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For Workers Revolution to Sweep Away Suharto Dictatorship!



Economist



Reuters

Massive protests against Suharto dictatorship during July were met with brutal crackdown, including arrests of trade unionists and leftists.

Indonesia Powder Keg

The military regime of Indonesian dictator Suharto is facing the most convulsive political and social upheaval in decades. On July 8, army troops, marines and police brutally attacked a strike and rally of 20,000 workers in the east Java city of Surabaya. Later that month, police, troops and rightist vigilantes in the capital city of Jakarta stormed the headquarters of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), one of two tame opposition parties permitted by the military dictatorship. Supporters of opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of former Indonesian ruler Sukarno, had occupied the building to protest her ouster from the PDI leadership in a government-orchestrated maneuver in June.

More than 10,000 people took to the streets in outrage over the government's raid on the PDI building, and banks and government buildings were torched. The military ordered demonstrators shot on sight; at least five protesters were officially reported dead and 74 "disappeared." The regime then launched a countrywide manhunt against a wide range of dissidents. At least nine are charged with "subversion," punishable by death. While Megawati was pulled in several times for lengthy police interrogation, the main targets were not PDI supporters but trade-union organizers and supporters of the leftist People's Democratic Party (PRD).

Among those arrested was Muchtar Pakpahan, chairman of the banned Indonesian Workers for Prosperity Union (SBSI), the largest of the independent unions. Arrested for playing a leading role in strike struggles in Medan in April 1994, Pakpahan's conviction was overturned last October. Now he faces the death penalty on charges of subversion stemming from the July 27 protest. Budiman Sudjatmiko, 27-year-old leader of the PRD, was also hunted down and faces the firing squad for treason. At least 25 PRD leaders are being held, according to an overseas spokesman for

the group. All are in isolation, and there have been reports of electric shock and other torture being used to force confessions. Leaders of the PRD-affiliated trade union, peasants union and student group were also arrested. PRD offices in Jakarta and Surabaya have been seized and ransacked. The military has ordered the arrest of all PRD supporters and announced that they will likely be tried under the 1962 anti-subversion law, which carries a maximum penalty of death.

Determined to crush the PRD, the government has denounced it as "analogous" to the earlier Communist Party. As we noted in a recent protest statement sent by the Partisan Defense Committee in Japan to the Indonesian ambassador there demanding the immediate release

of all those imprisoned [see page 2]:

"The regime's tirades against a supposed 'Communist threat' evoked—as was intended—the spectre of the horrendous anti-Communist bloodbath of workers and peasants carried out by the military and by anti-Communist mobs in 1965. The message was as clear as it was brutal: All who oppose Suharto's 'New Order' government will be slaughtered in the same manner as were the more than one million supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and other militants in 1965 and the workers and peasants of East Timor who have been fighting for their independence for over 20 years."

Suharto's blood-soaked regime was born out of the 1965 massacre. Old and sick men condemned as Communist activists following the 1965 bloodbath are still sitting on death row. Only last year did the regime say it would remove the

designation "ET" (*ex-Tahanan Politik*—former political prisoner) from the identity papers of some 1.4 million people. One of these, writer Pramoedy Ananta Toer, has been accused of being a leader of "formless organizations"—a reference to Communist front groups—and his writings are banned. His novels, like *Child of All Nations* and *This Earth of Mankind*, are powerful indictments of brutal exploitation by the former Dutch colonial rulers. Today they are banned by an authoritarian regime which fears that readers might see too many parallels between the situation then and now.

U.S. imperialism has played a key role in propping up the bloody Suharto dictatorship from the time of the 1965 anti-Communist massacre. The recent flap
continued on page 4

Remember 1965 Bloodbath— No More Popular Front Betrayals



Der Spiegel



Russell Press

PKI support to bourgeois-nationalist Sukarno regime prepared the way for 1965 massacre of leftists, workers and peasants by CIA-backed military and Islamic anti-Communist mobs.

Japanese Trotskyists Defend Indonesian Leftists

The following statement protesting the recent repression in Indonesia was sent to the Indonesian ambassador in Japan on 19 August by the Partisan Defence Committee there. Since then it has been reported that 124 supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri have been released, while union leader Muchtar Pakpahan and at least nine Partai Rakyat Demokrat militants including Budiman Sudjatmiko continue to languish in the dictatorship's dungeons facing the death sentence. Meanwhile the military regime announced the arrests of an unnamed number of East Timorese, who face up to 20 years' imprisonment for "insulting the head of state" (UPI, 29 November). Free all victims of Suharto's right-wing repression, from Jakarta to Dili, now!

19 August 1996

Dear Ambassador Wisber Loeis,

We demand the immediate release of those imprisoned for protesting the Indonesian military's July 27 early morn-

ing vicious assault on the headquarters of the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI). Drop all charges against those currently imprisoned and those being hunted down! In addition to supporters of the PDI, Muchtar Pakpahan, leader of the banned SBSI trade-union federation, and Budiman Sudjatmiko, president of the Partai Rakyat Demokrat (PRD), and others have been arrested and charged with treason, a capital crime.

Less than 36 hours after the imperialist bosses of ASEAN and their counterparts jettied out of the country, the military brutally evicted supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri from the headquarters of the opposition PDI, sparking the most concerted anti-government protests in 20 years. Thousands battled troops and heavily armed riot police who were ordered to "shoot on sight." At least 200 were arrested, three killed, 90 injured and scores are still listed as "missing."

The regime's tirades against a supposed "Communist threat" evoked—as was intended—the spectre of the horrendous anti-Communist bloodbath of workers and peasants carried out by the military and by anti-Communist mobs in 1965. The message was as clear as it was brutal: All who oppose Suharto's "New Order" government will be slaughtered in the same manner as were the more than one million supporters of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and other militants in 1965 and the workers and peasants of East Timor who have been fighting for their independence for over 20 years.

The so-called Indonesian "miracle" has been accomplished through super-exploitation and built on the sweat and blood of the Indonesian proletariat and peasants.

The banks and office buildings torched on July 27 were the symbols of a ruling class who number among some of the world's richest billionaires. Indonesia's gap between rich and poor is one of the widest in Asia, and continues to grow; more than 30 million live in "absolute poverty." The bourgeoisie is moving into walled, guarded enclaves surrounded by the millions who labor in their fields and factories, making less than ¥200 a day and living in shanties without running water.

The size and determination of the July 27 protests speak to a deep-going opposition to the repressive Suharto dictatorship. We demand that all detained be released and all charges be dropped.

Sincerely,

Hirata Motomu

Charges Against Jane Kemelfield Dropped

On 10 December the Melbourne Magistrates Court dismissed charges against student activist Jane Kemelfield. Reprinted below is the 9 December PDC letter addressed to the Victorian attorney general. Copies were sent to the state police commissioner and the La Trobe University Council and vice-chancellor.

Dear Madam,

We strongly protest the outrageous criminal charges brought against Jane Kemelfield. Kemelfield, the 1996 president of the La Trobe University Students' Representative Council, has been charged over an August 1995 occupation of the administration building, protesting the withholding of funding for the SRC. She was arrested a full seven months after the occupation and charged with "incitement" and "criminal damage." The maximum penalty for each offence is seven and a half years jail. Kemelfield's "crime" was that she addressed protesters over a megaphone prior to the occupation.

The Kennett government's so-called "Voluntary Student Unionism" (VSU) legislation, under which the Administration cut off funds to the SRC, was transparently designed to cripple student political dissent. Not content with attempting to stifle student protest against education cutbacks and social injustice through financial manipulation, the government has resorted to police state repression. The 1995 editors of the La Trobe University student paper *Rabelais*, Ben Ross, Melita Berndt, Valentina Srpanska and Michael Brown continue to be dragged through the court system for publishing "objectionable material." This blatant, and for the student press unprecedented, attempt at state censorship was ordered by the former federal Labor government. If found guilty of all charges the four editors could be sentenced to up to six years jail and fined \$72,000.

In both the Kemelfield and *Rabelais* cases the capitalist state is attempting to drastically narrow the boundaries of what the haughty Australian ruling class considers "acceptable dissent," by severely curtailing democratic rights. The government's message to student youth is: shut up and "obey." The Students' Defence Committee, which is organising Kemelfield's defence, ominously reports that: "The Police say Chief Commissioner Comrie is taking a personal interest in Jane's case." It is in the interests of the workers movement and of all defenders of democratic rights that these sinister attempts at political repression be defeated.

The Partisan Defence Committee demands: Drop the charges against Jane Kemelfield! Drop the charges against the *Rabelais* editors!

Yours sincerely,

Neil Florrimell
for the Partisan Defence Committee

Defend 19-20 August Canberra Demonstrators!

Reprinted below is a protest letter sent to the federal attorney general and the ACT police minister on 18 November.

Dear Sirs,

We protest the nationwide witch-hunt of Aboriginal, trade unionist and youth activists which a special Australian Federal Police (AFP) taskforce codenamed "Operation Veneer" has conducted since the 19 and 20 August anti-government demonstrations in Canberra. Recalling the darkest days of Cold War anti-communist McCarthyism with its Anti-Red police squads, Operation Veneer has led to the laying of criminal charges by the AFP against at least 13 people across the country (*Daily Telegraph*, 8 October 1996). This is on top of the 50 people arrested during the demonstrations.

The nature and target of the charges makes clear the government's intent to jail a layer of Aboriginal, union and youth militants. We denounce Operation Veneer as a sinister exercise in domestic police repression targeting those the Howard government deems politically "undesirable". It is calculated to intimidate into silence the intended victims of, and those who would protest against, the deeply reactionary political,

economic and social agenda of the Howard Conservative Coalition. We demand that all the charges against the Canberra anti-government protesters be dropped immediately!

Amongst those caught up in Operation Veneer's dragnet is Jim Davidson, the regional representative of the Nowra Aboriginal Land Council in NSW. Davidson is 59 years old and has a long and honourable history as a fighter for the Aboriginal and union cause. Vriduar Vega, a union organiser for the NSW branch of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), is charged under the draconian Commonwealth Crimes Act.

Since 19 August the Howard government, police and capitalist media have engaged in a large scale "big lie" campaign designed to obliterate the truth about what really happened in Canberra. The police stopped up to six thousand Aboriginal and unionist marchers—mainly CFMEU members—from joining the official ACTU rally and attacked the Aboriginal marchers in the vanguard. This was nothing but a racist police provocation, doubtless orchestrated at a senior government/police level. The Aboriginal demonstrators defended themselves and were joined in struggle by the organised workers. On 20 August a thousand Aboriginal demonstrators were

compelled to again defend themselves against assaults by fully equipped AFP riot squads outside the old parliament building.

The reality of thousands of organised workers defending Aborigines in the face of police provocation on 19 August is unprecedented and no doubt deeply alarming for the powers-that-be, who stand on the tradition of promoting virulent racism in this capitalist society, founded under the official banner of "White Australia". The arrests and court proceedings currently underway against the protesters from 19 and 20 August are of a piece with the assaults against workers, Aborigines and immigrants being carried out on all fronts by the Howard government, from the anti-union Workplace Relations Bill, drastic cutbacks to funding for Aboriginal programs and racist attacks on immigrants.

We demand: drop all the charges against the militants arrested over the 19 and 20 August demonstrations! Down with the sinister Operation Veneer witchhunt!

Yours sincerely,

Keith Douglas
on behalf of the
Partisan Defence Committee

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Labor Government's Accord, Enterprise Bargaining Paved the Way

Down with Howard/Kernot's Workplace Relations Bill!

