

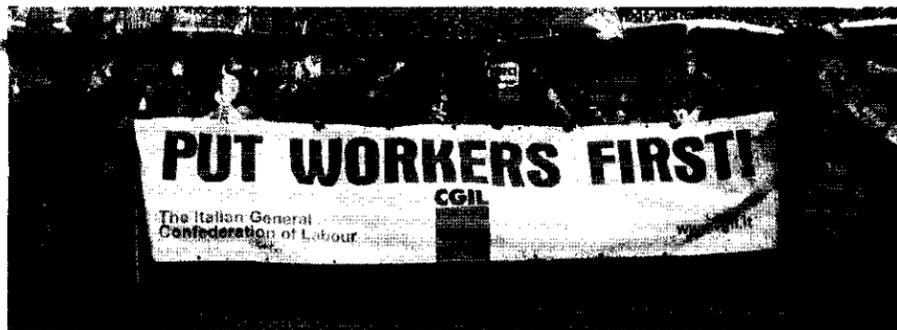


Forge a multiethnic revolutionary workers party!

We publish below an edited and abridged version of a resolution given by comrade Julia Emery at a Spartacist League public meeting in London on 4 April.

The ongoing world capitalist recession is having a tremendous impact on the British economy and inflicting severe hardship on working people. Across Britain the rate of home repossessions is rising while the number of job losses is enormous. The crisis has demonstrated quite openly the bankruptcy and irrationality of the capitalist system and what the leaders of all capitalist countries agree on is that working people will be made to pay for it. It also confirms the Marxist understanding that ultimately there is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialised economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problems of poverty, scarcity and want. We seek to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party to overthrow capitalist rule. Our starting point is the understanding that the working class cannot wield the capitalist state for its own interests, that the state must be smashed and replaced by a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

At the G20 summit in London, world leaders underscored "the critical importance of rejecting protectionism", ie measures that are designed to give preference to the industry of one's own country. But in the face of world recession, protectionism is increasing. Obama included a "buy American" clause in his "rescue" package for American industry and tensions between capitalist governments within the European Union (EU) have been exacerbated. Nicolas Sarkozy for exam-



**Unions must defend immigrant workers!
Down with chauvinist construction strikes!**



London, 28 March: contingents at mass trade union protest against capitalist economic crisis. In the face of chauvinist campaign for "British jobs", Italian trade unionists (centre) march for jobs alongside British trade union contingents (top and bottom).

ple proposed that in return for a government bailout, French car makers should shut down plants in Eastern Europe and produce in France.

For the bourgeoisie, "free trade" and protectionism are options they can debate, but for the working class protectionism is poison. It serves to channel discontent over job losses into hostility towards foreign work-

ers and immigrants while building illusions in the benevolence of one's "own" capitalists, who are responsible for the destitution of the working class. Protectionism ultimately leads to trade wars laying the basis for war between imperialist powers for control of markets and spheres of influence. It's worth recalling that what got the world out of the Great

Depression wasn't Roosevelt's New Deal, but World War II. It was when the imperialist governments in Britain and the US mobilised their economies for WWII that they fully adopted Keynes's programme of deficit spending for "public works" — battleships, bombers, tanks and finally atomic bombs. The labour movement must oppose protectionism and fight for international working-class solidarity. Production itself is socialised and international in scope and the international working class must be mobilised across national and other divisions.

Reactionary strikes

Since January a series of reactionary and virulently chauvinist strikes and protests have taken place on building sites at Britain's power stations and oil refineries. Building workers at Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire went on strike against the fact that foreign contractors hired workers in their home country to work in Britain. This sparked widespread protests at other sites centred on the demand "British jobs for British workers", a protectionist slogan long identified with the fascists and recently used by Gordon Brown. These protests were in contrast to the occupations at Visteon plants in Belfast and London in April where workers fought for better redundancy packages when the factory closures were announced.

The Lindsey strike was not intended to secure more jobs, but to redivide jobs in favour of British workers. In such situations we demand the highest rate of pay and benefits *no matter who* does the work, and equal pay for equal work. The settlement at Lindsey pledged that 102 jobs previously expected to go to Italian workers would be offered to British workers.

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Remember Blair Peach

Anti-fascist fighter killed by British state



bbc.co.uk

April 23 marked 30 years since the British state killed anti-fascist activist Blair Peach during a demonstration against the National Front (NF) in Southall. He was killed by cops unleashed that day by the James Callaghan Labour government to defend the fascist NF who were staging a provocation in an area heavily populated by Asian working-class families. Hundreds of anti-fascists were arrested; dozens were injured by the police. Blair Peach's skull was fractured by vicious blows from the notorious Special Patrol Group (SPG), the police unit that spearheaded the bloody assault.

Eyewitnesses reported seeing the SPG pour out of two vans and wade into the fleeing demonstrators. No fewer than ten witnesses reported seeing Blair Peach attacked by one of these SPG thugs. But no cop was ever charged with any crime. When the coroner's inquest 13 months after the killing announced its verdict of death by "misadventure", we wrote: "But it was not a 'misadventure' which cracked Blair Peach's skull in half. It was a police truncheon, or similar weapon, wielded with fatal effect by one or several of the more than 3000 cops who rioted outside Southall Town Hall to protect the future would-be guardians of



John Sturrock (Report)

Southall, April 1979: Asian workers honour anti-fascist fighter Blair Peach (inset) and victim of racist murder Gurdip (Gurdip) Singh Chaggar.



TROTSKY

A salute to Charles Darwin

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the publication of On the Origin of Species by Charles Darwin and the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth. Through his theory of evolution through natural selection, or, as he preferred to call it, "descent with modification", Darwin unshackled biological science from the chains of religion and metaphysics by providing a materialist explanation for the evolution of life on this planet through careful, meticulously recorded studies of variation within

species. Yet, even as it forms the basis of modern biology, evolution continues to be a constant target of the fundamentalist Christian right and reactionaries, including because it eliminates any scientific basis for racism.

In the following excerpt from an article (written in 1919 and revised in 1922) on the renegade from Marxism Karl Kautsky, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky compared the historic breadth of Darwin's scientific studies to Marx's study of human society, pointing out that both reveal that long periods of seeming equilibrium are periodically interrupted by tumultuous periods of rapid, revolutionary change.

The Darwinian theory of the origin of species encompasses the entire span of development of the plant and animal kingdoms. The struggle for survival and the processes of natural and sexual selection proceed continuously and uninterrupted. But if one could observe these processes with ample time at one's disposal—a millennium, say, as the smallest unit of measure—one would undoubtedly discover with one's own eyes that there are long ages of relative equilibrium in the world of living things, when the laws of selection operate almost imperceptibly, and the different species remain relatively stable, seeming the very embodiment of Plato's ideal types. But there are also ages when the equilibrium between plants, animals, and their geophysical environment is disrupted, epochs of geobiological crisis, when the laws of natural selection come to the fore in all their ferocity, and evolution passes over the corpses of entire plant and animal species. On this gigantic scale Darwinian theory stands out above all as the theory of critical epochs in the plant and animal development.

Marx's theory of the historical process encompasses the entire history of human social organization. But in ages of relative social equilibrium the fact that ideas depend upon class interests and the property system remains masked. The age of revolution is Marxism's school of advanced study. Then the struggle of classes resulting from systems of property assumes the character of open civil war, and the systems of government, law, and philosophy are stripped bare and revealed as instruments in the service of classes. Marxist theory itself was first formulated in a prerevolutionary period, when the classes were searching for a new orientation, and it achieved its final form through the experiences of revolution and counterrevolution in 1848 and the following years.

— Leon Trotsky, "Karl Kautsky" (1922), reprinted in *Portraits Political & Personal* (Pathfinder Press, 1977)



LENIN

gas chambers and concentration camps from the wrath of their intended victims" (*Spartacist Britain* no 22, June 1980).

In the late 1970s, when the NF was carrying out racist terror on the streets, the Asian community of Southall became a symbol of resistance to these attacks. The racist murder of Gurdip Singh Chaggar in 1976 called forth a militant youth revolt which took up the Sikh battle cry, "We shall fight like lions". Militant trade union struggle in the area including at Heathrow Airport drew support from the local population. Blair Peach, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, was respected as a dedicated teacher and anti-racist. Five days after he was killed, some 10,000 marched in defiant tribute, raising clenched fists as they passed the spot where he was killed.

The findings of a police enquiry into Peach's death were never published, but ~~a few facts did get exposed. As we~~ wrote in the 1980 article, "When the CID team did a search of SPG lockers for 'unauthorised weapons', they were diverted long enough for the lockers to be sanitised. Even so, the array of 'unauthorised' weapons discovered included metal truncheons, lead-weighted coshes, crowbars, axe-handles and a rhino whip. One locker contained

Nazi regalia." In fact, the doctor who carried out the second post-mortem on behalf of the Peach family suggested that the weapon used had been "a lead weighted rubber 'cosh' or hosepipe filled with lead shot".

The capitalist state protects and covers for its hired thugs. Repeated efforts to press for an enquiry into the cop killing of Blair Peach—which the state would certainly whitewash—have failed. Twenty years after Peach was killed, in again ruling out an investigation, Labour minister Paul Boateng said, "Lessons have been learned from the circumstances of his death about the policing of public order incidents and the importance of good police-community relations" (bbc.co.uk, 13 April 1999). Fast forward ten years: Ian Tomlinson was killed at the hands of the Territorial Support Group, which in 1987 replaced the SPG as a Metropolitan Police special unit for "disorder" as well as "anti-terrorism" policing.

"We remember and honour Blair Peach. Nine years after his death we wrote (*Workers Hammer* no 98, May/June 1988): "Vengeance for his death will only come with victorious socialist revolution. Along the road to that revolution, the workers movement will honour its martyrs and its heroes. And Blair Peach was certainly both of these." ■

Partisan Defence Committee

Immediate release of the North West 10! No deportations!

We reprint below a 27 May letter sent to the Home Secretary by the Partisan Defence Committee, a class-struggle non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League.

We demand the immediate release of the Pakistani students arrested on 8 April in draconian "anti-terror" raids in northwest England. The police outrageously seized and arrested twelve men—one British and eleven Pakistani—with the usual justification of thwarting a gigantic and sinister "terror plot". *But there was never any plot*; thirteen days of cop searches predictably unearthed no "bomb factory", no "Al Qaeda links", no evidence of anything, merely photos the students had taken of one another at public locations such as the Trafford Centre. Finally released without charge on 21 April, eleven of the men were immediately incarcerated by the UK Border Agency under immigration legislation, and slated for deportation on bogus "national security" grounds. Ten are

still being held pending their appeal against the deportation order.

