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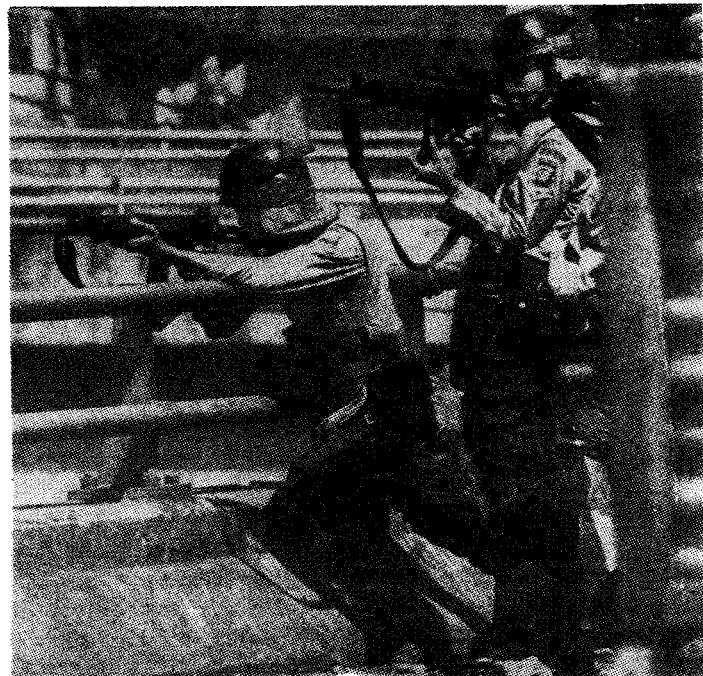
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Indonesia: For Workers Revolution!

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Herald Sun

Jakarta, 20 May: students demand immediate resignation of Suharto. Anger over police/military terror, IMF austerity triggered plebeian upheaval against U.S./Australia-backed dictatorship.

MAY 28—After more than three decades of tyrannical military dictatorship, ushered in by the slaughter of a half million workers, peasants, Communists and ethnic Chinese in 1965-66, the reign of Indonesian strongman Suharto has come to an end. Months of skyrocketing inflation and unemployment resulting from the economic crisis racking Southeast Asia have led to growing turmoil throughout the country. The anger exploded in May when the government imposed draconian cuts in subsidies for fuel and other necessities—jacking up prices by as much as 70 percent—as part of the austerity measures dictated by the imperialists' International Monetary Fund (IMF).

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

The imperialists aimed for a deal in which the military butchers would agree to back some less discredited bourgeois political figures, either from Suharto's current entourage or the tame "opposition." This was the sentiment as well of wide sectors of the Indonesian bourgeoisie fed up with the way the notoriously corrupt Suharto clan has run the country into the ground. Among the protesters, particularly students, illusions in a "democratic" wing of the military and civilian political establishment are rife. The new president, B.J. Habibie,

Down With the Generals! Down With Anti-Chinese Pogroms! Independence for East Timor!

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

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

The proletariat must take its place at the head of the unemployed poor, the rural masses, women, the hundreds of brutally subjugated ethnic and national minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the capitalist class. This is the only way to satisfy the aspirations of the masses and break the stranglehold of imperialist exploitation and domination. Indonesia is a classic example of combined and uneven development, where modern capitalist industry coexists with deep backwardness. Drawing on the experience of the Russian October Revolution of 1917, Bolshevik

leader Leon Trotsky explained in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving **democracy and national emancipation** is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all its peasant masses."