On 19 November, after weeks of haggling between the Howard government and Kernot's Australian Democrats, the federal parliament passed the Workplace Relations Bill. Amongst its many savage union-busting measures, this legislation enshrines individual and non-union "workplace agreements," and provides for unlimited financial penalties against unions who carry out "secondary boycotts," that is, acts of union solidarity. The *Australian* (28 November) drew attention to the core of this legislation: "All industrial action, except that allowed during the negotiation of a new enterprise agreement will be illegal...."

This legislation is the product of a drive by the capitalist class since the early 1980s to decisively weaken union power and to strangle the traditional economic militancy of the Australian working class. In this the bosses were well served by the

responded to the passing of Howard's bill with national snap strikes. A central aim of the ban on secondary boycotts is to keep the rest of the unionists at work while the bosses go about smashing this centre of working-class union power.

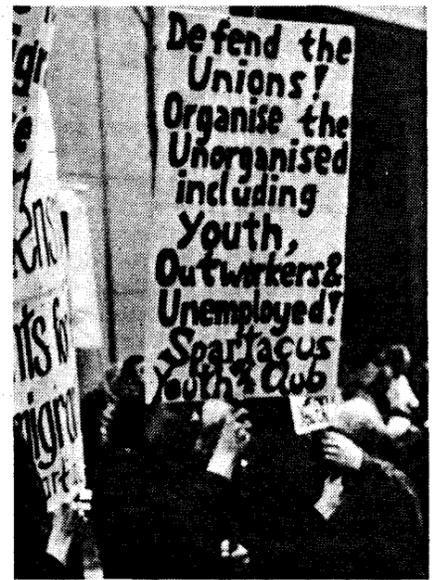
The Labor government oversaw the destruction of the closed shop in the mines, and the results can be seen in gruesome statistics: 67 miners killed in mining "accidents" between 1983 and 1996 in New South Wales alone. But when the mining giant CRA moved to finish off the miners' union at Weipa last year, the maritime and mining unions launched a joint strike which fought back the employers' attack. Within 24 hours the bosses were screaming. This powerful display of social power was called off by shunting the dispute into the Industrial Relations Court, the graveyard of strikes. They even had to dig up ex-prime min-

when the bill was pushed through they lost no time in accommodating themselves to the new anti-union law. ACTU president Jennie George commended and claimed credit for Howard's agreement with the Democrats, arguing: "The amendments...represent a significant setback for the industrial agenda of the Howard Government." Meanwhile the Business Council, the National Farmers Federation and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) all backed the final legislation, with the ACCI's spokesman praising the amendments as improving the package. In fact, the Democrats' amendments strengthen the role of the Arbitration court and its state policing of workers unions.

The chronic high levels of long-term unemployment in Australia provide the basis for the bosses to undermine union power and to pit native-born against immigrants, the employed against the unemployed. The labour movement must take up the fight against unemployment through fighting for a sliding scale of wages and hours: jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! This requires a struggle against the capitalist system, where the maintenance of a "reserve army" of unemployed is an integral part of wage slavery. The bill's provisions for individual contracts will inevitably hit hardest at the most vulnerable sections of the workforce, those in small shops and the unorganised, especially immigrant workers. To defeat the bosses' divide and rule tactics workers organisations must wage militant class struggle in defence of all the oppressed. For full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Organise the unorganised!

As the rulers shape up for a decisive attack on the MUA, threatening to put troops on the wharves, maritime unionists will need to forge an alliance with fellow unionists in the mines, in the railways, warehouse storemen, truck drivers. They will also need to appeal for internationalist solidarity from Japanese waterside workers, and Japanese workers in the steel mills and car plants where Australian coal and iron ore end up. This strategy is undermined by the MUA tops who push national chauvinist job trusting in their campaign for "Australian crews on Australian ships."

The bosses have been emboldened in their union-busting moves by the



ASP photo

Spartacus Youth Clubs mobilise youth in defence of unions and all oppressed: Sydney "Unity Against Racism" rally, 23 November.

counterrevolutionary destruction of the former Soviet Union. Driven by growing inter-imperialist rivalries to massively jack up the rate of exploitation, they are unable to offer the crumbs they formerly used to piece off traditionally powerful sections of the workforce. The Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky wrote that monopoly capitalism is less and less willing to reconcile itself to the independence of the trade unions:

"The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

—*Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*, 1940

Today the bosses are set to precipitate some hard class battles, for which the working class will need a leadership willing and prepared to mobilise their own immense potential power in a struggle against the whole capitalist system. In the sharp class battles to come workers need a revolutionary leadership, built in political struggle against the class-collaborationism and national chauvinism pushed by the current Laborite leaders. The Spartacist League, and Spartacus Youth Clubs, fight to win class-conscious workers, immigrant workers and radical youth to the task of building an authentic Leninist vanguard party through political struggle against the pro-capitalist leadership of the ALP. Such a revolutionary workers party will be dedicated to the struggle for workers state power to expropriate the capitalist bloodsuckers, and institute a planned economy in the interests of all the toilers. ■



Herald Sun

Mounted police baton charge pickets at BTR-Nylex's ACI plant at Spotswood, Melbourne in August. Howard/Kernot's anti-union bill will escalate union-busting assaults.

13 years of Labor Party government. Under the class-collaborationist Accord workers were hogtied by their ALP union "leaders" to the "national interest"—the interests of their capitalist exploiters—while jobs and conditions were shredded. They were herded into "superunions" to make their trade-union organisations more wieldy for the bosses' Arbitration court. Enterprise Bargaining agreements undermined union power in the interests of the employers. Unions such as the Builders Labourers Federation and the airline pilots' union which bucked the Accord were smashed by the capitalist state. Union-busting privatisations which swelled the coffers of big business were pushed through. The current part-privatisation of Telstra, which will mean a job massacre shedding thousands of jobs, was prefigured by the former Labor Keating government.

"Waterfront reform," aiming to destroy the union closed shop (full unionisation) on the wharves, was always seen as a key test of Labor's reforms by their capitalist masters. Yet despite the destruction of conditions and thousands of jobs, all with the willing compliance of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) bureaucrats, the Labor government was unable to deliver on this or on the privatisation of the Australian National Line. The Howard government was brought to power on a promise to bust the MUA, and maritime unionists

ister, ex-ACTU president, "Mr Fix-it" Hawke from the grave to put on a charade in front of the supposed "neutral umpires" of the Arbitration court judges.

Such subordination to the bosses' courts means playing by the bosses' rules. Strikes backed by solid mass picket lines and occupations that close whole struck sites, together with solidarity strikes, will be needed to make the Workplace Relations Bill a dead letter. The only illegal strike is one that loses! While Howard's legislation must be smashed, the existing framework of state-mandated arbitration of any and all industrial disputes is not in the interests of the working class. The arbitration courts have been used for over a century to subordinate workers' union organisations to the capitalist state, to the class enemy. Arbitration is a "safety net" for the capitalist bosses, and their Laborite servants, to derail successful class struggle. Down with Arbitration!

The existing pro-capitalist union leadership is an obstacle to this perspective. Fearing the prospect of such militant integrated working-class struggle, the ACTU leadership has sought to channel working-class opposition to Howard's legislation into a losing strategy of appealing to the bosses' parliament, especially the Democrats in the Senate, to water down the legislation. Their utter bankruptcy was shown by the fact that

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NUMBER 9

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International Bulletin

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The Post-Soviet Period and Disintegrative Pressures on the Revolutionary Vanguard

Norden's "Group": Shamefaced Defectors From Trotskyism

Indonesia...

(continued from page 1)

over Indonesian funding for Clinton's election campaign underlines not only Washington's continuing close ties with the butchers in Jakarta but the rampant nepotism and corruption of the Indonesian ruling family. Now the imperialist bloodsuckers who for years lauded Suharto for ushering in "political stability" are worried about the aging dictator's health and the absence of a credible alternative to his regime. An editorial in the *London Economist* (3 August) titled "If Indonesia Erupts" warns that as "a vital part of Asia's fragile security balance, turmoil there would produce tremors from China to Australia" and "shake boardrooms." In an accompanying article, this mouthpiece for the imperialist bankers wants Suharto to allow a little "space" lest he contribute to "a future explosion of potentially devastating consequences"—devastating, that is, to the maintenance of neocolonial enslavement, where stifling repression, starvation wages and draconian union-busting assure a huge flow of profits from the sweat of millions.

The imperialists have reason to be worried. Even official figures point to a huge growth in strikes and other workers' struggles. There have also been outbursts of student unrest. In April, three students were killed during two weeks of protests against public transport fare increases in south Sulawesi. Student activists frustrated at the tight military control of campuses and the lack of job prospects have turned to labor

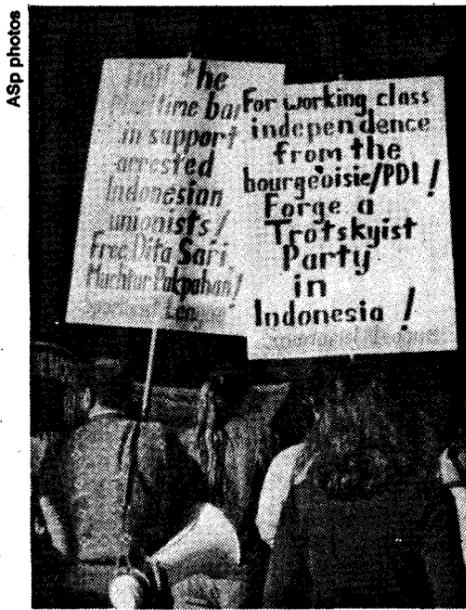


SBSI union leader Mughtar Pakpahan, now facing death penalty on charges of "subversion."

organizing. Protests by workers, students and the unemployed in urban centers have intersected peasant struggles for land and grievances against ethnic and national oppression. Incapable of developing a unified Indonesian nation, the Java-centered bourgeoisie presides over a prison house of peoples.

Indonesia is a powder keg waiting to explode. Yet despite the evident courage and dedication of its supporters, the PRD offers a strategy of class collaboration like that which paved the way for the 1965 slaughter. The PRD actively organizes support for the tame bourgeois opposition led by Megawati—who denies any intention of threatening the power of Suharto and the generals—and itself calls for nothing more than a "multiparty democracy." SBSI leader Pakpahan, meanwhile, says that he is not a communist but a "nationalist" and avows his support for the 1945 bourgeois constitution (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 November 1995). But in this backward country tied by a million strings to international finance capital, there can be no thoroughgoing democracy without sweeping away the entire

Spartacists protest against repression in Indonesia. Right: At Melbourne rally, October, against military crackdown in wake of July upheaval. Far right: Spartacist picket in Sydney, 1986, protests threatened execution of Indonesian communists.



capitalist class, which acts at the behest of the imperialist overlords. A new generation of working-class militants must come to grips with the burning question: Will they be led once more down the suicidal path of class collaboration which led to the 1965 bloodbath or undertake the struggle to unite the dispossessed peasants, horribly oppressed women and ethnic and national minorities in a revolutionary struggle to end the brutal rule of capitalism?

Indonesia and Permanent Revolution

The world's fourth most populous country, Indonesia is a vast archipelago of more than 13,000 islands spanning 3,000 miles and encompassing a diverse collection of ethnic, national and religious groupings. Separatist insurgencies have taken place from the tip of the westernmost island of Sumatra to Irian Jaya (on the island of New Guinea) in the far east. The deepgoing divisions among these peoples are the heritage of the brutal rule of Dutch colonialism, which ended with the Japanese occupation in World War II and, following Japan's military defeat, the 1949 victory of Sukarno's nationalists in the war of independence against the Dutch.