Like other cases—including 15 Muslim men rounded up and interned as suspected "terrorists" after 9/11, whose lives have been ravaged by government "control orders" for fictional unnamed crimes—these arrests and intended deportations amount to British **state terror** aimed at justifying the ever expanding repressive powers of the capitalist state. The Labour government currently wields these powers against "terror suspects", which in the state's racist lexicon today means first and foremost Muslims. The "war on terror" is the domestic corollary to the British and US bloody imperialist wars and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Now as the US has broadened its killing fields to bombing Pakistan, the British government rails against that country's "insufficient" actions against terrorism.

Release the North West 10! No deportations! Down with the racist "war on terror"!

WORKERS HAMMER

Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain

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

The Spartacist League is the British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

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No vote to No2EU!

On the ballot for the 4 June elections to the European Parliament is a new political formation called "No2EU - Yes to Democracy". Backed by the RMT union and headed by its general secretary Bob Crow, No2EU is an alliance between the Socialist Party, the Communist Party of Britain (CPB) and other smaller groups, including Tommy Sheridan's Solidarity in Scotland and the Indian Workers Association (IWA). No2EU says it is standing in "opposition to the Lisbon Treaty, against the EU-led privatisation of our public services, for workers' rights and in protest at the corrupt EU gravy train", as well as "setting out a clear, socialist alternative to the poison and hatred of the BNP [British National Party]". References to "workers' rights" and "socialism" are there merely to provide camouflage for the reactionary agenda of No2EU which attacks the EU, not from the perspective of internationalist workers solidarity against the bosses but on the basis of protectionism and "little-England" nationalism.

The real content of No2EU's campaign is chauvinist protectionism, as can be seen from this statement on its website:

"The economic term for undercutting wages by using cheap foreign labour is 'social dumping'. This process was recently played out at the Lindsey oil refinery when unorganised Italian and Portuguese workers were brought in on lower rates of pay and local workers took illegal strike action in protest.

"The more bizarre elements of the ultraleft quickly attacked the strikers as 'xenophobes' while the TUC claimed that tweaking the EU posted workers directives would solve the problem. Both seem to be happy to ignore the events of the last 30 years where elected governments have been stripped of democratic powers to control the movement of capital, goods, services and labour."

As a 22 May article on BBC News online put it: "NO2EU was born out of the 'British jobs for British workers' protests at the Lindsey oil refinery and its aim is to provide working class voters and trade union members with a left wing alternative to the British National Party". No2EU boasts that its electoral list comprises candidates who played a leading role in those reactionary protests on construction sites and participation in the alliance is conditional on having supported them. This in itself is enough for Marxists to reject any support whatever to this outfit. We say: No vote to No2EU in the European elections!

According to *Weekly Worker* (19 March) a leaked internal memo from the CPB states: "Whilst this is a very broad campaign, SWP, AWL, *Weekly Worker* and other ultra-left groups have not been considered eligible, these having sharply criticised the Lindsey strike movement" (quoted in *Weekly Worker*, 19 March). In fact, the "ineligible" organisations all supported the Lindsey strike, albeit with criticisms. The reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) opposed the "British jobs for British workers" slogan but supported the Lindsey settlement anyway. The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) gave "critical support" to the Lindsey strikers and claimed: "SP comrades played a generally positive role in winning the Lindsey strikers to a progressive, internationalist set of demands, and in opposing the nationalist slogans spontaneously adopted by some, such as

Down with the bosses' EU For a Socialist United States of Europe!

'British jobs for British workers'" (*Weekly Worker*, 26 March). For its part the Alliance for Workers' Liberty (AWL) hailed what they called a "substantial industrial victory" at Lindsey.

In May the Socialist Party once again proclaimed a "big victory" at Milford Haven in South Wales when another

"Fairness for British workers" and "British jobs for British workers" were again in evidence. Speaker after speaker bemoaned the "discrimination" against "British" workers, while Bob Crow fulminated: "what they want to do is, say there's a Chinese worker [who] wants to work for a bowl of rice, then you've got



London, 21 May: Bob Crow at press conference of No2EU election campaign.

anti-immigrant strike resulted in some 40 Polish workers losing their jobs. According to the *Guardian* website (21 May) the strike was settled when "the Dutch-based employer, Hertel, agreed to withdraw 40 Poles and replace them with UK staff at the terminal owned by ExxonMobil and Total". The Socialist Party admits that "Hertel faxed the media that the Polish workers [had] been removed from the site", blithely adding "but this was never a demand of the union". They go on to say that the striking British workers "were not opposed to laggards from Poland getting work on the site as long as local laggards were given the opportunity of the work first as under the union agreement" (*Socialist*, 28 May-3 June). Putting *British workers first*, is what these chauvinist strikes—and indeed the Socialist Party—are all about.

The Spartacist League opposed the chauvinist strikes against foreign workers and called for full union pay for all work and for the unions to defend immigrant workers. We noted that the outcome of the Lindsey strike "will reverberate against foreign and immigrant workers, not least on building sites such as the 2012 Olympic projects where over a third of the workers are immigrants and where in recent months some 200 Romanian workers were removed during a clampdown on 'illegal' foreign labour" (*Workers Hammer* no 206, Spring 2009). Sure enough, this was graphically confirmed at a 6 May protest at the 2012 Olympics construction site in Stratford, London, which was used as a platform to build support for the No2EU campaign. The demonstration was an orgy of nationalist protectionism. Many of the workers present had been bussed in from sites like Lindsey and Staythorpe where the protests against migrant workers had taken place. Signs demanding

to cut your pay and conditions down to a bowl of rice as well".

A Socialist Party leaflet for the rally called "to force the government to withdraw from or amend the EU directives and court rulings that legalise the bosses' exploitation of cheap foreign non-union labour to the exclusion of local unionised workers". "Local" here is a euphemism for "British", a fact emphasised by the racist storm whipped up by the *London Evening Standard* against foreign-born workers who are registered as "local" working on the Olympics site. The Socialist Party has worked overtime to cover up the chauvinist character of the reactionary strike movement, dismissing as marginal or irrelevant the Union Jacks, the calls for "British jobs for British workers" and the presence of the BNP at the protests.

Protectionism benefits BNP!

The No2EU campaign claims to be fighting the BNP, but in reality this boils down to competing with the fascist scum on their own racist terrain in an attempt to win over would-be BNP voters. No2EU says "the BNP has no answers". In fact fascists do have an "answer" to the crisis of capitalism—their programme is genocide of blacks, Asians and other minorities as well as the destruction of workers organisations.

Fascists are guard dogs of capitalism who are held on a leash during times of relative capitalist "stability", to be let loose during periods of crisis when the capitalist order is threatened by workers revolution. Reformists like the SWP have persistently spread the lie that the way to "stop the BNP" is to vote Labour, or some other "democratic" alternative at election time. But, unlike Labourite reformists, fascists are not characterised by parliamentarism—the BNP's electoral campaigns are de-

signed to conceal the fact that fascists are paramilitary forces that seek to realise their programme in action on the streets. The fascists feed off the economic misery and mass unemployment wrought by decaying capitalism by scapegoating foreign workers for unemployment.

Fascist provocations must be stopped by trade union/minority mobilisations. However such a perspective is anathema to Labourite bureaucrats like Crow, who as leader of the RMT—a strategic union of white, black and Asian workers—sits on top of enormous potential social power that can hit the capitalists where it hurts. Instead, with the No2EU campaign, Crow is helping to put wind in the fascists' sails by supporting strikes organised on the BNP's central slogan of "British jobs for British workers"! Fascism is endemic to the capitalist system and the fascist danger can only ultimately be eliminated by socialist revolution.

Echoing the arguments of right-wing Tory "Eurosceptics" and the UK Independence Party (UKIP), No2EU directs all its fire at the European Union which it criticises as an "undemocratic superstate" while calling for "the repatriation of democratic powers to member states"—a touching appeal for restoring sovereignty to the Mother of Parliaments in Westminster. One thing is certain: neither the Socialist Party nor Bob Crow are prepared to wage a class-struggle fight against the capitalist ruling class at home or the Labour government. Yet such a struggle is precisely what's needed as an answer to mass unemployment, the privatisation of public services and the ever-worsening economic conditions that have pauperised millions.

As Marxists we stand in implacable opposition to the European Union, an imperialist trade bloc and a vehicle for the European capitalists' co-operation against the working class and against immigrants. Our opposition is based on proletarian internationalism which is counterposed to the nationalist protectionism pushed by trade union bureaucrats like Crow. In common with Lenin, we believe that it is impossible to cohere a stable European bourgeois "superstate" because capitalism is organised on the basis of nation-states. Originally established as an economic adjunct of NATO as the US sought to strengthen Western Europe against the Soviet Union, the EU is today a trade bloc dominated by Germany, the most powerful European imperialist country. The EU exists to facilitate competition with the rival US and Japanese imperialists. The capitalists' drive for new markets and raw materials inevitably leads to attacks on the living standards and conditions of the working class as the capitalist ruling class of each nation seeks advantages against its rivals. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe, the permanent imperialist rivalries which were kept in check by shared anti-Sovietism have been sharpened greatly, posing the question of trade wars leading to shooting wars. Like Lenin's Bolsheviks we insist that the only way out of the impasse is international workers revolution to expropriate the capitalist classes and lay the basis for socialism. ■

We reprint below, in slightly edited form, an article from Australasian Spartacist no 204 (Autumn 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

**Australasian
SPARTACIST**

For youth repelled by the exploitative capitalist system and beginning to explore socialist ideas, organisations claiming the mantle of Marxism might seem a bewildering assortment. Reading an article in *Socialist Alternative* (Oct-Nov 2008) titled "The real story of what Marxists think of religion", you could forgive such potential revolutionaries their confusion. Eulogising religion as having the potential to be a "platform for resistance to oppression", Socialist Alternative (SAIt) contend that Marxism isn't opposed to religion at all! "What!?" such youth might exclaim, "What happened to Marxism being scientific and atheist?"

