

Australasian SPARTACIST



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Howard/Beazley Push Racist Union-Busting, Austerity

No Vote to Labor!

Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!

AUGUST 30—The October election offers the “choice” of John Howard’s bourgeois Coalition of racist union-busters and...Kim Beazley’s Australian Labor Party (ALP) racist union-busters. Both the Coalition Tories and the social-democratic ALP pledge continued attacks on the working class, women, Aborigines, immigrants and youth. This reactionary political climate has directly fuelled the rise of Pauline Hanson’s virulently racist, fascist One Nation Party. While the union bureaucrats and various self-styled socialists have been on the ALP campaign trail for months, we Marxists, fighting for the emancipation of the working people, say: No vote to Labor! The working class needs its own **multiracial revolutionary workers party.**

The Labor Party in opposition decks itself out with a fig-leaf here or there: half-heartedly opposing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the most drastic cutbacks, appearing at a picket line or anti-racist protest now and then. But what the ALP is all about is daily revealed in the states where they are currently in office. In Queensland, new Labor premier Peter Beattie’s first act was to enshrine Howard’s Native Title legislation which basically eliminates land rights for Aboriginal peoples. In NSW Bob Carr has been cutting health care and education to the bone, while his cops terrorise Davids warehouse strikers, Aborigines and immigrant youth.

The ALP in power is a **capitalist** government, running the capitalist state on behalf of the bosses. In office the social democrats, no less than the outright bourgeois parties, wield the power of the state—the army, cops and courts—against the working class and the oppressed. The 13 years of Robert Hawke/Paul Keating federal ALP governments were years of union-busting, racist police terror, nationalist anti-immigrant attacks and assaults on the condition of women. Under Beazley, the ALP aims to carry on this program which laid the basis for Howard’s relentless union-busting and slashing of social services.

It was the ALP which smashed the Builders Labourers Federation, broke the pilots’ strike and introduced Enterprise Bargaining. Under Labor, the state carried out de facto executions of Aborigines on the streets and in the lockups, and the number of Aboriginal deaths in custody soared. The ALP initiated the racist “waiting period” for immigrants to access the welfare system and threw immigrant students off Austudy benefits. They presided over the creation of a vast army of nearly 300,000 out-workers, mostly immigrant women in the garment industry, who slave in their homes for a pittance.

To increase the profitability of Australian capitalism, from the early 1990s



Anthony Weate

Capitalist state defends rule of exploiters: cops attack Aboriginal protester in Brisbane (left), MUA pickets in Sydney (right). In power ALP runs capitalist state for bosses.



AP

the ALP carried out a program of “privatisations” aimed at breaking the power of strategic unions. Continued by Howard, the sell-offs have meant windfalls for the capitalists while driving down wages and working conditions. Today the urban infrastructure is in a shambles, exemplified by the (privatised) Sydney water system, which is poisoned by the dangerous parasites cryptosporidium and giardia. Several months ago large parts of Queensland were blacked out, and Auckland, home of the New Zealand “free market” profiteers, had no electricity for weeks. This winter in Melbourne, a privatised gas main owned by Esso froze, shutting down most of the city’s industry.

The situation cries out for a socialist reorganisation of society: those who labour must rule! As history has shown, this **cannot** come about by efforts to reform the capitalist state which exists precisely to defend and secure the rule of the exploiters. A rationally planned international economy at the service of all humanity can only be achieved by a thoroughgoing socialist revolution, establishing workers governments based on councils of working people.

The economic crisis of the Asian “tigers,” recently hailed as the miracle countries of capitalism, has sent millions of workers into struggle. In South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and across the region there have been strikes and factory occupations in the face of brutal government repression. In Japan, the working class is seething with discontent as the capitalist rulers drive to make the working class pay for their falling rate of profit. The burning need is to forge revolutionary Marxist parties that can trans-

form the spontaneous struggles of the working class into a **conscious** fight for power. Such a party in Australia can only be built in a struggle to break the political stranglehold of Laborism.

Under the misleadership of the ALP-loyal, pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, the working class has suffered a series of defeats. Last year, Hunter Valley miners struck against the giant Rio Tinto’s attempt to force workers to sign individual contracts. While support for the strike was widespread, the Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union (CFMEU) bureaucrats capitulated to the anti-union laws and sent the miners back to work with nothing. Today the ALP refuses to pledge the repeal of Howard’s union-busting *Workplace Relations Act*, brought in with the help of then-Democrat, now ALP star Cheryl Kernot.

In April this year thousands of workers flocked to the picket lines of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), looking for a way to throw back the bosses’ union-busting offensive. But the ACTU/MUA bureaucracy, terrified by the prospect of hard class struggle, consciously hung the waterside workers out to dry, demobilising the union and its supporters explicitly to channel working-class outrage into the capitalist courts and voting

Labor. To the 626 workers who have lost their jobs MUA leader John Coombs’ assertion that “in the end we got exactly what we wanted,” is bitter indeed. At the time, only the Spartacist League told the truth: the waterside workers were **betrayed**. The rest of the left’s victory-mongering alibied Coombs & Co.’s sellout.

In the absence of a fighting class-struggle leadership, defeats such as these are producing demoralisation and discontent in the working class that, ominously, benefits the virulently racist One Nation Party. Railing against Aboriginal peoples and the “Asianisation” of Australia, peddling vile Australian nationalism, Hanson’s One Nation is interpenetrated with and a spawning ground for fascist terror gangs such as National Action. One Nation “political adviser” David Oldfield openly describes himself as a “national socialist.” Growing at the expense of all the parliamentary parties of racist Australian capitalism, in the recent Queensland state elections One Nation received 23 percent of the vote, with the support of as many as one third of previous Labor voters. Even a recent CFMEU survey has indicated that around 13 percent of its members were

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Promoting Iran’s “Islamic Republic”

The Cliffites and Islamic Reaction

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Red-Baiting Witchhunt Fuels Nazi Threats

For Union/Minority Mobilisations to Stop Fascist Terror!

In July and early August, two fascist groups issued chilling threats of violence against leftists and anti-racist militants. National Action, whose swastika-wearing, skinhead bootboys have a long and infamous history of violence including thug attacks and firebombings, stuffed a hate sheet in letterboxes in at least three cities. Under the sinister headline "Anti-Racist High School Activities Will Be Challenged By Nationalists," these race-terrorists printed a photograph of a supporter of the left group Resistance along with her name and an (incorrect) home address. On the same page, this "Public Information Bulletin" rants about "applying force" against "Trotskyoids" who "are known: Democratic Socialist Party, International Socialist Organization [sic], Militant, Socialist Alternative, Workers' Fight, Socialist Equality Party and the Spartacist League."

In mid-July another fascist gang, White Aryan Resistance, posted death threats in downtown Sydney, including on the entrance to the offices of the Spartacist League. The same or similar stickers appeared in later weeks in other suburbs. On 9 August the Pathfinder Bookshop, associated with the Communist League, was vandalised. An attempt was made to smash the front window and the shop front was defaced with "Execute Asian, Arab and African drug dealers—White Aryan Resistance, fight or die."

This ominous escalation in fascist activity is not an accident. In early July, the capitalist media launched a frenzied and dangerous smear campaign against Resistance following anti-racism protests by high school students (see article, opposite). Obscenely equating anti-racist leftists with Nazis and other fascist terrorists who seek the destruction of all those who do not fit their demented ideas of who is human, columnists, talk-

back radio hosts and others unleashed a torrent of threats. P.P. McGuinness, editor of the fanatically anti-communist *Quadrant*, demanded that the sinister Australian Security Intelligence Organisation—infamous for its infiltration and disruption against unions, immigrant groups, civil rights activists and leftists—"keep close tabs" on Resistance. One Nation's Queensland leader Bill Feldman demanded that student campaigns against racism be "stamped out." And on 6 August another One Nation Queensland official publicly welcomed the "support" of National Action.

Fuelled by the anti-Aborigine, anti-immigrant racist campaigns of the federal Howard government, which extended and deepened the policies laid down by its Australian Labor Party Keating/Hawke predecessors, the virulently racist One Nation party has grown, providing fertile ground for fascist activity. While still small, the fascists are a deadly danger to the organisations of the working class and all those who struggle against the racism, poverty and war of the capitalist system—they need to be crushed in the egg.

Appeals to the capitalists' state to ban or stop the fascists not only breed dangerous illusions in the very forces that will unleash their dogs of war should they fear their power threatened—as in Germany in the 1930s—but also open the door to attacks on the fascists' intended victims, as the grotesque branding of anti-racist students as "blackshirts" exemplifies. As the Spartacist League speaker at the large, 15 March 1997 demonstration against the National Action bunker in Fawkner, Melbourne stated: it is the multiracial working class which has both the burning interest and the social power to bring all those in the fascists' cross hairs together in massive mobilisations to sweep the fascists from

the streets whenever they dare crawl out of their holes into the light of day.

We print below a 25 July "Open Letter to the Workers Movement and All Targets of Fascist Terror" issued by the Partisan Defence Committee which was sent to trade unions, left groups and a wide number of other organisations and individuals.

Partisan Defence Committee

On 19 July the entrance to the offices of the Spartacist League was defaced by a sinister fascist sticker reading "Paedophiles Mongols Negroids Mongrels WHITE ARYAN RESISTANCE SAYS KILL THEM ALL." A photocopy of the sticker is attached.

The Partisan Defence Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people, a purpose which is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. The SL has been targeted because it is a working-class revolutionary organisation which fights on behalf of all the oppressed, and is well-known for its successful labour-centred united-front actions to stop the fascists from North America to Germany, and anti-fascist protests and actions in defence of Aborigines in Australia. An injury to one is an injury to all! It is in this spirit that we are notifying the potential victims of these fascist terrorists—the next target could be a picket line, an Aboriginal community, an Asian immigrant's home, a socialist or gay group's offices.

With the fascistic Pauline Hanson and her One Nation spewing racist filth against immigrants and Aborigines, and the ongoing attacks on the working

class and oppressed by both John Howard's Coalition and Bob Carr's Labor Party in New South Wales, the fascist terrorists surely feel the wind in their sails. "White Aryan Resistance" (WAR) is an especially dangerous group. In the U.S., WAR not only advocates killing those who don't fit their demented racist profile, but are proven, convicted killers. Led by white supremacist Tom Metzger, WAR is notorious for having killed an Ethiopian man in Oregon in 1988. Other fascist bootboys led by Metzger killed Denver radio personality Alan Berg in 1987.

Just four years ago, the Sydney offices of Pathfinder Books/Communist League were vandalised by fascists, and arsonists hit the anarchist Black Rose Bookshop. Nine years ago, fascists tried unsuccessfully to gain entry to our own offices. In May 1997 supporters of both the Democratic Socialist Party and the Communist Party were attacked in Adelaide by National Action fascists.

Our program to stop the fascists whose ultimate aim is the annihilation of the workers movement, the left and minorities is centred on the independent mobilisation of the working class and its allies—trade unionists, Aborigines, immigrants, socialists, Jews, gays, abortion rights defenders and more. Today the fascists carry out their threats and deadly attacks in the dead of night. To stop them, all intended victims of fascist terror must make a united stand against our common enemy. To this end we inform you of the threats against the Spartacist League and would appreciate notification of any similar threats against your organisation or individuals. The PDC and the Spartacist League stand ready to participate in, and help build united-front efforts called to defend the meetings and other activities of organisations of the workers movement.

Elections...

(continued from page 1)

planning to vote for One Nation (*Australian Financial Review*, 1-2 August).

While Beazley hypocritically criticised Howard for failing to earlier "condemn" Hanson, he now accuses her of "flirting" with "Left symbols," citing common opposition to the GST and privatisation of Telstra. Kernot says "I feel as though she's been reading some of my past speeches" (*Age*, 18 July). There is indeed common ground. The ALP was founded on the White Australia policy of exclusion of "cheap" Asian labour and the chimera of bringing prosperity to its white Australian working-class base through protectionism and class-collaborationist schemes, e.g., Arbitration.