The struggles of oppressed ethnic and national minorities in Indonesia were recently highlighted by the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to two of the more moderate figures in the struggle of the East Timorese people, who have been subjected to a genocidal military occupation since 1975. In November 1991, Indonesian troops carried out a slaughter of 200 demonstrators in the Timorese capital of Dili. As our Australian comrades wrote recently (*Australasian Spartacist* No. 159, Spring 1996):

"For 350 years, the people of East Timor suffered the brutal rule of Portuguese imperialism. As the Portuguese empire collapsed in 1974/75, the Indonesian capitalist military regime invaded and annexed East Timor. Twenty years of bitter resistance has ensued, with over 200,000 East Timorese killed by gunfire, disease or starvation. As Marxists and Leninists who recognise the right of self-determination, we of the Spartacist League of Australia (Australian section of the International Communist League) demand: Independence for East Timor! Indonesian troops out of East Timor! Australia hands off!"

Until the Dili massacre, many Indonesians knew little about what was happening in East Timor. Intended by the military as a signal not only to the East Timorese but also anyone who might oppose the regime, the killings were a catalyst in galvanizing new opposition to the regime.

Ethnic and religious tensions have also been stoked by government policies encouraging settlement of outlying areas like Irian Jaya by people from Java and other densely populated areas of the country. Closely intertwined with the struggles of minorities is the fight for land. The Dutch left in their wake massive plantations, which are now worked by millions of landless laborers and small tenant farmers. And with the accelerated flow of imperialist investment over recent years, countless tribal and peasant families have been thrown off

the land in favor of mining, manufacturing and other corporations.

Indonesia presents a classic case of "combined and uneven development" in the epoch of imperialism, where pre-capitalist forms of exploitation and oppression exist side by side with modern industry, communications and transportation. In such countries of belated capitalist development, no wing of the bourgeoisie is capable of lifting society up from neocolonial subjugation and oppression. The dynamic growth of the Indonesian proletariat and its re-emergence into the arena of class struggle points to the one social force that can successfully lead the struggles of the oppressed—from land-hungry rural toilers to women, youth and religious and ethnic minorities—against the entire capitalist-landlord ruling class and its imperialist patrons.

As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revolution, explained in "What Is the Permanent Revolution?" (1930), in colonial and semicolonial countries, "the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses." The validity of this perspective was confirmed by the workers revolution in backward Russia itself. Under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, the numerically small Russian proletariat was able to mobilize behind it the mass of the peasantry and oppressed national minorities in a proletarian revolution which broke the power of the capitalists and landlords and opened a period of revolutionary struggle internationally.

The Bolsheviks' revolutionary program was trampled on by the Stalinist bureaucracy which usurped power in the Soviet Union in 1923-24, following the failure of the revolution to spread to advanced capitalist countries like Germany. Stalinist betrayal finally culminated in the capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states in the Soviet Union and East Europe in 1989-92. This, in turn, has emboldened the imperi-

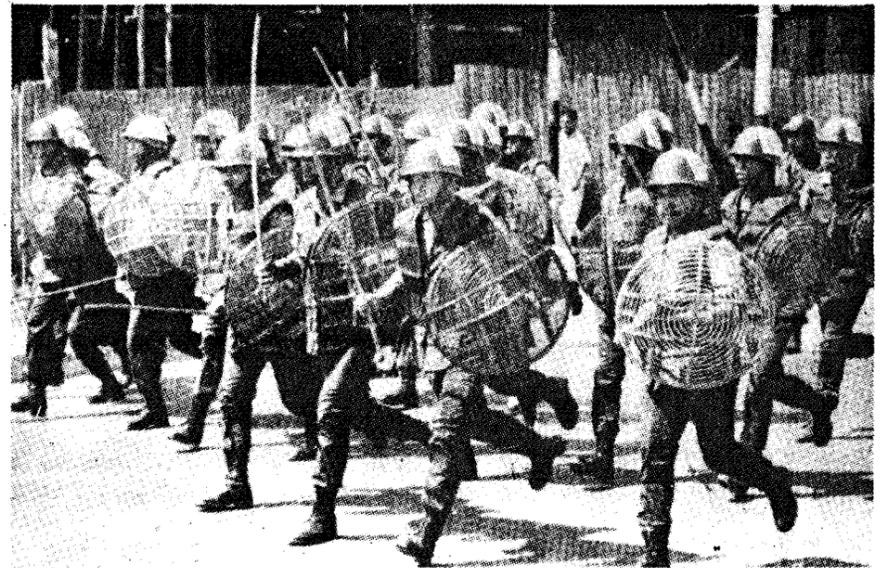
alist powers to seek the destruction of the remaining deformed workers states, which (with the exception of Cuba) are all located in East Asia—China, Vietnam, North Korea. In a desperate and futile balancing act, the Stalinist regimes in these countries have opened the door to imperialist investment and capitalist exploitation, strengthening outright capitalist-restorationist forces (including within the bureaucracy).

The defense of the remaining gains of these anti-capitalist revolutions can be ensured only by proletarian political revolution against the bureaucratic Stalinist regimes as part of a perspective of international socialist revolution, centrally aimed at the advanced industrial powers, whose vast economic wealth and productive resources must be liberated in the interests of all humanity. The central lesson of the October Revolution retains its full force today for the exploited and oppressed around the world: Bolshevik parties must be forged in the struggle for a new October Revolution, from the islands of Indonesia to the imperialist centers in Australia, Japan, the U.S. and West Europe.

Lessons of 1965

In 1965, the PKI was the mass party of the Indonesian proletariat and the largest Communist party in the capitalist world. But basing itself on the Stalinist schema of revolution in "stages"—first a revolution limited to (bourgeois) democracy, to be followed only later by a fight for socialism—the PKI counterposed to the program of workers revolution the call for unity with Indonesia's bourgeois-nationalist rulers. In 1952, PKI chairman D.N. Aidit raised the slogan "Long Live Sukarno! Long Live the PKI!" and called on Sukarno's Nationalist Party to form a "united national front, including the national bourgeoisie" which would carry out "not socialist but democratic reforms" (see "How Maoist Strategy Sabotaged Indonesian Revolution," *Young Spartacus* Nos. 36 and 37, October and November 1975).

In the 1950s, when nationalist demagogues had some room to maneuver between U.S. imperialism and the Soviet



November 1994: Indonesian riot cops charge pro-independence protest in East Timor marking the anniversary of 1991 Dili massacre.

Jeff Widener

Maritime Union Protests Indonesia Repression

In late September, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) launched rolling bans on Indonesian shipping in protest against the Suharto regime's arrests of Mughtar Pakpahan, leader of the Indonesian Workers for Prosperity union, and union activist Dita Sari. Pakpahan was arrested following demonstrations in late July against the government's attacks on the supporters of opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri, who was ousted by the state from the leadership of the Indonesian Democratic Party. Dita Sari was arrested earlier the same month in Surabaya after a workers' protest. The MUA's action, directed at all Indonesian shipping and cargo, was backed by the International Transport Workers' Federation.

The MUA's rolling bans are exemplary acts of solidarity with the struggles of the workers and oppressed of Indonesia. The MUA is in the cross hairs of the right-wing government of Prime Minister John Howard—which has launched an all-sided attack on labour, immigrants and other minorities—not only because of its strategic economic position in the country, but also because of the history of militant struggle by waterfront workers, including on behalf of the working masses of Asia.

As the Indonesian leftists go to trial, facing possible death sentences, internationalist working-class solidarity is crucial. However we warn that in the climate of intensifying Australian national chauvinism (and anti-Asian hysteria) sustained bans on Indonesian shipping could easily be coopted into a broader anti-Indonesia campaign by the White Australia ruling class (assisted by their labour lieutenants) to shore up Australian nationalism in the working class. It is the habit of Australian imperialism to claim "democratic" superiority to despotic neocolonial regimes who brutalise their populations on behalf of imperialist exploiters like those in Australia. To serve its ambitions to increase its own exploitation of the region the Australian ruling class needs to nurture a patriotic working class to exploit at home and to send to war. A revolutionary leadership in the MUA would seek to hit the main enemy at "home" and defend the Indonesian leftists by holding a one-day

national waterfront strike demanding the release of the Indonesian brothers and sisters. This would also lay the basis for future reciprocal class-struggle solidarity from workers in the region in defence of the MUA against the Australian bosses.

During the dirty, losing U.S. war against the workers and peasants of Vietnam, in which Australian imperialism served as loyal lackeys of Washington, waterfront workers took concrete action on behalf of the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people. The recent labour bans protesting the repression in Indonesia recall in particular the 1945-49 boycott of Dutch shipping carried out in support of the Indonesian independence struggle by Australian, Indian, Chinese and other workers.

The history of that boycott can be found in the book *Black Armada* (1975) by Australian journalist Rupert Lockwood, a longtime supporter of the now-defunct Communist Party (CPA). During World War II, as the Japanese imperialists invaded Indonesia, the retreating Dutch transported their colonial functionaries to Australia, along with hundreds of members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and other political prisoners. Many of these had spent

decades in the Dutch imperialists' jungle death camp of Tanah Merah in Netherlands New Guinea. While being moved to prison camps in Australia, including the infamous camp at Cowra, New South Wales—which was later the scene of racist mass slaughter of Japanese POWs—the imprisoned militants appealed for help by throwing notes from convict ships and railroad cars. Australian trade unionists and civil libertarians responded with a successful campaign to free the leftist political prisoners.

Once freed, some former prisoners were employed by the Dutch in sensitive positions where they had access to information on Dutch military stores and shipments, classified radio reports and Allied intelligence. With the defeat of Japan and the proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia in August 1945 by nationalist forces led by Sukarno, the Dutch and Allied powers sought to rush military forces and supplies to Indonesia to shore up colonial control. Members of the Indonesian Seamen's Union, founded in Australia during the war, declared they would not man Dutch ships steaming to crush the Republic and began deserting the ships in late September 1945. Australian waterfront workers and seamen, led by the CPA, immedi-

ately declared their support for the Indonesian seamen, placing a "black ban"—boycott—on Dutch ships, the "Black Armada."

That union-enforced ban tied up most Dutch shipping in every major Australian port over the next four years. Over 30 unions, including those of Asian seamen organised in Australia, participated in the boycott of Dutch transport, paralysing the colonial fleet and buying precious time for the Indonesian nationalist forces to organise resistance. At great sacrifice, Indian seamen refused to fulfill the strikebreaking role for which they had been recruited. The Chinese Seamen's Union in Australia was critical in organising material aid for Indonesians and Indians facing desperate financial hardship because of their refusal to work Dutch ships.

Undercutting the internationalist impulse and implication of these actions, however, was the social-patriotic policy of the CPA. From the time of the arrival of the newly released PKI members, the Australian CP "instructed" these militants—who had been in complete isolation since 1926—on the necessity of subordinating the struggle for independence to the Allies' war effort against the Axis powers in the imperialist conflict. As Lockwood wrote:

"Though advised by the CPA, the PKI retained its independence, and at first made sectarian errors that made CPA hairs stand on end....

"The Australian advice was delivered in firm terms, that support of the war against the Axis powers was essential."

The labour boycott was called in response to the fact that the imperialist "democracies" were attempting to prop up colonial rule in Indonesia. The Stalinist leadership of the waterfront and seamen's unions argued that in fact the boycott was in the best interests of Australia. Lockwood quotes the appeal carried in the CPA's newspaper, the *Tribune*:

"Australia must raise the strongest voice to see that her 70 million Indonesian neighbours win their freedom. A fettered Indonesia in the Near North carries a constant threat of political and economic instability to Australian trade and foreign policy."

This posture in fact coincided with that of the governing Labor Party (ALP);
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Indonesia Calling

Australian and Indonesian protesters march in Sydney in 1945 to demand end to Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia. Waterside workers boycotted Dutch shipping in solidarity with independence struggle.

