



Down With ALP Government "War on Terror"!

Racist Dragnet in Melbourne

At 4.30 a.m. on 4 August, in a massive operation, hundreds of federal and state police raided houses in Melbourne and Colac in south-western Victoria, terrorising the neighbourhoods. The cops arrested four young men of Somali and Lebanese backgrounds under the pretence of thwarting a gigantic and sinister "terror plot." The four, along with another man already in police custody, are charged with "conspiring to prepare for a 'terrorist attack' on the Holsworthy army base in Sydney" (*Age*, 8 August), amongst other things. With Murdoch's *Australian* tipped off before these raids, the media whipped up racist hysteria with inflammatory headlines like "Somali extremists on a 'fatwa order' from God" (*Australian*, 5 August 2009). Reflecting the justified outrage of Melbourne's

besieged Somali community, one of their leaders, Abdurahman Osman, remarked following the raids, "What do you call waking people up at four in the morning with guns? It is the police themselves that are the terrorists. They had 400 police and 19 raids, but they did not find anything. No guns, no ammunition, nothing. Now we have our kids being called terrorists at school" (*Herald Sun*, 7 August). The Somali community rightly fear a racist backlash in a climate of growing racism, which has seen vicious attacks on overseas students and others (see article below).

The "anti-terror" frenzy is designed to demonise the Muslim minority and whip up xenophobia to divide the working class and regiment the population

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Nicole Garmston
August 4: Over 400 police, particularly targeting Somali and Lebanese communities, raided 19 separate properties in Melbourne and country Victoria.

Defend Overseas Students!

Racist Terror Sparks Indian Student Protests

Early last year, a gang of eight racist thugs, out to bash Indian students, murderously assaulted 41-year-old Chinese academic, Dr. Zhongjun Cao, as he walked home from his research job at Victoria University in Footscray, a western suburb of Melbourne. The talented Dr. Cao was set upon, bashed, picked up and dropped on his head, and then viciously kicked in the head. Later that evening, a Mauritian man, Bhinesh Mosaheb, was also attacked, grabbed from behind, lifted and dropped, by one of the same thugs. Mosaheb now suffers headaches, neck pain and has a twisted spine. While Mosaheb survived, Cao died from his horrific injuries four days after the cold-blooded, vicious attack. There was an outpouring of deep and justified outrage, particularly among the Chinese community, when those who were prosecuted for the killing of Dr. Cao got off with terms ranging from fifteen years in jail (with a minimum of ten) to two years in youth detention. Four of the gang members were not charged at all!

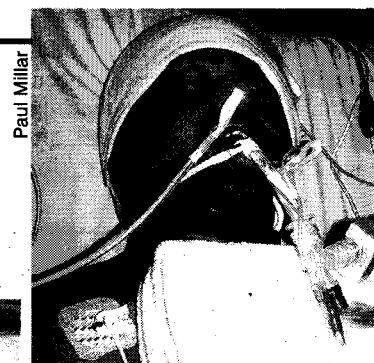
Racist brutality is fundamental to the rule of the venal Australian capitalist class. Australia was founded as a British penal colony, a colonial settler state built on the mass murder and dispossession of the Aboriginal people, pogroms against Chinese, and a racist colour bar to keep out non-white people. Today, Australia is largely dependent upon U.S. imperialism—the most powerful enemy of the world's oppressed—to help enforce a smooth flow of profits obtained from the

No Illusions in the Capitalist State!

plunder of resources and superexploitation of the working masses in the region. The Australian capitalist class has always viewed itself as vulnerable, which accounts for the rawness of its racism. In-

deed fear and hatred of Asia has conditioned Australia's development as an imperialist country. While no longer a lily-white enclave, and increasingly economically dependent on Asia, it remains a

Indian student, Sravan Kumar Theerthala, in a Melbourne hospital following vicious screwdriver attack (right). Melbourne, 31 May: Indian students protest racist attacks (below). Cops rioted against protesters in the early hours of the following morning.



Paul Millar



Indian Link

virulently racist jackal imperialist power. The current wave of murderous attacks epitomises the violent reality that immigrants and minorities, including Africans and Aborigines, confront in capitalist White Australia.

Last September, Indian-born Mukash Haikerwal, a former president of the Australian Medical Association, was bashed with a baseball bat and kicked repeatedly by a gang of five youths, resulting in doctors placing him into an induced coma. On 23 May, 25-year-old Indian student, Sravan Kumar Theerthala, was left comatose after he was stabbed in the head with a screwdriver in Melbourne. The next day, Sydney student, Rajesh Kumar, was severely burnt when a petrol bomb was thrown at his home. A survey of one hundred Chinese overseas students, conducted by the Chinese consulate in Sydney, showed that one in four had been subject to crime, often involving violent threats and assault. In Hobart, many Chinese students are too scared to go out at night following the murder of 26-year-old student Zhang "Tina" Yu in May and ongoing racist attacks.

Earlier, in February, in response to mounting anger over the violent assaults, a Victorian police spokesman grotesquely sought to place blame on the victims, warning that Indian students should not be "openly displaying signs of wealth with iPods and phones, and not talking loudly in their native language" (*Age*,

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French Government Represses Anti-Colonial Union Militants

New Caledonia

We print below the translation of a 2 July protest statement by the Comité de Défense Sociale (CDDS), which is fraternally allied to the Partisan Defence Committee in Australia. This translation first appeared in Workers Vanguard (No. 940, 31 July), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S. The CDDS is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation associated with the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

PARIS, July 2—Gérard Jodar, president of the Union of Kanak and Exploited Workers (USTKE), was sentenced on June 29 to one year in prison, while five of his comrades also received prison sentences of between four months and one year. Eighteen others were also given suspended sentences of four months. The Comité de Défense Sociale (Committee for Social Defense—CDDS) strongly protests this attack, which strikes at all workers in New Caledonia, France and its colonies. These sentences follow a May 28 police attack. While dozens of USTKE members, including Gérard Jodar and the others who were charged, were at the Magenta airfield protesting the firing of a worker from the Air Caledonia airline company and the attack on union rights, they were forced to flee a brutal cop attack and a rain of tear gas

grenades, taking refuge in two Air Caledonia airplanes. Outrageously, they were sentenced for “prevention of the free circulation of an aircraft.” In reality, they were simply defending the right to strike and to demonstrate! We solidarize with our class brothers in New Caledonia against this French state-led witchhunt against the USTKE militants, and we demand their immediate release and the dropping of all charges.

These prison sentences were handed down in the context of the world economic crisis. Strikes in the colonies are subjected to increasing repression. In the French West Indies, Réunion and New Caledonia [an island east of Australia], trade-union struggles, as well as those against colonial oppression, are violently repressed. In mainland France too, attacks have been increasing against workers, immigrants and youth—above all, minority youth—as well as against Corsican and Basque nationalists. What is needed is a counter-offensive by the workers movement, organized independently of bourgeois forces and without any illusion that a “left” capitalist government would be more favorably disposed toward their struggles. Colonial repression has been no less a hallmark of popular-front governments than of governments of right-wing parties—from the government of [Socialist prime minister] Guy Mollet during the Algerian War to that of [Socialist president François] Mitterrand, who oversaw the 1985 state murder of Kanak independence leader Eloi Machoro. And let us not forget the anti-union repression and, espe-

cially, the imprisonment of UGTG leaders in Guadeloupe under the government of [Socialist prime minister Lionel] Jospin and [Communist Party leader Marie-George] Buffet. That state repression prepared the attacks being waged today against the UGTG in Guadeloupe, as well as against the USTKE and trade unionists elsewhere.

The prison sentences against Jodar and his union brothers show that the bourgeoisie intends to crack down on the working class and on anyone who dares to criticize the “French Republic, one and indivisible.” The USTKE, and Jodar in particular, have long been legally harassed and targeted by the French state. Just over a year ago, the CDDS protested against the sentencing of Jodar to a one-year prison term for “directly provoking an armed assembly” as well as against the sentencing of 22 other activists. Through this persecution, the bourgeois state seeks to send a message that it will crush all attempts by workers, in New Caledonia or in France, to defend themselves against layoffs and any undermining of their social gains by the



Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes

state or the bosses. But the workers movement, and particularly the trade unions in the French metropolis, have the social power to fight back and to strike the capitalists where it hurts—in their pocketbooks—because it is the workers who produce the profits appropriated by the capitalists. Labor must mobilize this power to take up the defense of the USTKE militants. An attack against one is an attack against all—the entire working class is being targeted.

We are for the independence of New Caledonia and we demand the immediate withdrawal of French troops from New Caledonia and the Pacific. The aim of these attacks is to maintain the control of French imperialism over nickel in New Caledonia. The emancipation of the [indigenous] Kanak people—and harmonious relations between Kanaks, Caledonians and Oceanians—can be won only by united proletarian struggle in New Zealand, Australia, Japan and throughout the region. This perspective of achieving socialism throughout the Pacific is that of the international Trotskyist program. **Free all the imprisoned USTKE militants!** ■

“War on Terror”...

(continued from page 1)

into accepting gross violations of all our civil rights. The “war on terror” is not a war in the military sense, but a political weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Using criminal terrorist attacks such as the attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 and the Bali bombings in 2002 as a pretext, capitalist rulers around the world have seized the opportunity to jack up state repression at home. Outrageously those arrested in this case have been refused bail and may not be put on trial for at least two years! They are being held in horrendous Guantánamo Bay-type conditions at Barwon prison. Rob Sary, lawyer for one of the defen-

dants, said the prosecutors were “crying wolf.” He noted that the defendants are “supposed to have a presumption of innocence. Well, in these cases there’s a presumption of guilt” (*Australian*, 28 August). We condemn the latest raids: **Down with racist “war on terror” government repression! Hands off the Muslim minority! Free the detainees! Drop the charges now!**

These sinister raids are similar to those in Sydney and Melbourne in 2005 where 17 men were arrested and imprisoned as suspected terrorists. Subsequently their lives, and those of their families, have been torn apart by ongoing imprisonment. One of those arrested, Melbourne-based Muslim cleric, Abdul Nacer Benbrika, having already been imprisoned three years, was sentenced to a minimum of twelve years’ jail after being found guilty in February of “forming an

Australian terror cell.” Six others also received jail sentences. Committing no terrorist act or even laying down plans for one, in truth, these men have been imprisoned for expressing opinions, for alleged thought crimes.

When Benbrika and the others were arrested in November 2005, we noted that the sinister raids were orchestrated to occur on the eve of the vote on the then-Howard federal government’s “anti-terror” legislation. They also occurred in the lead-up to mass union demonstrations against Howard’s anti-union laws. It is no accident that aspects of legislation targeting building workers, which gave the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) ASIO-style powers to spy on, secretly interrogate and prosecute militant workers, were modeled on the “anti-terror” laws. Currently CFMEU construction union member, Ark Tribe faces a jail sentence of up to six months for allegedly failing to attend a compulsory ABCC interrogation. We say: **Defend the unions! Down with ABCC and all government union-busting!** It is necessary to organise a proletarian-centred fight against all the reactionary “anti-terror” and anti-union laws.