Over the last few decades Australian

imperialism has attempted to "enmesh" with Asia, seeking to share in the super-exploitation of the Asian masses. This necessitated a gradual breaking down of strict racial exclusion as well as lowering some trade barriers. But today, as economic crisis rages throughout the region, the trade-union bureaucracy is increasingly demanding protectionism and immigration "controls." Especially in Australia, protectionism—premised on the lie that there is a "partnership" between the working class and its "own" bourgeoisie—means racism. Targeting Japanese or Koreans as "the enemy" leads directly to the anti-Asian atrocities perpetrated by the fascists and is poison to integrated, internationalist class struggle. We say: Down with anti-Asian racism! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

In the name of the "national interest" and "defence of the fatherland," in 1914

the social-democratic parties in Europe helped send millions of working-class youth to their deaths—cannon fodder in the struggle between the rival imperialist powers. Ever since, the social democrats have been unabashed labour frontmen for imperialism. Guardians of the jackal Australian capitalists' interests, the ALP's formal 1998 program asserts Australia's "special role and responsibility" in its own neo-colony, Papua New Guinea, and lauds "the defence co-operation treaty between Australia and Indonesia." When defence minister in 1987, "Bomber" Beazley had to be restrained from invading Fiji. Bolstering the reactionary U.S./Australian alliance, Beazley was shoulder to shoulder with Howard, sending off the SAS killers to the Persian Gulf in January. More recently, he warmly supported the recent U.S. terror bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan as "an understandable and reasonable act of self-defence by the United States."

The Bolshevik Tradition Versus Laborite Treachery

We Marxists say: the main enemy is at home! Armed with this understanding, the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky organised and led the Russian Revolution of October 1917. At the head of the millions of impoverished peasants, the multinational proletariat in the tsarist empire took power, smashing the capitalist state, expropriating the bourgeoisie and opening up a new chapter of human history. The social democracy, especially in Germany, served its bourgeois masters, helping stabilise their order against revolutionary upsurges and joining them in hostility to

the October Revolution.

This contributed to the isolation of the Revolution which helped enable Stalin's 1923-24 rise to power in a political counterrevolution. The resulting bureaucratically degenerated workers state remained in the imperialists' crosshairs, as they sought to reconquer the one-sixth of the globe that had been ripped from their grasp. The social democrats, including not least the ALP, put themselves at the forefront of the imperialists' drive to destroy the USSR.

The triumph of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s has intensified inter-imperialist rivalries, threatening humanity with nuclear annihilation. At home each bourgeoisie is feverishly attempting to increase the rate of exploitation of the proletariat as they jockey for position in the world market. Across Europe, this task is currently entrusted to the social democrats. Tony Blair's New Labour in Britain is openly hostile to the unions. In France Socialist Party president Lionel Jospin is "tactfully" dismantling state-owned enterprises and carrying out savage attacks on immigrants. The Olive Tree coalition in Italy is targeting workers, women and immigrants, and the German Social Democratic Party wants to do the same if elected in September following a vile racist campaign.

Throughout this century Laborism has been the main obstacle to revolutionary proletarian struggle in Australia. The ALP is what Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin termed a *bourgeois workers party*, thoroughly bourgeois in its program, outlook and leadership, while

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For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

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Anti-Racist Youth Protest Hanson/One Nation Capitalist Rulers Target Aborigines, Immigrants, Workers

For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Racist Capitalism!

The following leaflet was issued by the Spartacus Youth Clubs in Melbourne and Sydney on 22 July.

Pauline Hanson is a vile racist bigot. Fueled by her fascistic ravings against immigrants and Aborigines, her One Nation Party is a cesspool of White Australia racism. It's a good thing youth who hate racism have taken their anger to the streets in school walk-outs and protests across the country. And it's also good they targeted the prime minister, John Howard, for Hanson has borrowed more than a few planks from this government which has sharply cut immigration, deported desperate refugees, and conducted a relentless racist campaign to destroy any chance of land rights for Aborigines. But don't forget, the way for Hanson and Howard was prepared by 13 years of Labor Party governments, under which killings of Aborigines in police custody soared, while thousands of immigrants were deported or locked up in concentration camps.

The 2 July Sydney protest gave anti-racist youth a sharp lesson in the workings of this capitalist system as students occupying the foyer of Howard's office—some as young as twelve—were brutally assaulted by police. As the cops violently broke up the occupation, some protesters were injured and five arrested as the racist thugs in uniform picked out the most vocal and militant, including an Aboriginal student.

Racism is integral to the capitalist system, in which the ruling class, a tiny minority who own all the industry, exploit the labour of the working class, the many, for private profit. Hanson is but the most naked face of the deeply racist Australian capitalist profit system. By targeting first the most vulnerable sectors of society like immigrants and Aborigines, the capitalists seek to divide the working class and weaken the trade unions so as to slash wages, working conditions and social benefits. And it's not just in Australia. Around the world the capitalist rulers have launched racist attacks on immigrants and others as a wedge to destroy trade-union rights and social welfare programs while driving up the rate of exploitation. An end to racism will only come by smashing the capitalist profit system that breeds it in a thorough-going socialist revolution.

So how does this tiny exploiting minority maintain its rule over the majority? First by inculcating the illusion, peddled by school, church and state, that there are no classes in society, and that the capitalist parliaments represent the "will of the people" through which society can be "improved." But as history shows, in fact the capitalists will not hesitate to dispense with their "democratic" trappings, should they fear their power threatened. At bottom, as Karl Marx explained, the capitalists rule by naked force—the armed fist of the state—the police, prisons and



Jay Town



ASp photo

Left: Cops defending a One Nation meeting attack Aboriginal protesters in Echuca, rural Victoria, 23 July. Right: Rally of youth during a national school walk-out against racism, Melbourne, 24 July.

courts. The cops with their guns stand in violent defence of an entire system based on a few rich capitalists squeezing immense wealth out of the blood and sweat of the vast majority of the peoples of the world. This means murdering Aborigines, smashing workers pickets, harassing youth and immigrants, and assaulting and arresting anti-racists.

It also means cracking down on political opposition. A year ago, as anti-Hanson protests peaked, the capitalists' media went on a violence-baiting witch-hunt against the left. Since 2 July, once again gallons of ink of have been spilled as the bourgeoisie's loyal media inveigh against youthful anti-racist protesters. The *Sydney Morning Herald's* P.P. McGuinness raved about "left fascism" and called for ASIO to keep "close tabs on extremists on all sides of the current controversies" (9 July). McGuinness is a mouthpiece for larger powers who aim to intimidate anyone who fights for the rights of the oppressed.

Crawling in and around One Nation are the likes of Nazi bootboy Gideon McLean of the fascist "band," Blood Oath, admirers of Italian fascist Mussolini and crazed would-be Rambos arming themselves for war against Aborigines. The fascists are emboldened in the climate of racism being stoked by the capitalists' assault on immigrants and Aboriginal people. In the "Deep North," an Aboriginal family was terrorised in their home by hooded and robed race terrorists calling themselves the Ku Klux Klan, while several black men have been beaten. The fascists are a deadly danger to workers and minorities, aiming at destroying the organised workers movement. They must be stopped with massive mobilisations centered on the trade unions, uniting behind them immigrants, youth, gays and lesbians, Jews, Aborigines—all the fascists' intended victims.

The Spartacus Youth Club took part in the 2 July protest in Sydney. Unlike Resistance, the protest organisers, we said clearly: it is the capitalist system that produces racist trash like One Nation. Addressing the occupiers at Howard's office, the SYC called for full citizenship

rights for all immigrants, and pointed out that it was the ALP that made immigrants starve for their first six months by denying them welfare.

The Labor Party—and its defenders among the left—want us to believe that they have something better to offer youth, workers and minorities. The ALP is a bourgeois workers party, based on the workers' own organisations but with a racist, pro-capitalist leadership and program. Indeed, the ALP and the union bureaucrats are the capitalists' agents in the working class, and are crucial to maintaining capitalist rule. The Labor Party chains workers to the capitalists and their state, for example, through protectionism (also a cornerstone of One Nation's program). Telling workers to fight for the interests of Australian capitalists, protectionism is racist, pitting workers here against their class brothers and sisters elsewhere, especially in Asia.

When reformist groups like the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and Democratic Socialist Party/Resistance (DSP) push the chant "Howard and Hanson have got to go," they're selling a Labor government. The ISO and DSP both ritually call on workers to vote Labor! The DSP doesn't stop there: they even call for a vote to capitalist parties like the racist, anti-immigrant Democrats. But when the ALP is in government their job is to rule on behalf of the

capitalist class. A Labor government is a capitalist government.

Seeking "respectability" in the eyes of the rulers, the DSP condemned anti-racist militants who shut down Hanson's meetings last year just as the violence-baiting witch-hunt in the bourgeois media was peaking. All they are doing, as Resistance said in their so-tame reply to McGuinness' recent smear, is "exposing the culpability of the entire political system in racism's re-legitimation," (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 July). The racist capitalist system is well exposed to youth—what's needed is a program for workers revolution, the only way to end racism. This the DSP does *not* have. Instead, at a 4 July anti-Hanson protest in Melbourne, the DSP called for capitalist politicians to lead anti-Hanson demonstrations!

The ISO circulated a petition in 1997 calling on parliament to oust Hanson, appealing to the same racist capitalist government that produced this fascistic menace to clean up its act! The ISO has also called to "shut down" Hanson. Sounds militant, but don't be fooled. Their "action program" is to "lobby" local councils to refuse One Nation use of council facilities. The ISO's calls on the capitalist state are a *danger*. The cops' attacks on anti-Hanson protesters are a warning that whatever measures

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Sydney Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

The Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 3. For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution! | 3 September |
| 4. Indonesia: For Workers Revolution! | 17 September |
| 5. China on the Brink—Workers Political Revolution or Capitalist Enslavement? | 15 October |
| 6. The Fight for a Revolutionary Workers Party | 29 October |

6.30 pm, Thursdays, Room 712, Applied Science Building, UNSW

A short presentation based on selected reading material will be followed by discussion. For further information and/or readings, contact the Spartacus Youth Club on (02) 9281 2181, or write to GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001.

The Red Cross and the Church—Partners in Crime

The AIDS Epidemic in Mexico

The following article is translated and abridged from the "Mujer y Revolución" (Women and Revolution) pages in *Espartaco* (No. 11, Spring-Summer 1998), published by the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League.

ESPARTACO
PUBLICACION DEL GRUPO ESPARTACISTA DE MEXICO

At a February press conference during the Sixth World Conference on Disease in Mexico City, in the guise of protecting public health, an important health official retailed the lie that the principal cause of the spread of AIDS is not unprotected sex but...condoms! The official asserted: "I feel that the more the use of condoms is promoted as a possibility for preventing infection, the more infections there will be." He then ranted that "we

organisation because the groups are "autonomous and responsible for their own governing bodies" (*La Jornada*, 18 February). Thus, the Red Cross is sentencing millions of people around the world to death.

Even before Barroso's reactionary remarks, the Mexican Red Cross systematically discriminated against AIDS patients. In the Baja California town of La Paz, the Red Cross was accused of medical negligence and discrimination against poor patients for refusing treatment even when lives were at risk. Even though its services are supposedly free, there is the case of Casimiro Méndez, who wasn't treated because he had no money, or that of Justino Rosas Vargas, who was negligently discharged without treatment even though he was known to be suffering from a brain trauma—a life-threatening condition (*La Jornada*, 17 March).

after World War II. The International Red Cross issued fake passports to Nazis (many even in their real names!) in order to find them refuge in Latin America. The Catholic church, with its vile anti-Semitic poison, refused to help Jewish refugees escape the ovens of the Holocaust.

Despite Barroso's deadly lies, the HIV virus cannot "pass through the pores of a condom." Rather it is transmitted through semen or other secretions when condoms are not used during sex, through intravenous drug use, blood transfusions, or from a pregnant woman to the fetus. Not all those infected with HIV develop AIDS, which kills by attacking the body's immune system. Many patients die of opportunistic infections like pneumonia and other complications. While there is presently no cure, the spread of AIDS could be dramatically reduced through public education on

Because AIDS is largely sexually transmitted, this question intersects ingrained prejudices in bourgeois society which have been manipulated from the start in the service of obscene fanaticism and repression. Bourgeois politicians, the church and official and private institutions such as the Red Cross reinforce the belief that sex outside marriage is dangerous and immoral in order to shore up the institution of the family, the main source of women's oppression. Since homosexuality is perceived as a threat to the patriarchal family, especially in a Catholic country like Mexico, gays are brutally oppressed and even murdered. Even though AIDS is transmitted largely through heterosexual relations, it is still portrayed as a gay disease. AIDS patients are targets of systematic bigotry, thrown out of their jobs and homes, rejected by their families and subjected to discriminatory treatment in hospitals.

