

After Suharto: imperialists back "new" dictatorship

Indonesia: For workers revolution!



AFP photos

Indonesian students in anti-Suharto protest. Anger over police/military terror, IMF austerity triggered plebeian upheaval against imperialist-backed dictatorship.

After more than three decades of tyrannical military dictatorship, ushered in by the slaughter of half a million workers, peasants, Communists and ethnic Chinese in 1965-66, the reign of Indonesian strongman Suharto has come to an end. Months of skyrocketing inflation and unemployment resulting from the economic crisis racking Southeast Asia have led to growing turmoil throughout the country. Anger exploded in early May, when the government imposed draconian cuts in subsidies for fuel and other necessities—jacking up prices by as much as 70 per cent—as part of the austerity measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

When troops shot dead six student protesters from Jakarta's elite Trisakti University on 12 May, this provoked a plebeian upheaval which left hundreds dead and wide swaths of the capital in smouldering ruins. The desperately poor slum masses particularly targeted the mansions and businesses of the president, his family and cronies. But the looting of stores and shopping malls also spilled over into murderous attacks against Chinese merchants and homes. There are clear indications that these pogromist assaults were encouraged by the regime itself, which has time and again channelled popular outrage into anti-Chinese racism.

The imperialists aimed for a deal in which the military butchers would agree to back some less discredited bourgeois political figures, either from Suharto's entourage or the tame "opposition". This is the sentiment as well of wide sectors of the Indonesian bourgeoisie fed up with the way the notoriously corrupt Suharto clan had run the country into the ground. And among the protesters, particularly the students, illusions in a "democratic" wing

**Down with Islamic reaction!
Independence for East Timor!
Defend Chinese against racist attacks!**

of the military and civilian political establishment are rife.

The new president, Jusuf Habibie, a fanatically anti-Chinese racist with ties to German imperialism, is very much a creature of his patron Suharto. *We warn: This "reformed" Indonesian capitalist regime will be just as repressive and bloody as its predecessor and just as determined to force the country's toiling masses to pay for the capitalist crisis.*

The massive influx of imperialist investment in the last few decades has fostered the growth of a combative young proletariat, which has repeatedly engaged in strikes in recent years. Workers joined student protests in the North Sumatran city of Medan, and elsewhere public transport came to a halt as drivers went on strike. For now, however, the proletariat as a class has not entered the arena of struggle. It is urgently necessary for the working class to emerge as an independent revolutionary factor. This requires the forging of an internationalist vanguard party committed to leading the proletariat to the seizure of state power.

The proletariat must take its place at the head of the unemployed poor, the rural masses, women, the hundreds of brutally subjugated ethnic and national minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the capitalist class. This is the only way to satisfy the aspirations of the masses and break the strangle-

hold of imperialist exploitation and domination. Indonesia is a classic example of combined and uneven development, where modern capitalist industry co-exists with deep backwardness. Drawing on the experience of the Russian October Revolution of 1917, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that 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 its peasant masses."

Proletarian revolution in the Indonesian archipelago would resonate throughout Southeast and East Asia, where hundreds of millions of working people are being crushed under the weight of brutal exploitation and IMF-imposed austerity. It

would also be an enormous impetus to proletarian political revolution in China, where the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy is driving headlong towards capitalist counterrevolution. The fight for a socialist Asia—for workers revolutions throughout the region, especially in imperialist centres like Japan and Australia—is a life-and-death question for proletarian militants in Indonesia. The US and other imperialist powers—which have armed Suharto to the hilt—would immediately seek to use their financial and military might to stamp out any challenge to capitalist class rule. The sections of the International Communist League in the US, Britain and other imperialist countries fight to mobilise the multiracial proletariat in struggle against their rapacious bourgeoisies. *IMF, CIA, US and British imperialism: Keep your bloody hands off Indonesia!*

Imperialists promote "democratic" military butchers

From its braintrusting of the 1965 anti-Communist blood-bath, when the CIA provided hit lists to Suharto's butchers, to the arming and training of the dreaded Kopassus Red Berets notorious for the torture and killing of suspected political opponents, the US has been a

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The Cliffites and Islamic reaction

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"Little England" Labourites embrace Russian fascists

In an article headlined "Russia's Racist Depths", British Socialist Party (SP) leader Peter Taaffe issued a call for "the international labour movement... to assist the left in Moscow and the rest of Russia to combat the virus of racism, nationalism and fascism" (*Socialist*, 15 May). Seeking to revive the flagging fortunes of the "Youth Against Racism in Europe" (YARE) groups set up by the SP (formerly Militant Labour) and other affiliates of the reformist Committee for a Workers International (CWI), Taaffe appeals for

"active assistance" to enable the YARE "to produce material explaining to the youth of Russia the real aims and purposes of the fascist groups".

The *Socialist* article describes the ominous rise in fascist terror in Boris Yeltsin's Russia, including an attack Taaffe witnessed on one of his supporters in Moscow. But *Taaffe's appeal is a cynical fraud through and through*. Not only did the CWI enthusiastically support the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolution which ushered in the rising tide of racist terror,

but *Taaffe and his Russian supporters apologise for fascist killers in their midst*.

"Democratic" counterrevolution and "red-brown" chauvinism

Capitalist restoration has subjected the working masses of the former Soviet Union to an unparalleled decline in living standards. Mass unemployment, homelessness, malnutrition and disease are today rampant and growing. In the absence of organised working-class resistance, the fascists have seized on such economic desperation. The growth of murderous fascist gangs has been fuelled as well by the Great Russian chauvinism pushed by the new capitalist rulers. Reports in the Western press of the near-deadly beating of a black American soldier and the bombing of a Moscow synagogue in May only hint at the wave of fascist terror against dark-skinned people from the Caucasus, Jews and African and Asian students and visitors.

After fascists threatened "to kill one non-Aryan every day after Hitler's birthday on April 20", two Asian women were viciously beaten by a mob of skinheads in a Moscow shopping area. African students are attacked nearly every day, and skinhead gangs recently rampaged through dormitory rooms at Moscow State Veterinary Academy. On 7 May, a 25-year-old Azerbaijani trader was stabbed to death in a Moscow market by skinheads in black uniforms. The cops who were on the scene colluded in this racist murder. And when 1500 Azeris marched through Moscow to express their outrage over this killing, the cops dispersed the procession and Mayor Luzhkov threatened to prosecute the protest organisers. The role played by Yeltsin's cops should come as no surprise; since the capitalist counterrevolution, Caucasians and Central Asians have repeatedly been rounded up and expelled from Moscow and other Russian cities.

Grotesquely, the fascist killers have also been embraced by the self-styled "Left Vanguard", *Levy Avangard*, Russian group of the CWI. This was disgustingly evident at a May Day forum in Moscow featuring Taaffe himself speaking on "The British Labour Party, One Year Later". Three members of the so-called "National Bolshevik Party" (NBP) were seated in the room, dressed in their standard black leather and openly flaunting Nazi-style armbands. When a comrade of the International Communist League attending the meeting saw the fascists, he immediately urged the organisers to expel the NBP scum. The ICL spokesman then declared from the floor:

"There are three members of the fascist NBP here with their Nazi regalia. The organisers of this meeting have said they refuse to remove them. This is a provocation and an obscenity, as a representative of the ICL I am leaving."

As our comrade left—and the Nazis stayed—Taaffe shouted out, "Good!" Three others walked out in protest, including a young Azerbaijani woman who knew only too well what the NBP fascists stand for.

The CWI's flirtation with the fascist scum did not begin at the May Day forum. The Moscow anarchist journal *Naperekor* (January 1997) reported that the Russian Taaffeites' "Left Anti-Fascist Resistance" (LAS) has harboured NBP supporters since its founding in October 1996. Most recently, *Levy Avangard* (May 1998)

issued an open appeal to the fascists titled "How to Understand the NBP." This sickening piece praises NBP *fürher* Eduard Limonov for his "deserved fame" as a writer (!) and expresses "pity" for the Nazi terrorists as "daydreaming" idealists and "phrase-mongering windbags". Urging the fascists to "acknowledge reality", it concludes with the invitation, "Why are you still not with us?"

The *Levy Avangard* article spits on the graves of the millions of Soviet workers and soldiers who died defeating Hitlerite Nazism and mocks all those who are being beaten, stabbed and bombed by fascists today! Do the Taaffeites want the NBP "daydreamers" to carry out more actions like their August 1996 rally denouncing Yeltsin's pact with Chechnyan independence fighters as "treason" or their march through Moscow last November carrying swastika-like banners? Limonov himself is a racist killer who crows about joining Serb chauvinists in "ethnic cleansing" operations against Bosnian Croats. Another NBP leader laments Hitler's "regrettable mistake" in attacking Soviet Russia instead of joining with it to attack the West (*St. Petersburg Times*, 2-8 June 1997). Indeed, *Levy Avangard* (November 1997) has itself acknowledged that, at least in one town, the "majority" of the NBP consists of "Nazi-skinheads" who "are responsible for numerous attacks on Arab and Negro students".

In his recent *Socialist* article, Taaffe writes of "the economic and social wasteland which is capitalist Russia today". But Taaffe and his supporters bear their share of political responsibility for bringing about this wasteland. In August 1991, the Taaffeites—whose paper was then called *Rabochaya Demokratiya* (Workers Democracy)—joined Russian Orthodox priests, would-be capitalists and other reactionary rabble on Yeltsin's counter-revolutionary barricades. *Rabochaya Demokratiya* (April-May 1992) sought to whitewash its active support to the forces of capitalist restoration by absurdly denying that "the liquidation of the USSR weakened the position of socialism in the world".

But as the ravages of capitalist restoration became evident and the Yeltsinite "democrats" increasingly despised, the CWI opportunists shifted gears. To his British readers, Taaffe hypocritically declaims how "sickening" it was to see this year's May Day rally in Moscow, organised by Gennady Zyuganov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), "sullied by the presence of fascists and racists, some of whom openly carry anti-Semitic placards". But in Russia, Taaffe's outfit seeks a common language with these nationalists and has ever more aggressively tailed after the "red-brown coalition" of Stalinist has-beens, monarchists and outright fascists in recent years. The same April-May 1992 issue of *Rabochaya Demokratiya* which amnestied the capitalist counterrevolution also featured a grovelling front-page appeal to the "red-brown" Toiling Russia group. This article did not even mention Russian chauvinism or anti-Semitism.

In the December 1995 elections, *Rabochaya Demokratiya* gave back—*continued on page 10*



TROTSKY

Indonesia and permanent revolution

After mass protests swept Indonesia, the dictator Suharto has been replaced by his crony Habibie. However, the new regime will only continue the impoverishment and repression of the worker and peasant masses, oppression of women and subjugation of national and ethnic minorities. What is needed is a Leninist vanguard party to lead the vibrant, young proletariat, standing at the head of all the op-

pressed, in socialist revolution against the imperialist-backed bourgeoisie. This is the road of permanent revolution elaborated by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky in drawing the lessons of the victorious October Revolution of 1917 and the defeated 1925-27 Chinese Revolution.