One week after the recent raids the Rudd government unveiled a 450-page plan to consolidate and expand the existing “anti-terror” laws. A key purpose of this proposal is to avoid any repetition of the string of failed “anti-terror” frame-ups from that of Jack Thomas to Zak Mallah to Izhar Ul-Haque. The most spectacular of these was that of Indian doctor Mohamed Haneef. Haneef was arrested in a blaze of publicity on 2 July 2007 that

falsely connected him with an attempted bombing in Scotland the previous month. He was detained for 12 days before being charged with giving “reckless support” to terrorism. But the government and cops’ story quickly began to unravel and less than two weeks after being charged the case ignominiously collapsed like a house of cards.

The federal Labor government is determined to avoid further such embarrassments. The government’s new proposal would entrench the far-reaching powers already handed to the state under the pretext of an “anti-terror emergency.” They also significantly expand the definition of terrorism to include acts that can cause psychological as well as physical harm. There would also be a series of new offences, including inciting racial or religious violence and carrying out a terrorist hoax. The new laws would give federal police the power to raid homes and workplaces without a warrant, and allow for detention without charge for up to eight days. Immediately following the August raids proposals were also floated to legally allow the Defence Signals Directorate to spy on Australian citizens at home and abroad, as well as vastly expand the powers of the ASIO secret police.

Police allege that the men arrested in the raids are supporters of the Islamic fundamentalist group, Al-Shabaab, in Somalia—even though a spokesman for Al-Shabaab has denied knowledge of the men. Al-Shabaab began as the youth wing of the clericalist Union of Islamic Courts which briefly ran Somalia until

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Australasian

SPARTACIST



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

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EDITOR: Margaret Rodda

YOUNG SPARTACUS EDITOR: D. van Scheveningen

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mike Wallace

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Phil Newman

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Queensland Couple Targeted in Anti-Abortion Witchhunt

Full Access to RU486 Now! For Free Abortion on Demand!

AUGUST 31—A young Queensland couple, 19-year-old Tegan Leach and 21-year-old Sergie Brennan, are being subjected to a harrowing ordeal over the alleged use of the drug, misoprostol, to end the teenager's pregnancy last year. The couple were charged by police in April under archaic 110-year-old anti-abortion clauses in Queensland's Criminal Code. Tegan is the first woman in the state to be charged over procuring an abortion in more than half a century. If convicted, she faces up to seven years' jail. Her partner faces a three-year and possibly 14-year jail term for procuring and supplying a drug to procure an abortion. We say: Drop the charges against Tegan and Sergie now! It is in the interest of the labour movement and all defenders of democratic rights to vigorously take up their defence.

The state's witchhunt of the couple, overseen by the Queensland Labor government of Anna Bligh, has emboldened the anti-abortion bigots, who reportedly mobilised outside the couple's home. The pair was forced to flee the house after it was firebombed and Sergie's car vandalised. In this "deep north" state, riddled with religious backwardness and prejudice, the Labor government has ruled for over ten years, pushing racist "law and order" campaigns that serve to strengthen the powers of the police, who carry out brutal repression within Aboriginal communities.

A "pro-choice" feminist, Premier Bligh has backed the police prosecution of the couple, claiming the case is about the importation of misoprostol and its use without medical supervision. Flouting Queensland ALP state policy to repeal the anti-abortion laws from the criminal code, the premier reaffirmed a March election commitment made to the Australian Christian lobby that the party had no intention of pursuing abortion law reform. Bligh, a former student campaigner for abortion rights, declared any changes would be "a matter of a private member's bill" adding "I certainly have no intention of introducing a private member's bill..." (*Australian*, 12 June). In fact, such a bill decriminalising abortion drafted in 2003 was repeatedly blocked by then-ALP premier, Peter Beattie, and Bligh herself when she took over the job.

With Section 282 of Queensland's Criminal Code technically only allowing a "surgical operation" to save a woman's life, the police prosecution of Leach and Brennan has raised widespread concern among doctors offering drug-induced medical abortions over possible prosecution of themselves and their patients. Prominent Cairns obstetrician, Dr Caroline de Costa, who was in the forefront of the 2005-06 campaign to overturn the federal government's ban on the abortion drug RU486, has stopped prescribing RU486/misoprostol and urged others to do likewise until the law is clarified. She has since been joined by doctors around the state, including from some 22 public

hospitals, which carry out mostly medical abortions in cases of severe fetal abnormality or health risk.

Forcing the hand of the Bligh state government, Queensland's largest hospital, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, suspended its medical abortion services in mid-August. Usually performing about 80 late-term abortions each year, the hospital has now referred women needing such terminations interstate. The state Labor government rushed into damage control, declaring it would revise Section 282 of the code to allow for medical procedures. Bligh pointedly added that the government would not bow to pressure and decriminalise abortion in the state.

According to a poll reported on the Pro Choice Qld website, 79 percent of Queenslanders want abortion out of the criminal code. The demand for abortion rights is the demand for a simple, basic democratic right to a medical or surgical procedure among the safest in the world. It is outrageous that the capitalist state and its bourgeois parliamentarians should have the power to interfere in people's most intimate, private decisions, including



The late Dr Bertram Wainer, courageous fighter for women's right to abortion in Australia.

a woman's decision to have an abortion. As one Cairns doctor recently said "I do not believe police should be standing behind the bedroom door" (*Cairns Post*, 22 August). State out of the bedroom! We fight for free abortion and contraception on demand, without qualification, linked to a program of free, quality health care for all. These are vital necessities for women and for working people as a whole, along with paid maternity and paternity leave and free 24-hour childcare facilities at work and in the community.

Rudd's Labor Government Enforces Anti-Woman Bigotry

In the context of the current global capitalist economic crisis, working people face increasing hardship and economic

uncertainty. In July, the Labor prime minister, Kevin Rudd, told the populace to brace for rising prices, interest rates and unemployment on the "long, tough and bumpy road" of "economic recovery." In other words, any resurgence of capitalist profits will be built on the misery of working people. The loss of full-time jobs has been matched by a growth in part-time work, reinforcing a decades-long push towards increased casualisation of the workforce. Often the hardest hit by attacks on jobs and conditions are women workers, who on average earn 17.5 percent less than men.

Barely 50 percent of women have access to paid maternity leave, forcing thousands of low-income-earning mothers back to work early out of financial necessity. As the economic crisis unfolded, the government talked of shelving the introduction of a national paid maternity leave scheme. In the May budget, it announced an 18-week national parental leave scheme that won't be introduced until 2011. Even then it will be means-tested and only pay the poverty-level minimum wage while denying recipients family tax benefits and other payments.

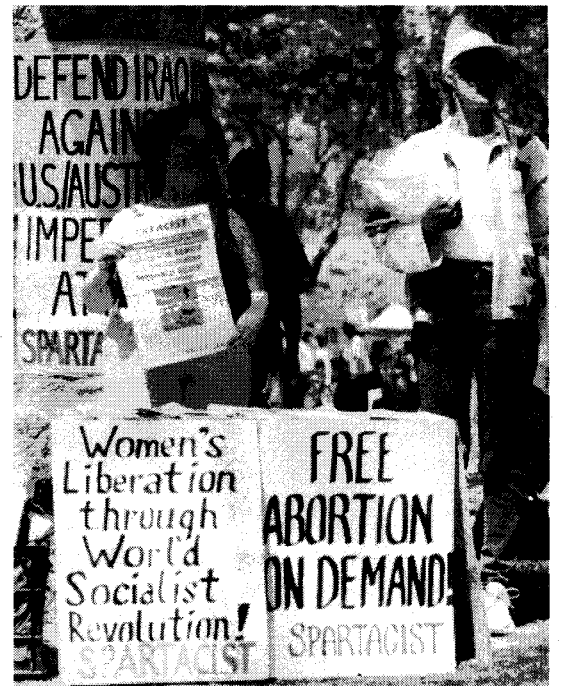
Families also face a health-care system in crisis, with pregnant women in labour being turned away from hospitals due to lack of specialist staff and others having miscarriages in the toilets because of bed shortages. Parents are also in dire need of accessible, affordable childcare. A 2008 UNICEF report on childcare slammed Australia as third worst out of 25 developed countries, spending less than one percent of GDP on early childhood services. With the widening gap between rich and poor, increasing numbers of children are growing up in households struggling on or below the poverty line. Child poverty rates stand at more than ten percent. Aboriginal communities have been subjected to racist "quarantining" of welfare payments for more than two years. Liberal and Labor MPs alike have called for quarantining welfare payments across the entire country.

A moralistic, god-fearing Christian, Kevin Rudd, is well-known for his reactionary anti-abortion views. From voting for the RU486 ban in 1996 to allowing a "conscience" vote on abortion issues, from supporting the outrageous ban on gay marriage in 2004 to upholding these discriminatory laws in office today, the pro-capitalist Labor Party is clearly no friend of women and the oppressed.

For Access to RU486, Free of Charge, Now!

In 2006, when federal parliament voted to overturn its effective ban on RU486, transferring control to the state-appointed Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), we wrote:

"It is a good thing that control over RU486 no longer rests in the hands of the anti-abortion bigot Abbott [then federal Liberal health minister]. Australian



Spartacist supporters at Sydney International Women's day rally, 2003.

women now at least have the possibility of accessing a drug that two million users in more than 30 different countries have found to be safe and effective for more than a decade.... However, while the TGA is expected to approve the drug within the year, access is likely to be severely restricted, as is the case in New Zealand, and there is also no guarantee that it will be affordable for working and poor women. Of course the TGA could bury RU486 for years. For access to RU486, free of charge, now!"

—*Australasian Spartacist*, No. 194, Autumn 2006

Importation and administration of RU486 is so far restricted to doctors approved by the TGA under stringent conditions, with 61 reportedly authorised as of early August. The latest TGA approvals, announced amidst the growing outcry over Queensland's current anti-abortion case, includes authorisation for 14 doctors from Marie Stopes International clinics around the country to provide RU486 in cases where women are less than nine weeks pregnant and "meet eligibility criteria covering standard surgical abortions" (*Australian*, 11 August). The approval sent anti-abortion fanatics into a frenzy, labelling this women's health organisation "fundamentally evil" and grotesquely comparing it to "terrorists."

Up until this decade, anti-abortion laws were included in all state and territory criminal codes. However common law rulings in the 1970s and 80s gave tens of thousands of women across the country access, albeit restricted, to this medical procedure. The availability of relatively cheap, safe abortions in most major cities, despite the continued existence of legislation making it a crime, was in large part a tribute to the militant struggles of courageous fighters for abortion rights such as the late Dr Bertram Wainer.

In 2002 the ACT repealed the anti-abortion provisions in its Criminal Code and last year Victoria also repealed its laws. However, even here restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles still exist, particularly for the small number of women desperately seeking late-term abortions. In the ACT, obtaining an abortion after the first twelve weeks requires approval from a hospital "ethics" committee. In Victoria, the Brumby ALP government's abortion law reform bill removed all restrictions within the first 24 weeks, but requires the agreement of two doctors for later abortions.

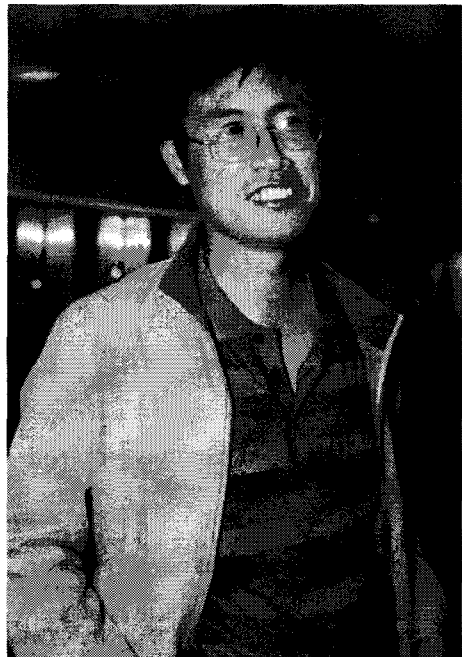
We defend every gain won from the capitalist rulers against attack by the state and other reactionary forces such as the

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Racist Terror...