Union, Sukarno's "non-aligned" posturing was a constant irritant to Washington. With the full backing of their Stalinist mentors in Moscow and especially in Beijing, the PKI implemented the policy of *gotong royong*—"national unity"—with the "progressive" bourgeoisie and its military. The PKI gained a number of cabinet posts in Sukarno's government, embracing his strategy of "Nasakom"—an alliance of bourgeois nationalists, Islamic groups and "Communists." This regime was an example of a popular front, a class-collaborationist coalition in which the proletariat and oppressed are chained to the class enemy, in this case through the instrument of the PKI.

Groveling before Sukarno and the reactionary Muslim clerics, the PKI organized work brigades to build mosques. Again and again, the PKI banned strikes, suppressed militant peasant movements and courted imperialist investment, preaching confidence in Sukarno and his generals. The PKI even denounced an uprising it had led at Madiun in 1948 and elevated the general who suppressed it to its pantheon of "Heroes of the Working Class." Raising the slogan "For the Maintenance of Public Order, Help the Police," and pledging to enforce "the co-operation between the people and the Armed Forces, in particular the Police Force,"

the PKI served to strengthen the very repressive apparatus which was later to come down on it.

The immediate precursor to the 1965 military coup was a botched attack on top army officers in late September. Sukarno may in fact have encouraged the move against the officers, in which six were killed, although he quickly disowned it, leaving the PKI to bear the brunt of the subsequent repression. Following the attack, Sukarno appointed General Suharto "responsible for restoring security and order." As hundreds of thousands of PKI supporters were massacred by Suharto's troops and Muslim rightists, Sukarno called for exterminating the Communist "rats." But even as they sat in prison cells awaiting execution, PKI leaders continued to pledge their loyalty to the "democratic" military and the "progressive" Sukarno!

On the eve of Suharto's counterrevolutionary October 1965 coup, the PKI was an enormously powerful force, with a membership of three million and over 14 million additional supporters organized in PKI-controlled labor unions, youth, women's and peasant organizations. But the PKI's treacherous policy of class collaboration bartered the political independence and revolutionary mobilization of the exploited for maneuvers with their oppressors. When the generals struck,

the PKI, politically disarmed and militarily unprepared, was paralyzed. Even as the remnants of the PKI in exile issued a "self-criticism" of its failure to adopt "an independent attitude toward Sukarno," they refused to break from the disastrous stagist politics that paved the way for the massacre: "By correcting the mistakes made by the Party in the united front with the national bourgeoisie it does not mean that now the Party need not unite with this class...our Party must work to win the national bourgeoisie over to the side of the revolution."

In an article headlined "Indonesia: Lesson in Betrayal" (*Spartacist* No. 5, November-December 1965), we wrote that "the working people of Indonesia are now paying with their blood" for the PKI's betrayal in "helping administer Indonesian capitalism while suppressing the struggles of the Indonesian workers and keeping them wedded to Sukarno's police-state."

Imperialist Rivalry Over Indonesia

The U.S. was up to its neck in the Indonesian bloodbath. The CIA provided the Indonesian generals with a hit list of 5,000 Communists, and U.S. embassy officials ticked the names off as they were

hunted down and murdered in 1965-66. The mobilization of reactionary Islamic fundamentalists against the PKI was also promoted by Washington. In 1950, John Foster Dulles, later to be Eisenhower's secretary of state, explained how the "spiritual beliefs" of "the religions of the East...cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us and our task is to find and develop it." That "bond" was cemented in the blood of the Indonesian workers and peasants, and later in Afghanistan.

With the "Communist menace" eliminated in this strategic Pacific Rim country, Washington felt emboldened to massively escalate its ground invasion of South Vietnam. At the same time, the consolidation of Indonesia as a bastion of "free world" anti-Communism created the conditions for the later development of a defeatist wing of the American ruling class, who felt that the U.S. could safely withdraw from its losing war in Indochina without jeopardizing its strategic interests in Southeast Asia.

The imperialists have continued to assign a key role to Indonesia in their counterrevolutionary ambitions in Asia. Indonesia is the central player in ASEAN, the anti-China bloc which now
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Women and Revolution

Bitter Fruit of Washington's Anti-Soviet Dirty War

Afghanistan: Hell for Women

On September 27, Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, fell to the Taliban, a fundamentalist Islamic militia. Four years of horrific rule under a shifting "coalition" of warring factions of reactionary Islamic *mujahedin* ("holy warriors") had already brought Kabul to the point of famine and devastation. Now the Taliban killers have begun to wreak bloody vengeance against any vestige of social progress overlooked by the vultures who preceded them. One of their first targets was Najibullah, the pro-Soviet Afghan president ousted by the *mujahedin* in 1992, who was dragged from his sanctuary in the city's United Nations compound and beaten, shot and hanged, his body left strung up on the street for several days. Justifying this atrocious act of savagery, a member of Kabul's Taliban council railed that Najibullah "was against Islam. He was a criminal, and he was a Communist."

Without question the chief victims in the consolidation of Islamic fundamentalist reaction in the aftermath of the Soviet military withdrawal in 1989 have been Afghanistan's miserably oppressed women. While the civil war has now resumed, with ethnically based militias which supported the former *mujahedin* regime launching an offensive against Taliban positions outside Kabul, all the contending forces are deeply reactionary.

Among the first acts of the Taliban after seizing Kabul were to bar women from all work, to close down all girls' schools and to order women to remain locked in their homes in *purdah* (social isolation) unless accompanied by a man. As a result, almost all educational facilities have been shut down, since 75 percent of teachers are women, overwhelmingly trained during the Soviet presence in the 1980s. This has also created chaos in hospitals and orphanages that were primarily staffed by women. Given fundamentalist taboos against women being treated by male doctors, the elimination of female medical personnel means a death sentence for countless women and girls.

The *Los Angeles Times* (2 October) reports that "women who have ventured onto Kabul's dusty streets without cloaking themselves from head to toe in

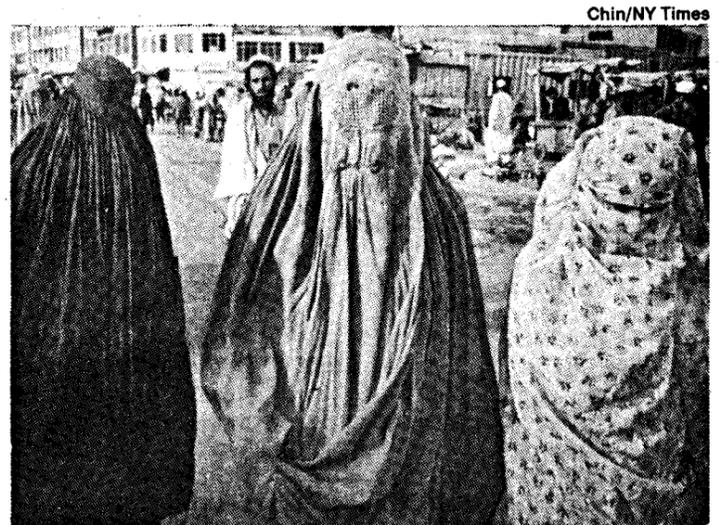


John Voos

Former Afghan president Najibullah, tortured and murdered by Taliban killers.



Steel-Perkins/Magnum



Chin/NY Times

Seizure of Kabul by Taliban militias (above left) has led to intensified Islamic fundamentalist reign of terror against Afghan women, imprisoned at home or forced to wear head-to-toe "vell."

opaque, suffocating gowns have been lashed with whips or fan belts." The situation there is today so dire that better-off Afghans are seeking refuge for their daughters in neighboring Iran, which is under the rule of Islamic fundamentalist ayatollahs. The Taliban's orgy of woman-hating terror adds the finishing touches to the program of social reaction implemented by the *mujahedin* cutthroats who took power four years ago and revived the stoning of women for adultery and "immodesty," while subjecting the entire population to a reign of terror and plunder.

While hypocritically distancing itself from some of the "excesses" in the nightmare of dark reaction which has befallen the women of Kabul, Washington has been the chief force in the Taliban's rise to power. Through its client regime in Islamic Pakistan, U.S. imperialism has for years funneled vast sums of money and high-tech military equipment to various *mujahedin* factions, from the notorious Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who rose to prominence by throwing acid in the face of unveiled women students at Kabul University in the 1970s, to, most recently, the Taliban cutthroats. Even as women were being beaten and brutalized in the streets of Kabul, Clinton administration spokesmen rushed to meet with Taliban representatives, hailing the efforts of these medievalist killers and torturers to "liberate Afghanistan."

The unspeakable hell which has descended on women, teachers, doctors, working people, ethnic and religious minorities and all secular elements in Afghanistan is the bitter fruit of U.S. imperialism's unrelenting drive to undermine and destroy the former Soviet Union, whose military presence in Afghanistan in the 1980s was the chief bulwark against Islamic fundamentalist reaction. For over a decade, Washington armed the *mujahedin* murderers to the hilt, building them up to wage a proxy war against the Soviet Army and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). But the blood of every unveiled woman butchered by the Afghan fundamentalists is also on the hands of those leftist organizations internationally which lined up behind U.S. imperialism's anti-Soviet dirty war in Afghanistan!

For years, groups like the social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO), U.S. supporters of Tony

Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), marched in lockstep behind Washington's drive for the defeat of Soviet troops by the mullah-led forces who were openly fighting for the enslavement of women in Afghanistan. Now they have gotten what they wanted. These self-styled "socialists" contributed, to the extent their limited means allowed, to bringing about the horror which is today being inflicted upon Afghan women.

The "Russian Question" Pointblank

In the 19th century, utopian socialist Charles Fourier observed that social progress can be gauged by the status of women in society. This is unambiguously clear in the case of Afghanistan. For Marxists, as indeed for all opponents of women's oppression, taking the side of those fighting the U.S.-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan was as clear and obvious a position as was the support of Karl Marx's First International for the Union forces led by Abraham Lincoln in the American Civil War against slavery.

How, then, could self-avowed socialists like Cliff's ISO/SWP line up with those fighting for the enslavement of women in Afghanistan? The answer lies in their virulent hostility to the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state. From the moment the Bolshevik Revolution toppled capitalism in Russia in 1917 until the capitalist counterrevolution led by Boris Yeltsin several years ago, the imperialists' central aim was focused on restoring capitalist exploitation in the Soviet Union and overturning the social gains which remained despite decades of Stalinist degeneration. That is why the entire apparatus of political indoctrination in the United States and West Europe was geared to producing hatred for and fear of the Soviet Union. Because groups like the ISO bought into the anti-Soviet program propagated by the bourgeoisie, they lined up with any and all forces opposed to the Stalinists in power—from sadistic Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan and Iran to the Vatican-backed anti-Communist, anti-Semitic and anti-woman Solidarność movement in Poland.

Historic American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon, in waging a factional struggle within the then-revolutionary

U.S. Socialist Workers Party against the Shachtman/Burnham minority which argued to abandon the Marxist position of military defense of the Soviet Union, said in 1939:

"The question of the Russian revolution and the Soviet state which is its creation has drawn a sharp dividing line through the labor movement of all countries for 22 years. The attitude taken toward the Soviet Union throughout all these years has been the decisive criterion separating the genuine revolutionary tendency from all shades and degrees of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world."

In the case of Afghanistan, this dividing line not only separated revolutionaries from reformists, but proponents of social progress from those who backed, openly or otherwise, medievalist barbarism.

Uniquely in modern history, the rights of women were a central issue in the civil war which raged in Afghanistan from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. After coming to power in an April 1978 coup, pro-Moscow intellectuals and army officers in the PDPA sought to implement some minimal reforms to bring the country closer to the 20th century: land distribution, freeing women from the *burka* (the head-to-toe "veil"), reducing the bride price to a nominal sum and providing education for girls. However, such basic democratic reforms can be explosive in a cruelly backward country like Afghanistan, not least because women's subordination in the family has decreed them as the "bearers" of the traditional culture to the next generation. Afghan landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs launched a ferocious *jihad* (holy war), burning down schools and flaying teachers alive for the "crime" of teaching young girls to read.