Not a single one of the tasks of the "bourgeois" revolution can be solved in these backward countries under the leadership of the "national" bourgeoisie, because the latter emerges at once with foreign support as a class alien or hostile to the people. Every stage in its development binds it only the more closely to the foreign finance capital of which it is essentially the agency. The petty bourgeoisie of the colonies, that of handicrafts and trade, is the first to fall victim in the unequal struggle with foreign capital, declining into economic insignificance, becoming declassed and pauperized. It cannot even conceive of playing an independent political role. The peasantry, the largest numerically and the most atomized, backward, and oppressed class, is capable of local uprisings and partisan warfare, but requires the leadership of a more advanced and centralized class in order for this struggle to be elevated to an all-national level. The task of such leadership falls in the nature of things upon the colonial proletariat, which, from its very first steps, stands opposed not only to the foreign but also to its own national bourgeoisie....

The above developed views regarding the special character of the "bourgeois" revolutions in historically belated countries are by no means the product of theoretical analysis alone. Before the second Chinese revolution (1925-27) they had already been submitted to a grandiose historical test. The experience of the three Russian revolutions (1905, February and October 1917) bears no less significance for the twentieth century than the French revolution bore for the nineteenth....

The regime of the proletarian dictatorship, by its very nature, however, could not limit itself to the framework of bourgeois property. The rule of the proletariat automatically placed on the agenda the socialist revolution, which in this case was not separated from the democratic revolution by any historical period, but was uninterruptedly connected with it, or, to put it more accurately, was an organic outgrowth of it. At what tempo the socialist transformation of society would occur and what limits it would attain in the nearest future would depend not only upon internal but upon external conditions as well. The Russian revolution was only a link in the international revolution. Such was, in broad outline, the essence of the conception of the permanent (uninterrupted) revolution. It was precisely this conception that guaranteed the victory of the proletariat in October.

— Leon Trotsky, "Revolution and War in China" (January 1938)



LENIN

WORKERS HAMMER



For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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Islamic reaction...

(Continued from page 7)

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

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

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

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

And the Cliffites have placed themselves squarely in the Islamist camp. In February 1992, *Socialist Review* gushed that the rise of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) "reflects the rise of revolutionary feeling". The same month, their French newspaper *Socialisme International* declared: "Revolutionaries in Algeria must fight side by side with these people, even in actions called by the FIS." The "actions" of Algeria's sinister Islamic fundamentalists include the murders of countless thousands of unveiled women, secular journalists, trade unionists and leftists.

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



Workers Hammer

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

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

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

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

For permanent revolution!

In Indonesia, Iran and other countries, the rise of Islamic reaction was conditioned both by the bankruptcy of the bourgeois nationalists and the betrayals of the mass Stalinist parties which preached an alliance of the proletariat with "anti-imperialist" capitalists and generals. Under the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of "two-stage" revolution, the working class is called upon to support the bourgeois nationalists, who are entrusted with the task of creating an independent capitalist "democracy". But in the former colonial and backward countries of the Third World, the bourgeoisie is so tied to its imperialist masters that it is incapable of carrying out even the most basic democratic tasks such as national emancipation. As was brought home in blood and fire in Indonesia in

1965, "two-stage revolution" is a chimera which can only lead to devastating defeat for the oppressed.

Ours is the perspective of *permanent revolution*: the understanding that in countries of belated capitalist development, even the achievement of the unresolved democratic tasks requires sweeping away the rule of capital. The proletariat must place itself at the head of all the oppressed in a struggle for socialist revolution. This is inextricably linked to breaking the power of the imperialist rulers through the fight for proletarian state power in the West. The International Communist League aims to build Leninist parties as the crucial instrument for imbuing the proletariat with the consciousness and purpose of its historic task of world socialist revolution.

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

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

Today the WCPI's programme, "A

Spartacists protest murderous Iranian regime, London 1980. Trotskyists warned against Iranian left's subordination of workers movement to Islamic fundamentalists, fought for proletarian revolution.

— March 1979

SPARTACIST

**Down with Khomeini!
For workers rule in Iran!**

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

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

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

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

WORKERS HAMMER

Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League

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Lawrence inquiry shows racist reality of Labour's Britain

JUNE 27—The Labour government's public inquiry into the brutal racist murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence in Eltham, south London has thrown a spotlight on the naked racism of the capitalist state, particularly the cops. For five years, the Lawrence family have been subjected to a racist vendetta from the cops and courts who have shielded the fascist killers of Stephen Lawrence. Everyone has known for years who the killers are. They are ordered to appear at the inquiry next week, but Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw guaranteed even before the inquiry began that they will walk away free, exactly as they have done previously, both from a criminal prosecution and a private prosecution brought by Stephen Lawrence's parents. To add insult to injury, the high court has ruled that the Lawrences are forbidden even to ask if these racist swine killed their son.

Anger at the blatant racism of the cops is palpable among the mainly black audience at the inquiry and the racial minority population in general. As one young observer at the proceedings put it, "What happened to Stephen can happen to any of us. Listening to the police in there, racist thugs are being told that they can get away with murder." The family have been pilloried during the proceedings. Doreen Lawrence, Stephen's mother, under a barrage of provocative questioning by the cops' lawyer, asked pointedly, "Am I on trial here or something?"

The question which is starkly posed is what to do about the racist cops, the fascist gangs, and the courts who protect them. As Marxists we insist that the capitalist state is not a neutral body which arbitrates and "inquires", but exists to maintain the system of capitalist exploitation. The state is necessarily racist, and it protects the fascist gangs. Schemes purporting to "reform" the cops, or to make them "accountable" are based on a lie. The fundamental truth is that the entire system of racist capitalist rule must be overthrown through workers revolution



Doreen and Neville Lawrence have fought for justice. But under Tories and Labour alike, the capitalist state is necessarily racist.

led by a revolutionary vanguard party. This kind of party must be built in clear opposition to racist, pro-imperialist Labourism and must mobilise the multiracial working class in a fight for its own state power.

It is now undeniable that the Lawrence family will not get justice from the capitalist system including under Labour and this in itself is a damning indictment of all those left groups and anti-racist organisations who clamoured for a Labour government. Uniquely on the left we said *no vote to Labour* in the election, pointing out that Blair's government would ruthlessly carry out attacks on the working class, immigrants and racial minorities, which is what they are doing. In regard to the Lawrence inquiry we wrote: "what it actually shows is that Labour stands firmly by its racist henchmen in the capitalist state — the cops who have shielded

the fascist murderers, and William Macpherson, the racist judge in charge of the Lawrence hearing" (*Workers Hammer* no 162, May/June 1998).

When the *Observer* published evidence that Macpherson has a racist track record in immigration cases, the Lawrence family voiced objections to him chairing the inquiry. They were told bluntly by home secretary Jack Straw that the inquiry would go ahead under Macpherson even if they refused to participate. This message was reinforced by Lee Jasper, head of the Labourite National Assembly Against Racism. But in the face of this mountain of evidence that Labour is clearly on the side of the racist establishment, against the Lawrence family, pro-Labour groups such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) petition Jack Straw to sack police chief Paul Condon. "When is home secretary Jack Straw going to step in and have the guilty police officers prosecuted..." asks *Socialist Worker* (9 May). This is nothing other than a whitewash of Labour's racist rule and an attempt to prettify Labour's credentials. Even within the circumscribed limits of this inquiry it is clear that the Lawrences are not merely up against a few "rotten apples", or an "incompetent" police force, but a high-level conspiracy to protect the racist killers and to vilify the family in their fight for justice.

Early in the inquiry, Lawrence family lawyer Michael Mansfield QC pointed to some of the forces involved in protecting the guilty, saying: "So much was missed by so many that deeper causes and forces must be considered", mentioning that the victim was black, and that "the perpetrators were white and were expecting some form of protection". Mansfield has traced long-standing connections between cops and Clifford Norris, father of one of the racist killers, and a high-profile drug smuggler and criminal thug. Norris has a

track record of intimidating witnesses before court cases. "Could it be, says Mansfield, that the police in south-east London had a connection with Norris that led to the protection of his son?" (*Guardian*, 11 June). Attempts to convict the killers of Stephen Lawrence were thrown out, supposedly for lack of evidence, yet there was a mountain of evidence which the police suppressed.

Socialist Worker (27 June) acknowledges "The truth is that the police incubate racism the way marshes breed mosquitos. The entire culture of the police is permeated with racism." They locate the cause in the racism of the capitalist system. Last year we wrote that the Cliffites were "Looking for a few good cops". They think they've found one—almost an entire page of the same *Socialist Worker* is given over to an article with the banner headline "Black police officer speaks out". In glowing terms they quote ad nauseam the words of "Detective Inspector David Michael" brandishing his credentials as "a serving police officer in the Met for nearly 26 years" who was speaking at an "anti-racist" conference. The idea that you can fight racism in alliance with the cops (even black, "anti-racist" cops) is grotesque. This reflects the SWP's reformist line that cops (and prison guards) are part of the workers movement. One might ask if David Michael is a member of the SWP.

In 1993 the SWP boasted of "a number of prison officers who were in sympathy with our objectives" (*SW*, 26 June 1993). In 1997 John Molyneux wrote that "Not all coppers are necessarily bastards but unless they get out (which happens quite a lot), or rebel collectively (which is very rare) they are all agents of the state, the system and the ruling class" (*SW*, 8 February). At the time we wrote "Molyneux's column is nothing more than a whitewash of the role of the cops, and once again shows the SWP/ISO's base cynicism, opportunism, anti-Marxism, and inability to fight for the socialism it ostensibly desires" ("The ISO: Looking for a few good cops", 26 February 1997).

A month after Labour took office, Workers Power (WP), who gushed, Blair's victory "is our victory" (*WP*, May 1997), wrote that Straw "has already taken a couple of steps that would have been unimaginable under his Tory predecessor.... Straw looks set to reopen the case of Stephen Lawrence, the black teenager who was brutally murdered and whose racist attackers still walk free. He has signalled that two new offences of racially motivated violence and racial harassment will be legally recognised" (*WP*, June 1997). This is a brazen attempt to bolster the racist Labour government's anti-racist "image" by comparing them favourably to the Tories. Yet even WP admits that Labour's Crime and Disorder Bill forms part of an "authoritarian package" that will "strengthen police powers to criminalise black youth in particular".

The Crime and Disorder Bill excludes Muslims from the categories deemed to be

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Workers Hammer

London, 23 May: Spartacists denounce SWP/ANL's craven social-democratic pleas to the capitalist state.