Perhaps it was one such individual who wrote to *Socialist Alternative* (November 2008), calling on SAIt to stop sugar-coating religion and observing that "Islam like Judaism and Christianity are tools of the oppressors". The letter provoked a venomous response. Three replies, including from SAIt cadre, published in the "Dec 08-Jan 09" issue denounced the correspondent as on the "elitist, atheist 'God Delusion' bandwagon" and "filled with Islamophobic shit" having "sucked up...the anti-Muslim mind poison, sugar-coated in leftism fed to you by the ruling class". While we are not uncritical of the original (edited) letter and have no way of knowing fully what the writer stands for, SAIt's unhinged response, like their article penned by Patrick Weiniger, is a bald-faced repudiation of Marxism.

As Marxist revolutionaries who want to change this world and end human exploitation and oppression, we're firmly on the side of science, which studies the natural world and validates theories by observation and experiment, as opposed to religion which asserts blind faith in an unreal, supernatural power controlling events. We are, in the words of Russian revolutionary leader VI Lenin, "absolutely atheistic and positively hostile to all religion". At the same time we oppose all forms of religious persecution and oppression. Thus our comrades in the US have opposed the arrest of Mormons for practising polygamy (see *Workers Vanguard* no 916, 6 June 2008). Comrades in France and elsewhere have protested government moves to ban the Islamic *hijab* or headscarf in schools, noting that such persecution can only reinforce the grip of religion by driving women out of secular society.

We stand opposed to the imperialist impoverishment and exploitation of the masses of the neocolonial world, but this does not mean that we are cultural relativists who prettify the horrible status quo in such countries. Thus we oppose hideous "customs" such as female genital mutilation or the head-to-toe veil. While recognising that people should be able to hold their religious beliefs without interference from the state, we oppose religion dictating the policy of the state.

Upholding the liberating ideals of the Enlightenment and Marxism, we revolutionaries fight for the complete separa-

tion of religion and state! In fact, the full separation of religion and state has nowhere been fully realised by the bourgeoisie for the simple reason that religion has great value for the ruling class in its struggle against the proletariat. With its deep social roots, religion serves to buttress the institution of the family, the main source of women's oppression, and ruling-class authority. All modern religion acts as an instrument of capitalist reaction that defends exploitation and befuddles the working people.

Our goal is to build a revolutionary party that can lead the working class in its historic task of overthrowing capital-

ism. Thus, in the 2007 elections they championed a vote for the bourgeois Greens (an act of class treachery) as a means to apply pressure on Rudd's Labor Party. For our part we Spartacists declared the elections a bipartisan war on workers and minorities, and called for "No vote to ALP! No vote to bourgeois Greens!"

Under the cover of fighting against the "war on terror", SAIt poisonously insinuate that any criticism of Islam equals support for racist anti-Muslim persecution. In fact, from their written repudiation of the Marxist attitude towards religion to braying about their



Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai with Central Asian women, drinking wine in defiance of teachings of Koran.

ism and replacing it with socialism. Only then will religion, which enforces mindless subordination to "higher authority" and is responsible for so much guilt and misery, quickly wither through education once its state props are kicked away.

Down with anti-Muslim racism!

We Marxists have been forthright in our opposition to the racist "war on terror", opposing the bloody occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan abroad and the vile racist scapegoating of Muslims at home. Struggling in the interests of the whole working class, and against Laborite nationalism, we are for a class-struggle fight to defend the rights of Muslims and all immigrants and minorities. As for SAIt, for all their "militant anti-racist" posturing, come election day they fall into line behind the Labor Party [ALP] and racist capitalist rule. For example, in the 2001 elections SAIt advocated to "grit our teeth" and vote for the ALP, even as the ALP was demanding "security abroad, security at home" and trying to outdo the then-Howard government in support for the war on Afghanistan and the war on refugees.

In fact SAIt's "socialist alternative" has never extended beyond trying to pressure the pro-imperialist Labor

attendance at Muslim prayer meetings, SAIt foster backward consciousness among the masses, conciliating both religion and religious leaders such as the Muslim clerics involved in recent protests against Israel's murderous attacks on Gaza. This is no surprise as they and their forebears have long portrayed Muslim fundamentalism as "anti-imperialist" and even "revolutionary". Their outlook is both a product of their liberal opportunism and a direct outgrowth of their anti-communist hostility to the former Soviet Union and other societies where capitalism has been overthrown. It has led them to politically embrace such vile reactionary forces as the Vatican-backed Polish *Solidarność* (Solidarity) and the Islamic fundamentalist Afghan *mujahedin*.

To the extent that SAIt have influence, their programme has actually helped create today's post-Soviet reactionary political climate marked by all-sided capitalist brutality and heightened religious obscurantism. In August 1991 when Boris Yeltsin's imperialist-backed forces of counterrevolution staged a coup in Moscow, every capitalist ruling class around the world celebrated. Then part of the International Socialists, SAIt cadre joined in the jubilation declaring that "'Communism is dead'.... It's a fact that should have

every socialist rejoicing" (*The Socialist*, September 1991).

SAIt: Haunted by the spectre of Marx

As if to justify their anti-Marxist conciliation of religion, SAIt quote Karl Marx, who explained:

"*Religious* suffering is at one and the same time the *expression* of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people."

SAIt piously claim, "Those who wish to present Marx as anti-religious trot out only the last sentence." One only need quote Marx's very next lines to expose this self-serving lie:

"The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to *call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions.*"

— "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (1844)

Declaring "Marx was a democrat before he became a socialist", SAIt do their best, through selective quoting, to devolve him into a "harmless" modern-day bourgeois-liberal democrat.

To expunge the taint of atheism from their fake brand of "Marxism", under the heading "Islamophobia" SAIt pick on two prominent authors who are self-identified atheists. First they cite reactionary journalist Christopher Hitchens as "living proof that being an atheist does not make you more left-wing". In fact Hitchens' pro-imperialist warmongering over Iraq owes more to the classless pontificating about "tyranny" versus "democracy" fundamental to SAIt's worldview than to his non-Marxist critique of religion. Hitchens, once a member of SAIt's forebear, the anti-communist Cliffite International Socialists, long ago took the logical step to bourgeois reaction.

The other target of SAIt's anti-atheist vitriol is Richard Dawkins, evolutionary biologist and writer of popular science. SAIt quote from *The God Delusion* where Dawkins gives a straightforward list of atrocities committed in the name of religion, including the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition. SAIt assert, "Dawkins argues that religion is to blame for war. This patently false idea provides a cover for imperialism." Never mind the fact that Dawkins protested Britain's involvement in the invasion of Iraq. False consciousness like religion and nationalism certainly *is* a powerful tool to inspire division in the working and oppressed masses, and in this epoch of imperialist reaction often provides the trip wire for the bloodiest conflicts.

Indonesia 1965-66 is but one chilling illustration. More than a million Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese were massacred when the Indonesian generals unleashed Islamic fundamentalist reactionaries to crush the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In the face of this terror, the workers and peasants of Indonesia were politically, organisationally and militarily disarmed by the PKI programme of "national unity", a popular-frontist alliance of bourgeois nationalists, Islamic groups and the PKI (see "Lessons of Indonesia 1965", *Spartacist* [English-language edition] no 55, Autumn 1999). The Australian and US imperialists were up to their necks in these atrocities, promoting the mobilisation of Islamic reactionaries against "godless communism"

and providing the Indonesian generals with a hit list of some 5000 Communists to exterminate. In helping to orchestrate this massacre the imperialists were applying an imperative noted in 1950 by then-US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it" (cited in Paul A Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*).

Hostile to the lessons of Indonesia 1965, the anti-communist opportunists of SAlt criminally encourage workers down the same blood-drenched popular-frontist path. A letter by Weiniger and Colleen Bolger published in *Socialist Alternative* (Dec 08-Jan 09) excitedly reported on the "Socialism and Islam" session they attended at a Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM)-hosted conference last November. Enthusing that "we got to debate how the Left should relate to Islamic parties in a largely Muslim country", they lauded the PSM for "eschewing sectarian dismissal of Muslim political forces". No doubt they also support the PSM standing in the Malaysian elections last year under the banner of the main bourgeois opposition, which includes Islamic fundamentalists.

SAlt slander the Bolsheviks

SAlt would have us believe that their chasing of religious "allies" has the endorsement of the Bolshevik party that led the October 1917 Russian Revolution establishing the world's first workers state. In a September 2006 article, "Why Socialists Fight for Religious Freedom", cadre Diane Fieldes writes: "In some of the southern republics of the USSR in the early 1920s as many as 15 per cent of party members were believers in Islam" and declares, "Muslims were encouraged to join the Communist Party."

Far from conciliating religion, Soviet policy in Central Asia recognised that the path to overthrowing the entrenched power of religion, in lands almost entirely devoid of a working class, mandated admitting a fraction of the *most conscious* members of society, outside the Europeanised elite, into the Communist parties. As Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky explained:

"We will admit into our ranks those comrades who have yet to break from religion not in order to reconcile Marxism with Islam, but rather tactfully but persistently to free the backward members' consciousness of superstition, which in its very essence is the mortal enemy of communism."

... "Tasks of Communist Education" (1923) in *Problems of Everyday Life*

SAlt lyingly infer that the Bolsheviks abandoned the bourgeois-democratic separation of church and state by claiming the young Soviet state accommodated *sharia* law, the 1300-year-old body of Muslim canon law regulating every aspect of life including enforcing capital punishment for homosexuality and "honour killings" of women and girls accused of "improper" relations with men. According to Fieldes: "A parallel court system was created in 1921, with Islamic courts administering justice in accordance with *sharia* law alongside the soviet system. Thousands of Muslim schools were set up with government encouragement." In truth, as we wrote in "Early Bolshevik Work Among Women of the Soviet East" (*Women and Revolution* no 12, Summer 1976):

"...the Soviet government waged a campaign to build the authority of the Soviet legal system and civil courts as an alternative to the traditional Muslim *kadi* courts and legal codes. Although the *kadi* courts were permitted to function, their powers were circumscribed in that they

were forbidden to handle political cases or any cases in which both parties to the dispute had not agreed to use the *kadi* rather than the parallel Soviet court system. As the Soviet courts became more accepted, criminal cases were eliminated from the *kadis*' sphere. Next, the government invited dissatisfied parties to appeal the *kadis*' decisions to a Soviet court. In this manner the Soviets earned the reputation of being partisans of the oppressed, while the *kadis* were exposed as defenders of the status quo."

After only a few years the *kadis* were forbidden to enforce any Muslim law which contradicted Soviet law. Soviet representatives attended all *kadi* proceedings and their approval was required for all court decisions. In the mid-1920s, when the *wafks* (endowment properties), which had supported the *kadis*, were expropriated and redistributed among the peasantry, the *kadis* disappeared completely.