The worldwide AIDS pandemic is a crime of the bourgeoisie internationally, as scientific research and vital public health services, education and prevention are abandoned because of the dictates of the profit system and its social props—the family and organised religion. Medicine for profit means that the poor die while the rich can get treatment, even if this requires taking a plane to New York or Paris. In the 1980s, blood banks in France, Germany, Canada, Japan and the U.S. knowingly sold HIV-infected blood for years, infecting thousands because blood screening was "too expensive"! And while mothers with AIDS have been used as guinea pigs in studies in the Dominican Republic, Thailand and many African countries, to this day only four countries (France, Great Britain, the U.S. and Cuba) carry out research to develop preventive vaccines against the virus. The miserable conditions of poverty produced by capitalism are the perfect breeding ground for infectious diseases such as AIDS, cholera and tuberculosis. Only an internationally planned socialist economy can wipe out poverty and promote universal public health. For billions of dollars for an international program of AIDS research!

The Grupo Espartaquista de México fights for massive public education, free distribution of condoms, decriminalisation of drugs, free health care, free and anonymous AIDS testing, free abortion and contraception, full democratic rights for homosexuals and against discrimination in the treatment of AIDS patients. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For socialist revolution throughout the Americas! ■



Mexican Catholic church hierarchy, the principal force for anti-woman reaction, preaches acceptance of suffering to desperately poor families in shantytowns.



have many other needs and if ten thousand people die of AIDS while a million have respiratory or digestive illnesses, I think that it is much more important to help the million people than the ten thousand" (*La Jornada*, 7 February). Lying that condoms fail 40 percent of the time, he also blamed the media and the National Council for the Prevention and Control of AIDS (Conasida)—an official institution for AIDS prevention—for the spread of the disease.

Who said this? The Pro Vida (Pro Life)—i.e., pro-AIDS—bigots or the Catholic church? No, it was José Barroso Chávez, the president of the Mexican Red Cross, an international health organisation which supposedly helps the sick! It is a recognised fact that condoms remain the most effective protection against the sexual transmission of AIDS, if they are used correctly and *in every instance of sexual contact*. Given that the Red Cross isn't ignorant of this, Barroso's ravings are part of a criminal campaign of hysteria and prejudice promoted even as many deadly misconceptions remain prevalent, like the notion that it is possible to prevent AIDS by bathing before and after sex or that AIDS can be detected from one's external appearance ([Mexico City] *News*, 4 February).

While some groups around the country denounced Barroso's grotesque remarks and demanded his resignation, all but two members of the board of directors of the Mexican Red Cross voted full confidence in their leader. Notably, while declaring its opposition to discrimination, the International Red Cross has said nothing about Barroso, claiming that it cannot interfere with the Mexican

Barroso's backward remarks came in the midst of a xenophobic campaign in Chiapas and other areas. Thus, Pro Vida president Jorge Serrano Limón appealed to the Mexican government to expel Rainer Rosenbaum of the United Nations Population Council because his work promotes birth control and his "vile" declarations in favor of abortion "damage" public health and violate the human rights of Mexican couples (*La Jornada*, 9 March)! Such charges are truly grotesque given that *illegal* abortions are the third or fourth greatest cause of death among women in Mexico.

In Mexico, dangerous displays of superstition and "morality" from the Catholic church are common. Archbishop Javier Lozano Barragán rants against condoms as a "giant farce," basing himself on a study solicited by the "impartial" Vatican. Though about as "scientific" as exorcism, this study was also cited by Barroso. Barragán also denounces a back room deal between the government and "the big latex-producing laboratories...in order to maintain their profits worldwide." Such charges really take some chutzpah coming from the institution of the medieval Inquisition, that bastion of "faith" which perversely tortured and killed millions of innocent people in order to enrich itself. The church thus became the largest landowner in Mexico and parts of Europe! In the eyes of the church, AIDS is a gift from god to rid the world of sinners, gays and "wayward" women.

The "holy" union between the Red Cross and the reactionary Catholic church is nothing new. In the name of anti-Communism, both organisations actively assisted the Nazis during and

condom use, through sterile needles for drug users, through drugs which would reduce the transmission of AIDS by pregnant and lactating women to their babies, and through systematic screening of blood for transfusions.

As the rate of infection rises steeply, AIDS has become a disease of poverty. In wealthy countries, the disease spreads most rapidly among the poor, and 90 percent of all cases are now found in underdeveloped countries, with Mexico ranking eleventh in the world and third in the hemisphere in the per capita rate of infection, after Brazil and the United States. Mexico City, one of the largest cities in the world, already accounts for a quarter of all AIDS cases in the country, and one in 70 city inhabitants are expected to be infected by the year 2000. Yet it still has not established a prevention program! As in many other underdeveloped countries, the obstacles to reducing the spread of AIDS in Mexico are diverse: a church ban on contraceptives, lack of education on prevention, women's oppression and anti-gay bigotry, contaminated blood banks, rampant poverty, prostitution and illiteracy.

In Mexico City, 44 percent of AIDS cases are to be found among youths between the ages 15 and 29. As a result of poverty, the moralist dictates of the Catholic church and bourgeois reaction, 73 percent of sexually active youth do not use any type of contraception! The infection is spreading like wildfire especially among women and the rural population, where access to health care is totally inadequate and some 48 percent of the indigenous population is illiterate.

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Workers Must Rule—Forge a Trotskyist Party

Indonesia: Hideous Mass Rapes of Chinese Women

AUGUST 30—During the mid-May upheaval that led to the Indonesian dictator Suharto stepping down, a storm of pogromist terror was unleashed against ethnic Chinese people, mainly in Jakarta. Between 12-14 May some 1,200 people were killed; thousands of shops, malls, homes and cars were torched and looted. Later, revelations emerged that systematic atrocities were committed against hundreds of Chinese women and girls: as many as 468 were raped and at least 20 women are dead.

The attacks were carried out by organised groups of men whose purpose was to publicly terrorise and degrade the oppressed Chinese minority. Following a set pattern, the assailants often arrived in trucks—some looted stores while others assaulted women. In Jakarta a bus was stopped, the non-Chinese women forced out and the Chinese women raped. In north Jakarta groups of men moved from floor to floor in a highrise, raping as many as 40 girls and women. A doctor, Rosita Noer, told the news magazine *Asiaweek* that in west Jakarta dozens of men dragged 100 girls to the street, forced them to strip and dance before a crowd. Twenty were raped, some were burned alive, others were terribly mutilated.

We of the International Communist League (ICL) say that the proletariat must be mobilised to combat Javanese chauvinism and anti-woman bigotry. A revolutionary workers party would organise multi-ethnic workers defence guards—men and women—to defend Chinese neighbourhoods against communalist violence, state-orchestrated or otherwise. A genuine tribune of the people, such a party would fight against all the myriad forms of discrimination against the Chinese, their virtual exclusion from government and academia, and the bans on Chinese language publications. It would vigorously defend the rights of the East Timorese and other oppressed peoples of Indonesia.

On 19 May we said, "There are clear indications that these pogromist assaults were encouraged by the regime itself, which has time and again channelled popular outrage into anti-Chinese racism" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 691). Since then, evidence of the military's role in organising the terror has steadily accumulated. After a major investigation, *Asiaweek* said the shootings of students, the riots and the rapes of Chinese women "were indeed planned" (24 July). Hundreds of men trained by the elite Kopassus killers were brought to Jakarta from East Timor and sent out to shoot, burn and loot. Kopassus also brought gangsters from south Sumatra into the city. *Asiaweek* also reported that the military "intercepted radio traffic between Jakarta army headquarters and groups of provocateurs on May 14."

Rape is a brutal and terrifying crime. In war, racial or communal conflict, mass rape becomes a means of subduing a conquered people or exacting revenge. During the communal violence and bloodletting that erupted in the 1947 partition of India, mass rape was a political weapon, a punishment worse than death. In Indonesia, rapes by the military of Acehnese and East Timorese women are well documented. In countries where women's oppression is very profound, the social stigma against rape victims is intense for they are no longer seen as

fully human. There have been tragic reports of young women committing suicide, including, cruelly, with the help of their parents. Grotesquely, "chastity belts" of stainless steel and leather are being marketed to fearful Chinese Indonesians.

While the government's own investigating commission has said the rapes were "systematic, wide-spread, contemptible and sadistic," top officials are now

employed poor, the rural masses, women and the hundreds of brutally subjugated ethnic and national minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution.

Nationalism, Political Islam and Anti-Chinese Racism

The Chinese minority makes up less than five percent of the population but it includes a tiny elite which controls up

Communist parties in Thailand, Malaysia and elsewhere.

In response to worsening economic conditions, and especially in the absence of a proletarian revolutionary leadership, the role of Islam as a political factor has greatly expanded, and this can only be a force for reaction. It is necessary to fight for the separation of state and religion, and to combat theocratic reaction, including discrimination against all religious and national minorities. It is also necessary to wage a sharp struggle against nationalist prejudices, reflected in the chants raised by student protesters as they left the parliament following Suharto's ouster: "We are one people, one nation, one language." In late June at Surabaya University, for example, where 25 percent of the student population is ethnic Chinese, the local government organised lumpen thugs to go on to the campus to terrorise these youth. The nationalism promoted by the Java-centred Indonesian bourgeoisie is heavily intertwined with Islamic reaction, which directly targets women and the largely Christian Chinese minority, as the atrocities against Chinese women cruelly highlight.

This is no less true of the bourgeois "opposition." Amien Rais, the former head of the country's second-largest Muslim organisation now running a new political party, has a history of racist bigotry. Megawati Sukarnoputri is a Javanese chauvinist who supports Suharto's annexation of East Timor. Now she has added her voice to the venomous chorus seeking to discredit the rape victims, claiming, "A friend of mine in the police checked the address of an alleged victim and found that the person reported to have been raped was perfectly composed... How it could be that she had been raped, when she was so calm?" (*Republika*, 2 August).

Nevertheless, left groups such as the People's Democratic Party (PRD) look to these "oppositionists" and call for a "democratic coalition government." Criticising Megawati as "sectarian," the PRD demanded she "join in a coalition with other pro-democratic forces" (*Free Indonesia* No. 1, 1998), and they have supported her call for alliances with the Islamicists.

Promoting illusions in such bourgeois politicians among the proletariat can

continued on page 10



Manila: Women protest anti-Chinese atrocities in Indonesia.

claiming there is no proof of the rapes. Individuals and organisations trying to aid the victims have been threatened, and a leader of the Tim Relawan (Volunteers for Humanity) civil rights group, Sandiawan Sumardi, was warned—with a live grenade—to halt his investigations. In some cases, the attackers know the identities of their victims, and given the role of the armed forces in orchestrating the terror, many women fear reprisals if they make a report to the police. Indeed, the police are threatening to charge those who speak out with disseminating false information!

Suharto is gone, replaced by his underling B.J. Habibie, a fanatical anti-Chinese racist. For the impoverished masses, groaning under severe economic crisis and continuing right-wing repression, nothing fundamental has changed. The economic disaster sweeping Asia has devastated the lives of hundreds of millions. Militant workers struggles have erupted from Thailand to South Korea, and the imperialists and local bourgeoisie deeply fear a social explosion.

In Indonesia, with inflation exploding and almost 80 million unable to afford food and basic necessities, strikes and workers protests have been widespread. In July 10,000 workers at 14 factories in the Jakarta area struck for higher wages and in Surabaya a dock strike paralysed the harbour for several days. The army and police have been massively mobilised to intimidate workers, and in the Bekasi industrial region near Jakarta, the military fired rubber bullets at strikers, sending 23 to hospital. The proletariat as a conscious class has not yet entered the arena of struggle, but it must emerge as an independent revolutionary factor, taking its place at the head of the unem-

ployed poor, the rural masses, women and the hundreds of brutally subjugated ethnic and national minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution. Regarded as the "Jews of Asia," Chinese throughout the region have long been used by the capitalist rulers and nationalist and Islamist movements as scapegoats for the misery of the masses. As with anti-Semitic outrages directed against the Jews of Europe, such "populist" racism is truly the "socialism of fools," poisoning opportunities for proletarian unity and playing into the rulers' hands. Moreover, the vast majority of Chinese in the region are part of the working class and have historically played a leading role in social struggles. Ethnic Chinese were prominent in the Philippines independence struggle at the turn of the century, in organising the first trade unions in Thailand and in forming

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Promoting Iran's "Islamic Republic" The Cliffites and Islamic Reaction

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada (No. 117, Summer 1998), publication of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.