Labour's frenzy over "paedophilia": pretext for state repression

For several months Labour has been whipping up lynch-mob hysteria over "sex offenders" and so-called "paedophiles" and manipulating it as a pretext for passing ever more draconian legislation. Central to Labour's "law-and-order" programme is the Crime and Disorder Bill, which strengthens the Sex Offenders Act. Brought in weeks after Labour was elected, this Act extended police monitoring of former "sex offenders", requiring them to become part of a police "register" which is available to "individuals" in "the community". This detonated an outburst of vigilantism and mobilisation of reactionary mobs, for whom the register identifies thousands of people as "sex-offenders", many of whom have had their photographs plastered across newspapers, as targets for violent attack.

Fired up by the government's reactionary crusade, lynch mobs have whipped up hysteria over the release of prisoners convicted of crimes involving children. The government is fomenting a deeply reactionary social climate and taking advantage of it to strengthen capitalist state repression. They are instituting laws to be used primarily against the poor, racial minorities, gays, women, unemployed youth, vast numbers of whom are deemed "social outcasts" by this decaying capitalist system. Labour feel that they can get away with it; in 1995 there were mass demonstrations against the Tories' Criminal Justice Act, but there has not been a single protest against the Crime and Disorder Bill.

In lockstep with Labour's frenzy against "paedophiles" are a host of "liberals" such as Erin Pizzey, famous in the 1970s for her campaigns against wife-beating, who joined the "hang them and flog them" brigade when she wrote that, "the only rehabilitated paedophile is a dead paedophile" (*Guardian*, 1 October 1997). The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is right in there too, slavishly backing "their" government's reactionary agenda. In the midst of calls for castration as a "cure" for "paedophilia" *Socialist Worker* (18 April) ran an article entitled "What causes paedophilia?" which made the grotesque statement: "The fact is that paedophiles are a sick product of a sick society." The article blames the "lynch mobs" on press hysteria, not the govern-



Tim Holt

Tony Blair's Labour government whips up reactionary "family values" hysteria. Protests against ex-offenders, like in Bridgewater (left) earlier this year, have led to the growth of sinister vigilante groups.



Martin Argles

ment, but regrets that they "show little interest in whether the people they are targeting are guilty or not". "Guilty" of what, one might ask.

Down with bourgeois "family values" crusade

"Paedophilia" means sexual desire towards children. To accept that it is synonymous with "child murderer" is to embrace one of the main components of this moral "family values" crusade, which wilfully conflates "child abuse", murder, or rape with any kind of sexuality designated as "deviant". Labour is cynically seizing on anger over crimes such as the brutal sexual assault and murder of 14-year-old Jason Swift, making sure that anyone branded a "sex offender" is lumped together with Sidney Cooke and Robert Oliver, Jason Swift's killers. When Cooke and Oliver were released from prison in April, police stations where they were rumoured to be held were besieged by protests, out of which vigilante groups are being formed.

The forces of religion and the state strive to ensure that the mass of the population conforms to heterosexual, monogamous sexual activity to bolster the status of the family in society. We oppose reactionary "age of consent" laws and believe

the guiding principle for sexual relations should be that of *effective consent*, nothing more and nothing less than mutual agreement and understanding, as opposed to coercion. We reject the equation of paedophilia with child murder and rape, and have a long record of defending against persecution organisations such as the North American Man/Boy Love Association and Paedophile Information Exchange in Britain, whose leaders were jailed in 1984 for advocating the right of youth under the "age of consent" to have sex with adults. *We vehemently oppose state intervention into people's sexual activities and private lives. State out of the bedroom!*

Our attitude to the ambiguities of sexuality in a society where the deformities of class inequality and racial and sexual oppression can lead to a lot of pain and ugliness is spelled out in *Women and Revolution*, in key articles such as "Something About Incest" and "Uses of Abuse" (*W&R* no 28, Spring 1984; and no 29, Spring 1985, respectively). Summarising our attitude we pointed out that "while the abuse of children is a vicious and horrible crime, many 'illegal' sexual encounters are entirely consensual and devoid of harm per se. The wilful conflation of everything from mutual fondling of siblings to the heinous rape of an infant by an adult caretaker creates a social climate of anti-sex hysteria in which the perpetrators of real violence against children often go free. And we insisted that the sexual proclivities of a group-living mammalian species such as our own are patently ill-suited to the rigid heterosexual monogamy which forms the ideological foundation of the institution of the family, reinforced by organized religion" ("Satan, the State and Anti-Sex Hysteria", *W&R* no 45, Winter-Spring 1996).

Marxists understand that the institution of the family is the main source of the oppression of women and children in capitalist society, and that the state is the mechanism for enforcing capitalist class rule and the system of private profit. All of Labour's attacks have a direct and immediate impact on the lives of working class women. Relative to the rest of Europe, women form a high proportion of the workforce, but are concentrated in low-

paid part-time jobs. The rate of single parenthood and teenage pregnancies is also high. Labour's "answer" is to cut benefit payments for single parents, and the pitifully low wages mean the majority of women who have a job are unable to afford childcare. As part of the struggle for women's liberation through socialist revolution we fight for free, 24-hour childcare, good quality health care, the right of free abortion on demand and access to contraception, including for teenagers, certainly without parental consent.

Vigilante terror and state repression

On 24 April, when Cooke was moved out of London, a mob mobilised in Bristol and threw petrol bombs at police. Home Secretary Jack Straw denounced vigilantism on that occasion, because *cops* had been attacked, and declared that the police "are there to protect the community from paedophiles" (*Guardian*, 27 April). The "protection" Straw has in mind was illustrated last November when eight police forces staged early morning raids on schools and *homes* of teachers and seized videos, computer equipment, address books and correspondence, and arrested one person, in a hunt for a supposed "child pornography network".

With the proviso that it must not be directed against the cops, Jack Straw fans the flames of vigilante terror against individuals on his "register", probation hostels and ex-offenders. This was clearly illustrated when Straw proposed to place Robert Oliver in a hostel in a Rutland village. Local residents who threatened to protest report that Straw explained the government's view, that when sex offenders have served their time, it is better they are sent to a rural area "where instead of blending into the community they will stick out like a sore thumb" (*Evening Standard*, 23 June). This is an incitement to violence against anyone who "looks like" a sex offender, or an "outsider", including Gypsies and Travellers, who face murderous violence in rural and urban areas.

Furthermore Straw's goal is to make sure that the Crime and Disorder Bill grants the state legal powers to lock up

continued on page 4



Observer

London, 1994: gays demonstrate for equal rights. Marxists oppose reactionary "age of consent" laws and stand against state intervention into people's sexual activities and private lives.

Frenzy...

(Continued from page 3)

those convicted of "sex offences" indefinitely, either in prisons or in mental hospitals. This amounts to arbitrary indefinite incarceration and is based on the premise that "sex offenders" cannot be "rehabilitated". "Expert" opinions differ widely on the likelihood of re-conviction. Dr Ray Wyre, an "international expert on sexual crimes" says: "Of all sex offenders, fixated paedophiles are the most likely to abuse again..." (*Independent*, 23 April). On the other hand, the Chief Inspector of Probation has published a study which "found that 93 per cent of sex offenders kept in hostels were not reconvicted" (*Guardian*, 29 April).

We oppose the extension of prison terms and surveillance for ex-offenders, and we oppose state and vigilante attacks on convicted child murderers like Sidney Cooke and Robert Oliver who are being hounded out of existence despite the fact that they have already served their sentence. The presumption that for certain offences there is no such thing as *spent* convictions is a rationale for lifelong state surveillance and a massive attack on civil liberties. Straw's proposals amount to "preventive detention", a throwback to the barbaric days when criminals were literally branded for life. This is part of Labour's "law-and-order" agenda which has already led to a huge rise in prison numbers along with an increase in police surveillance, especially of blacks and

racists, returned to Britain from the US where he faced accusations by a 17-year-old of assault. He committed suicide in April, in the midst of this frenzy.

Even before the Sex Offenders Act came into existence, the "anti-paedophile" vigilantes left a trail of murderous terror. Last year in Manchester, 67-year-old Francis Duffy was beaten nearly to death because he looked like someone whose photo was splashed in a local newspaper three months before. Some months ago in Northern Ireland 79-year-old John Browne was "kneecapped" by the IRA because they believed he was a "child molester"; they then said they went to the wrong flat. Other heinous attacks include: in May 1994 the home of Dennis Butlin was fire-bombed and a young girl inside burned to death; in February 1995 Lawrence Leydon was stabbed to death in Edinburgh; in August 1996 in Teignmouth, 44-year-old David Moist was severely beaten when vigilantes broke into his flat; the same month in Belfast 53-year-old Desmond Moonan was found strangled in his flat.

State witch hunts over "child abuse"

The accusation of "child abuser" has taken its place alongside "terrorist" as a code phrase to justify all-sided attacks on civil liberties, used as part of a crusade over "family values". In Orkney in 1991 nine children were seized by the state and social workers who tried to get them to make up lurid tales of "Satanic" rituals to convict their parents. The various panics which are whipped up over morality have as their theme "the children are in dan-

gations" in North Wales, Manchester and Liverpool. Writer Richard Webster notes the result of these massive police operations is: "Slowly but surely our prisons are filling up with care workers who have been convicted as a result of the allegations which have been made during these investigations" (*The Great Children's Home Panic*, 1998).

The SWP's Paul Foot is a prominent defender of this state witch hunt against care workers. Referring to the North Wales, Cheshire and Liverpool examples he wrote that, "in most cases the abuse went on for more than a decade before it was exposed" and concluded: "It seems quite probable that serial child abuse in 'caring' homes has been common practice all over the country for at least two decades" (*London Review of Books*, 4 July 1996). There was undoubtedly cruelty perpetrated in children's homes, such as "pindown" methods of punishment. But in the vendetta over "child abuse", Paul Foot, representative of the SWP which pretends to be a Marxian socialist organisation, is acting as prosecutor on behalf of the bourgeois state.

Workers Power (WP), who were for a Labour landslide, now admit that Jack Straw is complicit in stirring up reactionary vigilantism. They oppose the "age of consent" laws, however they deny that children are capable of effective consent, saying: "If we rightly recognise that young children generally lack the powers of comprehension and the skills necessary for a range of activities then equally we recognise that they generally cannot give informed consent to sexual activity with an adult." Even though they rightly acknowledge that children's sexuality develops at different ages, WP argue that, by definition, "penetrative sex, between adults and pre-pubescent children [is] physically harmful to children". This accepts part of the bourgeois "family values" campaign which attempts to portray children as sexless innocents; thus WP call for bourgeois state intervention in the form of "protective legislation for children". WP also demand: "Children's tribunals, in which adult specialists (lawyers, child psychologists, etc.) can be utilised, should be set up and regulated by democratically elected representatives from schools, care institutions, reform schools" (*Workers Power*, June 1998). Children's "evidence" is easily manipulated and has been widely used to secure convictions in some of the most notorious frame-ups over "child abuse". The call for "children's tribunals" is a scheme to make bourgeois justice more effective. Contrary to Workers Power, there can be no rational or just policy towards the complex questions of sex or sexuality under capitalism.