Proletarian revolution in the Indonesian archipelago would resonate throughout Southeast and East Asia, where hundreds of millions of working people are being crushed under the weight of brutal exploitation and IMF-imposed austerity. It would also be an enormous impetus to proletarian political revolution in China, where the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy is driving headlong toward capitalist counter-revolution. The U.S. and Australian imperialists—which have armed Suharto to the hilt—would immediately seek to use their financial and military might to stamp out any challenge to capitalist class rule. Thus the fight for a socialist Asia—for workers revolutions throughout the region, especially in imperialist centers like Japan and Australia—is a life-and-death question for proletarian militants in Indonesia. **IMF, CIA, U.S./Australian imperialism: Keep your bloody hands off Indonesia!**

A class-struggle leadership would organize trade-union boycotts of arms shipments to the blood-drenched Indonesian military. Australian maritime workers have a history of such solidarity actions, from bans on Dutch shipping

during the struggle for Indonesian independence in the 1940s to a 1996 boycott demanding the release of imprisoned Indonesian workers leaders. Genuine internationalist solidarity with the Indonesian working masses requires a political struggle against the social-democratic misleaders who embrace the aims of their imperialist masters: the British Labour government has sent over 50 arms shipments to Suharto in the past year, while the Australian Labor Party recently voted against a Senate motion calling for the release of leftists in Suharto's dungeons.

"People Power" Fraud

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

In Aquino, a member of the landed aristocracy and owner of one of the country's largest estates, Washington had a ready candidate with impeccable anti-Communist credentials and proven allegiance to their dictates. Her husband Benigno, who was assassinated in Manila in 1983, had long been groomed by the CIA as a potential replacement for the increasingly despised Marcos regime. A

continued on page 4

Australian Imperialism Get Out of Irian Jaya, Bougainville!

As students were being shot down in the streets of Jakarta, Australian F-111 fighter bombers, FFG frigates, Fremantle patrol boats and P3C Orion aircraft swept into the Java Sea to conduct joint military "exercises" with the murderous Indonesian armed forces (ABRI). At the same time Australian Defence Forces' (ADF) Black Hawk helicopters and a C130 Hercules transport plane were engaged in Operation Ausindojaya in Irian Jaya, the western part of the island of New Guinea. Billed as "famine relief," this joint operation with the ABRI is meant to back up a brutal military crack-down by the Javanese-centred regime against the indigenous Melanesian people.

The intervention of the Australian military follows a similar "famine relief" operation recently in Papua New Guinea. Meanwhile, an Australian military force is now in position in Bougainville running a "Peace Monitoring Group." Since 1989 up to 20,000 Bougainvilleans have died as a result of the PNG government's war and economic blockade—brain-trusted, financed and armed directly by Canberra—against the pro-independence Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). While Australia has managed to strong-arm some BRA leaders into a phoney "peace deal," BRA leader Francis Ona has denounced Australia's intervention and has vowed that if Australian armed forces enter BRA-controlled territory "orders have been given to shoot to kill." Ominously it was reported in January that Australia has plans to take over PNG's airspace in 48 hours in case of "instability" (*The Age*, 22 January). We oppose the attempt to force Bougainville to stay within the artificial boundaries of PNG, carved out by British colonialism and now serving the interests of the giant Rio Tinto mining company. We say: Australian imperialism get out of Irian Jaya, PNG and Bougainville!

From the 1958 CIA-backed "Outer Islands Rebellion" in Indonesia to the dirty *losing* war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants, the Australian imperialists have acted as bloody junior partners of the United States in policing the region for imperialist domination. In 1965 Australia's foreign intelligence agency ASIS assisted the American CIA

in aiding the mass slaughter of Indonesian leftists and others. Thirty years later Indonesia's murderous Kostrad "strategic reserve" forces played a central role in "Exercise Kangaroo 95" held in northern Australia, while the Australian Special Air Service regiment continues to train Indonesia's infamous Kopassus torturers. And press reports abound of ASIO assistance to Indonesian government spies, such as the feared BAKIN agency, in targeting leftists and East Timorese activists including refugees



Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter

who the Australian government continues to threaten with deportation to death.