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19 February). Later, in June, Labor prime minister, Kevin Rudd, dismissed ongoing attacks as "just a regrettable fact of urban life," pushing the lie that capitalist White Australia is a country of great openness and tolerance (*Australian*, 11 June). This official contempt and indifference towards the wellbeing of overseas students was highlighted by a 1 July *Sydney Morning Herald* report that revealed coroners had



www.caozhongjun.org

Dr Zhongjun Cao, a talented academic at Victoria University in Melbourne, was brutally attacked and killed by racist scum in January 2008.

suppressed information about the deaths of at least 54 overseas students in the period between November 2007 and November 2008.

The police have meted out severe repression against Indian students who have mobilised to protest racist terror. On 31 May, after gathering outside Royal Melbourne Hospital where Sravan Theerthala remained in intensive care, thousands of Indian students took their protest to Melbourne's city centre where they began a blockade of the busy Flinders Street Station intersection. In the early hours of the next morning, the protest was violently dispersed by hundreds of police using horses and batons. As one student

explained, "The criminals are stabbing us. We are getting killed and if we are doing protest...the police [are] bashing us" (ABC Online, 1 June). During the cop riot eighteen people were arrested. We demand: drop the charges!

At protests in Sydney and Melbourne the following week, speakers expressed outrage at the behaviour of the police. At a Sydney rally, angry Indian students pointed out that the cops couldn't care less when students are bashed but turn out *en masse*, including with riot and mounted police, when they dare protest these attacks. On 8 June in Harris Park, a suburb of western Sydney, hundreds of Indian student protesters, who had assembled in response to a violent assault that evening, were surrounded and cordoned off by police with dogs. When significant numbers from the Indian community, including students and workers, took to assembling at Melbourne's St Albans railway station at night to ensure the safety of others arriving home by train, the police cracked down hard to stop these organised self-defence efforts.

ALP Government's War on Minorities Fuels Racist Reaction

The capitalist rulers consciously whip up racist divisions in order to paralyse the working class, drive down the conditions of all and thus maximise their profits. The current escalation of racist violence on the streets has been fueled by successive Liberal and Labor governments, not least through the "war on terror," which has particularly targeted Asian and dark-skinned people while shredding the democratic rights of everyone. As the economic crisis destroys the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of working people, including the growing numbers of young unemployed, the Rudd Labor government enforces draconian anti-union laws while pushing xenophobic "border protection" measures. The ALP's mandatory detention and deportations of refugees, and expansion of the police/military takeover of Aboriginal communities, leading to more Aboriginal deaths in prison, give the green light for terror against immigrant and minority communities. Particularly sinister were the huge police mobilisations in August against the Somali community in Melbourne. These "anti-terror" raids, which resulted in four arrests, were accompanied by saturation levels of openly

racist bourgeois propaganda (see article, page 1). Following similar raids in 2005, the frenzy whipped up by the capitalist media fueled a wave of attacks on Muslims, particularly women, leading to the thousands-strong December 2005 fascist-infested riot at Sydney's Cronulla beach, where anyone of Middle Eastern or non-white appearance was subject to murderous assault.

The current period of capitalist reaction, with rising unemployment and despair exacerbated by economic recession, is a culture medium for racist scum. It is telling that long-time fascist, Jim Saleam, who was imprisoned in 1991 for organising the shotgun attack on the Sydney home of black South African and then-African National Congress representative, Eddie Funde, is now able to posture as a "respectable" bourgeois politician and so-called "academic." We warn workers and minorities that Saleam's Australia First party seeks to organise into one deadly force the gangs of racist thugs and small bands of fascists currently spawned by this rotting capitalist system. We stand for labour/minority mobilisations to stop the fascists from organising for their program of genocide and the destruction of all workers organisations.

Free Quality Education For All!

In their relentless attacks against working people and drive to lower overheads, the bosses have trashed public transport, childcare, health care and education. Over the last 25 years, union-busting attacks on jobs and conditions of academic staff and all campus workers have accompanied the push to turn education into a vast commercial enterprise through gradually reimposing student fees. In the mid 1980s vulnerable overseas students were the first to be targeted by the federal Hawke Labor government for upfront fees. Those who couldn't pay faced deportation. Spartacist supporters joined with outraged overseas students in protest against these racist attacks which presaged the imposition of fees for all students.

Later, in 1995, when the then-federal Keating Labor government announced it would eliminate Austudy payments for all permanent residents who did not take out citizenship, we Spartacists organised spirited protests in Sydney and Melbourne (see *Australasian Spartacist* No. 156, Winter 1995). Today, following continued attacks by Labor and Liberal govern-

ments, the elimination of affordable tertiary education has reinforced the class bias of campuses, excluding many working class and minority youth. Those who do get to attend university are often forced to work to support themselves while studying, frequently having to take non-union jobs with low pay and poor conditions.

With education now transformed into a lucrative industry for the capitalist rulers, overseas students are particularly discriminated against. Forced to pay higher fees than domestic students, they also face work restrictions, including a cap of 20 hours per week, and are denied access to travel concessions or Medicare. We Marxists stand for free quality education and health care for all, including overseas students; for free public transport and access to decent, affordable housing. To open tertiary education up to working-class youth and minorities there must be a living stipend for all.

Faced with the enforced poverty that a 20-hour working week entails, many overseas students resort to cash-in-hand jobs that pay below the paltry legal minimum in order to survive, while living in constant fear of deportation should they be caught by immigration department agents. The situation is often worse for those enrolled in vocational courses. Many of these overseas students hope for eventual permanent residency through gaining employment in Australia. However to satisfy the government's "skilled migration" requirements, they are required to do 900 hours of "work experience" with no obligation they be paid. Thus tens of thousands of these students pay thousands of dollars in placement fees to shonky private "colleges," which in turn offer students up as a vast pool of unpaid labour to the bosses! In May this year, more than ten thousand Victorian academic staff in the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) stopped work for better conditions. As part of fighting for their own interests, such union actions should also champion the rights of all students. The working poverty of students and youth, especially immigrant students, cries out for a union fight to organise the unorganised into jobs with full union rights and conditions and for full citizenship rights for all who have made it here.

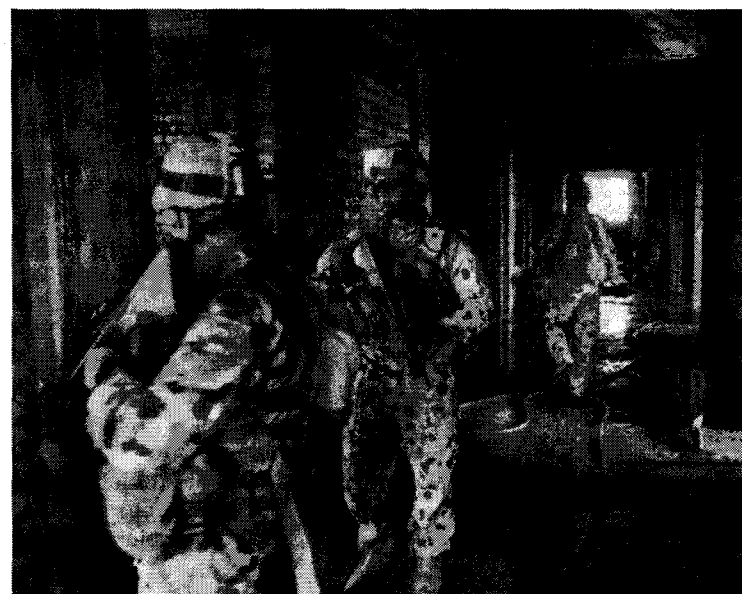
The masses of heavily exploited immigrant workers, far from helpless victims, form a vital component of the multiracial

"War on Terror"...

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driven from power by Ethiopian troops in late 2006. Notably, the recent raids in Melbourne followed the indictment by the Obama administration in the U.S. of two young Somali-Americans, on terrorism-related charges, and came just before U.S. secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, visited Kenya to reaffirm the U.S. imperialists' arming and funding of the current Somali rulers. The U.S. imperialists, along with their Australian imperialist lackeys are portraying Al-Shabaab as a significant new terrorist threat in order to justify and bolster their growing and bloody occupation of Afghanistan where under the banner of the "war on terror" thousands of civilians have been slaughtered. **Imperialist troops out of Afghanistan and Iraq! Hands Off Pakistan!**

Despite seven months of intensive surveillance of the suspect "terrorists," the "evidence" is scant and circumstantial. Frame-ups and false charges are the stock-in-trade of the police so we have no reason to believe anything they say. At the same time it is important to be clear on the



John Collins, U.S. Navy

Australian military in Afghanistan as part of bloody U.S.-led imperialist occupation which has resulted in loss of tens of thousands of Afghan lives.

Marxist attitude to individual terrorism. Even when carried out by misguided leftists, it is counterposed to mobilising the social power of the working class. But Marxists also distinguish between indiscriminate attacks on ordinary people, e.g., on trains or airplanes, which are simply criminal, and those against institutions of capitalist class repression. The fact that innocent civilians are often killed in terror attacks, and that the end result only serves to increase capitalist state repression

against the working class and oppressed, underlines the futility and stupidity of terrorism as a strategy for the liberation of the masses.

As our comrades in the U.S. wrote in regards to the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon:

"The attack on the World Trade Center was indeed a criminal act of terrorism that murdered nearly 3,000 everyday working people. However, unlike the World Trade Center, the Pentagon is the command and administrative center of the

U.S. imperialist military, and being a military installation, the possibility of getting hit comes with the territory. That recognition does not make the attack on the Pentagon an 'anti-imperialist' act, nor does it change the fact that terrorism almost always gets innocent people—in this case, the passengers on the plane as well as the maintenance workers, janitors and secretaries at the Pentagon."

—"Moussaoui Case: 9/11 Show Trial," *Workers Vanguard* No. 870, 12 May 2006

Under capitalist rule democratic rights exist for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. The only rights to which the bourgeoisie are committed are their own rights to own the means of production and to maximise their profits through the exploitation of wage labour. At its core, the capitalist state consists of the cops, courts, prisons and military, which are instruments of organised violence to protect the class interests of the filthy rich capitalist exploiters against the workers. The capitalists would have us believe their state is all-powerful and their rule inviolable. But what they can actually get away with depends on the level of proletarian opposition. We fight to infuse the working class with the consciousness that it has the class interest and social power to eradicate the capitalist system of racist terror, exploitation and war through working-class revolution. ■

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

proletariat and are a living bridge to workers and their struggles in many countries. With its hands on the levers of production, the working class has the class interest and potential social power to overcome racist divisions and push back the capitalist rulers' attacks. What is desperately necessary is some racially integrated working-class struggle. This would help to unify and strengthen the working class as a whole. A class-struggle leadership within the unions would have organised well-prepared multiracial worker defence guards alongside Indian students and workers at railway stations earlier this year. Drawn from responsible union men and women such contingents could still act to teach the race terrorists a lesson and give the cops pause.