Labour's "family values" crusade targets gay rights

Labour reduced the "age of consent" for gay sex to 16 (17 in Northern Ireland) not out of concern for equal rights for homosexuals, but because the pre-existing legal age (18) could easily have been thrown out in the European courts. Denouncing leaders of gay organisations who are "dazzled by New Labour", journalist John Lyttle points out that Blair and Straw are currently defending the ban on gays in the military in the European courts. He also notes that "108 gay men have been killed in the past decade and one in three gay men have been victims of an unprovoked attack" (*Independent*, 9 June). The reactionary mobilisations against so-called "paedophiles" is an ominous signal that attacks on gays will escalate.

As part of the fight for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism we insist that the state has no business legislating people's personal lives — no matter how messy. As we wrote in "The 'Date Rape' Issue: Feminist Hysteria, Anti-Sex

Witchhunt":

"While Marxists cannot decree either a just or a pleasurable solution to the ambiguities that arise out of the intersection of sex, race and class in this capitalist society, we can and do oppose all attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated and decreed 'norms'...."

"To create genuinely free and equal relations between people in all spheres, including sex, requires nothing less than the destruction of this class system and the creation of a communist world. In a classless society social and economic constraints on sexual relations will be nonexistent, and in the words of Frederick Engels, 'there is no other motive left except mutual inclination'."

—W&R no 43, Winter 1993-Spring 1994

The Labour government's reactionary crusade is part of a Europe-wide phenomenon. Last year the "Dutroux affair", where young girls were kidnapped and murdered, sparked huge demonstrations in Belgium which set off a wave of reactionary hysteria, also supposedly over "paedophilia". The Blair government is planning huge attacks that even the Tories balked at for fear of mass protest. This includes "New Deal" workfare for unemployed youth (who are to be pressurised to join the army); a pitiful "minimum" wage and even lower wages for youth; slashing benefits and levying course fees for higher education. They can embark on these savage measures because they are assured the loyal support of the trade union bureaucracy, and from liberals, feminists and the Labour-loyal "socialist" left, who all stand complicit in Labour's attacks.

Labour's police-state moves are designed to intimidate and regiment the working class, to instill it with bourgeois ideology and "Christian morality", to keep it docile, willing to be cannon fodder for imperialist aggression. This means accepting the attacks on its standard of living so that British capitalism can better compete with its rivals. The Spartacist League said "No vote to New Labour" in the elections and called "For a revolutionary workers party! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!"

We agree with the statement by Oscar Wilde in his essay, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism", that: "Starvation, and not sin, is the parent of modern crime." In 1895, the British ruling class turned on Irish-born Wilde, one of the leading literary lights of the period, who was jailed and had his life ruined for the "crime" of "posing as a Sodomite [sic]". We attach great importance to the question of the human condition. Our recently adopted "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), opens with a resounding declaration that the victory of the proletariat on a world scale will mean: "For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all. As Isaac Deutscher said in his speech, 'On Socialist Man' (1966):

'We do not maintain that socialism is going to solve all predicaments of the human race. We are struggling in the first instance with the predicaments that are of man's making and that man can resolve. May I remind you that Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies — hunger, sex and death — besetting man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labour movement have taken on.... Yes, socialist man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these.'

—Spartacist [English edition] no 54, Spring 1998 ■



Ms London

London, 1993: Spartacist League fights for women's liberation through socialist revolution.

Asians. Police powers to impose youth curfews are to be enshrined in law, along with unlimited detention of children. All these repressive measures are aimed at protecting this truly criminal system by intimidating the mass of the population, particularly working people and minorities as the bourgeoisie drives up the rate of exploitation while slashing social benefits. Labour's posture as defenders of children is obscene; in February they prepared for a mass terror bombing of Iraq, where the starvation embargo has killed over one million, including 600,000 children.

Labour's laws have nothing to do with "protecting children", and everything to do with strengthening the repressive powers of the capitalist state, especially the cops, with the vigilantes acting as an auxiliary. Sinister forces are acting within the vigilantes, the fascist British National Party, Ku Klux Klan and National Front have been up to their necks in the demonstrations against "paedophiles". In this deeply racist society racial minorities are going to be targets of any wave of social hysteria and reaction. Justin Fashanu, a famous black and gay soccer player, who was constantly subjected to vile racist and homophobic crap from the football ter-

ger — of "sexual abuse", murder or of being taken into care. This frenzy is part of a huge ideological campaign to intimidate mothers, implying it is dangerous to let their children out of sight; to tie women to the home and drive them out of the workforce.

Most of the scares over supposed "child abuse" such as Orkney and Cleveland are now discredited and exposed as Salem-style witch hunts. Yet they have been superseded by a series of massive police operations against residential care workers. A pretext for this was a series of wild allegations that children's homes had been "infiltrated" by "organised groups of paedophiles".

The sheer size of this police operation is staggering. They have collected thousands of allegations of "abuse" in more than 200 children's homes, including by offering huge sums of money to former residents in exchange for retrospective accusations against staff. A huge number of care workers have been prosecuted. In Cheshire alone the figure is thought to be well over 100; of these 22 have been tried so far, and the majority have been sentenced to long terms in prison. In addition to Cheshire there have been huge "investi-

and take power, is thereby incapable of bringing the democratic revolution to its conclusion."

Today, Indonesia remains a neocolony of imperialism — a source of cheap natural resources and low-wage labour — seething with unresolved national and social contradictions. But what has changed is the emergence of a young proletariat which has indicated its potential power in a series of strikes beginning in the early 1990s, many of them in the Jakarta-Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasih industrial belt of central Java. This is the social force which can sweep away the military dictatorship and put an end to the brutal oppression of women and the subjugation of national and religious minorities. There is no democratic wing of the bourgeoisie, and there can be no genuine democracy under capitalism in backward, dependent countries saddled by imperialist exploitation and grinding poverty. The proletariat must be made conscious of its historic role as the leader of the dispossessed masses and the grave-digger of this system of capitalist exploitation. It is the task of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to bring that understanding to the working class.

Amid the deepening economic crisis in Southeast Asia, hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers have been savagely expelled from one country after another. Working-class militants must oppose all deportations and demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants. In Indonesia itself, hundreds of national and ethnic minorities suffer under the whip of the Java-centred bourgeoisie. This is particularly clear in East Timor, which has been the scene of one bloody military massacre after another. Proletarian revolutionaries in Indonesia must uphold the right of self-determination for oppressed nations. *Independence for East Timor!*

Against the schemes of the imperialists, the bourgeois "opposition" and the military to impose a new police-state regime — possibly with a new version of the hand-picked "parliament" — in Suharto's wake, we oppose the ban on political parties and call for a *revolutionary constituent assembly*. In raising this slogan for China following the suppression of the 1925-27 Revolution by the bourgeois-nationalist Guomintang (Kuomintang), Trotsky explained how the fight for a constituent assembly must be linked to a perspective for proletarian power:

"The Communist Party can and should formulate the slogan of the constituent assembly with full powers, elected by universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage. In the process of agitation for this slogan, it will obviously be necessary to explain to the masses that it is doubtful if such an assembly will be convened, and even if it were, it would be powerless so long as the material power remains in the hands of the Kuomintang generals."

Both under Sukarno and Suharto, the nationalist regime has imposed many of the dictates of Islamic law on women: abortion is banned, the woman's role as family housekeeper and domestic slave to her husband is enshrined in law. Suharto sought to achieve social stability by reinforcing the hold of conservative Islamic interests, making religious education compulsory in public schools and granting increased powers to Islamic courts. The role of Amien Rais points to the growth of Islam as a political factor, which can only be a force for reaction, particularly targeting women and religious minorities.

At the same time, this deepgoing oppression has impelled the new generation of women workers into the forefront of the class struggle (see "Women workers and the fight for socialist revolution: Indonesia seethes under IMF austerity", *WH* no 162, May/June 1998). The proletariat must fight for the separation of state and religion and against theocratic reaction, op-

ICL protests For workers revolution in Indonesia!



Young Spartacus



Australasian Spartacist



Workers Hammer

As Indonesian protests against Suharto dictatorship erupted in May, ICL launched international campaign of demonstrations and forums. Protests in Sydney, Australia (top), Boston (above, left), London.

posing all discrimination against religious minorities. We call for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all as part of the fight for *women's liberation through socialist revolution*.

As in all underdeveloped countries, the Indonesian bourgeoisie is tied by a thousand strings to the imperialists and incapable of resolving the tasks associated with the European bourgeois revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries, such as political democracy, agrarian revolution or national emancipation. In elaborating the programme of permanent revolution, Trotsky stressed that in the epoch of imperialism these tasks can only be resolved through the proletarian seizure of power. To thwart imperialist intervention and overcome the economic backwardness of "Third World" countries, this must be integrally linked to a struggle for international socialist revolution, particularly in the advanced industrial countries.

This perspective was confirmed in both the positive and the negative in the experience of the Soviet Union. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution transformed backward Russia, a preponderantly peasant society and a prison house of oppressed peoples under the reign of tsarist despotism. But seven decades of Stalinist betrayal of revolutionary opportunities around the world, perpetrated in the name of "socialism in one country", finally led to the undoing of the October Revolution. This ultimate Stalinist betrayal only underscores the need for a revolutionary-internationalist programme for proletarian power.

Viewed narrowly from the Indonesian archipelago, prospects for consolidating proletarian rule in the face of imperialist hostility might appear bleak. But particularly given the economic turmoil in the region, especially in Thailand and Malaysia — which has strong linguistic and cultural links with Indonesia — socialist revolution in Indonesia would be a spark for class struggle throughout the Pacific Rim. The ties connecting the proletariat of these countries are embodied in the millions of immigrant workers in the region. South Korea is a tinder box, with its combative working class chafing under the prospect of millions of lay-offs. And in Japan, the industrial power house of the region, the proletariat likewise faces mass lay-offs as the bourgeoisie seeks to stem a

deepening economic slump and financial crisis.

The fate of the Indonesian masses is particularly bound up with events in China. The Beijing bureaucracy bore direct responsibility for the Maoist PKI's disastrous course, a betrayal of socialist revolution which served only to further isolate the Chinese deformed workers state. Now the Chinese Stalinists are pushing rapidly towards capitalist restoration, provoking a wave of workers' struggles. The fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and stop capitalist counterrevolution is at the centre of any revolutionary perspective in the region. It is crucial for proletarian militants in Indonesia and elsewhere to call for unconditional military defence of China and the other deformed workers states — North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba — against capitalist attack and internal counterrevolution.