When Moscow airlifted Red Army troops to Kabul in December 1979 to prevent its PDPA client regime from falling to the Islamic reactionaries and to protect its southern flank against imperialist incursion, the "Russian question" was posed pointblank. Democratic president Jimmy Carter's savage proxy war against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan and his retaliatory embargo against the Soviet Union were the opening shots of Cold War II. Under Carter's successor, Republican president Ronald Reagan, the U.S. spent hundreds of billions of dollars on high-tech "Star Wars" weaponry aimed at facilitating a first-strike

Racist War...

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twelve, are being held in custody (denied bail with no prospect of even a hearing until late January) for allegedly spitting at Pauline Hanson. We demand that these brave children be released immediately! They have committed no crime. Drop the charges now!

The attacks of the Howard government on immigrants and Aborigines, and its gearing up for wholesale attacks on the trade union movement, come after a decade of increasing, grinding exploitation of the working people under the former Labor government. Unemployment remains officially over eight percent, while many of the desperately long-term unemployed have dropped out of the unemployment statistics altogether, having given up on any prospect of a job. Youth unemployment is around 30 percent, while joblessness among many immigrant communities ranges from 25 to 40 percent.

In an orgy of "economic rationalism," tens of thousands of jobs have been shed in industries like mining, auto, steel and maritime; union membership has plummeted to just 35 percent of the workforce, 25 percent in the private sector. Living standards for the average worker have declined by over ten percent in the last decade. Women workers are paid less than two-thirds of the wage paid to their male counterparts and tens of thousands of immigrant women slave in sweatshops and at home for as little as two dollars an hour. Many young workers are trapped in low-wage "training schemes," most of which the Howard government has pledged to scrap altogether.

The pronounced shift to the right in the bourgeois political spectrum in Australia, as elsewhere in the capitalist world, is integrally linked to the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. For decades, the capitalists' desire to overturn the Soviet degenerated workers state served to a certain degree to suppress antagonisms among the imperialist powers. Now, beset by resurgent rivalries, the various bourgeoisies must ratchet up the rate of exploitation, drive down living standards and slash social



Asp photo

Spartacist contingent poses working-class centrality in fight against racism at "Unity Against Racism" rally, 23 November, Sydney.

What stands in the way of such a fight are the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats and ALP politicians who act as transmission belts into the workers movement for backward consciousness—centrally the deep racism rooted in this country's history as a white settler colony in Asia. What is required is a determined political struggle to replace these labour lieutenants of capital, who keep the working people tied to their exploiters, with a class struggle leadership. *We Spartacists stand for union/minority mobilisations against racist terror! Crush the fascist National Action scum in the egg! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! For a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights!*

To fight the racist tide means to fight against the conditions of capitalist decay which has spawned it. Against the labour bureaucrats' criminal inaction over unemployment, what is necessary is a new leadership in the labour movement to unite the workers and all the oppressed in the fight for *jobs for all—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay—and a full cost of living escalator in all union contracts*. Against the deterioration in housing, health services, schools and public transportation, workers need a leadership that will lead a fight for a *massive program of public works at union wages*

of thousands of organised workers defending Aboriginal protesters in united struggle against the cops was deeply alarming to the rulers and gave a taste of the sort of social power that could be utilised to roll back the capitalist offensive. The backstabbing ALP/ACTU leadership joined Howard's chauvinist hue and cry against the Canberra protesters and directly collaborated in the ensuing state witchhunt, dobbing protesters in to the cops and purging anti-racist militants from the union ranks. This was a clear signal to the bourgeoisie that the pro-capitalist union misleaders were committed to stopping any working-class-centred challenge to the bosses' war against immigrants and Aborigines.

Capitalist Reaction Spawns Fascistic Fringe

The result of thirteen years of the Accord between the Labor government and the ACTU bureaucracy was a dramatic atomisation of union power, a drastic erosion in living standards and a consequent deepening social alienation throughout wide layers of the population—and the discrediting of the ALP. Significantly, among the self-perceived "suburban middle class whites" there was a sharp increase in economic and social insecurity. Sections of the working class threatened with growing unemployment and lower sections of the middle class threatened with drastic erosions in their living standards are targeted by reactionary politicians for reactionary mobilisations against the even more oppressed.

Since the 1996 election, when the ruling class dumped Labor and installed Howard with the central objective of breaking the remaining strength of the union movement (in particular by crushing the maritime and mining unions), the Tories have gone all out to consolidate a reactionary political climate with overt racist appeals to the "battlers" and "mainstream Australians." Accompanying the raft of legislative assaults and cutbacks targeting immigrants and Aborigines, Howard has decreed "black armband history," i.e., the truth about the slaughter of the Aboriginal people on the Australian frontier, and demanded that students not be taught that Australia has a "racist and bigoted past." With Howard's support, Aboriginal Affairs minister John Herron has come out in support of the Assimilation policy which saw thousands of Aboriginal children stolen from their parents by state and church.

This reactionary agenda set the stage for Hanson's maiden parliamentary speech. As distinct from Howard's code words such as "mainstream Australian" and "special interest groups," Hanson openly railed against being "swamped by Asians," supposed "privileges" for Aborigines and warning of the "danger of civil war." This is the rhetoric of Eric Butler's anti-Semitic, fascist League of Rights, who are now mass-distributing Hanson's speech. For weeks there was a deafening silence from all sides in federal parliament, as Tories and Laborites alike

openly worried about Hanson's electoral appeal and the tabloids and talkback racism engaged in a paroxysm of demented racism.

But having unleashed this wave of racist reaction and received a deluge of bad press from almost all countries throughout East Asia, the ruling class moved to put something of a lid on its "race debate." A hand-wringing editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* entitled "Why we must not lose our way on race" expressed bourgeois concern. The *SMH* worried that the outburst of racism was manifestly becoming bad for business. Currently over 60 percent of Australia's exports go to Asia and over 60 percent of Australia's inbound tourism, at \$10 billion the country's largest foreign currency earner, is from Asia.

So parliament dusted off the paper-thin veneer of "multiculturalism" and Aboriginal "reconciliation" for international consumption in a bipartisan federal parliamentary motion passed in late October. But what the false rhetoric of "multiculturalism" in this viciously racist society seeks to conceal is the reality of Aborigines forced to live in isolated settlements lacking running water, sewerage or electricity; hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers, mainly East Asian women, toiling at home as superexploited outworkers; and minority youth subjected to daily racist cop terror.

For a Class-Struggle Fight Against the Bosses' Racist Attacks!

In late November and early December thousands turned out for a succession of anti-racism demonstrations in Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne. These rallies brought onto the streets anti-racist youth, unionists, immigrants (particularly those from East Asia), deeply outraged at what is happening in the country. But the reformist left, including the Democratic Socialist Party/Resistance (DSP), the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and Socialist Alternative (SA), have joined Labor honchos in channelling the fighting anger of anti-racist militants into an alliance with sections of the capitalist class concerned that the "excesses" of the "race debate" were getting bad for business. The Melbourne rally was addressed jointly by the Victorian Trades Hall secretary Leigh Hubbard and the former conservative Victorian premier Rupert Hamer. The Sydney rally was endorsed by the Business Council of Australia. The political program of this cross-class alliance is "moral witness" opposition to the more overt expressions of racial hatred, *à la* Pauline Hanson, in effect and in fact burying the necessity for a working-class-centred fight against the vicious bipartisan assault on minorities.

As Marxists we understand that the interests of the working class and their capitalist exploiters are absolutely irreconcilable. Political alliances with any section of the capitalists, including those from oppressed minorities, inevitably lead to proletarian class-struggle action being suppressed in the interests of not scaring away bourgeois bloc partners. By tying a new generation of anti-racist militants to a section of the ruling class in the name of "building as broad a movement as possible," the fake left are criminally derailing the necessary class-struggle mobilisations required to fight the racist capitalist offensive.

The genuine potential for such action was highlighted by the spectacular defence of Aborigines from cop provocations by trade unionists at the 19 August anti-government demonstration in Canberra. Yet ever so fearful not to offend their anti-union allies, all the reformist left groups failed to call for the defence of the 19 and 20 August militants at these "anti-racist" demonstrations. In contrast, the Spartacist League has uniquely sought to intersect anti-racism protesters with a class-struggle program. Our contingents at the Sydney and Melbourne demonstrations raised such slogans as: "Bipartisan War on Minorities Emboldens Hanson,



Striking women workers, crucial to working-class fightback, rally at picket line outside Bonds Wear clothing factory near Wollongong in November.

programs in order to gain an edge against their competitors. With bourgeois ideologists proclaiming the "death of communism" the rulers believe there is nothing standing in their way. But the working people and oppressed cannot indefinitely endure having no future for themselves and their children—a world of ever-intensifying exploitation and social misery.

The power to take on the racist Australian ruling class and win lies with the multiracial working class. But as we said in the last issue of our paper:

"...only by fighting in defence of minorities can the working class forge the unity and consciousness necessary to successfully turn back the bosses' mounting attacks."

and equal pay for equal work, with full union wages and union protection! Even defence of the most basic right of the working class—a job at decent pay—leads directly to challenging the capitalist profit system.

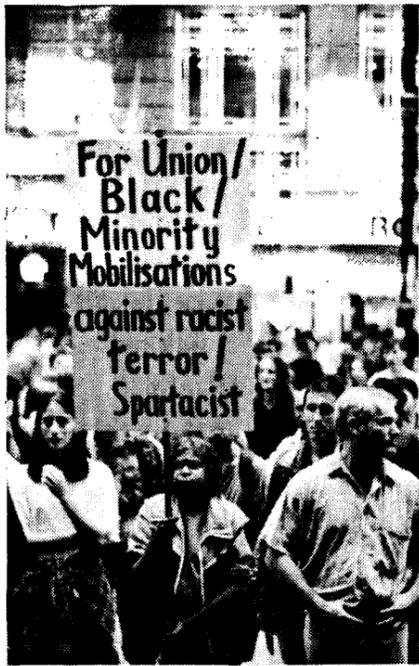
The current leadership of the ACTU doesn't act to defend the interests of its own membership against job-slashing and union-busting privatisations, much less mobilise on behalf of the horribly oppressed Aborigines and beleaguered Asian immigrants. It is telling that the current government-inspired racist barrage reached a crescendo in the aftermath of the anti-government protests in Canberra on 19 and 20 August. The sight

Canberra...

(continued from page 12)

and cry as Howard vituperated against "un-Australian activity." For our part we salute the Aboriginal, unionist and student/youth militants who in integrated social struggle defeated this calculated, racist cop provocation. The strength of the union movement must be brought to bear in defence of the militants of 19-20 August.

Immediately after the 19-20 August anti-government demonstrations the Howard government set up a special AFP taskforce named "Operation Veneer" to conduct a nation-wide witchhunt targeting Aboriginal, trade-unionist and student/youth activists (see PDC protest statement, "Defend 19-20 August Canberra Demonstrators!", page 2). The traitorous ALP/ACTU leadership have been collaborating with this vicious state witchhunt, fingering militants and promising their capitalist masters an internal purge of anti-racist unionists who acted to defend embattled Aboriginal people. Doug Cameron, national secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU), wrote in the *Metal Worker* (October 1996): "I have advised the ACTU that if any AMWU official is charged with a serious offence in relation to the rally, and found guilty, then their employment with the AMWU will be terminated." In reality the CFMEU leadership around national secretary Stan Sharkey forced Vriduar Vega, a NSW organiser of the CFMEU, to resign his union post long before he was charged, let alone fronted a court. Other known union targets of the witchhunt have been told that they are effectively on their own.



Asp photo

Spartacists call for labour-centred fight against racist terror at 1993 Melbourne protest against cop killing of Brisbane Aborigine, Dan Yock.