SPARTACIST CANADA

When participants in the Toronto International Women's Day march on March 7 arrived at the IWD fair at Ryerson University, they discovered that the feminist organizers had given display stalls to the Canadian army—notorious for the sadistic torture of Somalis in their role as "peacekeeping" troops—and to propagandists for the murderous Islamic Republic of Iran. Both the provocations were quashed by hundreds of protesters.

The protest against the agents of the Iranian government—initiated by the Worker-Communist Party of Iran (WCPI) and led by Kurdish and Persian women—has sharply polarized the Canadian left. Members of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), Socialist Action and New Socialist Group all joined this action against the deeply reactionary theocratic regime in Iran. Standing on the other side in defense of the ayatollahs' representatives are several other self-proclaimed socialist organizations, ranging from the burnt-out Stalinists of the Communist Party to the longstanding apologists for the Iranian government in the Communist League.

The first to pick up the cudgel for the Islamic Republic agents were the International Socialists (I.S.), Canadian affiliates of Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party. Within days, the I.S. went into print with an article in their newspaper *Socialist Worker* which slandered the WCPI and other leftist protesters as thugs who staged a "racist assault" against Muslim women!

This was a direct echo of the IWD organizers, who had called out the campus cops in a futile attempt to stop the protests. In a later statement, these feminists condemned the demonstrators for "terrorizing" the Iranian government's propagandists. Others howled that the protests—including the one targeting the Canadian army—were "awash with testosterone"! Thus, in the name of "sisterhood," the feminists take the side of the armed thugs of Canadian imperialism and of the brutally anti-woman Iranian regime.

Also whimpering about supposed "violence" was Socialist Resistance, affiliated with the British Socialist Party of Peter Taaffe. When a 16 March meeting of OCAP voted to "unreservedly support" the WCPI's action, Socialist Resistance members were among the

very few who opposed it. After years of maneuvering to install itself as the leadership of this coalition, Socialist Resistance quit the OCAP executive in protest. As the WCPI noted in a 28 March statement, "Socialist Resistance chose to be on the side of one of the most notorious and repressive regimes on the globe today."

I.S. Slanders Exposed

But the most frenzied slander campaign continues to be waged by the I.S. Initially, *Socialist Worker* (11 March)

'wonderful and full life' women in Iran enjoy, and all of them bore the logo of the Islamic Republic of Iran." The statement continued:

"There were two other booths of traditionalist Moslem women's organizations in the hall, and they participated in the fair without any challenge whatsoever. In fact, one of them was located right alongside the booth of the W-CPI....

"The fact that the International Socialists through their official organ chose to so misrepresent the facts of the incident is nothing less than scandalous. If they think that it was proper for the Republic of Iran to have a booth at the IWD fair they

"terrorism" are code words in their drive to expel desperate refugees and other immigrants.

As for the I.S.'s purported anti-imperialism, during the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq the I.S. adamantly refused to call for the defense of this (predominantly Muslim) neocolonial Middle Eastern country against U.S./Canadian imperialism. Instead they built pacifist "antiwar coalitions" with bourgeois liberals and pro-capitalist New Democratic Party politicians, who supported United Nations sanctions as the "alternative" to war. These sanctions have killed more Iraqi men, women and children than the terror bombing ever did.

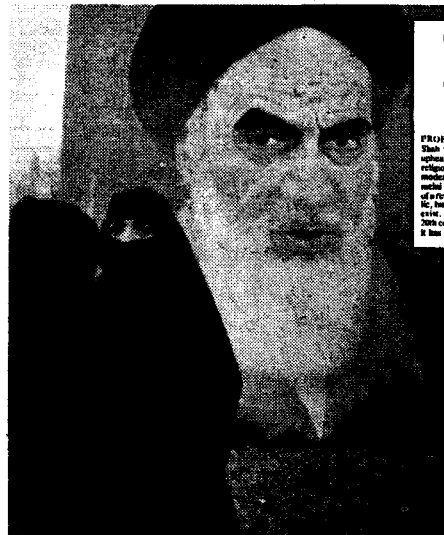
To cover for its scandalous defense of the ayatollahs' agents, the I.S. retrospectively embraces the protest against the Canadian army at IWD. Kellogg writes: "Fortunately some at the fair had the good sense to know this [the protest against the Islamic Republic] was wrong. Some tried to defend the right of the Muslim women to stay. Others led an attack on the real enemy—the booth staffed by the Canadian army—and drove it out of the fair." The unnamed "others" who led the action against the Canadian army—the TL and OCAP—were also prominent in the protest against the Iranian regime, and numerous WCPI supporters participated in the anti-army protest. Yet the I.S., whose own table was right across the aisle from that of the army, only joined in after hundreds of angry demonstrators had massed in front of the military recruitment station.

I.S. Backs Islamic Reaction: Iran and Afghanistan

The I.S.'s outrageous campaign against the IWD protest did not fall from the sky. For years now, this organization has tried to portray Muslim fundamentalism as "anti-imperialist" and even "revolutionary." The current period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world opened with the rise to power of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran in 1979. At the time, the I.S. ran laudatory articles on the Khomeinist "mass movement" which overthrew the Shah, with headlines like "The form—religion, The spirit—revolution" (*Workers' Action*, February 1979).

The criminal support for the Islamic fundamentalists by the I.S. and other self-proclaimed leftists in Iran and internationally was a monstrous betrayal. While they cheered on the Khomeini "movement," we warned that it was paving the way for a particularly brutal form of capitalist dictatorship. Uniquely on the left, we said that the mullahs in power would seek to reimpose the *chador* (the head-to-toe veil), restore barbaric punishments like stoning and flogging, suppress national minorities and crush the workers movement and left as ruthlessly as had the Shah. We said: "Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!" Tragically, our predictions were all too accurate.

Later that year, the Soviet Red Army intervened in the civil war in Afghanistan in support of a left-nationalist regime which had sought to introduce reforms like freeing women from the veil, reducing the bride price and providing education for girls. The I.S. took the side of the CIA-backed Islamic *mujahedin*, who fought to maintain women as chattel slaves. Afghanistan was the opening shot in the imperialists' "Cold War II" aimed at the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state. While whipping up a hue and cry against "godless Communism," Washington poured in arms to



Abbas/Gamma-Liaison



Canadian Cliffite paper hailed Khomeini's 1979 "Islamic revolution" which imposed veil on women and carried out bloody repression against Kurdish minority (below).



Reza/Sipa

tried to claim that the table in question had nothing to do with the Iranian regime, but was just "a booth staffed by some Muslim women." This lie was immediately refuted in a 14 March Trotskyist League leaflet, which was widely distributed on the left.

A subsequent "Open Letter to the International Socialists" by, among others, the WCPI and an I.S. member who had resigned in protest noted that "all of the literature and pictures on the display table were full of lies portraying the

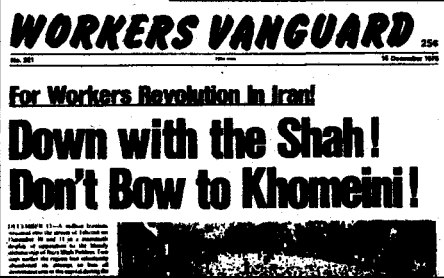
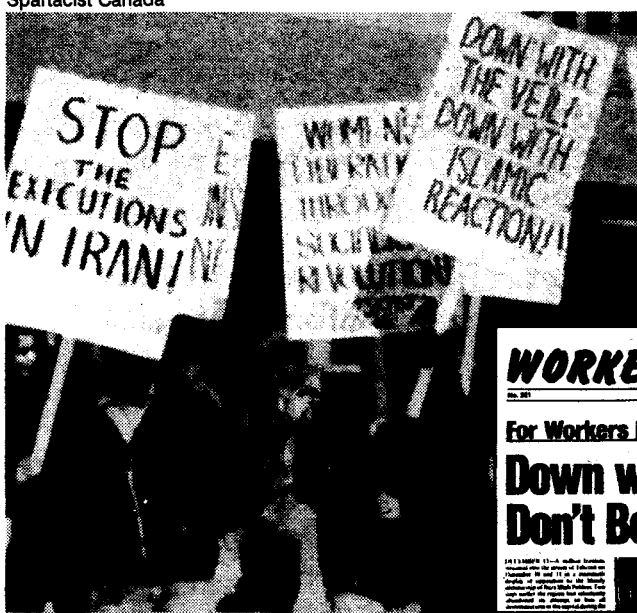
should say so openly rather than misrepresent the truth of the matter in order to cover their tracks."

Stung by the exposure of their lies, the I.S. held a rapid-fire series of branch meetings on "Marxism and Islam." These were no doubt directed at "re-educating" some of their own members who had taken part in the protest. Repackaging their attacks on the WCPI and other leftists, I.S. leader Paul Kellogg declared in a full-page article in the March 25 *Socialist Worker* that the real issue was "racist scapegoating of people from the Middle East." Kellogg asks rhetorically: "Even if there were a booth at IWD that had some backing from the Iranian state, would that justify an attack?" He answers that to protest a display sponsored by the Islamic Republic would be "a concession to anti-Islamic scapegoating coming from the ruling class." So according to the I.S., any left-wing protest against the ayatollah regime can only be racist and pro-imperialist!

The I.S.'s posture as opponents of the anti-Muslim racism of the Canadian ruling class is the most abject hypocrisy. Week after week, *Socialist Worker* has lied that the WCPI—a group of leftist exiles, many of whom were themselves jailed in the ayatollahs' dungeons—is a gang of thugs who led a "mob attack" on women. This plays directly into the hands of the racist rulers, for whom "violence" and

Spartacists protest execution of Iranian leftists, Toronto, 1979. Trotskyists warned against Iranian left's subordination of workers movement to Islamic fundamentalists, fought for proletarian revolution.

—15 December 1978



support the Afghan Muslim cutthroats. Here the I.S.'s cheering for Islamic fundamentalist forces came together with their visceral hostility to the Soviet Union. British Cliffite leader Paul Foot even used his column in the bourgeois Daily Mirror to attack the Conservative Thatcher government *from the right* by denouncing the possibility that British meat exports to the Soviet Union might be going to Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan.

In contrast, Trotskyists said, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" We recognized that, whatever the intentions of the bureaucrats in the Kremlin, this military action offered the possibility of extending social gains of the October Revolution to the hideously oppressed peoples of Afghanistan. This understanding stemmed from our recognition that, despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state and continued to embody historic gains of the October 1917 Russian workers revolution, not least for women and the historically Islamic peoples of Soviet Central Asia.

We fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, while at the same time fighting for a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers, whose deals with imperialism undermined the workers state and prepared its destruction. A decade later, the Kremlin bureaucracy's withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan helped pave the way for the victory of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe. It also led to untold horrors for the women of Afghanistan at the hands of the Taliban and other Muslim fundamentalists.

For the I.S., however, the Red Army withdrawal was a "victory." They gloated that "a defeated Russia will spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in Eastern Europe and inside Russia itself" (*Socialist Worker*, March 1989). From East Berlin to Moscow, the I.S. *cheered* these counterrevolutionary "struggles" which led to the restoration of capitalist exploitation, mass unemployment, racist terror and rampant attacks on women's rights.

I.S. Backs Islamic Reaction: Algeria and Indonesia

Trying to justify the presence of the Iranian government representatives at the Toronto IWD fair, *Socialist Worker* editor Kellogg writes:

"In fact, we should reject the term 'Islamic fundamentalism' and talk instead about the mass phenomenon of *Islamism*—a part religious, part political movement that has been part of the landscape in Middle Eastern politics for the last 40 or 50 years. Islamism is a type of nationalism, a response to the crushing hand of imperialism in the Middle East."

But the rise of Islam is not an expression of "anti-imperialism," but rather of despair. It is the reactionary reflection of the evident *dead end* of bourgeois nationalism and the absence of a communist alternative. As Paul Trehwela wrote in an insightful article on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in *Searchlight South Africa* (July 1989), a leftist journal published by South African exiles in London:

"It is the cry of the oppressed creature of the late 20th century, wrapping his chains around himself with indefatigable fury because no more substantial project of emancipation has yet presented itself. The high tide of Islamic reaction is the result of the absence over decades of any international politics that would address things by the root....

"Orchestrating and manipulating the fears and resentment of the Muslim poor, as so much raw material, the Islamic campaign in each country is in the hands of this or that stratum of the property-owners. These are out to strengthen their position relative to other classes through a political alliance with the imams, in which the mosques serve as nuclei of a political organization aimed, above all, at preventing access to civil society by the younger generation of Muslim women."