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party!

Over the past decade, a number of independent trade unions have emerged out of workers' struggles. Many of their activists and leaders, such as Muchtar Pakpahan of the Indonesian Workers for Prosperity Union and Dita Sari of the Indonesian Centre for Labour Struggles (PPBI), have faced repeated imprisonment. The PPBI is aligned with the People's Democratic Party (PRD), whose leader Budiman Sudjatmiko also languishes in prison. The international labour movement must demand: *Free all leftist and trade-union prisoners!*

PRD activists have exhibited unquestioned courage in going up against a regime that has never countenanced more than the tamest "opposition". However, the leftist PRD advances a nationalist programme which does not even pay lip service to socialism and seeks to tie Indonesia's toilers to an illusory "democratic" wing of the bourgeoisie. The PRD's occasional calls for independence for East Timor are couched as appeals to the imperialist United Nations to implement its bogus resolutions. And the PRD's own 1996 "Resolution on East Timor" calls not for the immediate withdrawal of the bloody Indonesian occupation forces but to "reduce military operations and administration in East Timor". At any rate, this

is all belied by the PRD's avid support to the Javanese-chauvinist Megawati, who demands the territory's incorporation as Indonesia's 27th province!

Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have petitioned Labour prime minister Tony Blair to stop arms sales to Indonesia "in line with New Labour's 'ethical' foreign policy". This grovelling before the racist, anti-union Blair government — whose idea of "ethical" policies means police terror against Catholics in Northern Ireland and threats to bomb Iraqi women and children — highlights the Cliffites' profoundly social-democratic politics. The SWP cheered the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, proclaimed itself "over the moon" when Blair was elected and supported the introduction of imperialist troops into Northern Ireland by an earlier Labour government.

Meanwhile, the SWP's Australian co-thinkers, the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) grotesquely retail imperialist propaganda equating the student protests against Suharto with the anti-Communist mobs which "played a role in bringing down the previous Sukarno regime" ([Australian] *Socialist Worker*, 6 March). These wretched reformists even promote illusions that Megawati and Rais could create "a rank and file revolutionary movement in the army, to split it from below".

We warn revolutionary-minded militants in Indonesia: beware these "socialist" apologists for imperialist terror, who buy into the bourgeoisie's lie that "communism is dead". In Indonesia, the military dictatorship and its imperialist patrons sought to ensure that anything smacking of communism was buried under a mountain of corpses. Nonetheless, a new generation of workers and radicalising youth are being drawn into struggle by the ineradicable contradictions of capitalism. Out of this layer, through studying the dearly bought lessons of revolutionary Marxism, the nucleus of a Leninist vanguard party — fusing declassed revolutionary intellectuals with class-conscious workers — must be cohered. For new October Revolutions! Reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution!

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 691, 22 May 1998.

Russia...

(Continued from page 2)

handed support to the KPRF, an outright bourgeois-nationalist party which is the current embodiment of the "red-brown coalition", burying a nominal disclaimer against "political support" to Zyuganov beneath reams of "fight the right" rhetoric and a headline which screamed, "Not One Vote for the Right!" The Russian Taaffeites subsequently changed the name of their paper to be more acceptable in this rabidly chauvinist milieu. The current issue of *Levy Avangard* does not so much as mention Russia's imperialist ambitions or the right of the Chechen people to self-determination—or even the rampant skinhead terror in Russia.

Beware YRE "anti-racism"

The aim of the latest YRE campaign—limited to "explaining" the purposes of the fascist terrorists—is thoroughly in keeping with its liberal politics, informed

by the CWI's reformist view that the racist cops are "workers in uniform" and its craven appeals to the capitalist state to ban the fascists (see Spartacist Pamphlet, "Militant Labour's touching faith in the capitalist state", August 1994). Indeed, Taaffe's call for "lobbies and pickets of Russian embassies...protesting against the free rein that is given to fascist and neo-fascist groups" dovetails well with the current designs of the "democratic" imperialists and their International Monetary Fund (IMF) vultures to promote investment by "cleaning up" the image of Yeltsin's Russia. To this end, Yeltsin government spokesmen have also issued cynical denunciations of skinhead attacks.

Even as they ape the worst excesses of Great Russian chauvinism, the Taaffeites have themselves been the target of witch-hunting anti-communist hysteria in the Russian press, and one of their supporters was recently jailed for five months in Kazakhstan. Despite our deep-going political differences with *Levy Avangard*, the ICL has protested this victimisation by the class enemy.

Levy Avangard's British patrons were submerged for decades inside the racist, pro-imperialist Labour Party as the fake-Trotskyist Militant Tendency. When they emerged some years ago, they set up the YRE as a liberal front group aimed at capitalising on anti-fascist activism among radical youth in Western Europe. But the Taaffeites remain firmly wedded to Labourite reformism, preaching economist "unite and fight" rhetoric tailored to the prejudices of backward workers and thus necessarily hostile to the fight against national, racial and sexual oppression. Not only do they refuse to raise the elementary demand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland but they have even taken to sponsoring a notoriously anti-Catholic Loyalist killer, Billy Hutchinson. And at the Moscow meeting, a Russian Taaffeite tried to break up a discussion our comrade was having with the young women who later joined the walkout, ranting that all the ICL is "interested in is homosexuals".

Against such bigoted filth, the Trotskyist ICL stands in the tradition of Lenin's

Bolshevik Party, acting as a proletarian "tribune of the people". As part of our fight against the looming danger of capitalist restoration and for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy in the former Soviet Union, when a Russian fascist group first surfaced in the late 1980s, the ICL raised the call: "Soviet Workers Must Crush Pamyat!" (*Workers Vanguard* no 461, 23 September 1988). Three years later, we distributed over 100,000 leaflets in Russia with the call, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" And we devoted an entire issue of our Russian-language *Spartacist Bulletin* (no 3, Spring 1992) to the struggle against anti-Semitism, women's oppression and anti-gay bigotry. It is only on the basis of an internationalist programme for proletarian state power that a new Bolshevik Party will be built in Russia as part of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International.

To those leftist youth who take the YRE's pretensions as good coin, we say: Beware "anti-racists" who embrace Russian fascists! ■

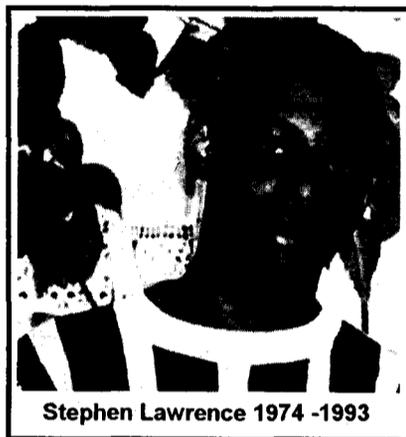
Lawrence...

(Continued from page 12)

"ethnic groups" for supposed "protection", thereby giving official sanction to racist terror against Muslims and all Asians. The bill also stipulates longer jail terms for crimes of racist intent. As we wrote last issue, "The interpretation of 'intent' and its imputation is in the hands of the racist capitalist state and will be used (as it was when the first Race Relations Act was introduced by the 1965 Labour government) to arrest and imprison blacks and Asians defending themselves against racist attacks" (*Workers Hammer* no 162, May/June 1998). The bill's talk of measures to cut crime, "empowering" the poor on devastated housing estates, is just a cynical cover for Labour's programme of "zero tolerance" policing, which means locking up a big portion of the poor population. Deaths in custody like that of Alton Manning, and of asylum seeker Ibrahim Sey who was beaten and gassed to death by CS spray, are multiplying. Official statistics report 53 such deaths in the last year.

The fascists are growing, emboldened by government attacks such as in Dover last year when the Home Office led the racist frenzy over the arrival of Roma refugees fleeing fascist terror in the Czech Republic. Fascists are extra-parliamentary gangs of race terrorists, kept in reserve by the capitalist class to be unleashed in times of acute crisis and working-class upheaval, ultimately aiming to crush the workers movement. *We call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and fight for trade union/minority mobilisations to stop the fascists in their tracks.*

The SWP's reformism in regard to the capitalist state is equally evident in the shenanigans of their Anti Nazi League when it comes to dealing with the fascists. On 23 May, the NF staged a provocative



Stephen Lawrence 1974 -1993

race-hate rally ("against the IRA") in London with the stated intention of going to Downing Street. The ANL called a counterdemonstration under the slogan "Stop the Nazi NF march". They mobilised about 300 anti-fascists at Westminster and quietly sent another small contingent of their forces to Whitehall where the NF did assemble, under heavy police protection. ANL leader Paul Holborow crowed that the ANL were "heckling" the fascists and that Jack Straw's cops were "pushing the fascists into the Underground".

The SWP that day mobilised a token showing of its London forces, a tiny fraction of what it brags about turning out to lobby Labour Party conferences. The police held the demonstrators at Westminster to prevent them getting anywhere near the fascists. Holborow grotesquely chided the police for not allocating its resources to investigating the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

In reality the ANL had no intention of stopping the fascist scum. After Holborow's speech, a Spartacist spokesman addressed the demonstrators denouncing the fact that the ANL had mobilised a diversion that was never intended to stop the fascists—and that this was the ANL's strategy going back 20 years. She

pointed out that the SWP always vote Labour. On the day they tried to drown out our chants against the racist Labour government, and for British troops out of Northern Ireland.

Socialist Worker (30 May) proclaimed the fiasco "a humiliating day for the Nazis" and said the anti-fascists had "stopped the Nazis assembling". This social-democratic "anti-fascism", criminally designed not to stop the fascists but to pressure the state to deal with them, leaves the fascists unbloodied and emboldened.