Scandalously, in 2005 SAlt's political cothinkers in Canada, the International



Gdansk, Poland:
Lech Walesa
being blessed in
1980 by
Solidarność
"spiritual
adviser", anti-
Semitic priest
Henryk
Jankowski.

Socialists, supported government proposals to establish *sharia* tribunals for family law, as part of the capitalist state. Our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste actively protested against these moves. Such courts could only deepen the isolation and oppression of Muslim women (see *Spartacist Canada* no 147, Winter 2005/2006).

Support to counterrevolution = support to anti-woman reaction

Despite the Soviet Union's degeneration under a nationalist parasitic bureaucratic caste, which usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in a political counterrevolution beginning in 1923-24, the proletarian collectivised property forms created by the 1917 October Revolution remained until capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. It was the elementary duty of revolutionaries to defend the gains of the revolution by fighting for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state and for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misleaders who paved the way for capitalist restoration. We apply the same programme to the deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba today.

SAlt's political origins go back to the late Tony Cliff and his followers who bowed to the pressure of anti-communist Cold War hysteria during the Korean War. Capitulating to the British bourgeoisie and the then-ruling British Labour Party, they refused to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialist attack and broke from Trotsky's Fourth International, reneging on their revolutionary duty.

Motivated by hostility towards the Soviet Union, throughout the 1980s, as then-members of the Cliffite International Socialist Organisation, SAlt cadre supported the CIA-bankrolled Islamic Afghan *mujahedin* cut-throats against the Soviet Red Army, alongside Washington and its union-busting Hawke/Keating Labor government ally in Canberra. This was a war directly over

the status of women — the tribal chiefs and mullahs went to war when the Afghan government attempted to open up education for girls and to reduce the bride price. Standing upon our unconditional military defence of the USSR, the Spartacist League took the side of social progress. We said: "Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!"

Driven by their hostility to the Soviet Union, SAlt also hailed Polish clerical-reactionary, anti-woman, anti-Semitic "union" Solidarność, backed to the hilt by the CIA and the Catholic Church, throughout its rise in the 1980s. When in September 1981 Solidarność came out for capitalist restoration we said: "Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" Later Solidarność's programme triumphed in the form of the devastating 1989 capitalist counterrevolution in Poland, which ushered in mass unemployment and the brutal rollback of women's rights, partic-

ularly abortion rights.

ularly abortion rights. wide proletarian revolution can lay the basis for the end of material want, the foundation of religious superstition. The Marxist programme aims at the eradication of religion, not by force of arms or law, but scientific mastery of nature. This is not a recipe to tolerate ignorance or superstition, but on the contrary an obligation to actively expose and refute religion as an obstacle to the satisfaction of human needs. As Lenin wrote:

"The dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels...applies the materialist philosophy to the domain of history.... We must combat religion—that is the ABC of all materialism, and consequently of Marxism. But Marxism is not a materialism which has stopped at the ABC. Marxism goes further. It says: We must *know how* to combat religion, and in order to do so we must explain the source of faith and religion among the masses *in a materialist way*."

"The Attitude of the Workers Party to Religion" (1909)

It will take a proletarian revolution to smash the power of capital and open the road to the egalitarian socialist society based on the material abundance needed to sweep away the basis of religion. This requires the building of a Leninist vanguard party which can lead the working class at the head of all the oppressed. Its cadres will be the most advanced fighters, including in defence of science and in opposition to religious superstition. Lenin explained:

"So far as the Party of the socialist proletariat is concerned, religion is not a private affair. Our Party is an association of class-conscious, advanced fighters for the emancipation of the working class. Such an association cannot and must not be indifferent to lack of class-consciousness, ignorance or obscurantism in the shape of religious beliefs."

—"Socialism and Religion" (1905)

This Leninist perspective stands diametrically opposed to SAlt's accommodation to organised religious movements as allies-in-waiting.

Addressing the French public in 1767, Voltaire wrote, "Anyone who has the power to make you believe absurdities has the power to make you commit injustices." SAlt oppose Marx's programme, not out of ignorance, but as a consequence of *their* anti-communist programme, which rejects the Marxist principle that *only* the working class has both the interest and the social power to overthrow capitalism and build a classless society.

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club are dedicated to freeing the oppressed from religion's yoke. As we say in the article "Marxism and Religion", reprinted in our pamphlet *Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism*:

"In order to win over a new generation to the struggle for socialism, based on a materialist conception of society, socialists must ceaselessly combat religion and other forms of idealism which look to the supernatural, explaining that freedom from oppression lies in this world, not another."■

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China

Charter 08: programme for “democratic” counterrevolution

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 933, 27 March 2009, adapted to Workers Hammer style.

In December, a document titled Charter 08 appeared on the internet in China. Signed by some 300 individuals, largely intellectuals and academics, it has since garnered another 8000 signatories. An English translation was quickly circulated abroad and then published in the *New York Review of Books* (15 January). The capitalist media in the US and elsewhere has heaped praise on Charter 08. An editorial in the London *Financial Times* (7 January) saluted it as “a powerfully written affirmation of universal human rights”. A *Washington Post* editorial (30 January) called it China’s “new democracy movement”.

Charter 08 is an explicit programme for capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese deformed workers state, wrapped in the envelope of “democracy”. Its initiators seek to emulate the imperialist-backed “human rights” dissidents in Eastern Europe who spearheaded the counterrevolutions in the former Soviet bloc in 1989-92. The Charter calls for “free elections” as a political mechanism for capitalist-restorationist parties to attain governmental power. It demands the privatisation of the collectivised core of the Chinese economy—the state-owned enterprises—as well as the land. In short, this is a programme to reverse the social gains of the 1949 Revolution that, if realised, would plunge China back into imperialist subjugation and exploitation.

Charter 08 retrospectively supports the imperialist-backed Guomindang (Nationalist Party) of Chiang Kai-shek against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the civil war of the late 1940s: “Victory over Japan in 1945 offered one more chance for China to move toward modern government, but the Communist defeat of the Nationalists in the civil war thrust the nation into the abyss of totalitarianism.”

The 1949 Chinese Revolution was a progressive social revolution of world-historic significance. Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been exploited from time immemorial. The creation of a centrally planned, collectivised economy laid the basis for enormous social progress. The revolution enabled women to advance by magnitudes over their previous miserable status rooted in the old Confucian order in such practices as forced marriage and concubinage. A nation that had been ravaged and divided by foreign powers was unified and freed from imperialist subjugation.

However, the Revolution was de-

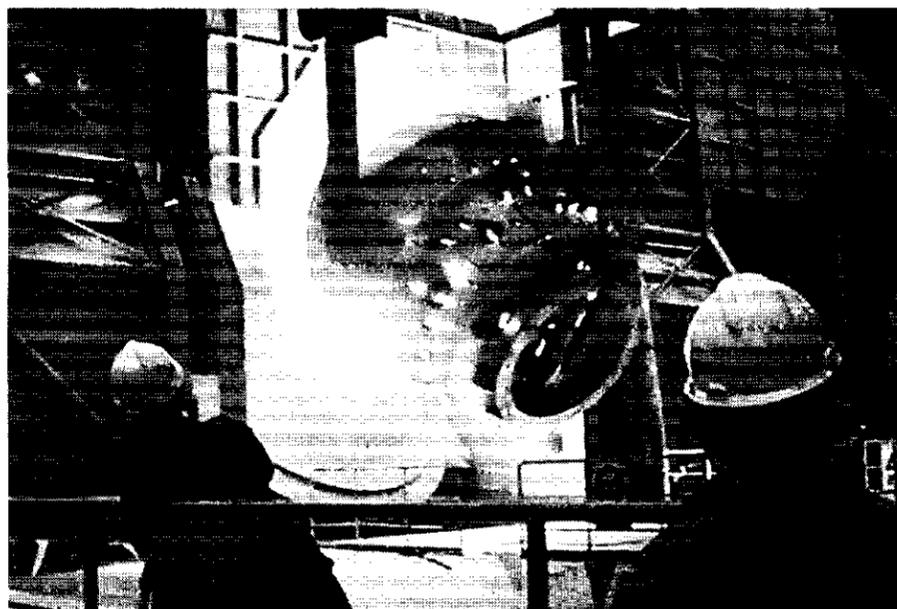


George Bush in May 2006 hosts Chinese anti-Communist “human rights” dissidents Li Baiguang, Wang Yi, Yu Jie (left to right), later signatories to Charter 08.

formed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong’s CCP regime, a nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the workers state. Unlike the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the Bolshevik internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky, the Chinese Revolution was the result of peasant guerrilla war led by Mao’s Stalinist-nationalist forces. Patterned after the Stalinist bureaucracy that had usurped power in the USSR, Mao and his successors, including today’s Hu Jintao regime, have preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country. In practice,

“socialism in one country” has meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution that is essential for the advance to socialism.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defence of China against imperialism and counterrevolution. In answer to the aspirations of the Chinese workers and rural toilers for democratic rights and a government that represents their needs and interests, we stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a government based on elected workers and peasants councils and committed to revolutionary proletarian internationalism. This perspective, premised on



Workers at Baosteel plant in Shanghai, part of China’s collectivised industry.

defence of the gains of the Revolution, is diametrically opposed to the counter-revolutionary machinations of outfits like Charter 08.

“Human rights” and “democracy” in the service of counterrevolution

Charter 08 takes its name from Charter 77, a document put out by dissidents in Czechoslovakia in 1977. This and similar groups were encouraged and promoted by the “human rights” campaign launched by then US Democratic president Jimmy Carter as a way of politically undermining the Soviet Union and its East European bloc partners. It is, as they say, no accident that Vaclav Havel, a leading figure in Charter 77, later played a central role in the imperialist-backed counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989-90.

Far more openly than Havel & Co in 1977, the group around Charter 08 brandishes the watchwords of “human rights” and “democracy” to attack the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist rule. The Charter states: “Where is China headed in the twenty-first century? Will it continue with ‘modernization’ under authoritarian rule, or will it embrace universal human values, join the mainstream of civilized nations, and build a democratic system?” Concretely, it demands: “We must abolish the special privilege of one party to monopolize power and must guarantee principles of free and fair competition among political parties.”

There is no such thing as a classless “democracy”. Western-type parliamentary government elected through universal suffrage is a disguised political form of the *dictatorship of the capitalist class*. In such a system the working class is politically reduced to atomised individuals. The bourgeoisie can effectively manipulate the electorate through its control of the media, the education system and the other institutions shaping public opinion. In all capitalist “democracies”, government officials are bought and paid for by the banks and large corporations. As Lenin explained in his 1918 polemic *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*: “Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the ‘democracy’ of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*.”