It was the former Labor prime minister Keating who spoke for the entire Australian bourgeoisie when he described the 1965 anti-Communist slaughter which brought Suharto to power as an "historic" event which created a "benign strategic environment" for capitalist rule in Southeast Asia. A measure of the current level of imperialist apprehension over the spectre of "anarchy" in Indonesia was the fact that the U.S. mooted direct military intervention, declaring its readiness to send a flotilla of Navy ships, military helicopters and more than 10,000 troops to "evacuate U.S. citizens." Australian "military advisers" were despatched to Jakarta and the *Sydney Morning Herald* (19 May) reported that "key sections" of the ADF were "placed on high levels of readiness, with naval helicopters being sent to Indonesia and RAAF crews put on rotation."

Japan, remembered for its brutal occupation when it briefly displaced the viciously racist Dutch colonialist regime during World War II, organised a military airlift of Japanese civilians, the first time in postwar history that Japanese "self-defence" forces were to be unilaterally deployed abroad.

Above all, the racist Australian rulers fear Japan, and so they have tied themselves tightly to the U.S. imperialists, especially regarding the heavily populated, sprawling island archipelago to the

Murderous Indonesian military: armed and trained by Australia, other imperialist powers.

north and west. Nowhere is it clearer how the Australian social democrats function as labour frontmen for imperialism. It was the Labor government which rushed military assistance to Indonesia after the 1991 Dili massacre in East Timor. And it was Labor which secretly negotiated the 1995 Indonesia-Australia Agreement on Maintaining Security which provides for joint action against "adverse challenges" including the possibility of "Australian involvement in Indonesia's internal security problems" (*Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, May-June 1996). A recent article in the *Financial Times* (23 March) describes Australia's role:

"The US, working in close co-ordination with Australia, has been steadily cultivating ties with the Indonesian military. Wherever

the US has felt constrained by domestic lobbies concerned over human rights, Australia has 'stepped in to fill the breach' ..."

Yet it is to the self-same blood-drenched White Australia imperialist state that various Australian "socialists" appeal. In one of its very first public statements Workers Power Australia called to "Vote Labor and Demand ... break all military and diplomatic ties with the Indonesian state." At the same time the International Socialist Organisation wanted "to force the government to withdraw Australian recognition of the annexation of East Timor" (*Socialist Worker*, 23 August 1996). A few weeks ago the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), Freedom Socialist Party and Communist Party were demanding that John Howard "withdraw recognition from the Suharto government."

The DSP's capitulation to the Australian rulers is so craven that its *Green Left Weekly* (13 May) published an article which *welcomed* the Australian military intervention into Irian Jaya! The author did so while admitting that "The ADF will supply engineers to build airfields in remote, inaccessible areas of the highlands" which will be of direct benefit to the ABRI.

This only underscores that the notion that White Australia imperialism can be pressured into being a benefactor of the myriad oppressed peoples in the South-east Asia and Pacific region is an obscenity. That the bulk of the Australian "left" push such illusions exposes how deeply they imbibe of the values of the Australian ruling class and its ALP frontmen. Against these "Lucky Country" socialists, who appeal to the "democratic" pretensions of their "own" bourgeoisie, we Spartacists say: the main enemy is at home!

We seek to mobilise the Australian working class in class struggle *against* the blood-soaked Australian imperialist butchers in solidarity with the toiling masses throughout the region, including trade-union boycotts of arms shipments to the Indonesian military. ~~Genuine~~ internationalist solidarity with the Indonesian working masses requires a political struggle against the Labor Party and union misleaders who embrace the aims of their imperialist masters. **Australian imperialism: Keep your bloody hands off Indonesia! Get out of Irian Jaya and Bougainville!** ■

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"Death of Communism" Centrists

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 161, March/April 1998, newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

Following the December 1979 Red Army intervention in Afghanistan, the imperialists fired the opening shots of their Cold War II drive to destroy the Soviet Union. Marching in lockstep behind the anti-Soviet war drive, most left groups accelerated their headlong rush to the right. In contrast, the Workers Power (WP) organisation used the occasion to announce its repudiation of the anti-Soviet "third camp" position inherited from Tony Cliff's organisation, from which WP had split five years earlier. Rejecting Cliff's ignorant "theory"—derived from buying into the "democratic" credentials of British imperialism—that the Soviet Union was "totalitarian" and "state capitalist", WP declared that it had come over to Trotsky's understanding that the Soviet Union under Stalinism was a degenerated workers state.