A mobilisation of London's multiracial working class could have inflicted a defeat on the fascists on 23 May. This has to be fought for in opposition to the Labourite politics of the trade union bureaucracy. This includes not just Blairite union bureaucrats like Bill Morris, but also Socialist Labour Party (SLP) bureaucrats. In the general election, we gave critical support to the SLP, which stood in opposition to New Labour, at the same time we also

stated that the interests of the working class cannot be met by the SLP's political programme. The SLP (whose Imran Khan is on the Lawrence's legal team) has members in key posts in the London Underground unions, a workforce strategically placed to fight racist attacks, but its "old" Labour reformism renders it politically incapable of waging the crucial fight to stop Labour's privatisation and union busting in the tube, or to fight racist terror. Mobilising the working class in struggle could turn the tables against this vicious Labour government, but such class struggle would also come up against the full force of the capitalist state—its cops, courts and anti-union laws; the same forces which protect the killers of Stephen Lawrence. There is an urgent need for a genuinely revolutionary party committed to mobilising the working class, to smashing the racist capitalist state and establishing working class rule. This is the only way to end racist terror. ■

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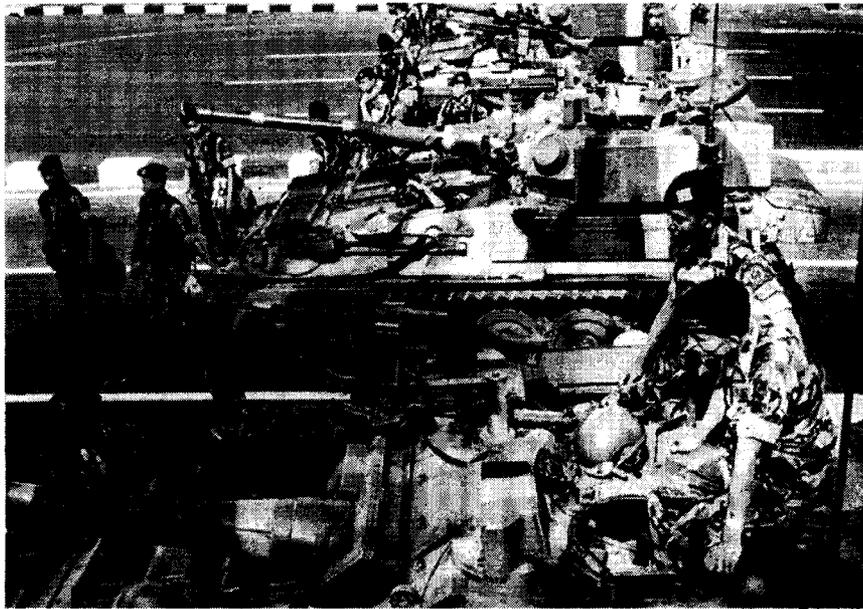
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Fake socialists for "ethical" imperialist arms trade

Britain, after the US, is the second largest arms dealer in the world and the main supplier of arms to Indonesia for use in military repression including in repeated massacres in East Timor. British Aerospace Hawk "trainer"-cum-ground-attack aircraft, which can be fitted with cannon and cluster-bombs, are part of this deadly trade.

As protests erupted in Indonesia, the International Communist League (ICL) organised speak-outs and participated in demonstrations around the world against the brutal Suharto dictatorship. As proletarian internationalists, we call for workers to take *class-struggle action to halt shipment of military hardware to Indonesia*, and we demand independence now for East Timor. We call for the proletariat in Indonesia to defend the Chinese minority against racist attacks. This is part of our fight for new October Revolutions from Indonesia to the imperialist metropolises.

The task of Leninist revolutionaries in Britain is to bring advanced elements of the working class to consciousness of its historic purpose: the *expropriation* of the capitalist class and not the Labourite *administration* of capitalism. We fight against the politics of the British fake left, the political tail of the Blair government that they worked so hard to elect. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) petitions Blair to stop arms sales to Indonesia "in line with New Labour's 'ethical' foreign policy". And Workers Power (WP) wants Labour "leaders" to be "hounded with resolutions, pickets and demonstrations until they a[re] forced to abandon their disgraceful attacks on the Indonesian people" (*Workers Power*, June 1998). The absurd and treacherous message of these "socialists" is that British workers need "struggle" only so far as to lobby Blair and Co. In other words they deny the plain fact proven a thousand times over that "new" or "old", a Labour government is the executive of bloody British imperialism. Our call for trade union action to halt arms sales is counterposed to class-collab-



British-made Scorpion tanks arm Indonesian military dictatorship.

orationist pleas to the imperialists to stop selling arms to Indonesia. Such calls are a reactionary-utopian appeal to one's "own" bourgeoisie to act in the interests of the oppressed! Real working-class internationalism demands a decisive political break from Labourism in the struggle to build a vanguard party for proletarian revolution.

Leftist journalist, John Pilger, in his recent book *Hidden Agendas*, showed what Labour in government means: when Robin Cook was announcing his "firm commitment not to permit the sale of arms to regimes that might use them for repression or aggression", in Jakarta the Indonesian minister for defence, Edi Sudradjat, was telling it straight — "The political change in Britain will not affect our negotiations for an additional purchase of eighteen Hawks" — additional, that is, to the 16 which were already prepared for sale by the Tories and which Labour would duly deliver. Pilger recounts how, since 1945, Labour governments have zealously promoted arms deals to promote

the bloody interests of British imperialism around the globe. When in 1965 the British ambassador in Jakarta declared that "a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change" the Wilson Labour government organised covert operations from Singapore to aid Suharto's military coup which slaughtered half a million Communists, peasant poor and workers. For Wilson's foreign secretary, Michael Stewart, Suharto's Indonesia presented "great potential opportunities for British exporters".

In 1966 the Defence Sales Organisation of the Ministry of Defence was duly set up by Labour's defence secretary Denis Healy. By 1993, according to Pilger, more than half of all British "aid" to the so-called "Third World" consisted of Department of Trade and Industry export credit guarantees underwriting arms sales, mostly to Indonesia and Malaysia, under the "Aid for Trade Provisions" scheme. In 1978 as the military's genocidal campaign in East Timor — which has wiped out one third of the population — was reaching its

height, the first Hawk aircraft were sold to the Indonesian military by another Labour foreign secretary, David Owen. "No one need pretend", wrote Robin Cook MP at the time, "that such a plane will not have a devastating potential against secessionist movements who have no air cover of their own." Tony Blair moved quickly after Labour was elected one year ago to approve another eleven military contracts (including for nuclear equipment) and was ready to repeat the imperialist terror bombing of Iraq. Blair stands in the long Labourite tradition, in government as in "opposition" and from Northern Ireland to Indonesia, of loyalty to decrepit British capitalism dominated by the finance-parasites of the City, and to the monarchy and the Union Jack.

But for all Pilger's laying bare Labour's hypocritical, *imperialist* programme, his own agenda is to shame and pressure the Labour government to return British capitalism to an allegedly more "civilised" past: "if Britain's military spending was cut by half, it would still equal the average of other European nations. And if the billions released... were invested in... rebuilding vital industries and restoring the devastated public services, the modest premises upon which civilised life used to be based in Britain might even return. 'The values of human rights, civil liberties and democracy', to quote Robin Cook, might also return." Return? The "modest premises" of the so-called "civilised life" so dear to lying Labour "statesmen" always were and always will be the most brutal exploitation of the world's oppressed masses for capitalist profit under a social system of bourgeois rule which is not merely a *policy* to be changed by a vote in parliament. The arms trade is integral to capitalism. Pilger's programme would leave the capitalist ruling class in the saddle and the armed fist of the capitalist state machine intact. At bottom, Pilger's abject reformism is shared by the pro-Labour British fake left.

Against the social-imperialist Labour government in Britain and its "left" tail we fight for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism. British troops out of Northern Ireland now! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles! In Britain and in Indonesia, only the rule of the working class will put an end to the depredations of the imperialist blood-suckers. ■

Indonesia...

(Continued from page 1)

chief backer of the military regime. Britain too has supplied the Indonesian dictatorship with military goods (see article above). Now the imperialists are intent on cohering a more stable and reliable regime capable of implementing the IMF's dictates.

In an editorial published a few days before Suharto's resignation, the *New York Times* (15 May) called for "a new government made up of trusted leaders" and held up the example of South Korea's Kim Dae Jung, who "persuaded citizens to accept measures that his predecessors could not". Kim, who was elected president last year largely on the basis of his record as an opponent of the former military rulers, was cultivated for decades by the CIA. Now he is administering the police-state regime and enforcing mass lay-offs and IMF austerity. The imperialists' talk of democracy in Indonesia is nothing but a fig leaf for maintaining the brutal system of exploitation enforced through vicious military repression, buttressed as always by the US and its British and Australian allies.

A class-struggle labour leadership would organise trade-union boycotts of arms shipments to the blood-drenched Indonesian military. Australian maritime workers have a history of such solidarity actions, from bans on Dutch shipping during the struggle for Indonesian independence in the 1940s to a 1996 boycott demanding the release of imprisoned Indonesian workers leaders. Genuine internationalist solidarity with the Indonesian working masses requires a political struggle against the union misleaders who embrace the aims of their imperialist masters. The British Labour government has sent over 50 arms shipments to Suharto in the past year, while the Australian Labor Party recently voted against a Senate motion calling for the release of leftists in Suharto's dungeons.

And while the pro-capitalist American AFL-CIO labour bureaucracy bleats about "multinational" low-wage sweat shops in Indonesia and occasionally mouths "concern" for imprisoned trade unionists there, this is only in order to push protectionist chauvinism and to further the broader interests of American imperialism. What is needed is a fight to break workers and minorities from the capitalist Democratic Party of racism and war and the forging of a revolutionary workers

party. *Imperialist hands off Indonesia!*

"People power" fraud

Imperialist spokesmen have churned out endless streams of propaganda glorifying the "people power" movement which led to the installation of Corazon ("Cory") Aquino in the Philippines in 1986, upholding it as an example for Indonesia. In fact, the "people power" mobilisations on the streets, heavily backed by the powerful Catholic hierarchy, were used as a vehicle for the US-orchestrated removal of dictator Ferdinand Marcos and the installation of a more credible and reliable government. Aquino's "people power" sham only succeeded because two top military leaders, Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Army Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos, swung to her support under direct prodding from Washington. The result was to consolidate the imperialists' control of their semicolonial client state.

To carry off this charade, Washington had in Aquino a ready candidate with impeccable anti-Communist credentials and proven allegiance to its dictates. Aquino was a member of the landed aristocracy, owner of one of the country's largest estates. Her husband Benigno, who was assassinated in Manila in 1983, had

long been groomed by the CIA as a potential replacement for the increasingly despised Marcos regime. A graduate of the CIA school in Quantico, Virginia, Benigno Aquino began his political career by participating in the suppression of the Communist-led Huk rebellion in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He went on to serve as CIA "control" for a 1958 clandestine operation in North Sulawesi in Indonesia which was part of an ill-fated attempt to provoke secessionist revolts against the Communist-supported, left-nationalist Sukarno regime.

The Filipino masses are no less exploited and oppressed today than they were under Marcos. The military butchers who served Marcos remain in place. The urban and rural masses are among the most impoverished in all of Southeast Asia. The myriad national and religious minorities, particularly in predominantly Islamic Mindanao, continue to suffer under the boot of police-state terror. We warned in 1986 that the replacement of the corrupt, brutal Marcos dictatorship with Aquino's "clean team" would mean "the substitution of one set of American lackeys for another. Marxists say: beware of coups 'Made in U.S.A.'" (*WV* no 398, 28 February 1986).

continued on page 8

Promoting Iran's "Islamic Republic"

The Cliffites and Islamic reaction

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

SPARTACIST CANADA

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

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

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

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

Also whimpering about supposed "violence" was Socialist Resistance, affiliated with the Socialist Party of Peter Taaffe. When a 16 March meeting of OCAP voted to "unreservedly support" the WCPI's action, Socialist Resistance members were among the very few who opposed it. After years of manoeuvring to install itself as the leadership of this coalition, Socialist Resistance quit the OCAP executive in protest. As the WCPI noted in a 28 March statement, "Socialist Resistance chose to be on the side of one of the most notorious and repressive regimes on the globe today."