—"Islam, South Africa and 'The Satanic Verses,'" reprinted in *Women and Revolution* No. 37, Spring 1990

Algeria provides a clear example. The Algerians won a war of independence

against France, but the victory over colonialism produced an anti-working-class, neocolonial capitalist regime which could not alleviate the exploitation and oppression of the masses. Millions turned to Islam as an "answer." The result has been an all-sided bloodbath between the brutal military regime and Islamic fundamentalists which has cost the lives of tens of thousands.

And the Cliffites have placed themselves squarely in the Islamist camp. In February 1992, their British journal *Socialist Review* gushed that the rise of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) "reflects the rise of revolutionary feeling." The same month, their French newspaper *Socialisme International* declared: "Revolutionaries in Algeria must fight side by side with these people, even in actions called by the FIS." The "actions"

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they simultaneously call to "impose on capitalism the most far-reaching reforms," and end up casting about for other, alien class forces to come to the aid of the oppressed. Take for example their appeals to the United Nations, an imperialist "den of thieves" (as Lenin called its predecessor, the League of Nations). As Washington threatened yet more air raids on Iraq in 1996, the WCPI called on the UN to "put an end to the arrogance of the United States," refusing to call for the proletariat to defend this semicolonial country against imperialist assault. More recently they have demanded that the World Court, another imperialist agency, put Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein on trial. As we have long argued, it is the task of the *Iraqi proletariat* to overthrow the butcher Hussein, not the imperialists who would

Successful protest against propagandists for bloody theocratic Iranian regime at Toronto IWD fair has sharply polarised the Canadian left.

of Algeria's sinister Islamic fundamentalists include the murders of countless thousands of unveiled women, secular journalists, trade unionists and leftists.

The Cliffites' infatuation with Islamic reaction was captured in a major article by British SWP theoretician Chris Harman titled "The Prophet and the Proletariat" (*International Socialism*, August 1994). There Harman writes, "*Islamists have now replaced socialists and the left in terms of being in the frontline against the state in many countries*" (emphasis in original). Claiming that the Algerian FIS is "caught between respectability and insurrectionism," Harman does not even hint that the goal of the FIS's "insurrectionism" is a theocratic dictatorship!

More recently, in the face of mass protests against the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia, the Australian Cliffites have fostered deadly illusions that Muslim leader Amien Rais could create "a rank and file revolutionary movement in the army, to split it from below" (*Socialist Worker* [Australia], 6 March). While promoting Rais today, they have retrospectively embraced the anti-Communist, Islamic mobs that helped to bring down the left-nationalist Sukarno regime in 1965-66. They write:

"Students have rallied on campuses around the country, demanding the dictator step down.

"The most impressive action was at the University in Jakarta, where students once played a role in bringing down the previous Sukarno regime."

Grotesquely equating the student protests against Suharto with the reactionary mobs in 1965, *Socialist Worker* gives its stamp of approval to the CIA-backed bloodbath of half a million Communists, workers and ethnic Chinese which installed Suharto!

For Permanent Revolution!

In Indonesia, Iran and other countries, the rise of Islamic reaction was conditioned both by the bankruptcy of the bourgeois nationalists and the betrayals of the mass Stalinist parties which preached an alliance of the proletariat

resolved democratic tasks requires sweeping away the rule of capital. The proletariat must place itself at the head of all the oppressed in a struggle for socialist revolution. This is inextricably linked to breaking the power of the imperialist rulers through the fight for proletarian state power in the West. The International Communist League aims to build Leninist parties as the crucial instrument for imbuing the proletariat with the consciousness and purpose of its historic task of world socialist revolution.

In investing the forces of Islamic reaction with "revolutionary" potential, the I.S. doesn't even pay lip service to the necessity of mobilizing the proletariat as an independent class force. The WCPI correctly denounces them for "defending the Islamic state," asking rhetorically, "Do we need to reiterate the shameful position of the I.S. in defending Khomeini?" Yet while the WCPI stands far to the left of most self-styled Marxists in the region, they have not transcended the deadly framework of "two-stage" revolution.

Neither the WCPI nor its predecessor, the Communist Party of Iran (CPI), existed at the time of Khomeini's ascension to power in 1978-79. However in writing about this period they draw a nonexistent distinction between the "revolution" that overthrew the Shah and the rise to power of the mullahs. For example, a CPI political resolution referred to the "experience of the suppression of the 1979 revolution by the Islamic regime" (*Bolshevik Message*, February 1989). Workers strikes were key in bringing down the Shah, but the proletariat was politically subordinated to the Khomeinists by its misleaders—with the decisive assistance of the Iranian left. Crucially missing was a Bolshevik party that could lead the working class to seize political power against both the Shah and the forces of Islamic reaction.

Today the WCPI's program, "A Better World," calls for "the overthrow of the Islamic Republic and the immediate establishment of a workers' state." Yet

only replace him with another anti-Communist dictator.

While opposing Islamic reaction in Iran, in Afghanistan the WCPI refused to take the elementary stance of supporting the Soviet Red Army intervention against the CIA-backed Muslim butchers. This flowed from their entirely false view that the Soviet Union became "state capitalist" in the mid-1920s because the Russian working class failed to completely "revolutionize the economic relations." The WCPI explicitly accepts the nationalist myth that it is possible to build "socialism in one country." This is counterposed to the Marxist understanding that the proletariat must extend its rule internationally to at least the main imperialist centers in order to advance to a socialist society. Rejecting the course fought for by Leon Trotsky's Left Opposition, which struggled to return the Soviet Union to the proletarian internationalist program that animated the Bolshevik Revolution and the early Communist International, the WCPI must necessarily fall back on the disastrous schema of "two-stage revolution."

In Iran in 1978-79, the support of the vast majority of the self-proclaimed left for the ayatollah-led "movement" was conditioned by their rejection of the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat. In that instance, they lined up with forces that didn't even *pretend* to be "progressive." Today, the International Socialists shamelessly continue to portray Islamic reaction as an "anti-imperialist" and "revolutionary" alternative. As we wrote in "Third Camp' Social Democrats Pander to Islamic Fundamentalism" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 613, 30 December 1994):

"The Cliffites' policy is suicidal for themselves and any workers, youth or women unfortunate enough to be influenced by them. The proletariat must be galvanized politically around a program not to replace the uniformed dictators with robed theocrats but to achieve their own class rule, not to be thrown back into benighted medievalism but to take society forward to socialist emancipation and enlightenment." ■

India-Pakistan...

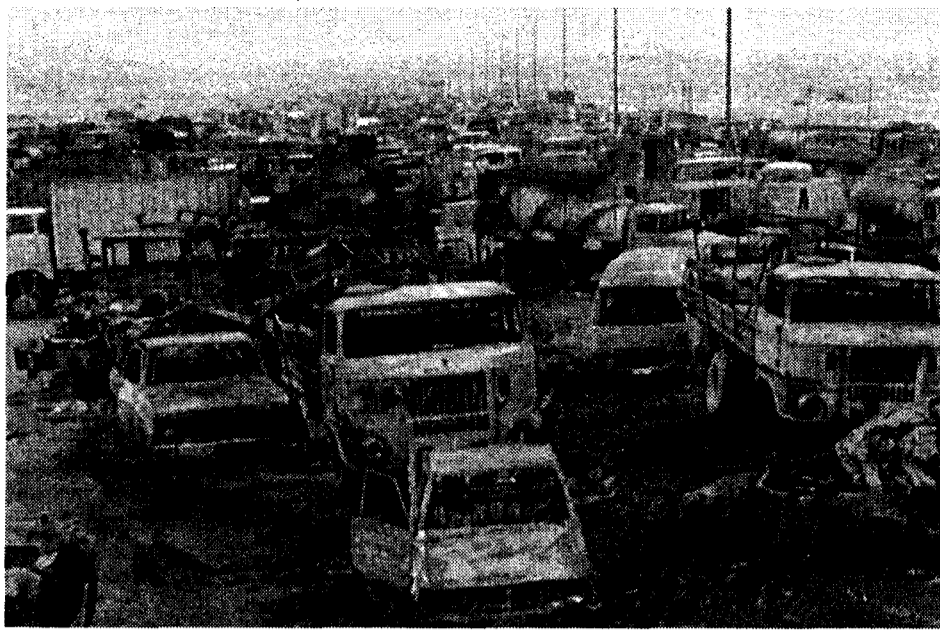
(continued from page 12)

tests, the theocratic regime of Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif carried out a launch of its new Gauri missile—provocatively named for the first Muslim invader of the subcontinent in 1193—which is capable of reaching well into Indian territory. India's nuclear explosions in turn provoked a chauvinist furore within Pakistan, as former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, once the darling of Western liberals and "leftists," and others screamed for Sharif to order similar tests.

BJP leaders gloated of their determination to "put an end to the Pakistan menace" (*Frontline*, 6-19 June). But as was made clear by the coalition government's defence minister, longtime "socialist" leader George Fernandes, the explosions were also meant to convey a message to China. This message did not fall on deaf ears in the imperialist centres. The U.S. bourgeoisie, in particular, is divided over how best to pursue its aim of capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese deformed workers state. Key sections of the American ruling class seek to continue prodding the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy along the road of a "cold" restoration of capitalism. But as U.S. naval provocations off the Chinese mainland two years ago and the current flap over Clinton's visit to Beijing illustrate, there is also considerable sentiment that Washington employ military blackmail to further its counter-revolutionary aims.

The ICL fights for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Beijing bureaucracy which is leading the drive towards capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, the A-bomb tests on the Indian subcontinent and the anti-China furore promoted by leading imperialist spokesmen underscore the Trotskyist call for unconditional military defence of the Chinese deformed workers state against capitalist attack, including upholding *China's right to a nuclear arsenal*.

Both under the BJP-led coalition and its "secular" Congress and United Front predecessors, India's government has been strengthening all the hideous mechanisms of capitalist class rule, inflaming religious and ethnic divisions, wielding murderous violence against the



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U.S. forces slaughtered thousands of retreating Iraqi soldiers in 1991 Persian Gulf War. American denunciations of India's "weapons of mass destruction" reek of imperialist hypocrisy.

lower castes perpetrated by upper-caste landlords and their hired thugs, intensifying the already brutal subjugation of women while threatening to engulf the subcontinent in communalist war. Pakistan, despite a veneer of parliamentary democracy, remains a military dictatorship under the grip of Islamic fundamentalism. Islamabad accompanied its A-bomb tests with the imposition of a draconian "state of emergency" which will be used to repress any resistance to the severe economic hardships being forced down the throats of the hideously exploited Pakistani working masses.

India and Pakistan have already fought three wars in the past 50 years, two of them centred in Kashmir, the Muslim-majority region which is divided between the two countries. Today, Kashmir is again a trip wire for war, as BJP revanchists scream of seizing "Pakistan-occupied" Kashmir and thousands of troops stand eyeball to eyeball on the border, regularly exchanging fire. The region is on a knife edge. The ICL is committed to forging internationalist vanguard parties, based on the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, to lead the impoverished and dispossessed masses of the subcontinent in the fight for proletarian power and the creation of a socialist federation of South Asia.

Capitalist Exploitation, Communalist Terror

The rise of the BJP comes in the context of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe and is paralleled by the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in predominantly Muslim countries. During the Cold War, India could count on diplomatic, economic and military aid from the Moscow Stalinists. With the Sino-Soviet split of the late 1950s, the Beijing regime became a chief backer of capitalist Pakistan, while the Kremlin criminally supported the Indian bourgeoisie in a 1962 border war against the Chinese deformed workers state. In the 1980s, the Soviet bureaucracy began pulling back on its international commitments as it embarked on a programme of "market reforms" which was to lead to full-scale capitalist restoration.

At the same time, India's Congress government initiated a policy of economic "liberalisation," privatising sectors of the state economy and opening the door to untrammelled imperialist exploitation. Combined with implementation of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank austerity dictates, this meant taxes on food and fuel and driving down manufacturing wages to compete with cheap imports from Southeast Asia. These "reforms" created a large urban middle class, grasping to make ends meet, resentful of the entrenched and filthy rich Congress tops and their big business cronies, and fearful of the impoverished toiling masses below them.