While the demand for pure “democracy” might play a certain role in mobilising the forces of counterrevolution in China, their victory would not bring a stable bourgeois parliamentary-type regime. Rather China would be subjugated and perhaps torn apart by American,

**Defend the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state!
For workers political revolution!**

West European and Japanese imperialism, transformed into a giant sweatshop.

The People's Republic of China is a bureaucratically deformed expression of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. The class rule of the capitalists has been smashed and the economy collectivised, but the proletariat is deprived of direct political power. What is needed is

become a great power by integrating into the world capitalist market via foreign investment and the export of cheap manufactured goods to the US and Western Europe. But now that economic strategy has been derailed—spectacularly—by the global capitalist economic crisis.

The dominant weight of the state-



Corbis

People's Liberation Army marching through Beijing, June 1949. Revolution smashed landlord/capitalist rule but was deformed from its inception by nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy.

a fight for proletarian democracy. The workers and rural toilers need their own class-based governing institutions, the soviets (the Russian term for councils), which would be open to all parties defending the workers state.

Charter 08 pushes "free market" capitalism

Charter 08's call for capitalist restoration is unambiguous:

"We should establish and protect the right to private property and promote an economic system of free and fair markets.... We should establish a Committee on State-Owned Property, reporting to the national legislature, that will monitor the transfer of state-owned enterprises to private ownership in a fair, competitive, and orderly manner."

It's more than a little ironic that this demand for "free market" capitalism is being raised at the very moment when the destructive irrationality of the capitalist system—the anarchy of the market—is more evident than at any time in the past several decades. World capitalism is in the throes of a deepening financial/economic crisis centred in the imperialist countries of North America, Western Europe and Japan. Desperate to stanch the bleeding, the governments of these countries are nationalising banks, subsidising key industries and engaging in other forms of state intervention in the economy. At the same time, many US politicians, especially around the Democratic Obama administration, have been pushing an increasingly protectionist stance against China.

One might think the authors of Charter 08 had taken their neo-liberal economic programme of privatising industry and commerce from editorials in the *Wall Street Journal* or London *Economist* of two or three years ago. Actually the roots of their ideas are probably closer to home. Despite Charter 08's hostility to the CCP regime, in a sense it has taken the CCP leaders' doctrine of "market socialism" to its logical conclusion. For decades, the Beijing Stalinists have extolled market mechanisms and competition as superior to centralised planning and management. They have wielded the whip of the market in an attempt to resolve the problem of stagnant productivity inherent to the bureaucratic commandism that prevailed under Mao. Their claim has been that China can

owned enterprises and banks has prevented China from being dragged into the kind of deep economic crisis that is ravaging most capitalist countries. Nonetheless, major sectors of its economy have been hard hit. In Guangdong province, the centre of China's export industry, shipments plummeted **over 50 per cent** in the first two months of this year. Already over 20 million migrant workers have been laid off, mainly from factories owned by foreign and offshore Chinese capitalists that produce consumer goods for export.

This has precipitated an upsurge of defensive labour struggle that has seen angry workers, demanding back pay or severance pay, fighting pitched battles with the police. The CCP regime has responded with a mixture of repression, cash handouts to some of the newly unemployed and the reversal of some of its privatisation measures. "So much for capitalism", headlined the *Economist* (5 March) in an article on China's latest economic moves, which noted ruefully that the "opening up" of China's economy appears to be going "into reverse".

Anti-Communist social democrats laud Charter 08

It is to be expected that leading organs of Western bourgeois opinion would praise Charter 08. But so do a number of groups claiming to be socialist, indeed Trotskyist. In reality, these groups reject Trotskyism in favour of a programme of "democratic" capitalist counterrevolution.

A recent article by the Hong Kong-based *October Review* group, linked to the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), supports Charter 08 without the slightest criticism ("The State of Human Rights in China", 31 December 2008). Saluting "the efforts of the people for democracy and human rights", the article has not a single reference to capitalism, socialism or the working class!

For its part, the British-based Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) led by Peter Taaffe writes:

"This manifesto, now with over 7,000 signatures, calls for an end to one-party rule and for basic civil liberties—things that socialists also fight for (many 'charter 08' signatories, however, are liberals who favour a faster pace of capitalist 'economic reform')."

—chinaworker.info, 16 January

While chiding Charter 08 for its economic proposals, the CWI *positively identifies* with its calls for "democracy". This is nothing new for the Taaffeites, who have backed all manner of anti-Communist forces in the degenerated/deformed workers states. In the final tumultuous years of the USSR, they supported the capitalist-restorationist "democratic" camp of Boris Yeltsin. In August 1991, Yeltsin, openly backed by then US president George Bush Sr, staged a successful counter-coup against the remnants of the disintegrating Kremlin oligarchy. The Taaffeites joined Yeltsin's reactionary rabble on the Moscow barricades. In sharp contrast, our comrades in Moscow distributed a leaflet in the tens of thousands with the urgent call: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" Capitalist counterrevolution brought mass unemployment, falling life expectancy and social degradation to the peoples of the former USSR and Eastern Europe, while emboldening the imperialist exploiters in attacking working people and minorities.

Today, the CWI publicises the work of the Hong Kong-based *China Labour Bulletin* (CLB). While masquerading as a workers organisation championing "independent trade unions", the CLB is a counterrevolutionary group with direct connections to US imperialism. Its leader Han Dongfang has long had a programme on the CIA's Radio Free Asia and is vice-chair of the World Movement for Democracy, an outfit founded and run by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a notorious CIA front. Han has been called the "Chinese Lech Walesa", after the leader of Poland's Solidarność. In the 1980s, Solidarność, the only "union" supported by Reagan, Thatcher and the Vatican, led the drive to bring capitalist exploitation in "democratic" guise back to the Soviet bloc, with full support from

organisers, is president of the US-based "Independent Chinese PEN Center", which receives regular NED funding. Two other prominent Charter spokesmen, Li Baiguang and Teng Biao, were given the NED's "Democracy Award" at a ceremony in Washington last year. To date, the CCP regime appears to have treated these pro-imperialist dissidents with untypically mild repression. While taking steps to block the Charter from the internet, it has arrested only one Charter spokesman, Liu Xiaobo, while briefly detaining others or putting them under surveillance. This is in contrast to the severe repression that has been inflicted on leaders of workers strikes and other protests.

While sharply opposing Charter 08's politics, we do not at this time support the repression of its initiators and signers. These right-wing ideologues are clearly not leading a movement that threatens the existence of the Chinese workers state, as was the case with Polish Solidarność by the fall of 1981. At that time, we wrote: "The threat of a counterrevolutionary thrust for power is now posed in Poland. That threat must be crushed at all costs and by any means necessary" ("Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" *Workers Vanguard* no 289, 25 September 1981). When the Stalinists moved to suppress Solidarność in December 1981, we supported this. At the same time, we indicted the bureaucracy for its nationalism, economic mismanagement and decades of capitulation to the Catholic church and other pro-capitalist forces, which drove workers from the historically socialist-minded proletariat of Poland into the arms of reaction.

With their hosannas to the "free markets" that are wreaking havoc around the globe, the right-wing intellectuals of Charter 08 are highly unlikely to gain any traction among China's working people, for whom the "magic of the market" has meant savage exploitation

Communist Party leader in Mianzhu begs enraged parents of victims of last year's Sichuan earthquake to stop their protest of shoddy school construction, May 2008.



Fukuda/NY Times

the Taaffeites and the USec.

Like Charter 08's demand for "free elections", calls for "free trade unions" on the Solidarność model are a reactionary trap for the working class. The struggle for unions free of bureaucratic control, important for China's embattled working people, must be based on defence of the workers state that issued from the 1949 Revolution. This struggle, as well as the fight for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold as part of the fight for soviet democracy, for the formation of workers councils opposing the bureaucratic parasites and suppressing counterrevolutionary elements.

Witting tools of US imperialism

Charter 08's leaders are not naive ingénues; many among them also have open associations with US imperialism. Liu Xiaobo, one of the Charter's main

and growing unemployment. Three decades ago, even as it promoted bourgeois "democracy", Charter 77 did not call for the restoration of a capitalist economy because at the time such a demand would have repelled most Czechoslovak intellectuals, not to speak of the workers.

The programme of "democratic" counterrevolution pushed by the likes of Charter 08 must be defeated *politically*—and that is something that the nationalist CCP bureaucracy is manifestly incapable of doing. In meting out repression, the Stalinist rulers do not differentiate between counterrevolutionaries and those who politically oppose bureaucratic rule from the standpoint of the historic interests of the proletariat. After the smashing of capitalist class rule in 1949, hundreds of Chinese Trotskyists who fought in

continued on page 11

Protectionism...

(Continued from page 1)

Similar protests at Staythorpe power station in Nottinghamshire and at the Isle of Grain in Kent against Spanish and Polish workers have featured placards saying "British jobs for British workers" as well as "Stop excluding British workers" and "Fairness for British workers". Derek Simpson, co-leader of the Unite union, supported these protests and was photographed beside the Union Jack, the racist emblem of the Empire in colonial times, symbol of the subjugation of Catholics in Northern Ireland today and of the bloody occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

These reactionary protests, which have been enthusiastically supported by the BNP, can only fan the flames of racism and help drive immigrant workers off the building sites. The campaign has sent a chilling message to all immigrants and minorities: during the Lindsey strike, racist strikers told the Italian workers to "go back to your own country" and there has been an outcry in the London *Evening Standard* against foreign workers working on the Olympics construction sites in London. What's needed is to mobilise the multi-ethnic working class in a fight against the Labour government. This requires a political fight to replace the Labourite union misleaders with a class-struggle leadership. Such a leadership in the trade unions would oppose the racist "war on terror" and fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

Labourites whitewash chauvinism

Scandalously, Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party played a leading role in the Lindsey strike and hailed the Lindsey settlement as a victory, while working overtime to peddle the lying claim that the strikes were not anti-immigrant, even though at one Staythorpe protest in February a section of the workers could be heard chanting "foreigners out" on a YouTube video. The Taaffeites made a lot of the fact the BNP had been excluded from the protests. But why did the BNP want to join them in the first place? The Socialist Party, whose member Keith Gibson was on the strike committee, wrote the strike demands, which merely replaced the slogan "British jobs for British workers" with a call for "union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members". In other words, jobs would be filled by "local", ie British, workers.