IS slanders exposed

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

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

A subsequent "Open Letter to the International Socialists" by, among others, the WCPI and an IS member who had

asks rhetorically: "Even if there were a booth at IWD that had some backing from the Iranian state, would that justify an attack?" He answers that to protest a display sponsored by the Islamic Republic would be "a concession to anti-Islamic scapegoating coming from the ruling class". So according to the IS, any left-wing protest against the ayatollah regime can only be racist and pro-imperialist!

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

IS backs Islamic reaction: Iran and Afghanistan

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

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

Later that year, the Soviet Red Army intervened in the civil war in Afghanistan in support of a left-nationalist regime which had sought to introduce reforms like freeing women from the veil, reducing the bride price and providing education for girls. The IS took the side of the CIA-backed Islamic *mujahedin*, who fought to maintain women as chattel slaves. Afghanistan was the opening shot in the imperialists' "Cold War II" aimed at the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state. While whipping up a hue and cry against "godless Communism", Washington poured in arms to support the Afghan Muslim cut-throats. Here the IS's cheering for Islamic fundamentalist forces came together with their visceral hostility to the Soviet Union. British Cliffite leader Paul Foot even used his column in the bourgeois *Daily Mirror* to attack the Tory Thatcher government from the right by denouncing the possibility that British meat exports to the Soviet Union might be going to Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan.

In contrast, Trotskyists said, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" We recognised



Abbas/Gamma-Liaison

**The form — religion
The spirit — revolution**

PROPAGANDISTS FOR the Shah would have us believe the revolution in Iran is fundamentally religious, and a bulwark against internationalism. Attributing Islam and the others may divert attention from the real issue: the struggle for a new Islamic Republic. It is the only part of the revolution that has not been transformed by the

are capitalism. There is no going back.

It is in the Russian revolution that we see the form of the revolution. It is in the Russian revolution that we see the spirit of the revolution. It is in the Russian revolution that we see the form of the revolution. It is in the Russian revolution that we see the spirit of the revolution.

Workers' Action

—February 1979

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



Reza/Sipa

resigned in protest noted that "all of the literature and pictures on the display table were full of lies portraying the 'wonderful and full life' women in Iran enjoy, and all of them bore the logo of the Islamic Republic of Iran". The statement continued:

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

"The fact that the International Socialists through their official organ chose to so misrepresent the facts of the incident is nothing less than scandalous. If they think that it was proper for the Republic of Iran to have a booth at the IWD fair they should say so openly rather than misrepresent the truth of the matter in order to cover their tracks."

Stung by the exposure of their lies, the IS held a rapid-fire series of branch meetings on "Marxism and Islam". These were no doubt directed at "re-educating" some of their own members who had taken part in the protest. Repackaging their attacks on the WCPI and other leftists, IS leader Paul Kellogg declared in a full-page article in the 25 March *Socialist Worker* that the real issue was "racist scapegoating of people from the Middle East". Kellogg

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

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

To cover for its scandalous defence of the ayatollahs' agents, the IS retrospectively embraces the protest against the Canadian army at IWD. Kellogg writes:

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

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

For the IS, however, the Red Army withdrawal was a "victory". They gloated that "a defeated Russia will spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in Eastern Europe and inside Russia itself" (*Socialist Worker*, March 1989). From East Berlin to Moscow, the IS cheered these counterrevolutionary "struggles"

Defend Women's Rights, Not Iran's Torture State

Socialist Action

Open Letter to the International Socialists:

Dear Editor:

In the March 11 issue of *Socialist Worker*, the International Socialist League (I.S.) published an editorial under the heading "Down with the Islamic Republic" which attacked the Islamic Republic of Iran. We are writing to you to express our disappointment that the I.S. has not taken a more active role in the struggle against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a theocratic state which has imposed a brutal and oppressive regime on its people. It has persecuted women and minorities, and has been responsible for the deaths of thousands of people. We believe that the I.S. should be more active in exposing the crimes of the Islamic Republic and in supporting the struggle of the Iranian people for a democratic and secular state.

We urge the I.S. to take a more active role in the struggle against the Islamic Republic of Iran. We believe that the I.S. should be more active in exposing the crimes of the Islamic Republic and in supporting the struggle of the Iranian people for a democratic and secular state.

Violence breaks up sisterhood and solidarity

By Kenny Yum
Ryersonian Staff

Monica Kayhan gained the international Women's Day celebrations at Ryerson to look in some sister solidarity. She left — escorted by security guards — with crowds bringing and intimidating her.

no more... Last... marks... even... said... Kayhan said her display...

The Canadian army is the enemy, not Muslim women

A spokeswoman for the Canadian Army said that the Canadian Army is not the enemy of Muslim women. She said that the Canadian Army is a professional fighting force and that its primary mission is to defend Canada and its interests. She said that the Canadian Army is not involved in any political or religious activities and that it respects the rights of all people.

RESOLUTION ON TABLES AT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 16, 1998

The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) unreservedly supports the action taken by women from the Worker-Communist Party of Iran at this year's International Women's Day gathering. With the support of others, we demand the removal of a disgraceful information table from the fair.

WCPI

The demonstration culminated at Ryerson University, where the various organizations set up their book-tables, displays and workshops. However, to our shocked dismay, we discovered that representatives of the Islamic Republic had set up their work-table, which was littered with posters and English publications from the I.R.'s "Guidance Department". The I.R.'s symbol and "Imam Khomeini's words" were openly visible. The presence of

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

International Socialists:

Vile Lies and Slanders in Service of Bloody Islamic Reaction

On March 7, the feminist organizers of the Toronto International Women's Day (IWD) fair openly embraced agents of racist state terror and anti-woman violence. For the first time, the IWD fair was held in a booth staffed by some Muslim women. This was a disgraceful and shameful display of the IWD fair's organizers' willingness to support the Islamic Republic of Iran and its brutal and oppressive regime. We believe that the IWD fair should be a working-class holiday which celebrates the struggles of all the oppressed. Not everyone was so pleased. In defense of the Islamic Republic's propagandists and the besieged army table, the feminist IWD organizers dispatched their marshals and Ryerson University security police to try to quell the protests. Now the so-called International Socialists (I.S.) have published a despicable diatribe which slanders those who protested the Iranian government as a mob of violent racists!

Socialist Worker

The March 8th Coalition
PO Box 48
382 Church Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 2E3

For Immediate Release
April 2, 1998

Organizers of the IWD Fair Condemn Action leading to Expulsion of Participants

Toronto: The organizers of the International Women's Day Fair, the March 8th Coalition, were expelled from the fair on March 7th. The fair was held at the Ryerson University and was attended by thousands of people. The fair was a success and was a great day for women. The fair was a success and was a great day for women. The fair was a success and was a great day for women.

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

which led to the restoration of capitalist exploitation, mass unemployment, racist terror and rampant attacks on women's rights.

IS backs Islamic reaction: Algeria and Indonesia

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

Kellogg writes:

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

But the rise of Islam is not an expres-

sion of "anti-imperialism", but rather of despair. It is the reactionary reflection of the evident *dead end* of bourgeois nationalism and the absence of a communist alternative. As Paul Trehwela wrote in an insightful article on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in *Searchlight South Africa* (July 1989), a leftist journal published by South African exiles in London:

continued on page 11

International Socialists slander Toronto IWD protesters

On March 7, the feminist organizers of the Toronto International Women's Day fair openly embraced agents of racist state terror and anti-woman violence. For the first time, both the imperialist Canadian Armed Forces and agents of the blood-drenched Islamic Republic of Iran — which has butchered thousands of leftists, gays, Kurds and other minorities — were accorded prominent display stalls. Militant protests by hundreds of women's rights activists and leftists succeeded in driving out both the military recruiters and the mullahs' propaganda officers.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is proud to have stood with those who sought to rescue International Women's Day as a working-class holiday which celebrates the struggles of all the oppressed. Not everyone was so pleased. In defense of the Islamic Republic's propagandists and the besieged army table, the feminist IWD organizers dispatched their marshals and Ryerson University security police to try to quell the protests. Now the so-called International Socialists (I.S.) have published a despicable diatribe which slanders those who protested the Iranian government as a mob of violent racists!

The I.S. newspaper, *Socialist Worker* (11 March), denounces the expulsion of the Islamic Republic's representatives as a "racist assault," singling out the Worker-Communist Party of Iran (WCPI), as well as Socialist Action supporter Joe Flexer. To justify its vile slander, *Socialist Worker* prettifies the Iranian regime's propaganda display as simply "a booth staffed by some Muslim women." Then the I.S. howls that "The booth was attacked and the women expelled from the fair on the bogus argument that the reli-

gion they represent is sexist. This is just racist."

No, this is just a pack of lies.

In fact, the booth in question was covered with pamphlets and glossy photos, bearing the emblem of the Islamic Republic, which glorified the treatment of Iranian women under the fundamentalist regime, including the imposition of the veil. The women purveying this trash openly defended the barbarous practice of stoning women to death for adultery. Chanting "Down with the Islamic Republic!" in English and Farsi, and led by Kurdish and Persian women supporters of the WCPI, a multiracial group of well over a hundred women and men angrily denounced the Iranian government as deadly enemies of women and minorities. The only "racist assault" came at the hands of *IWD marshals*, who tried to drag away an Iranian protester and then had him physically removed from the campus by Ryerson police. Of this, the I.S. breathes not a word.

Socialist Worker proclaims that "Fortunately the honour of IWD was partially salvaged when some others at the fair organized a protest outside the Canadian army booth and drove it from the fair." "Some others"? Supporters of the WCPI and Socialist Action were prominent in the anti-army protest, which was initiated, organized and led by the Trotskyist League, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and Anti-Racist Action. In contrast, the I.S. — whose own table was just a few feet away from the Armed Forces recruiting station — played no role at all until hundreds of demonstrators shouting "Army out!" confronted the uniformed killers of the Canadian imperialist state.

The International Socialists are liars

and slanderers. And we have to ask — who benefits? Certainly not the brutally oppressed women and minorities of Iran. By defending the agents of the Islamic Republic against the outrage of its victims, the I.S. offers a "left" cover for that repressive regime spawned by the supremely violent system of imperialism. Moreover, as the Canadian government gears up its anti-immigrant machinery of deportation to expel thousands — not least Iranian refugees — the I.S.'s sinister violence-baiting of the WCPI is an open invitation for racist state repression of foreign-born leftists.