Yet, in practice, WP never drew the programmatic conclusions of Trotsky's analysis: unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and the other deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. WP joined the imperialists and their Labour lieutenants in opposing the Soviet military intervention against CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, while claiming it would be "tactically wrong...to demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops" (*Workers Power*, February 1980). And when Polish Solidarność made its power bid in late 1981, WP acknowledged that it was an openly counter-revolutionary movement backed by the Pope, the CIA and Western bankers, but supported it anyway.

The 1982 WP pamphlet, *The Degenerated Revolution*, codifying their line "change", is a chemically pure expression of Trotsky's description of centrism as "crystallised confusion". Thus, while recognising that capitalism had been overthrown in the Eastern European countries under the post-World War II Soviet occupation, Workers Power called these "counterrevolutionary social overturns". As the winds of Cold War II blew increasingly hot, WP moved farther to the right. In 1990, Workers Power called on anti-communist Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher to give arms to the fascist-infested Lithuanian Sajudis. The same year, it played an active part in pushing the anti-communist witch hunt, orchestrated by the MI5 secret police, against National Union of Mineworkers head Arthur Scargill, who was hated by the British bourgeoisie not only for leading the heroic 1984-85 miners' strike but for denouncing the anti-Soviet war drive and rightly calling Solidarność "anti-socialist" (see "Workers Power caught with Russian fascists, Thatcher's scabs" *Workers Hammer* [WH], no 116, September 1990). In August 1991, WP supporters literally stood on the barricades of counterrevolution in Moscow alongside Yeltsin's imperialist-backed forces.

Having joined Yeltsin in dancing on the grave of the great 1917 October Revolution, Workers Power and its international, the League for a Revolutionary Communist International (LRCI), have now brought their "theory" into line with their practice. In an article by Mark Abrams and Helen Watson titled

"Stalinist bureaucracy—Marxist theory and the state" (*Trotskyist International* [TI], January-June 1998), which is no less pompous than it is ignorant, WP argues that a bourgeois state was restored in the Soviet Union in 1927. The deformed workers states in Eastern Europe are said to have been created without the smashing of the bourgeois state apparatus. Trotsky is taken to task for not calling to smash the Soviet state under Stalin, and Trotsky's whole analysis of the class character of the Soviet Union is openly repudiated.

The anti-communist conclusion of WP is explicit:

"In the Soviet Union the smashing of the Stalinist state machine had been a

class embodied in the proletarian property forms of the former workers states. We understood that the fight for workers to seize political power from the anti-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy—as part of the struggle for world socialist revolution—was the only real defence of these gains.

Hiding between the legs of their "own" imperialist rulers, virtually every other tendency on the left howled against the Soviet Union. Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP) rejoiced in Yeltsin's coming to power, declaring "Communism has collapsed" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991). The LRCI's Fourth Congress produced a manifesto headlined "A new dawn for humanity" (*Workers*

of time and effort" (*In Defence of the Russian Revolution: A Selection of Bolshevik Writings 1917-1923*, 1995).

The United Secretariat (USec), which falsely claimed for many years to be the continuators of Trotsky's Fourth International, is now ditching any such pretence. Thus a leading supporter of the USec in Italy asked: "Does it still make sense for militants, history apart, to bow down before the writings of the Russian revolutionary?...I don't believe that one can think of a socialist project for the 21st century that starts from the paradigms of Leninism and Trotskyism."

The LRCI's new "theory" is correspondingly the codification of their repudiation of the fight for proletarian revolution. They stridently call to "smash the Stalinist state" while on the home front operating as the most cringing, servile apologists for the maintenance of capitalist rule in its social-democratic face. In "Marxist theory and the state", Workers Power declares that what existed in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe was "the bourgeois form of the state machine and the proletarian content of the social relations of production defended by this machine". This ignorant gobbledygook makes a mockery of the most elementary Marxism in order to serve the purpose of Workers Power's prostration before Labourite social democracy. Its idea of a "new dawn" for the working class in Britain was the election of Tony Blair's virulently anti-working class Labour government.

