

Black Panther says youth not radical enough

Source: **The Manitoban** (U. of Manitoba) and **The Gateway** (U. of Alberta)
By **Krishna Lalbiharie** and **Michael Winters**

(CUP) - Lorenzo Kom'Boa Ervin doesn't pull any punches when it comes to politics.

"The [U.S.] government, for black Americans in particular, is one of the worst forms of modern oppression and is the source of war and economic injustice," said the former Black Panther Party member and Concerned Citizens for Justice (CCJ) representative.

During a recent stop in Winnipeg, Ervin, co-founder of the militant anti-racism journal *Black Autonomy*, said the 1960's civil rights movement was successful "mainly because of student dis-sension."

But today's students, the political activist says, are not following in the footsteps of their predecessors.

"The youth of today aren't active

enough," he said. "When we were young, we had no rights against racist, government-supported terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, and still we fought, and we fought hard. Myself and others went to prison and died for our beliefs."

Yet the social activist's vision goes well beyond the university campus.

During another stop at the University of Alberta, Ervin spoke out against the privatization of prisons.

The Edmonton talk, organized by the Industrial Workers of the World, focussed on what Ervin sees as the corporate exploitation of prison labour.

According to Ervin, corporations such as Boeing, Microsoft and General

Electric have taken advantage of cheap prison labour and made millions through what he called "plants behind prisons."

"[It's] the establishment of industrial plants under the guise of altruism," he said. "You will never, ever

be able to undercut prison labour when an average prisoner will make seven cents an hour and you make a minimum wage of \$7-\$9 an hour."

Ervin warns the trend in private prisons might soon reach Alberta.

He noted the provincial government's mandate of privatization and that an American company, the Aguirre Corporation, is looking into establishing a privately owned prison in Hobbema, Alberta.

"I would hate to see some of the worst excesses of American capitalism come to Canada," said Ervin. "If there's one thing I want to get across, it's the urgency of this matter. At this particular time you can prevent the corruption, but if you wait until the contract is finalized your chance is much more minimal."

The former Panther has good reason to be wary of the justice system.

According to Ervin, the United States government targeted him for assassination, forcing him

to flee the country in 1969.

He was later arrested in Czechoslovakia and subsequently extradited to the United States, serving 15 years in prison for firearms offences before an international defence campaign won his release in 1983.

Ervin and other '60s southern black activists staged demonstrations against the KKK, which defence counsel say led to his conviction and incarceration.

Now a community organizer on Black Anarchism and militant anti-racism, Ervin says African Americans are unfairly subject to police brutality and systems of oppression.

"Africans in America are colonized and exist as an internal colony of the U.S. white mother country," he said. "I believe that white workers must give up their privileged status, their 'white identity,' and must support racially oppressed workers in their fights for equality and national liberation."

Are Canadians really overtaxed?

Source: **The Manitoban** (University of Manitoba)

By **Gene Senior**

WINNIPEG (CUP) - The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) believes most Canadians are not overtaxed.

Fiscal Conservatives regularly say taxes are too high in Canada. This conclusion is based on an analysis that averages taxes among the general population.

But according to the CCPA, averaging taxes can distort data to suggest Canadians spend more money on personal income tax than on any other expense.

The Centre points out that only high-earning Canadians spend a great deal of their income towards taxes.

In contrast, for 40 per cent of Canadian households income tax represents the smallest share of expenditures when compared with shelter, transportation and food.

Therefore, the Centre argues, over-taxation is not as big a

problem in Canada as it is often portrayed.

"When critics use averages to describe taxes paid by Canadians," reads a recent CCPA study, "it produces skewed results that ascribe tax rates to the average person that are in fact paid only by taxpayers at considerably higher income levels."

According to Murray Dobbin, social activist and author of "Ten Tax Myths," the focus of debate in Canada needs to shift from over-taxation to under-funded social programs.

"The debate over tax cuts versus reinvesting in our social programs promises to be the next big political fight in this country," he said.

Last week, Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin released his yearly budget update - a glimpse at the upcoming federal budget.

At the same time the CCPA and CHOICES, a coalition for social justice in Winnipeg, have prepared their own "alter-

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