The Taaffeites' uncritical enthusing over the strikes was shared by the *Morning Star* and by George Galloway's Respect coalition. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) at first criticised the Lindsey strike as being based on the wrong slogans and targeting the wrong people, but it didn't take them long to capitulate to the Socialist Party and the trade union bureaucracy. They began circulating a petition to the TUC which opposes the slogan "British jobs for



Protest at Staythorpe, February, awash with Union Jacks and slogans against immigrant workers.

Down with reactionary strikes against foreign workers!

British workers" but goes on to say "we support the demands of the Lindsey Oil Refinery strike committee". This is a huge concession to social-chauvinism. Other groups such as the Alliance for Workers Liberty, Permanent Revolution and the Communist Party of Great Britain likewise claim to oppose the slogan "British jobs for British workers" but support the demands of the strike.

For the Labourite left, support to protectionism is not new. When BMW announced it was pulling out of Birmingham in 2000, the trade union bureaucrats organised a demonstration based on vile anti-German slogans such as "Save British manufacturing industry!" and "Save British jobs". The demo was welcomed by the SWP as the "great jobs revolt", and the Union Jack flew prominently on the march which also featured grotesque slogans such as "We won two world wars let's win the third."

The Socialist Party and SWP follow the political tradition of the social democrats of the Second International who lined up behind their own bourgeoisies at the outbreak of World War I in 1914. We stand in the tradition of Lenin who fought to win over the working-class base of these parties to the Bolshevik programme of proletarian revolutionary internationalism through a political break from the social-chauvinist camp in the workers movement.

Any meaningful fight against the massive job losses we face today must be based on Trotsky's 1938 *Transitional Programme*, the founding document of the Fourth International, which outlined a strategy for revolutionary leadership of the proletariat in the face of tremendous defeats, stating that:

"The Fourth International declares uncompromising war on the politics of the capitalists which, to a considerable degree, like the politics of their agents, the reformists,

aims to place the whole burden of militarism, the crisis, the disorganization of the monetary system and all other scourges stemming from capitalism's death agony upon the backs of the toilers."

— *The death agony of capitalism and the tasks of the Fourth International*

To fight unemployment, a class-struggle leadership in the unions would



Placard at Spartacist League literature table on 28 March London demonstrations reads "Down with reactionary strikes against foreign workers!"

demand jobs for all through a shorter work week at no loss in pay; divide all available work among the entire workforce, not only at equal pay but with a sliding scale of hours and wages. The unions must organise all non-union workers, especially immigrants. The struggle against unemployment, poverty and worsening conditions must be linked to the overthrow of the capitalist order and the conquest of state power by the proletariat.

Workers of the world, unite!

Significantly, both the General Confederation of Italian Workers (CGIL) and the Spanish Metal, Construction and Allied Workers Federation (MCA-UGT) issued statements of protest at the impact of these strikes on their members working in Britain. This shows the need for international collaboration between construction workers across European countries. The contrast between the great miners strike of 1984-85 and today's construction strikes couldn't be clearer. The miners came up against the full force of the capitalist

state, and became a tribune of the oppressed layers of society, including women, black and Asian minorities as well as gay and lesbian organisations which recognised that they were fighting the same enemy. In contrast to the vile nationalism at Lindsey and Staythorpe, the miners strike inspired magnificent displays of proletarian internationalism from workers around the world: French trade unions gave money as well as practical assistance to miners' families, and unions elsewhere including apartheid South Africa and the Soviet Union sent material aid.

The workers movement has seen several examples of trade union solidarity against the capitalists' attempts to use low-wage immigrant workers as a club against the unions. In Dublin in 2005 workers demonstrated against Irish Ferries—and in solidarity with immigrant workers—when the bosses tried to hire East European workers at a fraction of Irish workers' wages. As our comrades said in a leaflet calling for the working class to defend immigrants: "Unions must organise immigrant workers! Full wages and benefits for immigrants!" Another example was the Heathrow strike in 2005 when, in response to the sacking of low-paid catering workers and replacing them with immigrants at even lower wages (which did *not* happen in the construction sites at power stations), the workforce at British Airways staged an immensely powerful wildcat strike that

crippled BA's international operation. But the union leadership under Tony Woodley ended the strike without obtaining the reinstatement of the sacked workers.

While the Socialist Party played a leading role in the Lindsey strike for "British jobs for British workers", which had the backing of the bourgeois press, they are not so militant when it comes to organising strikes in the civil servants union PCS, where they occupy leading positions. The Taaffeites in the PCS were instrumental in accepting a rotten deal that meant workers joining the civil service will have to work five more years to qualify for their pensions. With the world's largest carmakers announcing tens of thousands of redundancies around the world, the Unite union bureaucracy is calling on the British government to bail out the car manufacturers in Britain. As Marxists we are opposed to a bailout of the auto bosses, which will be purchased through the further destruction of the jobs and livelihoods of working people as we are seeing with the

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bailouts of the banks.

The Unite union launched a "Unite for Jobs campaign" at a press conference in March, featuring union leaders Tony Woodley and Derck Simpson as well as Digby Jones, former chief of the Confederation of British Industry and government minister (who knows more than most about grinding down British manufacturing) and the CEO of the Society of Motor Manufacturers along with Labour MP John Cruddas. This campaign seeks to bring together "leading figures in business, politics and academia with the country's biggest union" to propel Britain "out of recession" (unitetheunion.com). This is the essence of Labourism—class collaboration with the capitalist bosses, rather than class struggle against them. For the time being, British industry belongs to the blood-sucking capitalists. The working class has no country!

What kind of workers party?

Labour's track record in office since 1997 doesn't stop the reformist left from voting Labour in elections: in last year's London mayoral election, the AWL, Permanent Revolution, Workers Power and the SWP all voted either first or second preference for Labour's Ken Livingstone who fully backed the racist "war on terror" and ostentatiously backed the Metropolitan Police following the execution of Jean Charles de Menezes on the Tube. As top boss of the Tube network, Livingstone also called on RMT members to cross their own picket lines in a Tube strike.

The Socialist Party's role in the Lindsey strike gives a pretty accurate picture of what the new mass workers party they call for would look like. Their programme includes support for counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and loyalty to "democratic" British imperialism and its state. In August 2007, the Socialist Party hailed a strike of prison officers over pay and conditions; in January 2008 they supported a London march by some 20,000 cops demanding better pay. Prison officers and the police are not part of the working class, but of the armed fist of the capitalist state. Strikes by the repressive forces of the state are for better pay and conditions to carry out their job, which for prison guards is to repress and brutalise the prison population; for the police it means arresting and brutalising black and Asian minorities and breaking strikes. Try telling the families of the dozens of blacks and Asians who have died in police custody, or any miner who was at the battle of Orgreave during the strike, that "social-

ists" ought to support better pay for the cops to carry out their job!

The Socialist Party refuses to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland and in March took part in a pro-imperialist march in Northern Ireland organised to condemn the Republican killings of two British Army soldiers and a cop. These killings of members of the forces of the British state and the Orange statelet were not crimes from the standpoint of the working class and as such we defend the perpetrators against state repression (see "Defend Irish Republicans against state repression!", *Workers Hammer* no 206, Spring 2009).

The Socialist Party, SWP and all of the reformist left adhere to old Labour reformism, based on the myth that socialism can be achieved by legislation in parliament nationalising industry without smashing the capitalist state. The commitment to "common ownership of the means of production" enshrined in Clause IV of the Labour Party's constitution (and abolished by Tony Blair in 1994) was introduced amid a revolutionary tide sweeping Europe in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917. The Labour leaders adopted this clause to dupe the working class into thinking socialism could be achieved through parliament without the need for a revolution.

As for nationalisations under capitalism, they're not by any stretch of the imagination a step towards socialism. In the context of British imperialism's decline after WWII, the extensive nationalisations of coal, steel and other industries by the Clement Attlee Labour government were in reality giant capitalist bailouts designed to help British capitalism to compete in the world market. In that sense the post-WWII nationalisations were no more "socialist" than the bailout of the banks being carried out today by New Labour (and for that matter by the Bush/Obama regimes in the US).

Revolutionary internationalism v "little England" nationalism

As proletarian internationalists, we're opposed to the EU, which originated in the 1950s as rival European imperialist powers sought to consolidate their alliance against the Soviet Union through closer economic cooperation. Today the EU is an imperialist consortium designed to improve the competitiveness of the European bourgeoisies against their American and Japanese rivals at the expense of the working class in Europe, including its minority component, and of the neo-colonial peoples elsewhere. We also

opposed the eastward expansion of the EU to include the former deformed workers states of Eastern Europe which was designed to open up those countries to further imperialist penetration and provided the West European bourgeoisies with a vast supply of cheap labour. At the same time we're opposed to all work restrictions by West European governments on workers from the recent accession countries.

Our programme has nothing in common with the opposition to the EU expressed by Labourite "little England" nationalists. The latter is represented by the "No2EU" coalition founded in March to contest the June elections to the European parliament. Headed by RMT leader Bob Crow, with the active participation of the Socialist Party and the *Morning Star*, this campaign is based on support for the reactionary construction workers strikes. The No2EU platform rails against EU legislation that curbs civil liberties, but makes no mention whatsoever of the "war on terror" or the draconian restrictions on civil liberties by the Labour government in Britain. The No2EU campaign's claim to oppose the BNP has to be taken with a grain of salt given that the "British jobs for British workers" crusade on building sites, which the component parts of No2EU support, has given an enormous boost to the fascists.

A statement on the No2EU website calls on people to: "Vote No2EU Yes to Democracy to resist the EU turning human beings into commodities to be shunted around Europe while local workers are excluded from being able to provide for their families." Once again, for "local workers", read "British workers".

The eastward expansion of the EU resulted from the capitalist counterrevolution that swept Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1992, creating massive unemployment and social immiseration in those countries and amounting to an enormous defeat for the working people and oppressed of the entire world. As Trotskyists who uphold the programme of the Russian Revolution of 1917, we are the only tendency on the left that fought to the end for defence of the Soviet Union. In spite of its degeneration under the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy that usurped political power starting in 1924, the Soviet Union remained a workers state based on the collectivised economy that issued out of the revolution, the greatest achievement of the working class to date. We applied the same programme to the workers states created in Eastern Europe in the wake of the Soviet

Union's victory over the Nazis in WWII. These states were qualitatively the same as the Soviet Union after its political degeneration. We stood for unconditional military defence of these workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution; at the same time we fought for proletarian political revolution to replace the Stalinist bureaucratic caste with a government of workers soviets committed to proletarian internationalism. This is what we fight for today in the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

In a historic gain for the working class internationally, capitalism was overthrown in China by the 1949 Revolution which led to the building of a collectivised economy. Despite the "market reforms", China's economy is still dominated by the state-controlled banks, the core elements of the economy remain collectivised and state-owned enterprises are still dominant in the strategic sectors. However China is by no means insulated from the crisis in the capitalist world and large numbers of workers have lost their jobs since the start of the economic crisis.