In the present climate of vicious racist reaction, the union bureaucrats are deliberately seeking to cut off the hand that reached out from the organised working class to the deeply oppressed and marginalised Aboriginal people. The union tops are, in effect, pledging to the bosses that they will prevent the organised workers ever again defending Aboriginal people from racist state terror.

By purging anti-racist militants from the ranks, the union bureaucrats fulfil their role as labour lieutenants of capital—a thin layer who prop up this

racist decaying capitalist social order through class collaboration reinforcing racial divisions. The multiracial working class has the potential social power and class interest to oppose all capitalist tyranny and state terror directed against the oppressed. What stands in the way of unleashing the power of the Australian proletariat is backward consciousness—most profoundly the deep racism rooted in this country's history as a European settler colony in Asia—and the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats and Laborite politicians who act as transmission belts for, and reinforcers of, this backward consciousness.

With the ALP out of office the reformist and centrist left are offering their services as waterboys for the Laborite ACTU bureaucracy. With the union tops joining the bourgeois hysteria about "mob rule" and "violence" the reformists have abandoned any defence of the victimised militants and even attempted to bury 19 August and its political meaning altogether. The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) and its youth group Resistance was red-baited by sections of the capitalist press in the immediate aftermath of 19 August. Yet in the dozen or so issues of their paper, *Green Left Weekly*, that have appeared since August the DSP has not once mentioned Operation Veneer or its victims and have gone silent about the necessity for the defence of the charged militants by the labour movement and the left.

For their part the right-centrist Workers Power group (WP) managed to whimper: "Certain union leaders tacitly supported the condemnation of militants in Canberra by carrying out a witch-hunt of their memberships, threatening to oust any union members involved in the action." (*Workers Power*,

November/January 1996-1997). To describe the union tops' purge of its ranks as "tacit" is a lie and a whitewash, providing a cover for the ALP/ACTU tops. Could these nameless "certain union leaders" be the same ones with whom WP is pleading to lead a general strike against Howard's anti-union legislation?

Marxists understand that a general strike inevitably poses the question of which class shall rule, that is, a prelude to a struggle for power. To call on the ACTU leadership to lead a general strike at the very moment they are purging trade unionists who defended Aborigines is transparently absurd. WP's insistent call for an ACTU-led general strike is militant-sounding verbiage designed to disguise their Laborite and economist adaptation to the existing leadership and consciousness of the working class. This becomes all too clear when in the same issue of their press WP decries what they politely choose to call "the debate about race, immigration and freedom of speech" which is, in their words, "diverting attention away" from the anti-union laws.

The unity in struggle of workers and minorities on 19 August gave a taste of the sort of power a revolutionary leadership would harness to bring down racist Australian capitalism. What is needed is a political fight to break working people and minorities from the ALP/ACTU traitors, ousting the pro-capitalist bureaucracy from the workers movement. The Spartacist League fights to build a Trotskyist vanguard party, a tribune of the people combating all manifestations of racial and sexual oppression, to lead the working class and behind them all the oppressed masses in a socialist revolution which will sweep away the racist capitalist system and establish workers rule. ■

Campbell, for Workers Action against Bosses' Racist Attacks!, "Australian nationalism serves white imperialist oppressors of Asian masses. Down with Australian Imperialism!" and "Capitalism Breeds Racism, Fascism. We need Socialist Revolution!"

But the reformist left have joined the Laborite politicians and bourgeois spokesmen in subjecting anti-racist protesters to endless nationalist appeals to "defend multiculturalism," "keep this a tolerant country" and "fight for Australian values." Such patriotic whitewashing of the history and nature of this brutally racist capitalist society dovetails neatly with the bosses' desire to rehabilitate the "democratic" pretensions of Australian imperialism. As revolutionary internationalists, we understand that nationalism serves to line up the working people behind their racist exploiters on the basis of "I am, you are, we are Australian" (as the song played at the Melbourne demo went). Ultimately, patriotism is used by this jackal imperialist ruling class to discipline the masses for imperialist attacks against the peoples of Asia and elsewhere. Flag-waving Aussie nationalism was a significant part of the ideological cover used by the bosses to send Australian troops to participate in the U.S.-led 1991 Persian Gulf slaughter of over 100,000 Iraqis and to the later United Nations neocolonial shoot-up of men, women and children in black Somalia.

Workers Power: Not So Left-Wing Kelticism

The right-centrist Workers Power (WP) complain that the war on minorities is "diverting attention away" from the anti-union laws (*Workers Power*, November/January 1996-1997). Their commentary on the storming of parliament does not even think it worth noting that the action was sparked when unionists came to the defence of Aborigines against cop attack. So ultimately all they can offer minorities, "as a key weapon in the fight against racism," is a call for separate minority-only caucuses in the trade unions. This disgusting and patronising sectoralism provides an all-too-convenient cover for the White Australia

union bureaucracy: the immigrants will have to try to fend for themselves, while the bureaucrats continue to do worse than nothing to defend this most beleaguered and oppressed section of the working class. *The fight against racism in this white imperialist enclave in Asia is a strategic task for the entire working class, led by its most conscious, vanguard elements, not a "tactic" to be relinquished to "minority-only" caucuses in the unions!*

Not surprisingly, WP make no criticisms of the labour lieutenants of capital's refusal to defend minorities, nor of their pushing of racist protectionist poison and support to Australian imperialism. This reflects their accommodation to the current nationalist, social democratic leadership and consciousness of the workers movement. WP's almost only criticism of the ACTU tops is that they are not militant enough on an economic level. So WP's latest paper is devoted, from cover to cover, to calling on Bill Keltly, Jennie George and the rest of the ACTU leadership to lead an "all out" "indefinite general strike" against Howard's anti-union laws. Marxists understand that a general strike inevitably poses the question of *which class shall rule*, that is, a direct prelude to a struggle for power. But for the Australian working class to defeat the bosses' union-busting attacks and challenge for state power requires a huge leap, not primarily in its economic militancy, but in its level of *political class consciousness*.

Centrally, especially in this period when the bosses have whipped up the most vicious racist reaction to divide the working class, the deep-going chauvinism that permeates the workers movement must be thoroughly rooted out and politically advanced workers won to the understanding that their class must be a champion of the rights of all oppressed. To bring such socialist consciousness to the proletariat requires the forging of a communist vanguard party, championing the rights of all the oppressed, or as Lenin called it, acting not as a "trade union secretary" but as a "tribune of the people." To call for the existing union leadership to lead an "all out," indefinite general strike, *at the very time that lead-*

ership is viciously witchhunting the Canberra militants who fought in defence of Aborigines, is not only a patent absurdity, but breeds the worst illusions that the pro-capitalist, chauvinist ACTU tops can be pressured into defending the interests of the working class.

Adapting to the current Laborite political and organisational grip on the workers movement, WP have nowhere to go but to campaign at the next election—as they did at the last one—to put Labor's craven Kim Beazley and Gareth Evans back into power. Dismissing our criticisms as supposedly proving the Spartacists are "devoid of all tactics" WP's current obsession with the general strike "tactic" (to be led by the existing union bureaucrats) ties in perfectly with its parent bodies' (Workers Power in Britain and its "League for a Revolutionary Communist International") traditional loyalty to voting for the social democratic parties in *every country, at every election, at all times, regardless of the political circumstances*.

In its galloping rightward trajectory, WP's passion for embracing the "lesser evil" has even surpassed voting for mere mainstream social-democratic formations. WP's international affiliates supported votes for the Russian-chauvinist and

anti-Semitic Zyuganov's bourgeois-nationalist party in Russia's presidential elections earlier this year. In the more recent New Zealand elections, WP's New Zealand group tortuously argued that the NZ Alliance, a cross-class coalition of the New Labour Party, the Greens, the Liberals, the Democrats and the Maori Mana Motuhake party, was a "left reformist workers' party" (!), advocated an "unconditional electoral block" between the NZ Labour Party and the Alliance, and called for votes "for either the NZLP or the Alliance."

The New Zealand Alliance is a classic "People's Front" (or "popular front") lash-up, tying the workers directly to the parties of the bourgeoisie. Meanwhile, after the elections, the NZ Labour Party unsuccessfully vied with the Nationals in enticing Winston Peters' anti-immigrant chauvinist New Zealand First party into a coalition. In the 1930s, Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote: "In reality, the People's Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism" ("The Dutch Section and the International," *Writings*, 1935-36). By its embrace of the Alliance

continued on page 10

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Afghanistan...

(continued from page 7)

February 1980). When the Kremlin later pulled out of Afghanistan, Workers Power turned around and denounced the withdrawal. And all the while, they vituperated against our call, "Hail Red Army!" Behind Workers Power's insistence that the eminently progressive Soviet intervention was counterrevolutionary lay a deeply ingrained anti-Soviet prejudice inherited from their Cliffite origins.

But the Cliffites themselves showed no such qualms, consistently supporting the imperialist line. As Gorbachev was preparing the Soviet withdrawal, the ISO gloated: "Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], May 1988). This comparison is truly grotesque! The ISO sees no essential difference between medieval fundamentalist killers coming to power in Kabul and the victorious *social revolution*—which the ISO's forebears refused to support—that drove U.S. imperialism out of Indochina!

With the fate they welcomed having come to pass and its horrendous consequences daily described in the bourgeois press, Cliff's SWP can only wring its hands and hypocritically moan about the "long series of tragedies to beset the Afghan people" (*Socialist Worker*, 5 October). Even now, with the Soviet Union gone, the Cliffites continue to whitewash the role of the Islamic fundamentalist anti-woman terrorists and their Pakistani and U.S. backers, writing that "Taliban's success comes from popular disenchantment with the leaders who oppose it" and complaining that "the Taliban has no answer to the terrible crisis of the country." These fundamentalist reactionaries *do* have an "answer"—a program of all-sided reaction and extirpation of even the most modest social advances for women!

Again borrowing from Western imperialist propaganda, the sole fig leaf that the Cliffites and the rest of the anti-

Soviet camp offered for their line was that the Soviet intervention violated Afghan "national self-determination." For Marxists, the question of self-determination is subordinated to overriding class considerations—in the case of Afghanistan, defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism and the struggle against feudal reaction and women's oppression. Moreover, Afghanistan is not a unitary nation, as the Cliffites assert, but a caldron of distinct, feuding nationalities (as well as tribal and other ethnic groupings) divided by artificial borders: the Pashtuns extend into Pakistan and the Uzbeks into the former Soviet republic of Uzbekistan, while the Tajik people overlap the border with both Tajikistan and Iran. The hue and cry about the "national rights" of "poor little Afghanistan" had about as much validity as the cries of "states' rights" raised by the Confederacy during the American Civil War and again 100 years later by diehard Dixie segregationists. Precisely because the Soviet Union was not capitalist/imperialist, the Red Army intervention into Afghanistan, rather than deepening oppression and reinforcing the forces of reaction as imperialism does in its semicolonies, posed the possibility of bringing progress to that backward land of fragmented peoples.

We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution!

As Afghanistan demonstrated, the Cliffites' ludicrous "state capitalist" analysis and their posture as leftist opponents of Stalinism were simply a cover for their profound programmatic hostility to the homeland of the October Revolution. From the time of the 1950-53 Korean War, when Cliff broke from Trotskyism in refusing to defend North Korea against U.S. imperialism, the Cliffites' supposed "third camp" ("Neither Washington nor Moscow") was nothing but an empty shell, as they continually lined up with imperialism (first in a veiled way, then openly) against the Soviet Union.