As we wrote in our article "Workers Power's 'united front' with counter-revolution" (*WH* no 160, January-February 1998):

"Specifically against the German Social Democrat Kautsky, who opposed proletarian revolution, Lenin said that 'the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one' (*The State and Revolution*). By asserting that workers states could come into existence without smashing 'the bourgeois form of state apparatus', the latter-day Kautskyites of Workers Power reveal their true programme—pushing social-democratic parties like the Australian Labor Party or the British Labour Party into getting rid of capitalism."

The degeneration of the Russian Revolution

Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe represented an unparalleled defeat for the working masses in these countries and the entire world. It has led to an escalation in the oppression of the semicolonial peoples, fratricidal nationalist war in the now capitalist states of the former Yugoslavia and USSR, and a dramatic increase in racist terror throughout Europe. It has exacerbated the rivalry among competing imperialist powers, thus pushing the world closer to imperialist war. And it has led to a dramatic retrogression in the political consciousness of the working class and leftist youth, who are bombarded with bourgeois ideology that "socialism is impossible" and "communism is dead".

The International Communist League fights to complete the task begun by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party when they led the working class to victory in Russia in 1917—to pursue the class struggle to a victorious conclusion, with state power embodied in workers councils around the world. In a period conditioned by such colossal defeats for the international proletariat as capitalist counterrevolution in the homeland of

continued on page 6



LY Leonidov

V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky (above), co-leaders of the October Revolution. Below: capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR has brought misery and poverty for working people and growth of vile Russian chauvinism and religious bigotry.



Der Spiegel photos

programmatic necessity ever since the counter-revolutionary political expropriation of the working class by the Stalinist caste. In Eastern Europe such a task was necessary from the moment of their creation as workers states."

This is a convenient alibi for the fact that the LRCI lined up behind the forces of counterrevolution which did indeed smash the Soviet degenerated workers state and the bureaucratically deformed workers states of Eastern Europe. But more than that it reflects how deeply Workers Power drinks from the "death of communism" well of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Burying the legacy of the Russian Revolution

The "Russian question" has been the defining political question of the 20th century and the touchstone for revolutionaries. We Trotskyists stood at our posts and fought to preserve and extend the revolutionary gains of the working

Power, October 1997), which likewise celebrated the victory of the forces of counterrevolution: "These movements brought an end to decades of Stalinist dictatorship. All genuine revolutionaries rejoiced at the downfall of these bureaucratic, totalitarian monstrosities."

With their "new" theory on the class character of the Soviet state, Workers Power is part of a stampede of pseudo-Trotskyists who have joined the imperialists in trying to bury the legacy of the Russian Revolution and with it the "spectre" of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Al Richardson, editor of the British journal *Revolutionary History*, now suggests the Russian Revolution was "premature", or a "false start". Expressing his own cynical attitude to revolutionary history, Richardson sneers at "the present debate between supporters of the workers' state theory and the proponents of state capitalism as a puerile exercise, unworthy of the attention of serious Marxists, as well as being a waste



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Hatred of Suharto regime has fed growth of bourgeois-nationalist and Islamic "opposition." Left: January march by supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri, banned leader of Indonesian Democratic Party. Right: May 1997 election rally for Islamic United Development Party (PPP).

Indonesia...

(continued from page 1)

graduate of the CIA school in Quantico, Virginia, Benigno Aquino began his political career by participating in the suppression of the Communist-led Huk rebellion in the late 1940s and early '50s. He went on to serve as CIA "control" for a 1958 clandestine operation in North Sulawesi in Indonesia which was part of an ill-fated attempt to provoke secessionist revolts against the Communist-supported, left-nationalist Sukarno regime.

The Filipino masses are no less exploited and oppressed today than they



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Chinese shop owner victimised in racist riots.