The reformist left supported every counterrevolutionary force that contributed to the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe, from Solidarność in Poland, the *mujahedin* in Afghanistan in the 1980s to Yeltsin in the Soviet Union. The SWP described the counterrevolution as a "fact that should have every socialist rejoicing", while the Socialist Party and Workers Power were on Yeltsin's barricades. Today they support provocations against the Chinese deformed workers state waged under the slogan "Free Tibet", which means they are for a Tibet dominated by the imperialists and the Dalai Lama's feudal theocracy.

The US imperialists are bent on restoring capitalist rule in the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, and for this they have a two-pronged strategy: military encirclement combined with capitalist economic penetration. Obama wants to extricate US troops from the Iraq quagmire in order to aim the US military at more strategic and long-term targets, not least China. At the same time, the Democrats, backed by the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracy, have been in the forefront of pushing anti-China chauvinist protectionism. Obama is completely committed to continuing Bush's "war on terror", including sending an additional 17,000 US troops to Afghanistan, where Gordon Brown has pledged to increase the number of British troops.

continued on page 10

WORKERS HAMMER

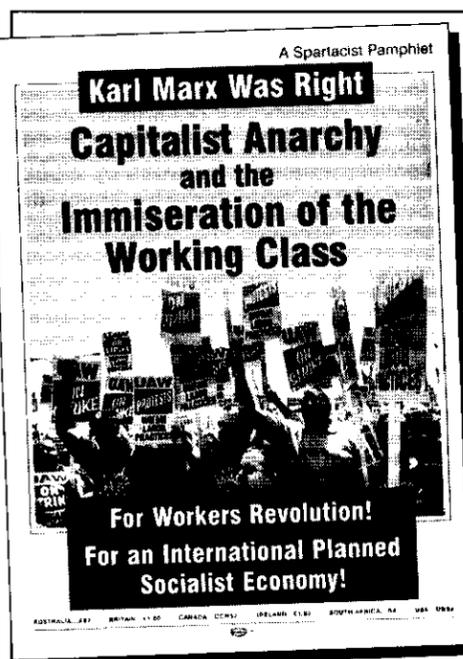
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For trade union protest against state repression!

Cop rampage at G20 protest killed Ian Tomlinson

We print below a Spartacist League protest leaflet issued on 10 April following the death of Ian Tomlinson at the hands of the police during the G20 protests in London on 1 April, which was published in Workers Vanguard no 935, 24 April 2009.

The killing of Tomlinson and other widely photographed police violence has brought forth calls for reform from bourgeois quarters prompted by concerns for Britain's "human rights" pretences. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has reportedly received some 185 complaints of police brutality at the protests. In addition to the IPCC enquiries, the Metropolitan Police are "investigating" themselves, in a review of police tactics launched by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Speaking of this review in the House of Lords, Home Office minister Lord West of Spithead exposed the government's other concerns for the problem of "order": "I do not like the thought of water cannon, baton rounds or shooting people, all of which seem to occur in some other countries: I am jolly glad that I live in this one. However, all of those things will, quite rightly, be looked at" (publications.parliament.uk, 21 April).

The killing of Tomlinson and beating of G20 protesters mirror the treatment meted out to Britain's black and Asian minorities on a daily basis. Black deaths in custody accumulate year on year like a deadly plague and are barely reported, much less punished. To "rein in" the cops requires mobilising the working class in a fight for its own state power. This demands first and foremost shattering illusions in capitalist "justice" and "democracy" which exist in reality for few other than the Lord Wests of this world.

The cops were out for blood at the G20 protests last week in London, and they got it. Weeks of press articles ominously predicting widespread destruction and violence by G20 protesters set the stage for an enormous cop presence which then terrorised the protesters, cracking heads and corralling or "kettling" thousands in a virtual mass detention for hours. Ian Tomlinson died at the hands of the cops in the City of London on 1 April. A video clip posted on the Guardian website (7 April) shows Tomlinson, a 47-year-old who lived in the area, walking home from work through the City and getting caught up in the police corral. The video shows him being clubbed with a baton from behind by a cop wearing a balaclava. Seconds later, the cop violently pushes Tomlinson to the ground. Minutes later he was dead.

Even before the video came to light, a growing body of witness statements showed the cops' story to be a tissue of lies: that Tomlinson simply dropped dead of a heart attack, unprovoked; that protesters intentionally blocked the police medics' access to Tomlinson and hurled "missiles" at them. In fact, witnesses told how protesters who were

trying to help Tomlinson were pushed away by the cops. Witness statements printed in the Guardian (8 April) indicate that Tomlinson was attacked twice, "both times from behind and as he was walking away". Press photographer Anna Branthwaite gave a detailed statement of one of the assaults, in which she saw a riot cop grab Tomlinson: "It was a very forceful knocking-down

their business, as millions of workers are being thrown on the scrap heap, to use riot shields, dogs and truncheons when a protest assembles outside the Bank of England. Contrary to the Labourite drivel of so-called "socialist" organisations who say cops are part of the working class, they are a key component of the capitalist state. The state is no neutral arbiter, it is at its core "armed bodies of

G20 summit plotting how best to shore up their crumbling capitalist economies on the backs of the working people and send more imperialist troops to Afghanistan. State repression such as was meted out in the City of London ultimately targets the working class. And it's the trade-union movement—the organised working class—that must be mobilised in self-defence which means



Left: London cops attack demonstrators at G20 protest, 1 April. Right: Ian Tomlinson, walking home from work, suffered lethal beating by police.

from behind. The officer hit him twice with a baton when he was lying on the floor." She continues, "It became an assault. And then the officer picked him up from the back, continued to walk or charge with him, and threw him. He was running and stumbling. He didn't turn and confront the officer or anything like that."

This is of a piece with the cops' conduct throughout the protests; the 3 April Guardian quotes protester Ashley Parsons describing the police conduct at the "climate camp" protest in Bishopsgate as "sickening and terrifying": "Without warning, from around midnight, the police repeatedly and violently surged forwards in full riot gear, occasionally rampaging through the protest line and deliberately destroying protesters' property, some officers openly screaming in pumped-up rage."

An investigation into Tomlinson's death is underway by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), but recall the 2005 police killing of Jean Charles de Menezes: pointblank execution on the London Tube in the name of the "war on terror" followed by a blizzard of lies from the Met about the innocent Brazilian electrician's "terrorist" behaviour. The jury at the de Menezes inquest last year were instructed *not* to return a verdict of unlawful killing, the police were exonerated, and the clear message was *the cops can kill and they will get away with it*.

The IPCC is no "independent" body committed to establishing the truth. Funded by the Home Office with its chair "appointed by the Crown following recommendation by the Home Secretary" (IPCC.gov.uk), it exists to defuse outrage at cop brutality; to whitewash the police and thereby facilitate their violent, racist business as usual. And it is

men" comprising police, courts, prisons and military that exist to maintain the capitalist system of exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed through parliamentary claptrap, investigations, or moral pleadings; it must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced with a workers state.

The cops were determined that no "disruption" would mar the perfect obscenity of Obama and Brown at the

also the defence of all the oppressed, of immigrants, blacks and Asians, Muslims witchhunted under the "war on terror", and of those who protest the barbarism of capitalism. The necessary instrumentality for the uprooting of the capitalist system is a revolutionary party, like the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky which led the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. It is the building of such a party to which the Spartacist League is committed. ■

Protectionism...

(Continued from page 9)

We call for all US/British troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan!

British imperialist crimes were often conducted under old Labour governments, such as the horrific communalist slaughter that accompanied the partition of India in 1947 and the sending of British troops to Northern Ireland in 1969. The present bloody mess in the Near East is the legacy of the carnage, savagery and divide-and-rule machinations of British imperialism when it was the dominant world power. Recent claims that MI5 was complicit in the rendition of "terrorism" suspects are hardly surprising: the British capitalist state has routinely used torture, from India to Africa, to Northern Ireland. Today in Iraq the British Army boasts about its expertise in "counterinsurgency" obtained during four decades of subjugation of the oppressed Catholics in Northern Ireland.

We fight to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, forged in political struggle against Labourism, which has served to tie the working

class to the capitalist exploiters for over a century. A Leninist vanguard party will be built on the understanding that workers can defend their own interests and those of all the oppressed only through the mass mobilisation of the working class, independent from all capitalist parties and their agencies, which culminates not in another version of parliament, but in Soviets or workers councils. Our perspective is that the bourgeoisie must be expropriated in favour of a planned economy which will open the road to a socialist future.

The working class, in the course of struggles and through the intervention of a Leninist-Trotskyist party, must be won to the programme of Marxism. We don't base our programme on the existing level of consciousness but on the material needs and historical interests of the working class, and on the experience of the workers movement at the high points of revolutionary struggle. Our model is the Russian Revolution of October 1917, led by Lenin and Trotsky, when the Russian workers took power into their own hands, expropriating the bourgeoisie and establishing a workers state. ■

China...

(Continued from page 7)

defence of the Revolution were rounded up and thrown in prison or shot. Following the worker and student upheavals centred on Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, the regime executed workers. We oppose the institution of capital punishment on principle, in China—where thousands are executed each year—no less than in capitalist countries.

The US group known as the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL) makes correct criticisms of Charter 08 in its 10 February internet posting, "The Truth Behind China's Charter 08 Manifesto—Liberal Language Cloaks Counterrevolutionary Aims". But the PSL looks to the Stalinist bureaucracy as the key barrier to counterrevolution: "The CCP government, in spite all of its contradictions, remains the most important obstacle to the return of China to its previous state of semi-colonial slavery." While criticising the CCP leaders' "market reforms", the PSL hopes that Hu Jintao & Co will see the light and return to the "socialist road":

"Faced with an intensified imperialist offensive, the CCP leadership could change course, turning to the working class for support and reinstating socialist measures.

"However unlikely, the path to a renewal or strengthening of socialist methods is possible as long as the CCP retains its hold on state power."

