORONTO**  
TL Forum: **For Quebec Independence!**  
Sat. 21 Oct., 7:30 p.m.  
St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor W.  
For more information call: (416) 593-4138

**VANCOUVER**  
SYC Class Series: **Introduction to the History  
and Theory of Marxism**  
Alternate Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.,  
starting 14 Sept.

**VANCOUVER**  
TL Forum: **For Quebec Independence!**  
Fri. 13 Oct., 7:30 p.m.

All Vancouver events in Rm. L4,  
Britannia Community Centre, 1661 Napier (at Commercial).  
For more information call: (604) 687-0353

## International Outcry Wins Stay of Execution

# Battle for Mumia's Freedom

*The following article is adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 627 (25 August), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.*

Cheers rang out in a Philadelphia courtroom on August 7 when Judge Albert Sabo announced a stay of execution for black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who had been scheduled to die on August 17. The ruling came in the midst of the battle being waged by Mumia and his defense team to reverse his frame-up conviction and death sentence for the 1981 shooting death of policeman Daniel Faulkner. Mumia is up against a cabal of the racist Philly cops, a District Attorney maniacally committed to pursuing the death penalty whenever she can, and Judge Sabo, who presided over Jamal's 1982 "trial" and has

sent far more people to death row than any other judge in the U.S. They seek to silence forever his impassioned, articulate voice on behalf of the oppressed. Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man who should never have spent a day in prison. And class-conscious workers and all opponents of the barbarous and racist death penalty around the world must not rest until he is freed.

Ever since the current hearing began on July 12, Sabo declared that he would not be moved by the protests in defense of Mumia that have mushroomed around the globe. Assistant D.A. Charles Grant (who has subsequently quit the prosecution team) sneered about "politically motivated people" trying "to undo or redo what 12 simple people in this town, and not in Sweden and not in Denmark or New Zealand, said the facts were." But as Rachel Wolkenstein, Partisan Defense Committee staff counsel and one of Mumia's co-counsels, declared on August 7: "It is absolutely clear that without the international support coming from all quarters, from trade unionists, from



SC photo

**Toronto, 29 July: Hundreds march to demand "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!"**

civil libertarians, from authors and writers and students, it would not have been possible for the stay to be granted."

America's capitalist rulers have clearly been taken aback by the scope of these protests, enlisting broad sections of the labor movement internationally and even including leading capitalist politicians around the world. On August 12, some 8,000 marched through the streets of Philadelphia. The bourgeoisie now seeks to defuse the protest movement. Jamal warned of this danger, writing in his column, "The Stay":

"The state of Pennsylvania still has every intention of killing me—just not right now.

"Thus, the stay is a limited victory, not just for the Jamals and the Africas, but for thousands and tens of thousands of people from every corner of the globe....

"Although many radicals and progressives expressed joy at news of the stay, other political analysts saw it as a clever move by a clever judge, who did what higher courts would've done and, in so doing, attempted to blunt the

*(continued on page 20)*