Last year, following the stabbing of a 23-year-old Indian taxi driver, and student, more than a thousand South Asian taxi drivers blockaded the same busy Flinders Street Station intersection that the students occupied this May. Threatening to also blockade Melbourne airport, they quickly won the promise of improved conditions, including fitting safety screens in all vehicles. This action could have sparked wider struggles, particularly amongst the thousands of heavily exploited immigrant workers, many labouring in unsafe working conditions and threatened with job losses, in the textile, hospitality and manufacturing industries.

However, far from opening up a fight against injustice and exploitation, the union tops have been telling workers to sacrifice for the nation as they try to rebuild confidence in the capitalist system. In the face of union busting, job massacres, savage racism and state repression of building workers, the Labor-loyal union bureaucrats are in the main prostrate. But when it comes to rallying around the Australian flag, be it through pushing protection of "Australian industry" or saluting the bloody Australian imperialist military occupiers from East Timor to Afghanistan, these traitors show great energy and purpose (see "Recession Australia: Racism, Unemployment, Militarism," *Australasian Spartacist*, No. 205, Winter 2009).

As proletarian revolutionary internationalists we fight against the poisonous nationalism funnelled into the working-class movement by these agents of the bourgeoisie. In preaching the lie that workers have a common "national interest" with their "own" capitalist rulers, the "labour lieutenants of the capitalist class" serve to divide the proletariat against their

class brothers and sisters overseas and subordinate the working class to bourgeois rule. The struggle for independent proletarian action against racist terror demands a political fight within the unions to break workers from Laborite nationalism and loyalty to the capitalist state.

Reformists Sow Illusions in Capitalist State

As Australia's third largest export after coal and iron ore, education to overseas students is a \$15.5 billion industry. With the escalating racist attacks producing a drop in overseas student enrolments (already diminished by the global recession) and faced with outrage from the

Melbourne, 1 September: Thousands of unionists strike against Rudd government's plans to attack workplace safety conditions. Multiracial working class has power and interest to fight racist reaction.



Indian and Chinese governments, the Australian bourgeoisie quickly moved into damage control. Desperate to reassure their "client base" that all is well and good in the land of the Cronulla riot, government ministers have held talks with Indian and Chinese government representatives. Parliamentarians have also flown to India to reassure their "market," i.e. worry-stricken parents of overseas students, that no harm will come to their children.

In June the Victorian Labor government promised new sentencing measures that supposedly will punish violent racially-motivated crime. Any such laws will inevitably serve to target those resisting racist terror. This was demonstrated following the pogromist 2005 riot in Cronulla. The NSW Labor government quickly passed draconian legislation allowing the police to lock down whole suburbs, giving cops free rein to search residents, vehicles and homes. Weeks later, when Aborigines in the rural New South Wales city of Dubbo protested the police bashing of an Aboriginal youth, the cops moved to lock down the Aboriginal neighbourhood.

The Federation of Indian Students of Australia (FISA) and the ALP-dominated National Union of Students have raised a series of demands that appeal for improved safety, chiefly through greater policing. It is a dangerous illusion for overseas students, or anyone, to seek protection from the very state forces that enforce exploitation and racist oppression. As Marxists, we understand that this society is fundamentally divided into two main classes whose interests are irreconcilably counterposed: workers who must sell their labour power in order to survive, and the property-owning capitalist class to whom their labour power is sold. The state is not an independent arbiter of the class and social conflicts inevitably thrown up by capitalist society. At its core, the state consists of special bodies of armed men—cops, courts, prisons and military—whose purpose is to violently suppress the struggles of the workers and oppressed, defending the private property and wealth of the tiny capitalist class who exploit the labour of the overwhelming majority. The same oppressive state forces that today bully and attack protesting overseas students also attack workers' pickets, such as those of the striking workers at Westgate Bridge in Melbourne earlier this year.

As V.I. Lenin, Russian revolutionary

leader, wrote in his 1917 work, *State and Revolution*, "The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another." This state cannot be reformed, or pressured to act on behalf of the working class and oppressed but must be overthrown through victorious workers revolution.

This perspective is anathema to the reformist opponents of revolutionary Marxism. For example, the anti-communist Socialist Alternative (SAI) supported the Victorian Labor government's 12 July "Walk for Harmony," which was transparently designed to whitewash the racist attacks and channel support to the state. Declaring that Victorian premier, John

oppressed. Last year when Aboriginal activist Lex Wotton was being outrageously railroaded through the courts and into prison for protesting the 2004 brutal cop killing of Palm Island Aboriginal man Mulrunji Doomadgee, the DSP and the Communist Party worked overtime appealing to the capitalist state to carry out a royal commission into the death of Doomadgee. In the mid-1980s, the forerunners of these groups channeled anger against Aboriginal deaths in custody into a campaign for a royal commission. Duly established by the Hawke Labor government, this royal commission set about whitewashing the crimes of the state and dismissed any wrongdoing on the part of the cops and prison screws in all 99 cases it "reviewed."

The very idea of appealing to the capitalist state ought to be repellent to anyone seeking to fight for the rights of workers and the oppressed. Promoted by those who purport to be socialists, it is abject treachery. For more than 200 years racist state persecution and terror against the Aboriginal people, Chinese and Pacific Islanders has been etched in blood and systematically covered over through government lies. That reformist groups such as the DSP seek redress from the state that exists to defend White Australia capitalist rule speaks volumes about their hostility to Marxism and marks them as a roadblock to the liberation of the working class and oppressed.

Build a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party

The cornerstone of Australian capitalist federation, "White Australia" was also the ALP's founding core principle over a century ago. An uncompromising class-struggle fight against racist Australian capitalism requires breaking the proletariat from the politics of Laborism, which serves to keep workers in thrall to capitalist class rule. For this it is necessary to build a multiracial, proletarian and internationalist revolutionary workers party. Such a party will be constructed through splitting the working-class base of the ALP, a bourgeois workers party, from its pro-capitalist leadership, centrally through a political struggle against the nationalist Laborite misleaders of the trade unions.

A revolutionary party would seek to transform and organise the most advanced layers of the proletariat into a conscious force for revolution. Fighting for socialist revolution on a world scale it would champion a fight against all manner of capitalist oppression on the road to overthrowing this sick capitalist system. This is what the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky achieved in Russia in 1917. We of the International Communist League fight to build Bolshevik parties in every country of the world to lead the struggles of workers and the oppressed to sweep the racist capitalist system into the dustbin of history. ■

Brumby, "wants a big turnout on this walk as a public relations stunt," SAI cadre, Jerome Small, nonetheless enthused "But a big rally can also go some way to showing Indian students and other victims of racism that many, many people in Melbourne want to stand with them in the face of the racist attacks" ("Support the Indian students—no more racist attacks" [undated]).

Meanwhile, as SAI were busily building the rally, Brumby was preparing to ban Indian students from speaking at it! While many outraged Indian students boycotted the walk, SAI and the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP)-run Socialist Alliance embraced it. They marched along with the reactionary Falun Gong cult, Vietnamese rightists, and Brumby and his cops, who spoke at the end of the walk. Sowing illusions in the capitalist state, particularly when administered by Labor, the reformists stand counterposed to the necessary *independent class-struggle actions* against the racist capitalist system.

Typically, the youth group of the DSP, Resistance, put forward grovelling reformist solutions to pressure the cops, giving a tortuous explanation that "While we should call on the police to take action [sic] against racist violence, the police are riddled with racism themselves so can't be relied on to take action against racism." The DSP are past masters at calling on the state to act on behalf of the

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Imperialists Hands Off Iran!

Down With the Clerical Regime! No Support to "Reform" Mullahs!



AP

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 939, 3 July), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

JUNE 29—A few short months after celebrating the 30th anniversary of its bloody and oppressive rule, Iran's Islamic Republic has been convulsed by the largest protests since the "Iranian revolution" of 1978-79. The massive demonstrations were sparked by the widespread belief that incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, supported by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had stolen the June 12 presidential election from opposition candidate Mir Hussein Moussavi. After a week in which hundreds of thousands filled the streets of Tehran and other cities chanting "Death to the dictator" and "Allah Akbar" ("God is great"), the regime struck back. Scores of demonstrators were reportedly shot by the hated paramilitary Basij militias, linked to the elite Revolutionary Guard, as well as by police, while hundreds have been locked up in the notorious Evin Prison. The International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, calls on the international workers movement to demand: *Free all anti-government protesters!*

The fraud surrounding Ahmadinejad's re-election became a focus for the broad discontents felt across Iranian society, from women compelled to wear the *hijab* (veil) and youth punished for public displays of affection to widespread poverty and growing unemployment. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets demanding new elections. Certainly, plenty of signs indicate voter fraud. But the elections—vote-rigging or not—were themselves a fraud, controlled by the mullahs, who approved all candidates in advance.

Part of the basis of support for Moussavi is his call for vague "reforms" on women's rights and other social questions. But Moussavi, one of the founders of the Islamic Republic, is no less a butcher than his opponents in the current regime. Under Moussavi's reign as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, untold thousands of leftists, Kurds and women's rights activ-

ists were slaughtered in Iran's prisons and buried in mass graves. Hundreds of thousands more died in the bloody war with Iraq in the 1980s. In 1999, militant student protests were drowned in blood by the "reform" government of then-president

ment. They have also sought to tone down the "anti-imperialist" demagoguery associated with Ahmadinejad. Abroad, the protests are being cheered by a spectrum of Iranian political forces ranging from royalists to bourgeois democrats and the remnants of

Iran itself. After 30 years of the oppressive rule of the mullahs, there are doubtless many in Iran who have illusions in Western bourgeois democracy or see the "democratic" imperialists as a potential ally. These illusions may have been further fueled by the initial softer (than the war-crazed Bush gang) tone adopted by Obama toward Tehran upon taking office.

Whether administered by Democrats or Republicans, U.S. imperialism is the deadliest enemy of working people around the globe. It was the CIA, in collaboration with the British, that organized the 1953 coup that overthrew then-prime minister Mohammad Mossadeq to reverse his nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The imperialists then reinstalled the Shah into power and backed the tyrannical, blood-drenched Pahlavi dynasty until its overthrow in 1979. Down with the imperialist occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq! U.S. out of Pakistan and Central Asia! Imperialists hands off Iran!

The U.S. imperialists and their nuclear-armed Israeli allies have repeatedly threatened military action against Iran's nuclear program. In the face of such threats, we say that Iran needs nukes to deter such an attack. Neighboring Iraq's lack of "weapons of mass destruction," including nukes, emboldened the U.S. to invade and occupy the country, leading to the horrific carnage and occupation of the last six years. While calling for military defense of neocolonial countries like Iraq and Iran against imperialist attack, we do not give an iota of political support to their rulers, who lord it over their "own" oppressed masses. We say: Down with all the sheiks, colonels, mullahs and Zionist butchers! For a socialist federation of the Near East!

Reformist Left Bowed to Mullahs

All sides in the tumult shaking Iran today hark back to the 1979 overthrow of the country's despised autocrat, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, as a model for their political activity. At that time, the convulsive opposition to the monarchy included powerful workers strikes in the



Getty

Top: Iranian riot police assault Moussavi supporters at Tehran University, 14 June. Above: Mass demonstration in Tehran protests election results, 18 June.