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

Class Collaboration: Road to Bloody Defeat

"Moderate" generals like Wiranto, armed forces chief, are up to their necks in the blood of countless victims, from the slaughter of '65 to the ongoing torture and murder of leftists and worker militants to the repeated massacres of East Timorese independence fighters. "Opposition" politicians like Megawati Sukarnoputri—daughter of nationalist leader Sukarno—and Muslim leader

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

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

This horrendous bloodbath was an object lesson in the deadly danger of class collaboration. As repeatedly demonstrated by history—from the defeat of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, which was drowned in blood by Chiang Kai-shek's Guomintang Nationalists, to the Chilean military's overthrow of Allende's popular-front government in 1973—this program means the mass murder of communists and workers.

Basing itself on the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of "two-stage" revolution—which amounts to mobilizing the workers to bring the bourgeois nationalists to power in the first "stage" and ends in the massacre of workers and Communists—the PKI opposed the fight for proletarian revolution. Preaching "national unity" with the bourgeois-nationalist rulers, the Islamic establishment and the military officers, the PKI gained a number of cabinet posts in Sukarno's government, embracing his strategy of "Nasakom"—an alliance of bourgeois nationalists, Islamic groups and "Communists." The PKI banned strikes, suppressed peasant protests, and pledging to enforce "the co-operation between the people and the Armed Forces, in particular the Police Force," the PKI strengthened the very repressive apparatus which later came down on it.

This regime was an example of a popular front, a class-collaborationist coalition in which the proletariat and oppressed are chained to the class enemy. The Indonesian masses were politically, organizationally and militarily disarmed when the generals, backed by imperialism, struck to behead the PKI following

a counterrevolutionary coup in October 1965 led by Suharto. In carrying out the repression, reactionary Islamic fundamentalists were unleashed against the PKI, its allies and the Chinese minority. Members of Gerwani, the PKI-linked women's organization, were particularly targeted for murder, torture and imprisonment. Those who survived were blacklisted and ostracized by their communities.

The U.S. and Australian imperialists were up to their necks in the 1965 massacres, providing the Indonesian generals with a hit list of 5,000 Communists. The mobilization of Islamic reactionaries was also promoted by Washington. In 1950, John Foster Dulles, who later became U.S. president Eisenhower's secretary of state, explained:

"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."

This "bond" was cemented in the blood of Indonesian workers and peasants.

The smashing of the PKI and stabilization of Indonesia as an anti-communist bastion both emboldened Washington to massively escalate its war in Vietnam and created the conditions for the development of a "defeatist" wing of U.S. imperialism, which felt that withdrawal from its *losing* war in Vietnam would not jeopardize its strategic interests in the region. Since that time, Indonesia has played a key role in the counterrevolutionary ambitions of imperialism in East and Southeast Asia, for example as the central local player in the ASEAN anti-China bloc.

Untold thousands of ethnic Chinese were also slaughtered in 1965-66. Today ethnic Chinese are virtually banned from the political system, civil service and academia. At the same time, the fabulously wealthy Suharto clan has deeply entwined its interests with a tiny Chinese elite who control some 70-80 percent of the country's economy. This has served

to make all ethnic Chinese, a predominantly Christian minority composing less than 5 percent of the population in the largest Islamic country in the world, convenient scapegoats for the abject poverty of the Indonesian masses. Yet throughout Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese form an important part of the proletariat and have historically played leading roles in workers' struggles. The *London Sunday Times* (17 May) indicates that the same Kostrad military unit which is widely believed to have been behind the murder of the Trisakti University students also encouraged the rampage against Chinese homes and shops in Jakarta. Indonesian workers must champion the defense of the persecuted Chinese minority as part of the fight against their blood-drenched capitalist rulers.

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

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

Over the past decade a number of independent trade unions emerged, but the regime would not countenance even the tamest "opposition," and Indonesia's prisons are full of union leaders and other dissidents. On May 26, Habibie freed Muchtar Pakpahan of the



ASp photo

December 1986, Sydney: Spartacist League-initiated protest demands freedom for PKI leaders condemned to death by blood-drenched Suharto regime. Free the PKI, all leftist and trade-union prisoners still in Indonesian jails now!