The razing of the Ayodhya mosque by fascist-led Hindu-fundamentalist mobs in 1992—and the ensuing massacre of up to 2,000 Muslims—helped propel the BJP on the road to power. Evoking memories of the horrendous 1947 Partition which created post-independence India and Pakistan, religious fanaticism reverberated across the subcontinent. As we wrote in "Hindu Fascists Whip Up Religious Slaughter" (*WV* No. 567, 15 January 1993):

"The BJP is an upper-caste Hindu-led party, oriented to maintaining the traditional caste hierarchy in the context of capitalist urbanisation which undermines the old rural-centred system. It appeals to



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CIA-sponsored Afghan mujahedin launched attacks against Soviet army in Afghanistan from bases in Pakistan.

a layer of urban educated petty bourgeois who can find no jobs, and traders and petty entrepreneurs who often see Muslims in the same way as the European fascists viewed the Jews before World War II. In India anti-Muslim communalism is the reactionary rallying cry for the fascist mobilisation of the new middle classes in the context of general urban plebeian rage and economic desperation—a feature of modern capitalist India, not some feudal leftover."

The BJP/RSS-led *Hindutva* combine includes the Bombay-based fascist Shiv Sena, formed in the early 1960s primarily to smash militant trade unions then organising Bombay's highly cosmopolitan proletariat in the textile mills, railways and banks. Among its early targets were Tamil workers from southern India, who were denounced as "criminals, gamblers, illicit liquor dealers, pimps, goondas [gangsters], and Communists" (Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* [1997]). When 15 million workers went on a general strike in 1992, they were confronted by BJP-organised strikebreakers. But the Bombay region remained highly unionised. In 1996, the Peugeot car factory there was hit by two major strikes against demands for higher productivity, the second lasting four months. And last year, prominent trade-union organiser, Datta Samant, was gunned down in Bombay, sparking a citywide strike.

While raising import tariffs in line with its rhetoric of *swadeshi* (self-reliance), the BJP is intent on escalating the economic "liberalisation" begun

under Congress, though not enough to satisfy the IMF vultures. The brutal reality of life for workers in India was shown last month, when over one thousand workers extracting salt from the sea in Kandla, a port in the western state of Gujarat, drowned in a storm. Unlike those of the prosperous middle class who have satellite TV, these largely illiterate workers could not even afford radios which would have notified them of storm warnings. Fifty years after independence, the vast majority of India's 900 million people live in extreme poverty, dispossessed and effectively disenfranchised, while corrupt capitalists, landlords and politicians amass fortunes through extortion, super-exploitation and brute force.

This is the legacy of the Nehru/Gandhi dynasty's Congress party, which governed India throughout much of the post-independence era. Most liberal and reformist opponents of the BJP promote the "secular-democratic" pretensions of the bourgeois-nationalist Congress. In fact, India and Pakistan were born out of the *defeat* of secular-democratic aspirations in the anti-colonial struggle against the British Raj, which manipulated and exacerbated communalist hatreds to bolster imperialist rule. As the parting act of British imperialism's bloody "divide and rule," Clement Attlee's Labour government engineered the 1947 Partition, unleashing an orgy of communalist fratricide in which some two million people were killed and over eleven million driven from their homes—the largest forced population transfer in history (see "The 'Quit India' Movement 50 Years On," *Workers Hammer* Nos.

131 and 132, September/October and November/December 1992).

For Permanent Revolution on the Indian Subcontinent

The wretched history of Congress underscores the impossibility of "secular democracy" under capitalism in horrifically backward countries like India. Congress chief and founding Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru, joined by Muslim League leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah, presided over the communalist slaughter which accompanied the division of British India into predominantly Hindu and Muslim states. Today, both Pakistan and India remain prison houses of peoples. The former includes over a million Hindus, as well as Baluchis, Pashtoons and other oppressed nationalities. India has the second-largest Muslim population in the world (after Indonesia)—larger than Pakistan and that of the entire Arab world—as well as a myriad of other peoples chafing under the rule of the Hindu-centred "all-India" bourgeoisie.

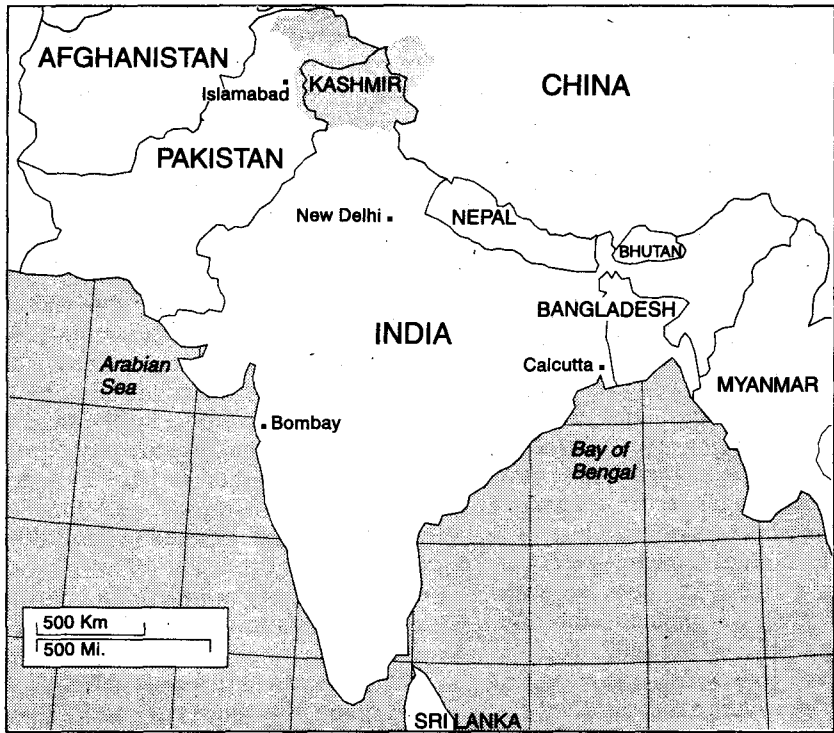
Hindu (and Hindi-language) chauvinism has been integral to capitalist rule in post-independence India. During her lengthy reign, Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, cynically supported Sikh and Tamil separatist movements when it suited, only to suppress them later. After ordering the army massacre of more than 2,000 Sikhs at Amritsar's Golden Temple in 1984, Indira Gandhi was killed by her own Sikh bodyguards.

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST



India Today

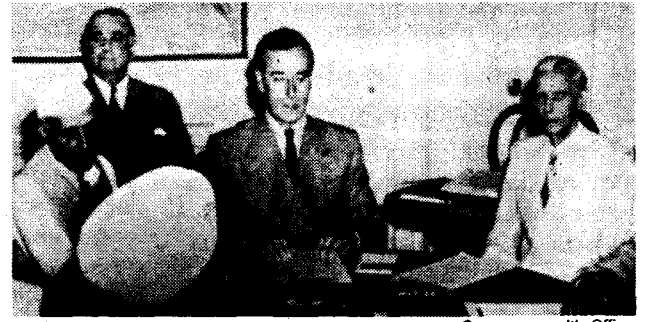
BJP-organized Hindu-chauvinist mob destroys Ayodhya mosque in 1992, leading to pogromist slaughter of up to 2,000 Muslims.



Workers Vanguard Map

British imperialist butcher Mountbatten (centre), flanked by Indian Congress leader Nehru and Muslim League head Jinnah. Imperialist partition in 1947 set stage for horrific communalist slaughter.

Der Spiegel



Commonwealth Office

Her son and successor Rajiv then unleashed a bloodbath of thousands more Sikhs in retribution. Seven years later, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by Tamil Tigers, who had been brutally suppressed by the expeditionary force he had sent to Sri Lanka. Now headed by his widow, Congress is no longer the hegemonic party it once was, as its base of support has fractured along regional and religious fault lines.

Among the chief promoters of the myth of capitalist "democracy" in India are the two reformist workers parties, the Communist Party (CPI) and the CPI (Marxist). These ex-Stalinist parties, which have administered various state governments for years, are deeply rooted in class collaborationism, alternately tailing Congress and other bourgeois forces. While both the CPI and CPI(M) derive their mass support at least in part from an anti-communalist reputation, they are thoroughly wedded to Hindu-centred Indian nationalism. Both backed the slaughter of the Sikhs by Gandhi in 1984 and denounce the struggle of the Muslim Kashmiris as "terrorism."

The CPI and CPI(M) joined with several other groups in a 16 May proclamation countering the BJP's "reckless nuclear policy" with typically abject butter-not-guns reformism (*People's Voice* [Canada], June 1998). In fact, they capitulated to the chauvinist frenzy. Indrajit Gupta, CPI interior minister in the United Front coalition government which preceded the BJP in power, declared: "The nuclear tests are a great achievement for India, no doubt, but we can't even supply ordinary drinking water and electrical power to the people" (*New York Times*, 28 May). The political bankruptcy of the ex-Stalinist parties has prepared the current upsurge of fundamentalist and fascist forces.

Shaped by two centuries of British colonial rule, Pakistan and India are classic examples of combined and uneven development, in which modern industry and technology co-exist with aspects of pre-industrial society. Age-old caste oppression remains pervasive in India, while women are the slaves of slaves throughout the subcontinent. In Pakistan, women are subjected to *purdah* (seclusion) and jailed or stoned to death for adultery and similar "crimes" under the hated Hadood Ordinance, which is based on Islamic law. Young women who refuse to submit to arranged marriages often have acid thrown in their faces or are otherwise brutalised. India has seen an alarming revival of *sati* (the religious practice of burning widows to death on their husbands' funeral pyres) and dowry burnings, the murder of young brides by husbands' families greedy for more or a second dowry. Such barbarous practices are increasing most among the urban layers most attracted to the BJP.

The intertwining of ethnic and sexual oppression on the subcontinent was

highlighted by the eruption of communalist terror in 1993 in response to a book by Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin, an opponent of religious fundamentalism and women's oppression who was subjected to death threats and criminal prosecution. In our article in defence of Nasrin in *Women and Revolution* (No. 44, Winter 1994-Spring 1995), we wrote:

"Nasrin's case raises questions far beyond the important democratic issues of women's rights, freedom of speech and the separation of religion and state. Addressing the profound oppression of women and the religious and national hatreds, her writings inevitably, and unintentionally, raise questions that only a revolutionary socialist program can answer."

In the epoch of imperialism, the bourgeoisies in countries of belated capitalist development are incapable of carrying out even fundamental democratic tasks. Much less are they able to implement a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution, which requires the expropriation of the big landlords and their capitalist allies. In short, the bourgeoisie cannot satisfy the most basic needs of the impoverished masses. The only way out of the multiple layers of oppression, degradation and exploitation is through the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution: the seizure of power by the proletariat—standing at the head of the poor peasantry, the oppressed women, castes and national minorities—as part of a perspective of socialist revolution throughout the region and internationally, particularly in the imperialist centres.

National justice for the myriad oppressed peoples of the subcontinent,

including the right to self-determination, requires the revolutionary overthrow of both the Indian and Pakistani bourgeoisies. This can only be based on an internationalist perspective. In the three wars already fought between India and Pakistan, we advanced the position of *revolutionary defeatism*, calling on the workers to turn their guns the other way. In the face of growing war fever today, it is necessary for the workers of India and Pakistan to unite around their common class interests in opposition to the chauvinism of their "own" bourgeoisies.

The proletariat has a direct and immediate interest in smashing the caste system and crushing communalist and pogromist forces. Frequently drawn from among local and migrant minorities, it is often the working class that is targeted by communalists. There have been numerous instances in recent Indian history of powerful strike movements which transcended communal and ethnic divisions. In 1984, some 300,000 dockers engaged in the longest port strike in Indian history, defying savage strikebreaking by the Indira Gandhi regime, including the massacre of over 300 workers. In the midst of this heroic battle, a report in *Workers Hammer* (No. 57, May 1984) stressed:

"This strike is particularly important because it has united a key section of India's vast proletariat across the myriad national/ethnic/religious divisions of the subcontinent. Tamils in the south, Bengalis in the east, northern and western Indians in the great port of Bombay are all battling the bloody bourgeois-nationalist regime of Indira Gandhi."

It is in the course of such struggles that a revolutionary leadership will be forged to bring to the proletariat an

understanding of its historic task in sweeping away the whole capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. The ICL fights to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties to fight for socialist revolution against all the reactionary capitalist regimes of the subcontinent: Hindu chauvinists in India, Islamic fundamentalists in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the brutal Sinhala-chauvinist People's Alliance government which is engaged in the bloody suppression of the oppressed Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. For the right of Tamil Eelam! For federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka as part of a socialist federation of South Asia!