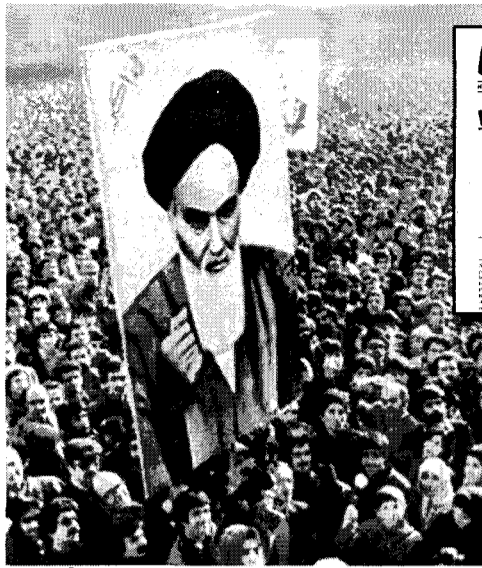
Mohammad Khatami, a current ally of Moussavi.

While the forces demonstrating in the streets of Iranian cities are heterogeneous, they are politically subordinate to one side of what is essentially a falling out between rival factions within the ruling clerical elite. A key ally of Moussavi is the notoriously corrupt former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani; known as the "pistachio king," he may well be the richest man in Iran. Moussavi and Rafsanjani have called to further "open up" the economy through privatizations and foreign invest-

ment. The workers and oppressed of Iran have *no interest* in supporting *either* of the cabals fighting over how best to pursue the mullahs' bloody rule.

The U.S. and British imperialists have sought to intervene in the political turmoil, beefing up their radio broadcasts into Iran. Obama declared that he was "appalled and outraged" by the crackdown in Iran. Meanwhile, nearly 200,000 U.S. troops continue to ravage Iraq and Afghanistan on Iran's eastern and western borders, while U.S. special forces carry out clandestine operations within

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party in Iran to Fight for Workers Revolution!



Kaveh Golestan



Anti-Shah demonstrators raise huge portrait of Khomeini, 1979. *Workers Vanguard* called for workers revolution in Iran, opposing both bloody Shah and Islamic reaction.

Sydney: Spartacists protest mass executions carried out by bloody Khomeini dictatorship, January 1989.



Australasian Spartacist

oil fields and throughout the country; Iran could have become the cockpit of proletarian revolution in the Near East. However, the mass mobilizations were channeled into a reactionary crusade for an "Islamic Republic," with virtually the entire left in Iran and internationally cheering on the mullah-dominated opposition led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Uniquely on the left, we called for the proletariat to struggle independently of and against the Islamic hierarchy, to sweep away the Peacock Throne and establish a workers and peasants government.

The establishment of a Shi'ite theocracy following the overthrow of the Shah resulted in the savage repression of Kurds and other minorities; the execution of strikers, homosexuals, adulterers and others accused of "crimes against God"; the stoning of unveiled women, the slaughter of leftists and the suppression of all opposition parties and press. As we wrote in our International Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

"The 1979 'Iranian Revolution' opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Khomeini's seizure and consolidation of power in Iran was a defeat akin to Hitler's crushing of the German proletariat in 1933, albeit on a narrower, regional scale. The international Spartacist tendency's slogan 'Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs!' and our focus on the woman question ('No to the veil!') stood in sharp opposition to the rest of the left's capitulation to mullah-led reaction."

Today, much of the reformist left repeats the treacherous policies of 30 years ago by lining up behind one or another wing of the ruling clergy in Iran. The remnants of Tudeh, the pro-Moscow Communist party that supported Khomeini and then was crushed by him, called for a vote to "reformist candidates," including Mousavi, whose hands are covered with the blood of their own comrades (*Tudeh News*, June 2009). Meanwhile, the fake Trotskyists of the Iranian Revolutionary Marxists' Tendency (IRMT), associated with the International Marxist Tendency

(IMT) led by Alan Woods, dimly appealed in a June 16 open letter to Mousavi (www.Marxist.com): "You must either side with the people who voted for you or with the *vali-e faghih* [Supreme Leader] (and the repressive apparatus of the state). Being at the service of the people would mean that you should cut your links with the whole state apparatus." The IRMT describes itself as descended from the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS), which also supported Khomeini's rise to power.

In the U.S., some left groups have sided with the pro-Ahmadinejad wing of the clerics against the protests, claiming that in this way they are opposing U.S. imperialism. A June 24 article posted on the Workers World Party (WWP) Web site declared, "Revolutionary socialists or communists sharply differentiate themselves from Ahmadinejad on many points. In the current conflict, however, his side is more anti-imperialist." After three decades of the mullahs' bloody rule, WWP still proclaims: "The Iranian people have benefited enormously from their revolution and cannot easily be turned back" (*Workers World*, 17 June). Likewise, a June 22 article (pslweb.org) by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a split-off from WWP, denounced the protests: "U.S. and British imperialism hope that a victory of this movement would result in the counter-revolutionary overthrow of the anti-colonial 1979 revolution."

Key to the future of Iran is the proletariat, the only class with the social power and objective interest to lead radicalized youth, women and oppressed nationalities behind it in an assault on the capitalist system itself. While individual workers have no doubt participated in the protest demonstrations, there is no sign as yet that any section of the powerful Iranian proletariat has intervened to assert its *independent* class interests against the Islamic regime. Two statements by workers groups in Iran have been widely posted on the Internet. One, signed by "Laborers of Iran Khodro" (the largest automotive company in the Near East) called for a 30-minute protest strike in "solidarity with the movement of the people of Iran." And in a statement

by the Vahed Syndicate, representing Tehran bus workers, the union similarly expressed support for "the movement of Iranian people to build a free and independent civil society."

The fundamental question facing the Iranian proletariat today is the need to build a Marxist workers party that fights

forces of clerical reaction by claiming that they were leading an "anti-imperialist" revolution. The International Socialist Organization headlined an article: "The Form—Religious, The Spirit—Revolution" (*Socialist Worker*, January 1979). The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the U.S. proclaimed "Victory in Iran: Ira-



Jahangir Razmi

August 1979: Execution of Kurds by Iranian mullah regime, which carried out massacres of leftists, trade unionists and minorities after coming to power. Mousavi (inset), who served as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, was major part of coldblooded killing machine erected by Khomeini.



AFP

for the class independence of the proletariat—from the clerics, the nationalists and the pro-imperialist elements—and for working-class rule. A key difference between the situation today and that of 1979 is that, before the victory of the "Islamic revolution," significant sections of the proletariat were led by leftist parties, centrally Tudeh. That generation of left-wing worker cadres was wiped out by the very regime that the leaders of Tudeh and other left parties helped bring to power.

For Permanent Revolution!

In 1978-79, the left in Iran and internationally supported the Khomeini-led

nian Masses Show the Way for Workers Around the World" (*Militant*, 23 February 1979). Brian Grogan, a leader of the British group of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel, even boasted that he had joined in chants of "Allah Akbar" during demonstrations in Tehran. The HKS, affiliated with the USec, went so far as to run in 1979 for election to the mullahs' Assembly of Experts—before joining the ranks of the mullahs' victims.

While we rushed to the defense of the HKS and other leftists victimized by the mullah regime, the American SWP and the USec, blinded by their grotesque opportunism, for months minimized the danger to their own imprisoned comrades. As we wrote in "SWP/USec Criminal Tailism: History Takes Its Vengeance" (*WV* No. 239, 14 September 1979): "USec, SWP, HKS—Ernest Mandel, Jack Barnes and the rest: you have committed a crime, for which you will be held responsible before the court of history. You must live with it because your own comrades may die for it."

The so-called "Islamic revolution" of 1979 represented a negative confirmation of Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky's theory and program of permanent revolution. In the epoch of imperialism, all wings of the bourgeoisie in countries of belated capitalist development like Iran are too dependent on their ties to the imperialists and too fearful of independent

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International Communist League Pamphlet

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Iran...

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working-class action to play any progressive role. They are incapable of solving the bourgeois-democratic tasks associated with the great European revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as agrarian revolution, national independence, democratic freedoms and women's rights.

The experience of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution showed that it is only the proletariat, leading the peasant and urban plebeian masses, which can liberate the societies of countries of belated capitalist development. In the Near East, only the proletariat can break the chains of reactionary traditionalism and imperialist subjugation. As Trotsky declared in 1928: "The further East we go, the lower and viler becomes the bourgeoisie, the greater are the tasks that fall upon the proletariat" (*The Third International After Lenin*). In seizing state power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers of the backward countries will be compelled to institute socialist measures, such as the expropriation of the means of production and the establishment of a planned economy. However, these revolutions will survive and flourish only if they are extended to the advanced capitalist countries of the West and Japan.

Rejecting this Marxist perspective, Tudeh, following in the footsteps of the Stalinized Communist International (Comintern), insisted that because of Iran's economic and historical backwardness, the proletariat could not take power in its own name. Instead, they argued that there must be a "two-stage revolution," the first stage of which would be led by the "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie and limited to solving democratic capitalist tasks. Socialist revolution, they claimed, would come in the distant, unspecified future. As always, the second, proletarian, stage of the revolution never came.

Tudeh and the rest of the Iranian left invested the Islamic clergy with "anti-imperialist" credentials, blinding their working-class base to the grave dangers they faced in the event of a mullah victory and setting the workers up for brutal suppression. In fact, in the early years of the mullah regime, Tudeh cadre went so far as to fight shoulder to shoulder with the murderous pasdaran and the fascistic hezbollahi thugs in killing other Iranian leftists. And during the Iran-Iraq War, which was reactionary on both sides, the Tudeh party told its members to report to their mosques (!) for military duty under the pasdaran.

In promoting the concept of "two-stage revolution," Stalin and his cronies could at least claim that they were giving support to modernizing bourgeois forces. For example, during the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the Chinese Communist Party was directed by Stalin and his henchmen to subordinate itself to the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang led by Chiang Kai-shek. The Stalinists argued that this step toward consummating the supposed "first stage" of the Chinese Revolution was justified by the fact that Chiang opposed the decaying Manchu Dynasty and decried the binding of women's feet. Nevertheless, the result of this Stalinist betrayal was the slaughter of tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers who were disarmed by Chiang in the Shanghai massacre of April 1927.

What claim to modernism could the retrograde caste of mullahs in Iran possibly have had? The reactionary character of the Islamic opposition was manifest from the outset, above all by its position on the woman question. As we warned in "Down With the Shah! Down With the Mullahs!" (WV No. 219, 17 November 1978):

"The Muslims call for an *Islamic* republic. They support the Constitution of 1906

Socialist Worker
January 1979

**THE FORM-
RELIGIOUS
THE SPIRIT-
REVOLUTION!**

Iran is a fabulously wealthy country. It earns billions of dollars each year through oil. It earns millions more from natural gas, of



Iranian woman being prepared for execution by stoning, 2004. Fake leftists hailed and continue to hail Islamic regime that carries out such barbaric practices as "revolutionary."

and particularly the added 1907 clause which explicitly guarantees clerical veto power over all legislation. The mullahs' opposition to the shah is a reactionary one, no matter how it plays on the crimes of the shah's dictatorship. The fanatical hatred of social advances since the time of the prophet Muhammad (the seventh century A.D.!) has its parallels in the military-based regimes of Pakistan or Libya and in the region-wide revival of religious obscurantism and its vicious oppression of women."