Indonesian Workers for Prosperity Union (SBSI) and announced that the SBSI would be legalized. Yet others, like Dita Sari of the Indonesia Center for Labor Struggle, Budiman Sudjatmiko of the PRD and East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao still languish in prison, as do members of the PKI who have spent over 30 years in jail. Free the PKI! Free all leftist and trade-union prisoners!

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

Viewed narrowly from the Indonesian archipelago, prospects for consolidating proletarian rule in the face of imperialist hostility might appear bleak. But given the economic turmoil in the region, especially in Thailand and Malaysia—which has strong linguistic and cultural links with Indonesia—socialist revolution in Indonesia would be a spark for class struggle throughout the Pacific Rim. The ties connecting the proletariat of these countries are embodied in the millions of immigrant workers in the region. In South Korea the combative working class is chafing under the prospect of millions of layoffs. On May 27, 120,000 workers there held a nationwide strike against the massive job slashing demanded by the IMF. In Japan, the industrial power house of the region, the proletariat likewise faces mass layoffs as the bourgeoisie seeks to stem a deepening economic slump and financial crisis, and in Australia workers have seen their unions ravaged while the capitalists carry out a jobs massacre.

The fate of the Indonesian masses is particularly bound up with events in China. The Beijing bureaucracy bore direct responsibility for the Maoist PKI's disastrous course, a betrayal of socialist revolution which served only to further isolate the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. Now the Chinese Stalinists are pushing rapidly toward capitalist restoration, provoking a wave of workers' struggles. The fight for pro-



Community Aid Abroad

East Timorese in city of Dili demonstrating in 1991 for end to Indonesian military rule, moments before troops massacre over 200 people.

letarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and stop capitalist counterrevolution is at the center of any revolutionary perspective in the region. It is crucial for proletarian militants in Indonesia and elsewhere to call for unconditional military defense of China and the other deformed workers states—North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—against capitalist attack and internal counterrevolution.

While PRD activists have exhibited unquestioned courage in going up against the bloody Suharto regime, they advance a *nationalist* program which does not even pay lip service to socialism and seeks to tie Indonesia's toilers to an illusory "democratic" wing of the bourgeoisie. Their occasional calls for independence for East Timor are couched as appeals to the imperialist United Nations to implement its bogus resolutions. For example, the PRD's 1996 "Resolution on East Timor" calls not for immediate withdrawal of the bloody occupation

forces, but to "reduce military operations and administration in East Timor." At any rate, this is all belied by the PRD's avid support to the Javanese-chauvinist Megawati, who demands the territory's incorporation as Indonesia's 27th province. We say: Independence for East Timor!

The PRD's bourgeois-democratic program necessarily leads it to look to the good offices of "democratic" imperialism. In an interview with *Green Left Weekly* (11 March), newspaper of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), PRD leader Sudjatmiko declared that "the dictatorship cannot guarantee free market reforms the US wants because of the nepotism and monopolies controlled by Suharto. So we have common interests in opposing this corrupt regime at this time." Such appeals to the imperialist butchers are common coin as well for the reformist DSP, which acts as press agent for the PRD. For years the DSP has called on the racist Australian rulers to

pressure the Suharto regime, while cheering UN imperialist occupations from Somalia to Cambodia to Zaire.

Meanwhile, the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) grotesquely retails imperialist propaganda equating the student protests against Suharto with the anti-Communist mobs which "played a role in bringing down the previous Sukarno regime" (*Socialist Worker*, 6 March). These wretched reformists even promote illusions that Megawati and Rais could create "a rank and file revolutionary movement in the army, to split it from below." The ISO's British patrons, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (who cheered the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union) have petitioned Labour prime minister Tony Blair to stop arms sales to Indonesia "in line with New Labour's 'ethical' foreign policy." This groveling before the racist, anti-union Blair government—whose idea of "ethical" policies means police terror against Catholics in Northern Ireland and threats to bomb Iraqi women and children—highlights the Cliffites' profoundly social-democratic politics.

