

4 The strong smell of sweat in our own backyards

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Source: The
Varsity (University
of Toronto)

By **Petty
Bozonelos**

TORONTO
(CUP) - For most
Canadians, the
word sweatshop

conjures up images of factories in developing countries where women are paid pennies a day to work in tiny, hot rooms. Windows are painted over, the air is stiflingly hot and the work is tedious.

But what most of us don't know, or refuse to acknowledge, is that similar sweatshop conditions are found right here in Canada, in places like Toronto.

The image of Canada as the "true north strong and free" does not hold true in regards to our continued exploitation of

immigrant garment workers.

"It's often assumed that sweatshop operations and homeworking are a third world phenomenon," Roxanna Ng, an anti-sweatshop activist, told a press conference this past summer. "When in fact garment workers around the world face similar predicaments."

Roxanna Ng's report on home sweatshops sent shock waves throughout Canada when it was released this past June. Ng argues that an overwhelming majority of

women in the garment industry work under sub-standard conditions, especially those that eke out their living at home.

"All of the 30 women I interviewed were Chinese immigrants who worked below the standards provided by the Employment Standard Act, and anybody's working conditions that do not meet up to these standards are illegal," Ng affirmed in an interview.

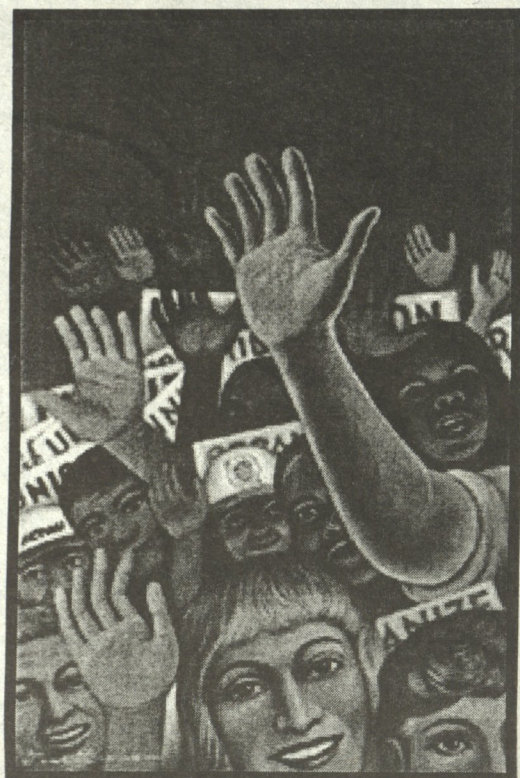
One worker, who appeared with Ng at the June press conference, chose to remain nameless out of fear of repercus-

sions for describing her working conditions. She was earning \$3-4 per hour and working six hours per day to support herself and her four-year-old child.

Ng says that one of the key problems with the garment industry is that employment contracts are not written in stone. It is a piece-work business where the seamstresses gets paid according to each piece, i.e. a sleeve or a collar, that is completed.

Theoretically, the faster one sews the more pieces one can accomplish by the hour, and hence

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The Mumia phenomenon



Source: The Link
(Concordia
University)
By **Ariel Troster**

MONTREAL
(CUP) - Libérez
Mumia. If you live
in Montreal you

may have seen the slogan sprayed on buildings and in alleyways speckled across the city. The image of a dread locked man, his face weathered by 17 years on death row,

is plastered on posters and printed on buttons worn by artists and activists all over Montreal.

The case is complex and many questions remain unanswered. But two things are for sure: a Philadelphia police officer was murdered, and the man sentenced to death for the crime claims he's innocent. And an international coalition of activists, writers, politicians and lawyers agree with the man.

Whether Mumia Abu-Jamal is guilty or innocent, the case highlights issues of systemic racism, police brutality and a justice system with little regard for the underdog.

Still, casual observers can't help but wonder what relevance the case has to activists in Montreal - where the reality of the death penalty only resonates through newspaper and television reports.

While Jamal's case is

striking, it is not remarkable in a state where the percentage of African American men on death row is nearly 700 per cent higher than the population at large. The question is why Mumia? And why in Montreal?

Before his conviction, Jamal was a radio journalist in Philadelphia, known as "the voice of the voiceless," for his reports on police brutality and support for minority communities. He

attended Godard College, won the Major Armstrong Award for radio journalism and was named one of Philadelphia's "people to watch" in 1981 by Philadelphia magazine. Jamal was the president of the Association of Black Journalists and had no prior criminal record.

In December 1981, while moonlighting as a cab driver,

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