The Islamic Republic has been hell for women. After coming to power, Khomeini reimposed the *hijab* for women in public. Those who flouted the edict were subjected to 74 lashes or a year's imprisonment. Meanwhile, a man's testimony was deemed worth twice that of a woman. Lashings and amputations were applied by the courts, and women convicted of adultery could be subject to stoning. Child marriage was re-introduced, while laws encouraged polygamy and prevented women from leaving abusive husbands. The husband's right of unilateral divorce was reinstated.

Nevertheless, modern practices have seeped into Iran. While child marriage was reintroduced, the average age of first marriages for women has continued to rise from about 19 before 1979 to 24 today. According to the *New York Review of Books* (2 July), literacy rates exceed 95 percent for both sexes. Today, a majority of college students are women. But despite these trends, women constitute only 15 percent of the formal-sector paid labor force. The 2006 Iranian census revealed that only 3.5 million Iranian women were salaried workers, compared with 23.5 million men.

During a wave of protests in Iran six years ago, we laid out our perspective for women's liberation through socialist revolution:

"In the countries of the East, the question of women's oppression is one of the most powerful motor forces of socialist revolution. Indeed, when the Bolsheviks arrived in Central Asia in the years following the October Revolution, it was among women that they found the main point of support for their program and won their key cadres. The same holds true for Iran. A Leninist-Trotskyist party, championing women's rights against the age-old stranglehold of religion and the family, will find its most loyal and courageous fighters among women."

—"For Workers Revolution in Iran!"
WV No. 807 (1 August 2003)

Workers World
25 June 2009

back control over its rich resources.

But 2009 is not 1953, when the CIA overthrew Prime Minister Mossadegh and installed the Shah. The Iranian people have benefitted enormously from their revolution and cannot easily be turned back. □

WCPI: Apologists for "Democratic" Imperialism

The Worker-Communist Party of Iran (WCPI) has denounced both the Ahmadinejad and Moussavi wings of the clerical regime. However, in its opposition to the Islamic Republic, the WCPI has had a long history of appealing to the imperialist powers—far greater enemies of the world's oppressed than the ayatollahs of impoverished neocolonial Iran—as potential allies. Thus a WCPI representative wrote to the London *Evening Standard* (17 June) regarding the protests in Iran: "Now is the time for people in the west to exert pressure on western governments to politically isolate the regime rather than excuse and legitimise it." A June 22 Web posting boasts that WCPI leader Hamid Taqvaei "wrote to heads of states and the UN Secretary General on behalf of the people of Iran calling on governments 'to immediately break all political ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran, shut down its embassies and consulates and ensure its expulsion from the United Nations and other international institutions'."

The reactionary nature of the WCPI's appeals to "democratic" imperialism has actually played out in Iraq. In 2003 the WCPI's then-sister organization in Iraq supported the imperialist occupation of that country, calling only to replace the U.S./British occupiers with "the intervention of the United Nations." This was after a UN embargo of Iraq, imposed following the 1991 Gulf War, had resulted in the deaths of some one and a half million people.

At the same time, the WCPI stands out among Iranian left groups for prominently raising the key issue of women's rights and for opposing the veil. Yet following

the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 against a CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalist insurgency, the WCPI viewed the Red Army as just as reactionary as the *mujahedin* holy warriors. They joined most of the left in refusing to support the Soviet intervention. This was justified by the WCPI's false claim that the Soviet Union became "state capitalist" by the mid 1920s.

We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet degenerated workers state against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack, while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. We said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called for extending the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples. While warning that the Kremlin bureaucracy was capable of selling out to the imperialists, we pointed out that the Red Army intervention was objectively in defense of the Soviet Union and a blow against the Islamic fundamentalists who threatened to return women to virtual slavery. The Kremlin's withdrawal from Afghanistan led to the victory of the *mujahedin*, with today's hideous consequences for Afghan women, and gave a giant impulse to the forces of capitalist restoration that triumphed in the Soviet Union.

Iran Needs Workers Revolution!

Iran today is a cauldron of contradictions and deepening tensions waiting to erupt. A new generation has grown up—as much as 70 percent of the population is under 30 years of age—that did not experience the 1979 "Islamic revolution" or the savage war with Iraq in the 1980s. These largely well-educated young people, their vision broadened by access to the Internet and other media, are smothered by the medieval strictures imposed by the clerical regime. Meanwhile, Iran remains a prison house of peoples in which Azeris, Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis and others oppressed by the Persian-chauvinist regime constitute nearly half the population.

The current protests have taken place in the midst of a severe economic downturn, made worse by the world financial crisis. Overwhelmingly dependent on oil, Iran's foreign exchange receipts plummeted as the price of oil fell from a high of about \$140 a barrel to around \$70 today. At the same time, the inflation rate is about 24 percent and official unemployment stands at 17 percent. More than 35 percent of the population under the age of 30 is experiencing long-term unemployment.

The only road to genuine social and economic modernization, to liberating Iran from imperialist subjugation, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning the right of national self-determination for the Kurds and the myriad other oppressed nationalities, lies in the smashing of capitalist class rule in Iran. The Iranian masses urgently need a working-class revolutionary party, capable of leading the struggle against the reactionary clerical regime. To forge such a party, leftist militants in Iran must understand the roots of the betrayals by those misleaders who in 1979 helped prepare a historic defeat by embracing the forces of Islamic reaction as a "progressive" alternative to the Shah. ■

Spartacist League of Australia

Web site: www.icl-fi.org

Melbourne

GPO Box 2339

Melbourne Vic 3001

Phone: (03) 9654 4315

E-mail: spartacist@iprimus.com.au

Sydney

GPO Box 3473

Sydney NSW 2001

Phone: (02) 9281 2181

E-mail: spartacist@exemail.com.au

International Communist League

Box 7429 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA



Abortion...

(continued from page 3)

Catholic Church which is currently threatening legal action against aspects of the Victorian abortion law reform. While reforms can be won under capitalism, they are necessarily partial and can be reversed by the bourgeoisie. They remain under threat as long as bourgeois class rule remains. This is seen in the ongoing attacks on abortion rights in the U.S., including the assassination of Dr George Tiller earlier this year by an anti-abortion fanatic. Dr Tiller heroically provided abortion services to women for more than 35 years, despite massive harassment, both legal and extralegal, against him.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

That the state can dictate whether a woman can or cannot have an abortion exemplifies the oppression women face in capitalist society. This oppression is rooted in the age-old institution of the family, which arose with the advent of private property as the mechanism for passing property from one generation to the next. The family serves in general as the social means for rearing the next generation, and under capitalism, where the masses of youth are slated for wage slavery or service as cannon fodder in the armed forces, it seeks to instil obedience to authority. It serves as an ideological transmission belt for the "values" of the capitalist rulers, inculcating religious backwardness as a brake on social consciousness. Along with organised religion and the state apparatus, the institution of the family is a fundamental prop for the capitalist system of oppression and exploitation.

The private property system, upheld by the capitalist state, and the family are the most basic and deeply intertwined aspects of class society. They cannot be "reformed" away. While fighting to defend every gain wrested through hard struggle from this ruling class, the inescapable conclusion must be that the entire capitalist system must go. To win freedom for women and all the oppressed requires a workers socialist revolution to overturn capitalist property relations and the creation of a workers state that rests on a collectivised and planned economy where production is for human need, not profit.

A workers government will be able to begin to provide social alternatives—in caring for children, the sick, the elderly, for housework, etc.—to the oppressive family structure. The young Soviet workers state created by the 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party, acted on this understanding of women's oppression and did more to liberate women than any other society in history. While inheriting a largely peasant society devastated by the First World War and bloody civil war, the Bolsheviks made heroic efforts to replace the family with social alternatives. They were the first government in the world to overturn criminal penalties for abortion in 1920 (health concerns prevented earlier legalisation in those days before antibiotics). (See "The

Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women" *Spartacist* [English-language edition], No. 59, Spring 2006.)

Until its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92, the Soviet Union remained a workers state, albeit degenerated under a nationalist, parasitic, bureaucratic caste, which usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in a political counterrevolution beginning under Stalin in 1923-24. We stood for the unconditional military defence of the USSR against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution and called for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misleaders. Capitalist restoration in 1991-92 was a deep blow to the world working class, not least women in the former USSR, and conditions the current period of capitalist reaction.

Marxism Vs. Feminism

Young women who hate the ingrained anti-woman bigotry of this society often refer to themselves as feminist. However feminism is politically incapable of resolving the most basic aspects of women's oppression because it functions entirely within the framework of bourgeois rule. Because it asserts the main division in society is between men and women rather than class versus class, feminism necessarily reflects the ideology of the politically and economically dominant class, the capitalists. The fate of many 1970s "radical" feminists, such as Anna Bligh, is instructive. Rejecting the necessary fight to overthrow the entire capitalist system, they secured careers in the Labor party and the trade-union bureaucracy and have helped to oversee cutbacks and union-busting carried out by the ALP federally and in the states which have particularly hit their working-class "sisters."

In contrast to feminism, Marxism, recognising that the class question is decisive, rests on a fundamentally different, **proletarian**, class axis. Every real gain won by working people and the oppressed is, and will be, the result of hard class and social struggle, not attempts to pressure bourgeois politicians and the courts. We look to the power of the working class as the motor force for social progress. Our understanding of the centrality of the working class and a revolutionary perspective in fighting for the liberation of women is counterposed to the outlook peddled by reformist left groups who reinforce feminist illusions among women.

In a recent article on abortion rights, the "socialist feminists" of the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP)/Radical Women (RW) call to "trounce the bigots, once and for all, through a massive, broad-based movement" declaring that "community organising is what has won just about every gain of working people" (*Radical Women Supplement*, Winter/Spring 2009). They continue:

"Radical Women calls on feminists to join together to build a united front capable of stopping the right wing and winning survival needs such as full reproductive rights, affordable housing, childcare and education, free healthcare, decent paying jobs, expanded human services and an end to imperialist war."

Trying to square the circle between feminism, a bourgeois ideology, and socialism, the FSP/RW are in essence Laborite reformists, pushing class-collaborationist schemas. Their calls for feminist unity can only serve to tie working women to their capitalist class enemy and breed illusions in capitalist politicians like feminist Labor premier, Anna Bligh, whose cops are prosecuting Leach and Brennan today. Their demands to "stop the right wing" and for classless community organising echo the Laborite pro-capitalist union misleaders,



VAAP
Women's demonstration in Russia, 19 March 1917. Banner reads: "As long as the Woman is a Slave There Cannot Be Freedom—Long Live Women's Equality." Russia was first country to overturn criminal penalties for abortion following 1917 October Revolution.

who push cross-class community campaigns and ALP lesser-evil parliamentary cretinism, burying the need for an independent class-struggle fight, including for women's rights. The FSP/RW's anti-Marxist call absurdly asserts that imperialist wars can be ended by a feminist united front rather than the only road forward: the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist/imperialist system through working-class revolution.

What is essential is a fight to forge an internationalist multiracial workers party to lead the working class in a socialist revolution that sweeps away this system of

capitalist exploitation, racist discrimination and women's oppression. The indispensable task of the revolutionary vanguard party, which we seek to build, is to bring to the working class the understanding that they must fight for all the oppressed in their battle to free themselves from wage slavery. The entry of women into the working class opened the way to their liberation: their position at the point of production gives them social power, along with the entire working class, to overturn the capitalist system. *For women's liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

Partisan Defence Committee

Drop the Charges Against Leach and Brennan!