Opposition to Stalinism from a revolutionary, Trotskyist standpoint meant defense of the social foundations of the

to expel the "rights" and form a workers government. However, following the destruction of the Soviet Union, this outfit "discovered" that the unions (not just their rotten leadership) were nothing more than "agents of capital." The SEP have lined up behind the bosses' fierce union-busting drive which, if successful, will lead to a dramatic increase in social reaction, especially targeting immigrants, Aborigines and women. These inveterate political bandits, blind and indifferent to the racial and sexual oppression intrinsic to the capitalist system, cannot defend unions nor minorities from the bosses' onslaught.

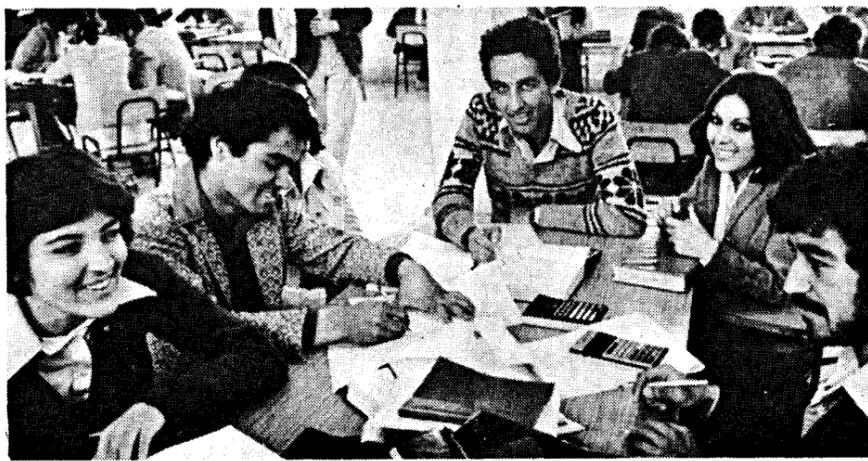
Against social democrats like the Australian Labor Party, who hated the liberating goals and proletarian internationalism of the Russian Revolution, the revolutionary Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky had the following message to the proletariat in the Pacific:

"...the Communist Parties of the imperialist countries—America, Japan, Britain, Australia and Canada—must not merely issue propaganda against the war, but must do everything possible to eliminate the factors that disorganize the workers' movement in their countries and make it easier for the capitalists to exploit national and racial antagonisms.

"The Communist Parties...must conduct a vigorous campaign against restrictive immigration laws and must explain to the proletarian masses in these countries that such laws, by inflaming racial hatred, will rebound on them in the long run."

—"Theses on the Eastern Question," in *Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*

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



Planeta

Students at Kabul University in the 1980s. Soviet military presence opened possibility of liberation for Afghan women.

Soviet Union—centrally the existence of a planned collectivized economy, a necessary precondition for the creation of an international classless, communist society. The Trotskyist call for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist usurpers was premised on our defense of the gains of October, including our unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack. In his 1939 speech, cited above, James P. Cannon explained:

"The Soviet Union emerged from the October revolution as a workers' state. As a result of the backwardness and poverty of the country and the delay of the world revolution, a conservative bureaucracy emerged and triumphed, destroyed the party and bureaucratized the economy. However, this same bureaucracy still operates on the basis of the nationalized property established by the revolution. That is the decisive criterion for our evaluation of the question."

—reprinted in "We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution!" *WV* No. 181 (11 November 1977)

Stalinist treachery and imperialist terror have left Afghanistan devastated, with a total breakdown of transportation, trade and economic life. The country has been turned into a patchwork of regional fiefdoms ruled by ethnically based warlords, with the Taliban, based on the predominant Pashtun grouping, controlling the gutted capital and two-thirds of the country in the south, while the Uzbek region in the north is ruled by Abdul Rashid Dostum and Ahmed Shah Massoud's militia lords over the Tajiks. While Dostum and Massoud's forces are today painted as supposed "moderates" relative to the Taliban, Massoud remains allied with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, one of the most savage fundamentalist leaders during the PDPA regime.

The martyrdom of Afghanistan is a direct product of the counterrevolutionary cataclysm which resulted in the restoration of capitalism in East Europe and the former Soviet Union. This has emboldened reactionary forces not only in backward areas like Afghanistan but in West Europe and the U.S. as well. While various bourgeois commentators are now wagging their fingers over the horrors being carried out by Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, "family values" Christian fundamentalists in the U.S. also aim to drive women back into the home. This is revealed not only in attacks by "right to life" terrorists on women seeking abortions but in the growing barbarism of the racist capitalist "justice" system (see "California Castration Law," *WV* No. 654, 25 October 1996).

The horrors being played out in Afghanistan today are the starkest expression of the choice which has been posed, with increasing sharpness and urgency, throughout this century: socialism or barbarism. Young fighters against social oppression must study and learn the lessons of past struggles and defeats, including the world-historic defeat represented by the destruction of the remaining gains of the October Revolution, if they are to go forward to win new victories. We of the International Communist League fight for a new October, both in the U.S. and around the world. We fight to forge Bolshevik parties internationally to lead the workers—standing at the head of all the oppressed—to power and to a society in which capitalist oppression and enslavement of women are relics of a barbaric past.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 654, 25 October 1996.

Racist War...

(continued from page 9)

and by calling for an NZLP/Alliance government, WP has placed itself firmly in the camp of Menshevik class collaboration, completely abandoning the crucial class independence the working class so desperately requires to fight for its own interests.

A separate case is the Socialist Equality Party (formerly Socialist Labour League, SEP/SLL). Today this group postures as a critic of Laborism and even as defenders of democratic rights. Don't buy it. The SEP constantly pours scorn on the struggle for any Aboriginal land rights and consistently echoes the racist pronouncements of government spokesmen that Aboriginal leaders, not this racist, capitalist system, are primarily responsible for the hideous oppression of the Aboriginal people. For example, recently in Brisbane SEP'er Carl Wyles stated that Hanson can get a hearing because "there is a thin privileged layer of Aborigines in ATSIC, the Aboriginal Legal Service and other organisations...who provide grist to Hanson's mill" (*Workers News*, 4 October 1996). So for this outfit the main reason for Hanson's rise is the existence of "black bureaucrats." As the bourgeoisie bulldozes Aboriginal rights and organisations into the ground the SEP echo, almost word for word, the capitalists' crass justifications, pandering to the most backward elements of the working class.

The SEP/SLL have spent decades sowing illusions in the ALP/ACTU to organise general strikes and for the ALP

Maritime...

(continued from page 5)

which had ruled throughout World War II and to which the CPA was (and its successors are) ultimately subservient. Founded on the racist "White Australia Policy," the Labor officialdom witnessed the ignominious demise of the European colonial powers in Asia. With the end of the war, the ALP government of Ben Chifley initially supplied the Dutch with arms and transport in the attempt to crush the Republic. But, reading the writing on the wall for Dutch rule, it also tolerated the "Black Armada" boycott.

After the failure of Dutch military offensives in July 1947 and December 1948, the Labor government adopted a policy of ingratiating themselves with the nationalist leaders in Jakarta, figuring that the interests of Labor's masters in the Australian capitalist class would best be served by cementing links with the bourgeois nationalists who would emerge as the new rulers of Indonesia. More fundamentally, with the empire of its traditional British big brothers in irreversible decline, the Australian bourgeoisie and its Labor lackeys turned to

American imperialism. As Labor dutifully lined up with the U.S. in the escalating Cold War frenzy fueled by the imminent success of the Chinese Revolution and Communist-led insurgencies in Asia, at home the Labor government sent the army into the coal fields to crush the CP-led miners strike of 1949.

Despite its misleadership, the workers' struggle over the "Black Armada" is an example of internationalist proletarian action that today can be an inspiration to those struggling against imperialist depredations. What's necessary is a genuinely revolutionary leadership, armed with the perspective that the most effective "solidarity" the Australian working class can offer the working masses of Asia is an irreconcilable struggle against its "own" imperialist rulers. *The main enemy is at home!* ■

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AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

Indonesia...

(continued from page 5)

encompasses virtually every nation to China's south and east. Vast amounts of military equipment and funds have been provided by the U.S. and Britain to prop up Suharto's generals and crush internal dissent. Last December, Australia agreed on a wide-ranging military alliance with Indonesia, described as "an effort to free up the two countries to pay more attention to the rise of China" (*International Herald Tribune*, 11 June). And while Washington postponed the sale of nine F-16 fighter planes to Indonesia to placate critics after the recent repression, it made clear its intention to proceed with the sale as soon as the dust settles. With an eye not only to China but also to instability in Indonesia and inter-imperialist rivalries with Japan, the U.S. and Australia have agreed to joint military exercises which will bring 17,000 American military personnel to northern Queensland next March.

The post-Soviet world is marked by intensified inter-imperialist rivalry. U.S. imperialism, with its Australian junior partner in tow, is vying with Japan over who will dominate the region. Indonesia is the largest supplier of oil to Japan outside the Near East, and 90 percent of Japan's oil imports pass through Indonesian waters. The Japanese imperialists recognize that the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and its military buildup in the Persian Gulf is aimed at reinforcing U.S. control over Near East oil. Japan's ruling class has never forgotten the U.S. naval blockade of oil which impelled Japan's entry into World War II. This reinforces the appetites of Japanese imperialism to include Indonesia as a key component in a new "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere."

Indonesia's rich natural resources—oil, gas, timber, gold, silver, copper, etc.—are being plundered by international capital at an ever-increasing rate. Foreign investment, principally Japanese and American, totaled \$40 billion in 1995 alone. For the world's imperialist overlords, Indonesia is a rich source for capitalist profits, where impoverished workers labor in the textile and shoe factories, the oil fields and rubber plantations, under conditions of brutal exploitation. Typical is the Nike shoe factory in Serang, where the cost of labor for a pair of athletic shoes which sells for \$100 is only \$2.60. Even the government itself admits that the minimum wage of \$2 a day (and many workers, especially women and children, receive far less), will not buy enough to feed one worker, let alone a family.

The changes brought about by capitalist development have brought new misery for the toiling masses, with peasants thrown off their land and driven into urban shantytowns where they cannot but notice the massive chasm between rich and poor. At the same time, industrialization has created a growing working class, young and not weighed down by the horrendous defeat of 1965. More than 20 million workers now live in urban areas like the Jakarta-Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasih industrial belt where strike activity has been centered.

Meanwhile, there is widespread resentment among the new middle classes at the nepotism, cronyism and corruption of the ruling Suharto clique. Suharto's six children have utilized their family connections, cheap state loans and subsidies and state monopolies to build up business empires worth more than \$4 billion, spanning telecom franchises, petrochemical complexes, transport and trading monopolies. Foreign capitalists seeking to invest in Indonesia are forced to set up joint ventures with Suharto family members, ceding them controlling interests in exchange for their political influence.

The Indonesian rulers consciously foster national and communal divisions to ward off multiethnic class struggle and to jack up the rate of exploitation. Chinese Indonesians, who include a fabulously wealthy elite, have been a particular target for racist attacks. Ethnic

Chinese were singled out by anti-Communist mobs in 1965, and during the strikes in Medan two years ago, efforts were made to divert militancy into attacks on Chinese shops. But in Indonesia as in all Southeast Asian states, there are many poor and working-class Chinese, who are class brothers in the struggle against capitalism. The need for proletarian internationalism is underlined by the fact that increasing numbers of Indonesian workers are compelled to cross the straits to Malaysia and Singapore, where Chinese are respectively 30 percent and 78 percent of the population. There they often replace Chinese, Malay and Indian workers in the lowest-paid, hardest and dirtiest jobs.

Ethnic and religious divisions are consciously fostered by the capitalist exploiters to keep working people from uniting against their common foe. One of the factors in the violence against Chinese Indonesians is that many of them are Christians, as are the East Timorese. Islamic fundamentalist groups have been growing recently in Indonesia, though not as spectacularly as in other countries. Some of the largest of these have been loosely aligned with the pro-Megawati opposition. It is necessary to fight for the separation of state and religion and against theocratic reaction while opposing discrimination against all religious minorities.