The I.S.'s defense of the Iranian government and Islamic reaction is not an aberration. This outfit has spent years painting up Muslim fundamentalism as "anti-imperialist" and even "revolutionary." In 1979, they supported the fundamentalists' seizure of power in Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini. Anti-Communist to the bone, the I.S. howled against the Soviet Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, hailing the CIA-backed Islamic *mujahedeen* who fought to maintain women as chattel slaves, and who murdered schoolteachers for the "crime" of teaching girls to read.

In contrast, Trotskyists said "Hail Red Army — Extend social gains of October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!" And we fought for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against the threat of capitalist counterrevolution, noting it was better to fight imperialism in Afghanistan than inside the USSR itself. As we warned, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan under Mikhail Gorbachev opened the door to the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, and left Afghan women at the mercy of the religious terror-

ists. In its own small way, the I.S. bears direct responsibility for the horrors of Islamic rule in Iran and Afghanistan, and for the immiseration of the workers and minorities under Boris Yeltsin's Russian capitalist regime.

The Trotskyist League has many political differences with the Worker-Communist Party of Iran, which we have long made clear. For example, the WCPI has on several occasions fostered illusions in imperialist agencies like the United Nations, calling in 1996 for the UN to "put an end to the arrogance of the United States" as Washington threatened another military attack on Iraq.

We have also argued against the WCPI's thoroughly retrograde position on abortion. Their program states flatly that their party "is against the act of abortion." The Trotskyist League fights for free abortion on demand as a key element in the struggle to break the grip of the family, the main institution of women's oppression. In Sweden, the WCPI endorses capitalist government prohibition of the Islamic headscarf in schools. We oppose such intervention by the imperialist state, which can only fuel anti-immigrant racism and fascist terror, as in France today. At the same time, we reject *Socialist Worker's* disgusting insinuation that leftists who oppose the veil — symbol and instrument of female servitude — are accomplices of French fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen and his murderous National Front.

On March 7, however, the WCPI took the right side in defense of women's rights. Every organization of the left and workers movement must stand with them against the poison spewed by the International Socialists, which can only serve the interests of the enemies of all the oppressed — imperialist capitalism and its "Third World" underlings. Down with I.S. lies and slanders! Women's liberation through socialist revolution!

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste
Canadian section of the International Communist League
14 March 1998

Indonesia...

(Continued from page 5)

Whatever deal the imperialists and their Indonesian bourgeois lackeys cobble together will solve nothing, even in the short term. The "new" Habibie regime will still have to push through the starvation policies demanded by the world bankers against an increasingly restive proletariat. "Moderate" generals like armed forces chief Wiranto are up to their necks in the blood of countless victims, from the slaughter of 1965 to the ongoing torture and murder of leftists and worker militants to the repeated massacres of East Timorese independence fighters. "Opposition" politicians like Megawati Sukarnoputri — daughter of nationalist leader Sukarno, who was Suharto's predecessor — and Muslim leader Amien Rais have served as props for the military dictatorship.

Class collaboration: road to bloody defeat

Nonetheless, popular illusions in such figures pose an obstacle to the mobilisation of the Indonesian proletariat. There is a syphilitic chain linking those who claim to speak for the proletariat and plebeian masses with the bourgeois "opposition" of Megawati and Rais, who in turn look to a wing of the military. Thus the left-nationalist People's Democratic Party explicitly calls for an alliance with Megawati and the Islamic PPP. The role of "moderate" Islamic leaders is typified by Rais — head of the 28 million-strong Muhammadiyah, the second-largest Muslim organisation in the country. Rais, who has a history of anti-Chinese racist bigotry, appeals to the army to "protect the interests of the nation", hailing it as "the backbone of the community" (*Jakarta Post*, 18 April).

It is natural that these bourgeois politicians would look to the military butchers to "protect the interests of the nation". But those who promote such a perspective among the workers and urban poor are leading them to repeat the bloody defeat of 1965-66. Suharto came to power through an anti-Communist massacre carried out by the military and reactionary Islamic gangs, with the direct involvement of the American CIA and its Australian jackals. The terror which began in October 1965 crushed the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which with three million members and 14 million supporters in trade-union, peasant, women's and youth organisations was the largest in the capitalist world.

This horrendous blood-bath was an object lesson in the deadly danger of class collaboration. Basing itself on the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of "two-stage" revolution — which amounts to mobilising the workers to bring the bourgeois nationalists to power in the first "stage"

and ends in the massacre of workers and Communists — the PKI opposed the fight for proletarian revolution. PKI chairman DN Aidit proclaimed: "Long live Sukarno! Long live the PKI!" With the full backing of its Stalinist mentors in Moscow and especially Beijing, the PKI preached "national unity" with the bourgeois-nationalist rulers, the Islamic establishment and the military officers. 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 nationalist popular front chained the proletariat to its class enemy.

The PKI repeatedly banned strikes, suppressed peasant protests and preached confidence in Sukarno and his generals. Pledging to enforce "co-operation between the people and the Armed Forces, in particular the Police Force", the PKI helped strengthen the very apparatus of repression which would slaughter its followers. Following a counterrevolutionary coup in October 1965 led by Suharto, the generals struck out against the party, while Sukarno turned a blind eye to the massacre of his former allies. The PKI, and the proletariat and peasant masses who looked to it, remained paralysed in the face of the terror. We wrote at the time: "The working people of Indonesia are now paying with their blood for the betrayal by the leadership of the 3,000,000-member, pro-Chinese Communist Party of Indonesia" (*Spartacist* [English edition] no 5, November-December 1965).

At the time of the 1965-66 blood-bath, Beijing refused to even protest the destruction of the PKI, its staunchest supporter and the largest Communist party in the capitalist world. Following the massacre, Washington became open to a rapprochement with China, particularly as Beijing's rift with the equally nationalist Stalinist regime in Moscow had grown into an open split. In explaining a possible change in US policy towards China, Secretary of State Dean Rusk gloated: "We know — the whole world knows — that the Chinese Communists have suffered setbacks during the past 14 months... They have suffered a major setback in Indonesia — the Indonesian Communist party has been decimated."

In a 1969 document, the Spartacist League warned against "the growing objective possibility — given the tremendous industrial and military capacity of the Soviet Union — of a U.S. deal with China." Indeed, this deal was soon consummated with the reactionary anti-Soviet alliance between US imperialism and Mao's China.

After 1965-66, those leftists and liberal intellectuals who had escaped the slaughter found themselves locked away in Suharto's dungeons for decades. Twenty-five



Steve Cox

Victim of military terror in East Timor. Java-centred bourgeoisie rules over Indonesian prison house of peoples.

years later, PKI leaders were still being executed. Untold thousands of ethnic Chinese were also slaughtered in 1965-66. Following the massacre, Suharto closed down Chinese-language schools and newspapers and even banned Chinese writing. Ethnic Chinese are virtually banned from the political system, civil service and academia. At the same time, the fabulously wealthy Suharto clan deeply entwined its interests with a tiny Chinese elite who control some 70-80 per cent of the country's economy. This has served to make all ethnic Chinese, a predominantly Christian minority composing less than five per cent of the population in the largest Islamic country in the world, convenient scapegoats for the abject poverty of the Indonesian masses.

As with anti-Semitic outrages directed against the Jews of Europe, such "populist" racism is truly the "socialism of fools", poisoning opportunities for proletarian unity and playing into the rulers' hands. When asked by a reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (31 May) if the recent "orgy of anti-Chinese arson and looting" in Jakarta had been orchestrated by elements of the military, one Indonesian general admitted, "Yes, I think it was organized." These incidents underline the need for Indonesian workers to champion the defence of the persecuted Chinese minority as part of the fight against their blood-drenched capitalist rulers.

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) deny the racist nature of the anti-Chinese attacks. At a public meeting in Dublin on 2 June, Dermot Connolly, a leading member of the Socialist Party (CWI Irish affiliate), said that there was a great deal of distortion of the Indonesian events in the bourgeois press, including the playing up of attacks on Chinese shops, but this was overstated. He continued that a lot of shops are owned by the Chinese middle class and such attacks on property are "inevitable" in any "revolution". In similar vein, *Workers Power* prints uncritically the remarks of a Tapol spokesman, Carmel Budiardjo: "what happened in Medan was an outburst of anger, it is really not right to call this an anti-Chinese riot", continuing, "it was just about the economic situation and the Chinese were on the receiving end of that because a lot of the commerce is in the hands of the Chinese" (*Workers Power*, June 1998). These are nothing but apologies for anti-Chinese racist reaction. *Down with anti-Chinese pogroms!*

Unless the proletariat marshals its forces in defence of the Chinese minority, plebeian anger could easily be channelled into another round of pogroms. Moreover, the vast majority of ethnic Chinese in the region are part of the working class and have historically played a leading role in social struggles. As the *Independent* (16

May) noted, "Unpopular regimes have some reason to fear the Chinese because they have often led revolutionary movements in Asia." Ethnic Chinese were prominent in the Philippines independence struggle at the turn of the century, in organising the first trade unions in Thailand and in forming Communist parties in Thailand, Malaysia and elsewhere.

Indonesia and permanent revolution

The student protesters were supported by a wide array of forces, including some who themselves participated in the 1965-66 anti-Communist slaughter. The image of haughty IMF director Michel Camdessus standing over Suharto as the Indonesian strongman signed the world bankers' humiliating agreement served as a focus for "national unity". But underneath the shared outrage against Suharto and the imperialist bloodsuckers lie sharply counterposed class interests. Significant sections of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie despise the regime for its corrupt nepotism. For the proletariat and urban and rural poor, the question is one of simple economic survival. Unemployment has skyrocketed in the past year, leaving more than eight million jobless. Estimates indicate that by year's end nearly half of the workforce of 90 million will be making too little to meet their minimum daily needs.

In order that any of the deeply felt needs of the masses can be met, the proletariat must seize power from the national bourgeoisie, expropriating its holdings and those of the imperialists. Indonesia won formal independence under Sukarno's nationalists in 1949, after centuries under the boot of Dutch colonial rule. Under Dutch colonialism, there was scarcely anything resembling a modern proletariat. In the years immediately after World War I, Communist leaders Tan Malaka and Henricus Sneevliet pursued a futile strategy based on political blocs with and accommodation to "revolutionary nationalists". They carried out an entry into the bourgeois-nationalist (and anti-Chinese) Sarekat Islam and even defended pan-Islamism as corresponding "to the national liberation struggle". In *The Permanent Revolution*, Trotsky wrote:

"Under the conditions of the imperialist epoch the national democratic revolution can be carried through to a victorious end only when the social and political relationships of the country are mature for putting the proletariat in power as the leader of the masses of the people. And if this is not yet the case? Then the struggle for national liberation will produce only very partial results, results directed entirely against the working masses.

"A backward colonial or semi-colonial country, the proletariat of which is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry



Ethnic Chinese shopkeepers in Jakarta following pogromist attack in May.