We reprint below a Partisan Defence Committee (PDC) protest letter sent to the Queensland Attorney-General and Director of Public Prosecutions on 20 August. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interests of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the *Spartacist League*.

We protest the prosecution of two young people under draconian 19th century anti-abortion provisions of the Queensland Criminal Code. It is an outrageous assault on the rights of women and all working people. Tegan Leach, 19 years old, and her boyfriend Sergie Brennan, 21, were charged in April, dragged before the courts, and face committal proceedings on 3 September. The first woman to face such a charge in over 50 years, Leach could be jailed for seven years if convicted under Section 225 for inducing abortion by reportedly taking misoprostol, and Brennan faces a possible 14 years imprisonment under Section 226 for assisting her, plus an additional 3 years for allegedly supplying the medicine. We demand the state harassment and persecution of Leach and Brennan end immediately. **Drop all the charges now!**

Misoprostol and RU486 are abortion drugs widely used around the world and for decades in Europe, providing a safer and much cheaper alternative to surgical abortion. Restrictions on their use in Australia serve the purpose of further oppressing young and working-

class women and their partners as well as poor, immigrant and Aboriginal women.

In 2006, Federal parliament overturned a 1996 deal brokered between the then Howard government and Catholic anti-abortion campaigner and former senator Brian Harradine, whereby access to RU486 required direct written permission from the health minister. Despite this decision severe restrictions on the importation and use of RU486 were retained. However abortion clinics, using drugs somewhat less effective than RU486, have been able to provide medical abortion safely for significant numbers of women across the country. Now the charging of Leach and Brennan has sent a chilling message to all would-be patients and abortion practitioners, a number of whom have stopped performing medical abortions in Queensland, out of fear of prosecution.

That reactionary anti-abortion laws can still be invoked in most states, not least in Queensland, only emboldens anti-woman bigots who act to terrorise abortion patients and clinic staff. The police prosecution of this couple, now forced to move house by violent threats and an arson attack, takes place under the Bligh Labor government, despite reaffirmation by the Queensland branch of the Labor Party at its June conference of its policy to remove abortion from the Criminal Code. We demand: **Drop all the charges against Tegan Leach and Sergie Brennan now!**

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China...

(continued from page 12)

Taiwan and Hong Kong. A sizable class of capitalist entrepreneurs—many of them former government functionaries and the children of current functionaries—has also developed on the mainland. As a consequence, there is now a widely held belief, across the entire political spectrum, that once-“Communist” China has become capitalist or is rapidly and irreversibly doing so. That belief is false. The core of the Chinese economy continues to be based on collectivized property. In fact, the *non*-capitalist character of China has been clearly demonstrated during the current severe global economic downturn.

To see this, one can compare the effects of the economic stimulus programs in the U.S. and China. Despite the \$800 billion stimulus package enacted by the Democratic administration of Barack Obama, output and employment have continued to fall. The gross domestic product is nearly 4 percent below what it was a year ago, while industrial production has been cut by 13.6 percent over the same period. Official optimism that the economy is bottoming out, propagated by the Obama White House, points to the fact that in July employers eliminated “only” a quarter of a million jobs, somewhat less than the average job loss over the previous several months.

By contrast, China’s stimulus program, centered on investment in infrastructure by state-owned enterprises and government bodies and expanding loans by state-controlled banks, has effectively offset the massive decline in export earnings. The annual rate of growth of gross domestic product increased to 8 percent in the second quarter up from 6 percent in the previous quarter. Richard McGregor, a China watcher for the London *Financial Times* (9 August), commented: “Beijing has managed to pull the Chinese economy out of a ditch with a massive fiscal and monetary stimulus.”

Nonetheless, the global economic downturn has sharply worsened conditions for those migrant workers from the countryside who have toiled in factories owned by foreign and offshore Chinese capitalists producing light manufactures for export. Many have had to return to their villages, at least temporarily, including Uighurs from Xinjiang. Impoverished Uighur and also Han youth in the villages and cities of Xinjiang cannot now improve their conditions by securing employment in the capitalist-owned factories producing for export. In this sense, the basic contradictions of the world capitalist system and the accommodation to that system by the Beijing Stalinist regime have aggravated the national conflict between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Xinjiang.

In their own way, the imperialist bourgeoisies recognize that China continues to embody the social and national gains of



Sabrie/NY Times

In the wake of communal violence, Uighurs and Han Chinese in mixed neighbourhood sign up for joint self-defence group.

the 1949 Revolution. The country is not theirs as it was in the past. The ultimate goal of the U.S., European and Japanese imperialist powers is to restore capitalism in China and once again reduce the country to semicolonial subjugation. In pursuing that goal, the imperialists have encouraged and supported reactionary nationalist forces linked to religion among the non-Han peoples—Tibetans, Uighurs—in the western borderlands of China. Thus the national conflict between Uighurs and Han in Xinjiang must be viewed within the broad framework of imperialist hostility to the Chinese deformed workers state.

Stalinist Misrule and the National Conflict in Xinjiang

The specific character of the national question in Xinjiang has significantly changed as a consequence of developments since the 1949 Revolution. At that time, 75 percent of the region’s population were Uighurs, less than 7 percent were Han Chinese. Today, of the 21 million people in Xinjiang, 45 percent are Uighurs and 40 percent are Han. Moreover, the Han population is concentrated in the cities and even in 1949 made up a majority in Urumqi, the provincial capital.

Initially, the migration of Han into the relatively impoverished backwater province of Xinjiang resulted from deliberate government policy and special incentives. However, for the past decade or so, Xinjiang had experienced an economic boom, even by China’s standards, centrally based on the exploitation and development of its oil and natural gas fields. According to official figures, the region’s gross domestic product doubled between 2004 and 2008 from \$28 billion to \$60 billion. This boom has attracted Han Chinese of all classes, from capitalist entrepreneurs to unskilled laborers, pursuing their own economic interests. That is, the changing demographics are not solely determined by the policies and intent of the CCP regime, though Uighurs complain that they continue to be excluded even from unskilled work.

At the same time, the pervasive use of market relations in the economy and the large private sector have increased the gap between the growing number of Han Chinese and the indigenous peoples in the country’s western borderlands. Especially in private enterprises, but also in the state sector, hiring often is based on nepotism, other personal connections or outright discrimination in favor of Han Chinese. But even if competition in the labor market were decided solely by individual capacity, Han Chinese would still have an advantage over Uighurs; they are far more skilled and literate, in particular fluent in Mandarin, China’s *lingua franca*.

Thus, the past decade’s economic boom in Xinjiang appears to have aggravated rather than lessened Uighur resentment against Han Chinese as a socially privileged and politically dominant nationality. Two China correspondents for the London *Financial Times* (7 July) report:

“The redevelopment of old towns and the influx of richer Han Chinese radically changed local economic structures, costing many Uighurs their traditional jobs....

“This has happened while Xinjiang’s economy has been growing at more than 11 per cent a year for the past six years, above the national average. The wealth created by this rapid growth has been concentrated in the pockets of new immigrants, increasing the gap between rich and poor, Han and Uighur, some locals complain.”

Enmity between Uighurs and Han Chinese has centuries-old, historical roots. But that enmity has been intensified by the effects of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, particularly in the last two decades. At the same time, it is important to recognize that Uighurs, like other workers and rural toilers throughout China, have benefited enormously from the progressive social and economic development of the post-1949 People’s Republic. Since the Revolution, infant mortality in Xinjiang has continually declined while life expectancy, less than 30 years in 1949, rose to 67 years by 2000.

However, today’s young Uighur men and women are much less likely to compare their conditions of life to those of their parents and grandparents than to those of the Han newcomers. And by those standards they are clearly disadvantaged. To be sure, the Stalinist regime has made an effort to recruit more Uighurs and other national minorities into the higher reaches of the social order. Thus Uighur students are given additional points on the standardized examinations that are a screening mechanism for admission to university. But such measures have a tokenistic character given the reality that the mass of Uighurs are on the bottom of a newly reconfigured society in their own homelands.

The Chinese Stalinist leaders, who strive above all to maintain social “order,” recognized the danger to themselves in the growing hostility of the poorer Uighurs toward the better-off Han. But instead of moving to raise the Uighur populace to the level of the Han *within* Xinjiang, the CCP regime had recourse to the safety valve of internal migration to the factories and construction sites of coastal China.

Beginning in 2002, the government instituted a labor export program for Uighur youth from low-income families. That program offered substantial advantages for those participating in it: incomes two or three times what they could earn at home, training in modern industrial

equipment, Mandarin-language classes and free medical care. But state coercion in the form of stiff fines also was used against those Uighurs who, despite such material incentives, refused to leave their homes to work in strange cities thousands of miles away.

An estimated 1.5 million people from Xinjiang, mainly Uighurs, work elsewhere in China. But that safety valve is now being shut off by the effects of the global capitalist downturn. Reports indicate that both Uighur and Han perpetrators and victims of last month’s riots in Urumqi were mostly unemployed or seasonal migrant workers.

What then is to be done? A workers and peasants government in China, issuing out of a proletarian political revolution, would establish a rationally planned and centrally managed economy based on state-owned enterprises. (This would not preclude the use of market mechanisms for certain purposes nor a limited role for the private, including foreign-owned, sector.) Only such a system would be able to narrow the present and widening socio-economic gap between Uighurs and Han in Xinjiang. What is required is expending and directing sufficient resources to educate and train Uighurs in the use of modern industrial technology on the same footing as Han Chinese. In the final analysis, however, to achieve a level of material abundance for the benefit of all of China’s peoples requires aid from a socialist Japan or a socialist America, underlining again the need for international proletarian revolution.

Key to achieving genuine national equality in Xinjiang is reversing the Stalinist policy of forced Sinification, in particular the effort to marginalize the Uighur language in favor of Mandarin. The CCP boss of Xinjiang, Wang Lequan, declared that minority languages like Uighur are “out of step with the 21st century” (*New York Times*, 10 July). Wang is here speaking the language of the Mandarinate of old imperial China translated into the Stalinist nationalism and Han chauvinism of today. Since 2002, Mandarin has been the only language used in courses at Xinjiang University for at least the first two years of course work. At the same time, children from lower-class Uighur families have had little opportunity to achieve fluency in Mandarin. Under a workers and peasants government, there would be genuine bilingualism at all levels of education from preschool to university. Uighurs would be able to use their own language as well as Mandarin in all economic and political institutions, whether dealing with factory managers or government officials.

Such a language policy is mandated by the principles of proletarian internationalism—i.e., equality of all peoples in all spheres of life. The example to which we look is that of the Bolshevik regime led by Lenin and Trotsky that issued out of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Tsarist Russia was aptly described by Lenin as a “prison house of peoples.” Upon coming to power, the Bolsheviks implemented the policies for which they always fought: the equality

Chinese-Language Pamphlet No. 8

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of all peoples, ethnicities and languages, including the right of self-determination for the myriad nations oppressed under the tsarist empire.

In China, the Han majority comprises some 90 percent of the population. Only a Leninist-Trotskyist party committed to proletarian internationalism can effectively combat Han chauvinism, including by mobilizing the Han proletariat in the struggle for the equality of all of China's peoples. And only such a party can combat the efforts of reactionary Uighur nationalists and Islamicists, supported by the imperialists, to exploit the just grievances of the Uighur masses against Chinese Stalinist misrule for counterrevolutionary purposes.