The PSL contrasts the CCP's "market reforms" to "the path followed by the Communist Party during the Mao era". However, Mao-style national "self-sufficiency" (economic autarky) and the market-oriented policies of later CCP leaders were both ways by which the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy sought to "peacefully coexist" with world imperialism in different periods and different international contexts. Under Mao, this was expressed in China's grotesque alliance with US imperialism against the Soviet Union.

In reality, the continued rule of the CCP undermines defence of proletarian state power in China. Thanks to the regime's policies, a sizable class of capitalist entrepreneurs with links to the offshore bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Taiwan has emerged on the mainland, though they are still prevented from organising politically and vying for power. Many CCP officials have financial and familial ties to such entrepreneurs. Contrary to the PSL's claims, the bureaucracy continues to preserve state property not out of a subjective identification with socialism but, as Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), "only to the extent that it fears



China Photos



Global capitalist economic crisis has slowed Chinese growth, hit export industry hard. Left: Massive jobs fair in Shaanxi province, 1 March. Above: Laid-off workers in Harbin stage workplace sit-in on 18 March demanding reinstatement of insurance and retirement benefits.

the proletariat"—ie, to protect its privileged position as a parasitic caste atop the workers state. Sooner or later, by one political path or another, the Stalinist regime will bring China to the brink of capitalist counterrevolution, posing pointblank the fate of the most populous country on earth.

It is instructive to look back at the social and political dynamics of counterrevolution in the Russian core of the former USSR. This was *not* led by anti-Communist dissident intellectuals analogous to China's Charter 08 but by major elements derived from the decomposing *nomenklatura*, the Soviet bureaucratic elite. A few years before Boris Yeltsin took power and announced the dissolution of the USSR, he was a senior leader in the Kremlin. There are today more than a few potential Yeltsins in the leading bodies of the CCP. At the same time the Chinese Stalinists have learned something from the counterrevolution in the ex-USSR. Seeking to forestall such developments in China, the CCP leaders have pursued policies of *perestroika* (market-oriented "reforms") without a hint of *glasnost* (political democratisation).

For proletarian political revolution!

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, his classic analysis of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky emphasised: "Under a nationalised economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery." The CCP regime's policies and practices create a climate in which some of the proponents of "democratic" counterrevolution could gain a hearing, at least among a layer of intellectuals, peasants and even some

workers. At the same time, the increasing antagonism between the bureaucracy and China's toiling masses is also preparing the ground for a proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic ruling Stalinists.

The potential for a pro-socialist workers uprising was shown in the May-June 1989 Tiananmen upheaval. In its article on Charter 08, the PSL endorses the line of the Chinese Stalinists on these events, calling them

bureaucracy (see "The Spectre of Tiananmen and Working-Class Struggle in China Today", *Workers Vanguard* nos 836 and 837, 12 and 26 November 2004).

The crucial missing element, during the Tiananmen events as well as today, is an authentic Bolshevik—ie, Leninist-Trotskyist—party to rally the working masses around the banner of workers democracy and communist internationalism. Such a party would be forged in



Corbis

Chinese workers join Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing, May 1989. Banner reads: "The Workers' and Students' Hearts Are Joined."

"a counterrevolutionary effort painted in the West as a 'struggle for democracy'". In reality, protests that began among students opposing corruption and seeking political liberalisation were joined by masses of Chinese workers, driven into action by their own grievances against the impact of the regime's market measures, especially high inflation.

Workers assemblies and motorised flying squads were thrown up, pointing to the potential for the emergence of authentic worker, soldier and peasant councils. The entry into struggle of the working class terrified the CCP rulers, who eventually unleashed fierce repression. But the bureaucracy, including the officer corps of the military, began to fracture under the impact of the proletarian upsurge. The first army units that were mobilised refused to act in the face of enormous popular support for the protests among Beijing's working people. Other more regime-loyal army units had to be brought in to carry out the massacre of June 1989, which was overwhelmingly targeted at workers rather than students. This was an incipient proletarian political revolution, drowned in blood by the Stalinist

political combat not only with currents emerging out of the decomposing Stalinist bureaucracy but also with the anti-Communist purveyors of Western-type "democracy", including some who will doubtless posture far to the left of the Charter 08 group.

The survival and advancement of China's revolutionary gains hinges on the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Japan, North America and Western Europe, the only road towards the all-round modernisation of China as part of an international planned economy. A proletarian political revolution producing a China of worker and peasant councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world, dealing a deathblow to the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" propaganda, lifting up the downtrodden masses of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and inspiring the workers in the imperialist heartlands. This, ultimately, is the only perspective that can defeat the siren call of "democracy" pushed by imperialist-backed outfits as well as fake "socialists" who are enemies of the gains of the Chinese Revolution. ■

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WORKERS HAMMER 4

Asylum now for Tamil refugees!

Defend the Tamil people!

The following article was written by comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste of Canada, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The savage 26-year war waged by the Sri Lankan government in the North and East of the Indian Ocean island ended on 18 May with the destruction of the remnants of the Tamil mini-state and the execution of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. But if the goals of the blood-drenched Sinhala-chauvinist regime have been achieved, its merciless repression of the Tamil people and their national rights continues.

Since January, at least 8000 Tamils and perhaps as many as 20,000 have been killed in a war that had already taken at least 70,000 lives. Cutting through the wall of press censorship, reports are emerging that an estimated 300,000 Tamils—40 per cent of them children—are now imprisoned in a network of prison camps and interrogation centres. Particularly chilling was a 23 May account by the Toronto *Globe and Mail's* Doug Saunders, who reported that the detainees “are not just those who have fled the violence, but the entire civilian population of the north-eastern conflict area, which is being swept clean of inhabitants by the military”. Those in the camps will be “screened” as a precondition to release, a process which a government spokesman says could take up to two years.

Against the bloody vengeance of the Lankan government, the international working class must rally to the defence of the Tamil people. Tamil émigrés in Canada, Britain and elsewhere now watch in helpless agony, knowing their families could be dead or held in the army's camps. We stand with them demanding asylum now for Tamil refugees!

In the months leading up to this catastrophe, in cities around the world Tamils have carried out protest after massive protest. In Toronto, where the 200,000-strong Tamil community is one of the largest outside South Asia, the demonstrations were among the biggest in the city's history. The sight of tens of thou-



300,000 Tamil refugees are imprisoned in hellish prison camps and interrogation centres such as Menik Farm.

sands of angry Tamils choking major Toronto streets in a sea of Tamil Eelam flags (which resemble the flag of the LTTE) sparked howls of outrage from bourgeois politicians and journalists.

The US, Britain, the European Union and Canada had all banned the Tigers earlier, declaring them a “terrorist” organisation. In doing so, the imperialist powers effectively gave the green light to the Lankan regime in its murderous army offensive. This underscores that the repeated calls on the Canadian, US and other imperialists to intervene on behalf of the Tamils could only be in vain, for they have overwhelmingly supported the Lankan government's war against the Tamil people. From the start we denounced the bans on the LTTE, which signalled the repressive attacks on exile Tamil organisations that continue to this day. It is in the clear interest of all working people to defend Tamil organisations against state repression.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste and other sections of the International Communist League have joined in the Tamil protests, distributing literature in solidarity with the besieged Tamils and putting forward our proletarian-revolutionary perspective for nation-

al and social liberation. As we wrote in *Spartacist Canada* no 160 (Spring 2009):

“We have long upheld the right of self-determination for the Tamil people—i.e., their right to form an independent state in the largely Tamil North and East. We stand for the military defense of the LTTE against the army assault and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Lankan army from the area.

“At the same time, we give no political support to the LTTE—bourgeois nationalists who, carrying out the logic of nationalism, have staged their own interethnic attacks on Sinhalese villagers and expelled Muslims from the historic Tamil city of Jaffna, the capital of the northern region, while employing murderous violence against other Tamil nationalist groups.”

In the wake of the devastating bloodbath, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) regime of Mahinda Rajapaksa staged grotesque chauvinist rallies in Colombo and declared a national holiday. Meant to further degrade an already defeated Tamil population, this sickening triumphalism underscores that the communal divisions fostered by the regime and its predecessors are deeper than ever. What we wrote at the time of the government-orchestrated anti-Tamil pogroms in 1983 retains all its force and more today:

“The government-orchestrated Sinhala-chauvinist bloodbath against the Tamil people in the small Indian Ocean island nation of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) has catastrophically altered for the foreseeable future the prospects for common class struggle between the Sinhalese working class and the oppressed Tamil minority.”

—“Massacre in Sri Lanka”, *Spartacist* no 35 (Autumn 1983)

Our organisation had always upheld the right to Tamil self-determination while counselling against its exercise, arguing in favour of united working-class struggle for Tamil freedom and socialist revolution in Lanka and its extension through the Indian subcontinent. But, as we wrote, “in the wake of the mass killing of Tamils, the bitterness and hostility between the peoples of Ceylon has evidently become insur-

mountable at least in the short run”. Thus we raised the call *for the right of Tamil Eelam*:

“The bloody communal struggle argues that even with proletarian revolution in Ceylon and South Asia generally, a *federated* socialist republic in Ceylon will be necessary to achieve the unity of Tamils and Sinhalese on a basis of justice and equality (and to take into account Sinhalese fears of vengeance at the hands of the millions of Tamils in south India).”

At the same time, we noted that the prospects for an independent Tamil capitalist state in the arid and underdeveloped North were not good. Nor would the formation of such a state ensure the national survival of the Tamils, who were (and remain) interpenetrated with the Sinhalese majority throughout much of the island. On the other hand, the establishment of a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka would be a beacon to the oppressed and subjugated masses throughout the subcontinent, including among the 65 million Tamils across the Palk Strait in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The struggle of the Tamils is today at its most desperate pass. Drawing the lessons from a bitter history is difficult but necessary for pro-working-class elements, Tamil and Sinhalese alike. The once-Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party abandoned the interests of the proletariat and the defence of the Tamil people when it entered the Sinhala-chauvinist government of the SLFP in 1964.

Today the struggle to forge a Trotskyist party in Lanka must begin with the understanding that the eradication of national oppression and true social progress for the peoples of Lanka and the region will come when the barbaric rule of capital and the divisions inherited from imperialist domination are overturned through socialist revolution. Lasting national and class justice for the Tamil working people will be secured through permanent revolution—rule by the workers and peasants in a socialist federation of South Asia, and the extension of proletarian revolutions into the imperialist centres. ■



London, 11 April: 100,000 march against slaughter of Tamils in Sri Lanka.