Imperialism Threatens Nuclear Barbarism

Justifying its A-bomb test, the Indian government focused on denunciations of Beijing for arming India's enemies, especially Pakistan. Tibet's reactionary Dalai Lama rushed to congratulate India after the nuclear explosions. This Buddhist cleric, whose monk-ridden "independence" struggle serves as a battering ram for capitalist counter-revolution in China, is a current favourite of the world's anti-Communist glitterati. Among his fans are India's "socialist" defence minister, Fernandes, "a fervent supporter of the Tibetan cause" (*New York Review of Books*, 25 June).

In a "leaked" letter to Clinton, Vajpayee made a thinly veiled appeal to U.S. imperialism for an alliance against the Chinese deformed workers state. The Indian prime minister blamed China for "the deteriorating security environment" and spoke of "an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962," referring to India's humiliating defeat after its attempted military incursion into a disputed border region. A commentary in the Indian journal, *Frontline* (23 May), on the BJP government's ambitions noted:

"This focus on China is deliberate, as the beginning of a methodical red-baiting offensive within the country, as the inauguration of an arms race on the Asian continent, and as an appeal to long-term U.S. goals in Asia. What we are witnessing is the staging of a short-term Indo-U.S. tension as a prelude to a long-term comprehensive strategic alliance."

Washington hardly has need of a "strategic alliance" with backward India at the moment. But the drumbeat of belligerent rhetoric against China has gotten noticeably louder among American ruling circles of late, and not just among Republicans taking Clinton to task for alleged campaign contributions from the Chinese military. An article headlined "Red Scare?" in *U.S. News & World Report* (8 June) asked, "Is China friend or foe?" And a piece in the *New York Times* (20 June) by op-ed columnist Thomas Friedman sympathetically noted that with India now deprived of Soviet patronage, the A-bomb tests were "meant to signal

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Anu Pushkarna

India's multinational proletariat has direct interest in crushing communalist terror, caste oppression as part of struggle for workers revolution.

Indonesia...

(continued from page 5)

only lead to a repeat of the bloody defeat of 1965-66. Suharto came to power through an anti-Communist massacre carried out by the military and reactionary Islamic gangs, with the direct involvement of the American CIA and its Australian jackals. This was the bitter fruit of the Maoist Indonesian Communist Party's (PKI) Menshevik/Stalinist strategy of "two-stage revolution," which repudiated the struggle for workers rule until an illusory future "second stage" while chaining the proletariat to the national bourgeoisie in the name of a "democratic revolution."

In dependent countries such as Indonesia the national bourgeoisie is tied by a thousand threads to the imperialists. They cannot and will not bring about a "democratic revolution" because to do so would unleash the masses of the desperately oppressed who the capitalists fear above all else. As the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky outlined, in the epoch of imperialist decay solving even the most basic democratic tasks requires socialist revolution, the seizure of power by the proletariat at the head of all the oppressed. Such a revolution cannot confine itself to one country, but must spread especially to the imperialist powers themselves or face strangulation and attack. This is the program of *permanent revolution*.

In Australia, the left enthuses over the deeply nationalist bourgeois "democracy" movement—in which there is little room for a struggle for women's emancipation. The International Socialist Organisation (ISO) thinks Rais and Megawati should put themselves at the head of a "rank and file revolutionary movement in the army" (see page 6). They espouse their own version of the "socialism of fools," fatuously claiming "the anger against the Chinese is not indiscriminate. It is mostly targeted against the wealthy who have links to Suharto and the regime" (*Socialist Worker*, 22 May).

The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) acts as uncritical press agents for the

PRD. Reporting on the February anti-Chinese outbursts, the DSP's Max Lane "explained" in *Green Left Weekly* (25 February) that "many shops in Indonesia are owned by Indonesian Chinese who are therefore the first contact point for many consumers being asked to pay higher prices." This was under the obscene headline "Indonesia: Behind the 'anti-Chinese' riots." The DSP (like the ISO), tailing bourgeois nationalist forces, has been shamefully silent on the urgent need for the working class to defend the Chinese against racist violence.

Women Workers and the Fight for Socialist Revolution

In Indonesia, where imperialist subjugation supplements and reinforces religious obscurantism and backwardness, the question of women's liberation is explosive, engaging deep fears and prejudices. Women have entered the proletariat in ever larger numbers in recent years, and now are a substantial part of the large and combative young proletariat that has emerged as a result of massive imperialist investment. Women have played a leading role in numerous class battles, yet they remain subject to harsh Islamic dictates—many enshrined in law—including a ban on abortion and other measures intended to keep them chained to the patriarchal family. We fight for full equality for women, for free abortion on demand and for separation of religion and state. Only a revolutionary overthrow of the existing capitalist imperialist system can even *begin* to address the oppression, degradation and misery of women as well as the rights and emancipation of national minorities throughout the archipelago.

The attacks on Chinese women in Indonesia have resonated throughout the Chinese diaspora and there have been protests in many countries. In cities across North America and in Australia the ICL (almost uniquely among the left) solidarised with the outrage. Our literature, which prominently opposes the anti-Chinese pogroms and elaborates our program for women's emancipation and the rule of the proletariat, was well received.

In Sydney on 29 August protesters urged the Australian imperialists to put pressure on the Indonesia government and impose sanctions on Indonesia if the atrocities are repeated. This is deadly dangerous. Whether they back Suharto/Habibie or prefer a "cleaner" regime, the imperialists are interested *only* in ensuring the continued extraction of profit from the exploitation of the working people. They are the greatest enemies of the fight for human liberation.

In China, students at Beijing and Qinghua universities have held demonstrations and accused the Chinese government of being fainthearted in defending the rape victims. These protests, nationalist in character, underscore that the fate of the Indonesian masses is particularly bound up with events in China. The Chinese Stalinists are pushing rapidly toward capitalist restoration, provoking a wave of workers struggles, and they are consciously fostering nationalism, preaching the lie that the market economy will propel China to superpower status. The fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and stop capitalist counterrevolution is at the centre of any revolutionary internationalist perspective in the region. Proletarian militants in Indonesia and elsewhere must call for unconditional military defence of China and the other deformed workers states—North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—against capitalist attack and internal counterrevolution.

Internationalism is a question of life and death for revolutionary militants in Indonesia, where proletarian rule would immediately be threatened by the overwhelming economic and military might of the imperialist powers. The ICL fights for a socialist Asia—for proletarian revolutions from Indonesia to South Korea, from Australia to Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia.

The working class in Australia has a particular internationalist obligation to oppose its "own" imperialists, who have unflinchingly supported the military regime in Indonesia, arming and training the Kopassus killers, and, as the defence minister recently said, "ensuring that ABRI [the armed forces] is able to play

its role" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 August). Chinese-Indonesians fleeing the terror have been met with a wall of racist hostility from the Australian government. We say no deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Central to our perspective of revolutionary struggle in this country is the need to break the most class-conscious workers from the Labor Party, racist frontmen for imperialism who rushed military aid to Indonesia after the 1991 Dili massacre in East Timor, and who sealed a 1995 agreement with Indonesia providing for "Australian involvement in Indonesia's internal security problems."

Student and other activists in Indonesia demand "*reformasi total*." Some of them understand the need to "go to the workers." The question is: with what program? To call for the working class to look toward a mythical "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie, as does the PRD, is a recipe for bloody defeat. The multiethnic working class is the only social force which can sweep away the military dictatorship and put an end to the brutal oppression of women and the subjugation of national and religious minorities—but only if it is mobilised independently, conscious of its power and historic tasks.

The Indonesian proletariat needs a revolutionary vanguard party based on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. As we wrote in *Workers Vanguard* (No. 692, 5 June):

"To achieve emancipation from the yoke of imperialism, to sweep away the military regime and secure political democracy, to fulfil the most basic daily needs of the masses, requires the *proletarian* seizure of power."

A Leninist-Trotskyist party, acting as a tribune of the people, advancing the cause of women's liberation, calling for the right of self-determination for the numerous oppressed nations of the archipelago and for immediate independence for East Timor, will bring to the proletariat the consciousness of its historic role as the leader of the dispossessed masses and the gravedigger of this system of capitalist, imperialist exploitation. This is what the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) fights for. ■

Elections...

(continued from page 2)

based on the trade unions. Thus a strategic perspective for revolutionaries is to split the working-class base from the chauvinist, pro-capitalist leadership, centrally through the fight for a class-struggle leadership of the unions.

During elections, when a mass reformist workers party claims to represent the interests of the working class independently of and against the parties of the bourgeoisie, it might be appropriate to apply the tactic of critical support. The only purpose of calling for such a vote is to offer support "the way a rope supports a hanged man," as Lenin put it, in order to explode the contradiction between the bourgeois program and its working-class base.

In the up-coming elections the ALP is not even posturing as a defender of the working class against the capitalists, at best offering racist, anti-working-class policies glossed over with a "progressive" veneer. For leftists today to call for a vote to the ALP is an act of treachery against the interests of the working class and those who suffer under capitalist depredations.

There is an organic chain that links the racist White Australian ruling class, their pro-imperialist labour frontmen and the latter's loyal "socialist" followers who consciously seek to prop up Labor's left flank with "fight the right, kick out Howard" rhetoric. The International Socialist Organisation (ISO), for example, are notorious internationally for championing the political interests and electoral fortunes of the social dem-

ocracy. In Melbourne recently the ISO sponsored an "anti-racism" rally which featured prominent Labor federal MP Martin Ferguson who as ACTU leader in the early 1990s was blaming immigrants for worsening unemployment. Naturally the ISO are for a Labor government, which they conceive as a government of the working class. For the ISO a "socialist organisation" is needed not to fight for proletarian revolution but to "challenge the priorities of the system" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 July).

The Democratic Socialist Party's (DSP) current posture as "left" critics of the ALP is a cynical fraud. Their "opposition" is based on classless "community" and sectoralist politics—their brand of reformism is not dependent on the ALP as their agent. They label the ALP a capitalist party in order to give themselves carte blanche to pick and choose amongst alleged "lesser evils." The cravenly opportunist DSP thus are willing to vote for the outright bourgeois Democrats as well as the despicable Greens who consort with anti-immigration racists! Their maximum demand—"the main assets of society must be publicly owned and democratically managed"—is at best a call for reforms to the capitalist economy while not touching a hair on the capitalist state which defends it.

The slippery centrists of Workers Power (WP) at least claim to be revolutionary. They have even written that "the ALP cannot be transformed into a revolutionary party. We have to fight to break workers from it..." (*Workers Power*, March-May 1996). But from their inception in Australia in 1996, they have always called to vote ALP, and they

pledge in advance to do so in the future:

"As long as the mass of the organised working class continues to have illusions in the ALP, we will continue to support workers in placing demands on them, and putting them to the test of office."
—*Workers Power*, August-October

In this country, where Labor has ruled for one third of the century with an unvarnished record of class treachery, including during two inter-imperialist world wars, the argument that today the ALP must be put "to the test of office" is in itself simply Laborism.

WP's words of opposition to Labor are so much ink on paper, intended only to cover for their real program and appetites. In Britain WP gushed that the election of Blair's anti-working-class New Labour government "is our victory" while in France they called for support to the now-ruling Socialist Party (and to the Communist Party) in order to test them "one more time."

Far from seeking to destroy illusions in the ALP, WP reinforces them. At the very time the Laborite bureaucrats were killing the MUA's struggle, WP opined that the ALP and ACTU should be "pressured by their membership" to "call on the Australian working class to carry out...national industrial action...in the form of an indefinite general strike" (May-July 1998)! For Workers Power, the working class as a conscious factor in history does not exist, and they cannot even conceive of workers struggling outside of or against the Labor Party.

For a Leninist Party, Tribune of the People

We of the International Communist League fight for workers revolution,

new October Revolutions internationally, the only answer to the war, poverty and oppression which is inherent to capitalism. Critical to this purpose is the building of a revolutionary party capable of transforming the present-day consciousness of the proletariat into *revolutionary* class consciousness.

It is necessary to wield the enormous social power of the working class not only for workers' economic needs such as decent pay, jobs and conditions, but on behalf of all the oppressed. The struggles of the working class and minorities will go forward together or fall back separately. At the very minimum what's needed is a class-struggle fight to smash all the anti-union laws and to win a shorter work week with no loss in pay to combat unemployment, free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all. There must be union/minority mobilisations to stop fascist terror. Such a class-struggle fight would immediately come up against the capitalist profit system and the bourgeois state.

A revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed, a tribune of the people, can only be built in struggle against the current leadership of the working class, the "labour lieutenants of capital," who won't defend the unions' hard-won gains, let alone immigrants, Aborigines and women in this deeply racist and bigoted society. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building a party of the working class that seeks nothing other than international socialist revolution. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

India-Pakistan...