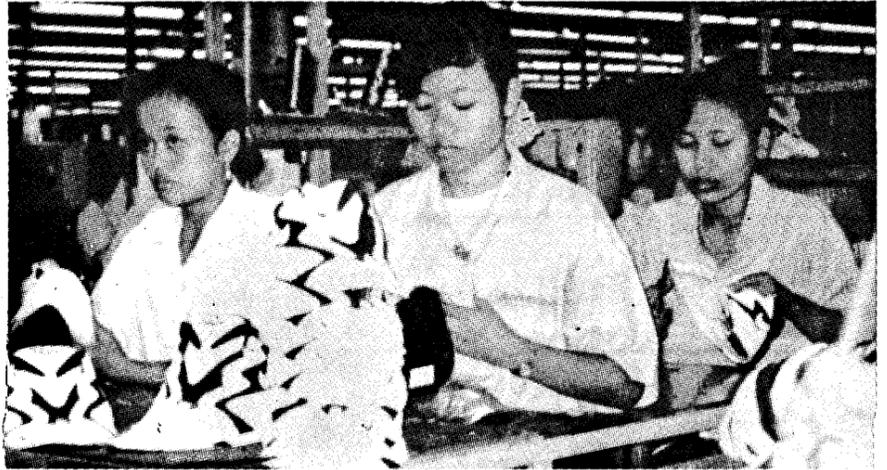
Religious fundamentalism is a particular threat to women, who have played an increasingly strong role in strikes and protests. The militant role played by women in the struggle against the Suharto dictatorship is exemplified by the case of Marsinah, a young woman worker militant tortured, raped and killed in east Java in May 1993. Her death, which became an inspiration for new fighters, illustrates the hideous oppression and superexploitation of women workers in Indonesia, who make up a majority of the workforce in the prison-like factories. As in the Russian Revolution of 1917, women are and will be in the forefront of the fight against capitalist and semi-feudal enslavement. As Trotsky said of the Muslim women in the Soviet East:

"The Eastern woman who is the most paralyzed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress.... And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the Revolution than the awakened woman worker."

— *Perspectives and Tasks in the East* (1924)

For a Trotskyist Party in Indonesia!

The PRD was formed in 1994 as an umbrella group of student, worker and peasant associations. From our limited information, it appears that many of its members are young university students who became labor activists, organizing trade unions and strike struggles; a number were arrested in the course of recent strikes and protests. Earlier this year, PRD militants played leading roles in organizing strikes and anti-government demonstrations in several key industrial centers. In the wake of the recent wave of repression, the PRD is reportedly reorganizing to operate clandestinely, while supporters overseas are broadcast-



Richburg/Washington Post

Women workers at Nike factory in Serang slave for \$2.50 a day making shoes sold for \$100 a pair.

ing their statements into Indonesia via fax and e-mail.

The courage of these young militants is epitomized by imprisoned union activist Dita Indah Sari, president of the PRD-affiliated Indonesian Center for Labor Struggles (PPBI). She has often been imprisoned for her work in organizing strikes and for participation in protests such as the December 1995 demonstration against the occupation of East Timor. During the July 8 rally of 20,000 strikers in Surabaya, she was arrested for "spreading hatred against the government." But along with this courageous work, she also exemplifies the central political weakness of the PRD: its support for and illusions in Megawati and the PDI. Dita Sari is described by the PRD as involved "also actively in organizing actions for the Indonesian oppositions and for Megawati's supporters," including as a regular speaker at public forums organized by pro-Megawati dissidents at the PDI headquarters.

The government's claim that the PRD is fomenting communist insurrection is far from reality. PRD leader Budiman Sudjatmiko insists his party is "leftist in the socio-democratic sense," which is confirmed by the limited material available to us on the PRD's political work. The PRD describes its program as aimed at "achieving a multiparty democracy, with the right to freedom of organization for workers, peasants and all oppressed sections of society," explicitly calling for class-collaborationist alliances "with the two legal non-government parties—the United Development Party (PPP) and the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI)—and with all other democratic forces."

A PRD manifesto issued after the July arrests sums up its "immediate demands," calling for raising the daily minimum wage to 7,000 rupiahs (about \$3), for a referendum for the people of East Timor, and for the nomination of Megawati as a presidential candidate. Together these reflect the reformist and popular-frontist outlook of this group, as it seeks to channel the vast popular hatred for the regime into minimalist economic demands and support for the bourgeois opposition. Megawati, meanwhile, has disassociated herself from her supporters' "violence" and has called "to guarantee public order." Megawati is often compared to the Philippines' Cory Aquino, who was promoted by Washington as a successor to the venal Marcos regime. While Megawati is less effective than Aquino, there are certain parallels: both wholeheartedly defend the interests

of the capitalist class they represent and both have been backed by leftists who mislead the workers movement into the trap of popular-frontist betrayal.

While the PRD has been active in protesting the genocidal Indonesian occupation of East Timor, it refuses to call for independence, instead demanding "a peaceful resolution and no military intervention in East Timor, and recognition of human and democratic rights for the East Timorese nation." Meanwhile, the PRD's "democratic" heroine Megawati endorses the expansionist aims of the military regime, calling for incorporation of East Timor as the 27th province of Indonesia. Among the Australian reformist left, the PRD's publicity agents in the Democratic Socialist Party call for "liberating" East Timor through the intervention of the Australian jackal imperialists, who are themselves deeply complicit in Suharto's slaughter of the East Timorese.

The PRD not only looks to Megawati and her bourgeois PDI to oppose Suharto, it also makes a veiled bid for a split in the Indonesian military and fosters illusions in the "democratic" appetites of U.S. imperialism. An August 12 statement released by the PRD's overseas office in Australia appeals to generals who "are indicating support for the democratic movement" and continues:

"The U.S., which has become the pillar of anti-communism, considers we have entered the New World Order where issues of human rights, democracy and economic development have become the priority for all world nations. And this principle has given birth to a wave of democratisation everywhere."

Belief in the "democratic" intentions of the imperialists who sponsored the 1965 massacre and in the "progressive" military is a fatally dangerous illusion. Such a policy will lead these courageous young militants into the same kind of bloc with bourgeois nationalists that led to the slaughter of a generation of leftist militants in 1965.

Successive generations of the Indonesian working class have demonstrated their determination to rise up against their exploiters. What is lacking is a leadership which can point the way forward to a victorious struggle for power. Such a party must be based on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution: the combative proletariat leading the toiling peasant masses in the struggle not only to overthrow the venal, repressive rule of the generals, but to expropriate the factory and plantation bosses—both the Indonesian exploiters and the imperialist overlords they serve. Such a party must, like Lenin's Bolsheviks, be a tribune of the people, championing the rights of the subjugated women, the restive youth, the myriad oppressed nationalities, the religious and ethnic minorities.

The proletarian vanguard must look not to suicidal alliances with the class enemy, the "democratic" bourgeois opposition and their imperialist sponsors, but to linking up with its international class allies, the workers throughout Asia and across the world, in an international party of socialist revolution—a reborn Fourth International. For a Leninist-Trotskyist party in Indonesia! For an Indonesian workers republic, part of a socialist federation of Asia!

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 654, 25 October 1996.

Spartacist League  Forums

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Howard/Beazley's Attacks Fuel White Australia Racist Terror

Down with the Racist War Against Immigrants and Aborigines!

Build a Revolutionary Workers Party, Tribune of the People!

Over the last few months this country has witnessed an explosion of racial vilification, harassment and bashings in schools, campuses, worksites and on the streets. Spokesmen for immigrant communities, particularly Asian, uniformly report that people are living in fear. The Cambodian-born Labor member for Clayton in Melbourne, Hong Lim, told the Victorian Parliament that he had never seen the Asian community so agitated. During the election campaign in March racist attacks reportedly doubled and have more than doubled again since. In an ominous provocation, the fascist National Action staged a chilling race hate rally outside a multi-ethnic primary school in Adelaide in late November.

The racist capitalist rulers of Australia have unleashed a war against Aborigines and immigrants which is both the cutting edge and necessary ideological adjunct of their assaults on the living standards and union organisations of the working people. The capitalists seek to divide the working class against itself and divert its anger by scapegoating immigrants and Aborigines for the increasing unemployment, erosion of living standards and

social decay resulting from the bosses' drive to jack up their rate of exploitation. In the popular mind, this sweeping racist reaction is identified with the fascistic "independent" Queensland member of federal parliament, Pauline Hanson, who the media have deliberately elevated into a "national figure." But the current vile political climate was prefigured by a federal election campaign which we characterised at the time as a "Carnival of Racist Reaction" (*Australasian Spartacist*, No. 158, Autumn 1996).

Immediately upon gaining office the Howard regime moved to deny newly arrived immigrants access to social security for two years, upped from the six months decreed by the previous Labor government. In its latest racist diktat blatantly aimed at further slashing Asian immigration, the Coalition government announced on 13 December that proficiency in English will henceforth be required for family reunion applications. The *Sydney Morning Herald* (14 December) summed up in the headline: "New migrants: speak English or don't come." The hypocritical purveyors of "family values" in the conservative government



ASp photo

Spartacist contingent at protest against planned visit to Melbourne University of racist bigot Pauline Hanson, 12 October.

will now enforce the permanent separation of families seeking to reunite in Australia. Down with this racist outrage!

At the same time the government has launched a witchhunt against what it has dubbed the "Aboriginal Industry" as a prelude to devastating cuts in federal funding for basic services for Aboriginal people. A special target of the conservative Coalition is the Aboriginal Legal Service, whose gutting is calculated to lead to ever-increasing numbers of

Aborigines, adults and youths, being trapped in the prison system. The Aboriginal people are already the most incarcerated people per capita on earth. This in turn must lead to increasing deaths of Aborigines in state custody. Aboriginal rates of incarceration have risen over 50 percent during the last decade, while deaths in custody have tripled. As we go to press we learn that two Aboriginal children, aged eleven and

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Canberra, 19 August

Parliament Stormed as Workers Defend Aborigines

Michael Jones



The following statement was distributed as a leaflet at the massive anti-racism rally in Melbourne on 8 December.

The spectacular storming of the Parliament House building in Canberra on 19 August by a militant, multiracial demonstration of Aborigines, unionists and youth showed the class anger seething at the base of Australian society. Up to 35,000 demonstrators had come at the call of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) to protest the Howard government's assaults on welfare and its anti-union legislation. The ACTU leadership had planned the rally as a vehicle to pressure parliament, especially the pro-business, anti-union Australian Democrats, to amend Howard's union-busting legislation in the Senate.

But the lid came off when the cops attacked the Aboriginal contingent at the

head of a 6,000-strong march of Aborigines and unionists—mainly members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU). In an exceptional and exemplary action the organised workers defended the Aboriginal protesters against this racist cop provocation. The state's thugs in blue were overwhelmed and retreated to the parliament building where a two-hour battle ensued. As the headline of the *Building Worker* (23 August, the news-sheet of the Victorian branch of the CFMEU) put it: "Workers Defend Aboriginal Brothers & Sisters. Police Provoke Workers." On 20 August a thousand Aboriginal demonstrators were compelled to again defend themselves against assaults by fully-equipped Australian Federal Police (AFP) riot squads outside the old parliament building.

The reality of thousands of organised workers defending Aboriginal protesters in the face of police provocation is historically all too rare and deeply alarming to the racist rulers of this country, dominated for decades by an official policy of "White Australia" racism. The promotion of virulent racism in this capitalist society is a central weapon used by the bosses to divide, derail and dissipate the struggles of all the working people and oppressed for social emancipation. In the wake of 19 August the government, cops and the bourgeois media launched a hue

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