World Uighur Congress: An Agency of Imperialism

There is historical irony and deep political significance in the fact that both Uighur Islamicists and the leading figure in the World Uighur Congress were originally sponsored and promoted by the Chinese Stalinist leadership. In the 1970s and '80s, China was engaged in a strategic alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, a policy initiated by Mao Zedong. In the context of that reactionary alliance, the Beijing regime trained and dispatched religious-minded, young Uighur men (who were Sunni Muslims) to join the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

Thus, the Chinese bureaucracy criminally bolstered American imperialism in weakening and undermining the Soviet Union, thereby furthering imperialism's counterrevolutionary drive against the USSR. We Trotskyists hailed the Red Army's intervention into Afghanistan, not only as an elementary expression of our unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state but also as the only means for social progress to be realized in benighted Afghanistan, not least for its horribly oppressed women.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the main body of militant Islamicists, represented by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda, turned against their former U.S. masters. Similarly, Uighur jihadists who had fought in Afghanistan redirected their fire at the Chinese Communist government. Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, *Jane's Security News*, which is linked to British intelligence, commented in this regard: "Chinese strategy on this front [Afghanistan], however, had a negative fallout for Beijing as the returning Uighur jihadis fuelled the already-simmering insurgency for an independent Muslim Eastern Turkestan in Xinjiang."

Most of the Uighur jihadists did not, in fact, return to China. However, the exiled Islamicists may well have ties to small, shadowy Uighur terrorist groups like the East Turkestan Islamic Movement operating in Xinjiang. Indeed, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR has led to a resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism throughout Central Asia. For its part, the Chinese Stalinist government has signed on to the global "war on terror," again emboldening the imperialists in Washington, who are now seizing on the communal riots in Xinjiang to promote their counterrevolutionary aims against China.

Far more important than the Uighur Islamicist terrorist groups is the World Uighur Congress because of the support it receives from U.S. and also German imperialism: The WUC receives funding from the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, a notorious CIA conduit. The organization's leading light is one Rebiya Kadeer, who dubs herself "the Mother of the Uighur nation." Kadeer began her career in China as a successful and wealthy capitalist, becoming a member of the National People's Congress, the rubber-stamp parliamentary body of the CCP regime. However, in 1997 this poster girl for China's new capitalist class fell from political grace after

her husband, who had fled to the U.S., made offensive broadcasts over the official government Voice of America radio station. Two years later, she was arrested and charged with "providing secret information to foreigners" as she prepared to meet a delegation of U.S. Congressional staff. She was imprisoned until 2005. After her release, she moved to Washington, D.C., operating in the bastion of world imperialism. On more than one occasion, Kadeer was granted an audience by George W. Bush, who duly called her an "apostle of freedom."

The communalist riots in Urumqi occurred a little over a year after Tibetan mobs, led by Buddhist lamas, engaged in murderous attacks on Han Chinese residents in the capital, Lhasa (see "Counterrevolutionary Riots in Tibet," *WV* No. 911, 28 March 2008). Much of the Western bourgeois media has drawn a parallel between the two events, while hypocritically condemning the Chinese Communists for their brutality toward the country's national minorities.

There are similarities but also important differences between the anti-Han riots in Tibet last year and last month's communal violence in Xinjiang. The similarity lies in the reactionary, imperialist-backed nature of the exiled forces that claim to represent the Tibetan and Uighur peoples. The difference lies in the actual influence these forces exercise on the ground in the borderlands of western China.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 after the suppression of a lama/aristocrat uprising organized and armed by the CIA. Since then he has been elevated, so to speak, by his imperialist masters as the supreme incarnation of opposition to the Chinese Communist government. The Dalai Lama is a political personage of some importance on the international scene. The WUC's Rebiya Kadeer has made every effort to identify herself and her cause with Tibet's "living god," who contributed a brief introduction to her

World Uighur Congress head Rebiya Kadeer (left) at press conference in Washington, D.C., with Republican Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (centre) and Democrat William Delahunt, 10 July.



autobiography. Nonetheless, prior to last month's communal violence in Xinjiang, few people paid attention to Kadeer and her cohorts except for their CIA handlers.

In Tibet, the effect of the CCP regime's policies has been to reconstitute a numerically large and relatively wealthy Buddhist priest caste. The lamas are in the forefront of both internal reaction and imperialist provocations, such as last year's riots. By contrast, Beijing's policy in Xinjiang has been to suppress the emergence of a socially and politically influential Islamic clerical caste. Mosques must be registered with the state and imams require government approval. There does not now exist an organized network of Islamic clerics that could act as an effective link between the imperialist enemies of the People's Republic of China and the disaffected Uighur masses. On the available evidence, what happened in Urumqi last month was mainly a spontaneous eruption of ethnic hatred, fueled by relative economic deprivation, on the part of Uighurs involved.

Reformists and the Xinjiang Riots

Joining the imperialist drive for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the



Workers in state-owned wind turbine factory in Urumqi. The core sectors of the Chinese economy remain collectivised.

Chinese deformed workers state are reformist "socialists" such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S. The ISO claims China has never been a workers state but has been "state capitalist" since 1949. This "theory," which they also applied to the former Soviet Union, is a fig leaf for decades of anti-Communist practice on behalf of imperialism. The ISO howled alongside the imperialists against the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. When Soviet forces pulled out of Afghanistan in 1988-89, in a futile attempt by the Kremlin bureaucracy to appease the imperialists, the ISO gloated: "We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker*, May 1988). Three years later, the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the ISO's former parent group, exulted: "Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have

all of its contradictions, remains the most important obstacle to the return of China to its previous state of semi-colonial slavery."

In reality, the continued rule of the CCP undermines defense of proletarian state power in China. Contrary to the PSL's claims, the bureaucracy continues to preserve state property not out of a subjective identification with socialism but, as Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) in regard to the Soviet Union, "only to the extent that it fears the proletariat"—i.e., to protect its privileged position as a parasitic caste atop the workers state.

For International Proletarian Revolution!

The CCP regime denounces the World Uighur Congress as "separatist." Actually, Kadeer & Co. do not now openly call to detach Xinjiang from China and establish an independent state, though that is manifestly what they're aiming for. The Uighur jihadists do call for an independent "Islamic East Turkestan." As proletarian internationalists, we do not consider the present state boundaries of China to be sacrosanct. But all of the forces advocating or supporting an independent Xinjiang today are in the camp of capitalist counterrevolution. Moreover, the demand for an independent Xinjiang, even if couched in the most "democratic" language, would be viewed by everyone in the region as a program to drive out the Han people.

One cannot envision a progressive solution to the national conflict in Xinjiang except in the context of a proletarian political revolution throughout China. This would open up historical possibilities that do not now exist: regional autonomy in some form, even an independent state allied to China.

The Chinese Stalinist regime of Hu Jintao declares a "harmonious society" to be the goal of its policies and practices. It is a fundamental premise of Marxism that a harmonious society can be achieved only through overcoming economic scarcity leading to material abundance. Despite China's rapid economic growth since the 1949 Revolution, it is still a relatively poor country by international standards. Per capita gross domestic product is one-tenth that of the United States and one-seventh that of Japan.

Ultimately, the survival and advancement of China's revolutionary gains hinge on the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Japan, North America and West Europe, the only road toward the all-round modernization of China as part of an international planned economy. A proletarian political revolution producing a China of workers and peasants councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world. That is the perspective of the International Communist League. ■



Defend Chinese Deformed Workers State! For Workers Political Revolution!

Communal Violence in Xinjiang



Ethnic conflict in Xinjiang, July: Injured Han Chinese women in hospital (left); Uighurs behind roadblock in their neighbourhood (right). Below: Chinese troops on a main street in downtown Urumqi.

The following is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 941, 28 August), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Early last month a violent national conflict erupted in Urumqi, the provincial capital of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in western China. It began on July 5 when hundreds of Uighurs—a Turkic-speaking, traditionally Islamic people—went on a murderous rampage against their Han Chinese neighbors. Han mobs then retaliated in kind. The Chinese government now sets the number killed at 197, most of them Han Chinese, while some 1,600 were injured. To halt the interethnic bloodletting the government authorities utilized massive police force with 20,000 troops patrolling both Han and Uighur neighborhoods.

From the outset the Beijing regime has claimed, without convincing evidence, that the riots in Urumqi were masterminded by the anti-Chinese nationalists of the World Uighur Congress (WUC), an imperialist-sponsored group based mainly in the U.S. and Germany. Needless to say, the WUC presents a completely different picture from that of the Chinese government of the events leading to the riots. It contends that on July 5, a peaceful protest by Uighurs, mainly university students, was set upon by the police who opened fire on the demonstrators without any provocation. For its part, the Chinese government says that the repressive measures it took were a response to, not the cause of, the violence. We are quite distant from the situation, and each source—whether it's the Chinese government, the WUC or the imperialist media—has its own motive in presenting what happened. What is clear is that however the events on July 5 may have begun, they soon degenerated into communalist violence. Even the *London Economist* (11 July), a house organ for Anglo-American financiers, stated: "The



violence in Xinjiang was crude, racist stuff on both sides, with the Han Chinese suffering the brunt of it."

The trigger for the riots in Urumqi was an event that occurred thousands of miles away in the southeastern Chinese coastal province of Guangdong. In late June, Uighur migrant workers living in a dormitory at a toy factory owned by Hong Kong capitalists were attacked by Han workers. At least two Uighur workers were killed and scores injured. The attack, which lasted for hours, was apparently provoked by a false rumor circulated by a disgruntled former worker that six Uighur men had raped two Han women. After news of what happened reached Xinjiang, Uighurs were enraged over inaction by Chinese authorities and demanded a full government investigation. These complaints against the Chinese government, which seem to be justified, in no way excuse the murderous rampage by Uighurs in Xinjiang against their Han neighbors.

Xinjiang, with its wealth of natural

resources, especially large deposits of oil and natural gas, is of great strategic economic importance to China. The country's president, Hu Jintao, judged the communalist violence in Urumqi to be of such political importance and urgency that he cut short his participation in the G8 summit in Italy and returned to Beijing. What is the broad political significance of the national conflict between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Xinjiang? To answer that question it is necessary to understand the class nature of the Chinese state and its relationship to world imperialism.

The Class Character of the Chinese State

The 1949 Chinese Revolution, marked by the military victory of Mao Zedong's peasant-based armies over Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang, destroyed capitalist-landlord rule and liberated the country from imperialist subjugation. The revolution brought enormous social gains to China's workers, peasants and deeply oppressed women. However, the People's

Republic of China, ruled by the Communist Party (CCP), emerged as—and continues to be—a bureaucratically deformed workers state patterned on the former Soviet Union under J.V. Stalin. A parasitic, nationalist bureaucratic caste rests atop a collectivized economy.

Like their Soviet Stalinist forebears, Mao and his successors, including the current regime, have preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism could be built in a single country. Marxists define socialism as a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance, which could be built only on the basis of international planning, crucially requiring the overthrow of capitalist rule in the advanced capitalist centers of North America, West Europe and Japan. In practice, the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" has meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. In answer to the aspirations of the Chinese workers and rural toilers, and also national minorities like the Uighurs, for democratic rights and a government that represents their needs and interests, we stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a government based on elected workers and peasant councils that is committed to revolutionary proletarian internationalism.

For the past several decades, the Beijing Stalinist regime has utilized extensive market mechanisms in the economy while encouraging large-scale investment by Western and Japanese corporations and the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie in

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