(continued from page 9)

America and China that India views their emerging 'alliance' with great concern." Two days later, the *Times* carried a sabre-rattling contribution by Robert Kagan and William Kristol warning: "The Chinese leadership must know that when it breaks its promises—by aiding Pakistan's and Iran's nuclear weapons programs—it will be punished with sanctions." These conservative ideologues concluded with Cold War rhetoric about the need to "contain China's strategic ambitions."

Beginning in the early 1970s, U.S. imperialism and the Beijing bureaucracy consummated a counterrevolutionary alliance aimed against the Soviet degenerated workers state, then the military and industrial powerhouse of the "Communist bloc." Both the U.S. and China also supported Pakistan against Soviet-allied India. Following the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan in late 1979, Pakistan became a strategic base for CIA operations in support of the anti-

Communist "holy war" waged by Islamic fundamentalist Afghan *mujahedin*. We proclaimed "Hail Red Army" and called to "extend social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples." The Kremlin bureaucracy's treacherous withdrawal in 1989 led to the barbaric, anti-woman Taliban coming to power in Afghanistan and gave enormous impetus to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism elsewhere. The pullout was also a direct precursor to capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union itself.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Washington has curtailed aid to Pakistan while focusing on the drive to restore capitalism in China. Though the 1949 Chinese Revolution was deformed from the outset under the nationalist leadership of the Stalinist Communist Party, it resulted in the shattering of capitalist rule and the creation of a planned, collectivised economy. Decades of Stalinist misrule and the escalation of "market reforms" in recent years have brought China to the very brink of capitalist counterrevolution, which would mean bloody chaos and immiseration for a quarter of the world's population and

would further intensify the imperialist scramble to redivide markets and spheres of exploitation. The ICL strives to cohere the nucleus of the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party which is desperately needed to lead the Chinese proletariat in a political revolution to stop the Beijing bureaucracy's galloping drive towards capitalist restoration. This perspective is premised on unconditional military defence of China against capitalist attack, including imperialist sanctions and nuclear blackmail.

While the imperialists fume about the handful of nuclear weapons held by India and Pakistan, the real danger to the continued existence of humanity lies in the vast arsenals held by the major capitalist powers, particularly the U.S. And as history has shown, there are no bounds to the scale of imperialist barbarity—from the U.S. A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 to the horrendous massacres perpetrated by British imperialism in colonial India. As noted in the ICL "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

"Capitalism has long since outlived its progressive historical role of creating a modern industrial economy. In order to maintain their rule, the national capitalist classes must exploit national, ethnic and racial divisions, which have been intensified since the destruction of the Soviet Union. Increasingly mutually hostile imperialist powers and rival blocs must oppress the peoples of the former colonial world and those still under the yoke of colonial peonage, impoverish the world's masses, engage in continual wars for the maintenance and redivision of the world markets in order to prop up the falling rate of profit, and attempt to smash the revolutionary struggle of the workers wherever it breaks out. In its final frenzied effort to maintain its class rule, the bourgeoisie will not hesitate to plunge humanity into nuclear holocaust or dictatorial oppression of unprecedented ferocity."

The only alternative lies in the proletariat establishing its own class rule around the globe, seizing state power from all the exploitative ruling classes and ushering in an international socialist society. The fate of humanity lies in the timely reforging of Trotsky's Fourth International to lead the struggle for new October Revolutions around the world. ■

Capitalist Attacks...

(continued from page 3)

the state may take against Hanson and her ilk will be triply enforced against anti-racists, the left and the unions.

Such faith in the state is consistent with the ISO's support to prison guards—the same ones that routinely murder Aborigines in their cells—in their "struggles" for "better working conditions," i.e., more power to brutalise prisoners. As for cops, the ISO's British co-thinkers in the Socialist Workers Party say (*Socialist Worker*, 8 February 1997) if cops "rebel collectively" they cease to be "agents of the state"! But cops who "rebel collectively" are cops who have slipped the restraints of their civilian bosses, and their terror is aimed at workers and minorities. Protesters attacked by cops on 2 July, and strikers hit with mass arrests

for their effective picket lines at Davids grocery warehouse in Blacktown a week later, know through bitter experience that the cops are their enemy.

Workers Power, a centrist group somewhat to the left of the ISO and DSP, has called for "no free speech for racists," an absurdity since racism is endemic to capitalist society. Indeed, WP's "Fight the Racist Right" rhetoric dovetailed with the various ALP politicians who in 1997 were busily banning Hanson's meetings in an effort to clean up the ALP's tarnished "anti-racist" credentials. WP doesn't deny a platform to Howard's party, much less the anti-immigrant ALP, the historic party of White Australia racism. *Au contraire*: Labor gets their votes! WP's "no free speech" call in practice is just another liberal appeal to clean up this system of racist oppression, and their real program can be seen in their British group calling the election of the racist Blair government "our victory" (*Workers Power*, May 1997).

Hanson's "law and order" ravings are a loaded gun aimed at minority and migrant youth, and Aborigines. But in NSW it's the Labor government of Bob Carr that's leading the charge. Sweeping new laws ban youth from gathering in groups of more than three and prohibit carrying even a Swiss Army knife. These laws are ostentatiously aimed against immigrants as Carr pushes the spectre of "Asian drug gangs" and the cops swoop down on immigrant suburbs like Cabramatta in Sydney. Meanwhile NSW Labor is policing youth sexual activity, with new "squeal rules" requiring doctors and others to report anyone under 16 years that they think is having sex! This will be deadly as young people are denied sex education, birth control, abortion and health care.

Capitalism offers youth the "choice" of unemployment or being slaughtered on future battlefields in the interests of Australian imperialism. Especially since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state which was undermined and strangled by decades of Stalinist rule, the imperialist powers have been gearing up for another struggle to redivide the world's finite markets among themselves.

The question is, how to fight back?

How to win? Young people themselves don't have a lot of social power. But the integrated working class, with its hands on all the levers of production and distribution of wealth, does. To be sure, youth who have never witnessed a winning strike, let alone a revolution, may think the fight for socialist revolution is way "out there." But what is really crazy is the notion that the present system can be made humane and just. No amount of tinkering can get rid of capitalism's purpose: the exploitation of the world's peoples for the profits of a tiny handful.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for a party like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky which led the workers to overthrow capitalism in Russia in 1917, smashing the racist, anti-Semitic, murderous Tsarist state in the process. Against the Labor Party hacks and "socialists" who proclaim the reformability of this dying system and divert social struggle into electoral politics, we seek to rally youth to a *revolutionary* perspective. Our goal is to help build an internationalist multiracial revolutionary workers party that fights all manifestations of oppression on the road to overthrowing this system of racist, capitalist exploitation. The SYCs are organisations of revolutionary action and education. Join us! ■

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Mumia...

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front demonstrations were endorsed by the branches of the Maritime Union of Australia in New South Wales and Victoria and the Australian Meatworkers Union, as well as the labour councils of both Newcastle and the NSW South Coast. The construction division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union and the NSW Australian Manufacturing Workers Union sent urgent protest letters as did the New Zealand Seafarers' Union. Other union branches and unionists, as well as students, youth, immigrant organisations, Aborigines and supporters of struggles against capitalist oppression from Bougainville to Kurdistan have spoken out for Jamal.

While Jamal's lawyers pull every possible legal lever to win his freedom, the whole history of the system of capitalist repression, not least Jamal's own case, shows that not one whit of justice can be expected from the bourgeois courts. What is urgently needed is the *mobilisation* of the multiracial working class not only in the U.S., but internationally. In Australia, such a fight could strike a blow against those trying to bring back the death penalty and would be a powerful launching point for defence of the rights of Aborigines and immigrants,

under attack not only by the federal Coalition government but also in Australian Labor Party-ruled Queensland and NSW. A class-struggle leadership in the unions would seek to organise not only protests and demonstrations, but stop-works and political strikes to bring labour's muscle to bear.

Just as we place no faith in the "justice" of the capitalist courts, so too do we understand that labour's fight must be one that is mobilised independently from the government, its courts, arbitrators and the like. This understanding is critical not only to win Mumia's freedom but also to unshackle the power of the working class in the fight against the increasingly savage attacks on wages, jobs and the very right to live in anything but misery, a fight against the entire capitalist system itself. Free Mumia! Those who labour must rule!

Funds for Mumia's Legal Defence Are Urgently Needed!

Get your union or organisation to contribute generously: make cheques or money orders out to "Partisan Defence Committee—Jamal Legal Defence," and send to P.O. Box Q217, QVB, Sydney NSW 1230. The PDC will forward every penny to the New York-based Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal. ■



Imperialist Hypocrisy and Nationalist Frenzy

India-Pakistan Nuclear Rivalry



Chauvinist outpourings in India (left) and Pakistan greeted A-bomb tests which represent ominous escalation of war fever on subcontinent. Reuters photos

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 693, 3 July 1998), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

LONDON—The nuclear tests carried out in May by India, followed two weeks later by its neighbour and rival Pakistan, were met with a chorus of imperialist condemnation. Following New Delhi's announcement, Labour prime minister Tony Blair sanctimoniously lectured India about its threat to a "safe world." U.S. president Bill Clinton, commander in chief of the deadliest nuclear arsenal in the world, hypocritically decried India's challenge to "the firm international consensus to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," imposing a raft of punitive economic sanctions first against India and then Pakistan.

Only months earlier, these two statesmen of "peace" were gearing up for mass destruction in Iraq, where the

For Unconditional Military Defence of China!

Anglo-American imperialists and their allies slaughtered 100,000 people during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. A million more Iraqis, including over 600,000 children, have died as a result of imperialist sanctions over the past eight years. Unlike the case of Iraq, the measures against India and Pakistan have not been embraced by many other imperialist powers, and the U.S. has already resumed some aid programmes to New Delhi. The International Communist League denounces the imperialist sanctions against India and Pakistan. Down with the starvation blockade of Iraq!

The proclamations by Britain and the U.S.—the only country ever to use

nuclear weapons—reek of imperialist arrogance against the prospect of semi-colonial countries entering the relatively exclusive "nuclear club." And conspicuously absent in the imperialist hue and cry over "nuclear proliferation" is any reference to the considerable nuclear arsenal of Zionist Israel, which has been engaged in "extensive defense cooperation" with India (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*, 30 May).

Nonetheless, the India-Pakistan nuclear rivalry represents an ominous escalation of nationalist war fever on the subcontinent. India's tests, its first since an initial atomic explosion in 1974, came only two months after the election of a

coalition government headed by the virulently Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The BJP is a creature of the fascist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), whose cadre form the leading core of the BJP. A relatively marginal political force only a decade ago, the BJP grew rapidly after the BJP/RSS-led *Hindutva* (Hinduness) fundamentalist combine instigated mob assaults in 1990 and 1992 on the most sacred mosque in India, the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, triggering pogroms in which thousands of Muslims were slaughtered. Now, the chauvinist outpouring over the A-bomb tests directly threatens the huge Muslim minority within India, whom the BJP decries as "Pakistani" and an "enemy within."

The BJP announced its intentions of "reviewing" India's nuclear weapons policy even before taking office in March. But a month before the Indian

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Black Political Prisoner on U.S. Death Row

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Terry/Gamma-Liaison

In the 16 years since he was framed-up and falsely convicted for the December 1981 killing of a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania cop, Mumia Abu-Jamal's fight for freedom has become an international focus of opposition to the racist, barbaric death penalty. Taken up by millions of trade unionists, minorities and leftist youth, the case of this eloquent, outspoken and unbowed black activist and journalist—known as the "voice of the voiceless" for his radio commentaries and writings on behalf of the oppressed—is synonymous with the fight against racist injustice and "legal lynching."

In recent weeks the forces who railroaded this former Black Panther Party leader and MOVE supporter to death row for a killing they know he did not commit have escalated a sinister campaign to kill him. A full back-page ad in the national *New York Times* (14 June) screamed for

Jamal's death. This followed a two-part "news" story on a San Francisco TV station which similarly repeated the lies of the cops and prosecutors who orchestrated Jamal's 1982 "trial."

The howls emanating from this chorus of death, led by the Fraternal Order of Police, are in anticipation of a ruling by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, due at any time, on Jamal's appeal of his conviction and death sentence. Republican governor Tom Ridge has already vowed to sign a new death warrant should the court turn down the appeal.

A massive cry of international protest including trade unions from the U.S. to South Africa, Japan and France stayed Jamal's scheduled execution in August 1995. In Australia, Partisan Defence Committee-initiated united-

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