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

Adapted and abridged from *Workers Vanguard* No. 691, 22 May.

INDONESIA

Women Workers and the Fight for Socialist Revolution

We print below, abridged and edited, a presentation by comrade Margaret Rodda at Spartacist League forums in Sydney and Melbourne in late March. The presentation was originally published in *Workers Vanguard* No. 688, 10 April.

Indonesia is a powder keg. For the working class, the austerity measures dictated by the imperialist bloodsuckers of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mean deepening immiseration. Millions have already been laid off, with building and factory workers worst hit. Unemployment is now officially reported to be 8 million, rising from 2.5 million in mid-1997. The state-run SPSI (All Indonesia Workers Union) predicts that the number of workers who don't earn enough to cover their daily needs will reach 40 million out of a workforce of 90 million this year. The situation has been heightened by the worst drought in 50 years, with villagers pouring into cities like Jakarta in search of work. While the economic crisis has sparked worker unrest, it has also fed the growth of Islamic fervour. This has had serious consequences not only for the largely Christian Chinese minority, who have met with violence and arson at the hands of rampaging mobs, but for women workers who have played an increasingly strong role in strikes and protests.

From Thailand and Indonesia to the Philippines, massive imperialist investment over the past two decades, centrally by Japanese capital, has created a vibrant, young proletariat. This is the

force which can and must fight to sweep away the bloodsoaked Suharto dictatorship, not by looking for an alliance with an illusionary "democratic" wing of Indonesian capitalism, but through socialist revolution against the entire capitalist-landlord ruling class and its imperialist patrons.

To lead this struggle to victory requires the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party which seeks to link the class struggles in Indonesia with those of workers throughout Asia and across the world. The road to the emancipation of the working class of the region—and with them women, the peasantry and oppressed ethnic and national minorities—lies in the fight for a socialist

federation of Southeast Asia, linked to the struggle for proletarian revolution in Japan, Australia, the U.S. and other imperialist powers and for workers political revolution in China to stop the threat of capitalist restoration there.

The Family: Mainstay of Social Reaction

Fighting for the right to organise in independent trade unions and for wage increases and better working conditions, including maternity leave rights, women have played a militant role in workers' struggles against the Suharto dictatorship over the past decade. This is exemplified by the case of Marsinah, a young militant who became a hero to

millions of women and youth after she was brutally murdered in the wake of labour struggles in East Java in 1993. Many of these new proletarians are recently arrived from villages where traditional jobs have been replaced by mechanisation or lost through encroaching urbanisation. While horribly exploited in the factories, these young women also find some freedom from the social pressures of family and village life, particularly the pressure to marry, including through arranged marriages.

Central to women's oppression in Indonesia, as in all class societies, is the institution of the family—an economic and social unit subjugating women as dependent domestic slaves and serving, along with organised religion, as a mainstay of social reaction. Suharto's "New Order" military regime, ushered in with the horrific 1965 anti-Communist bloodbath in which over half a million people were slaughtered, has strongly inculcated an ideology relegating women to the role of wife and mother. In 1974, the government passed a national marriage law which in its original form provoked widespread revolt from Islamic leaders because it threatened to abolish polygamy and weaken the role of the Islamic courts which mainly deal with family law and inheritance. To appease the Islamists, the final, revised law codified and greatly expanded the role of Islamic courts, allowing as well for the institution of polygamy, although somewhat circumscribed. The law also codified the wife's role as family housekeeper and

continued on page 9



Richburg/Washington Post

Nike plant in Indonesian city of Serang. Superexploited women workers, drawn into factory production during economic boom, are now threatened with mass layoffs.

Workers Power...

(continued from page 3)

the October Revolution, the disproportion between our purpose and the current political consciousness of the working class, youth and the left internationally is great. Unlike those self-proclaimed leftists who disparage Leninism and the lessons of the Russian Revolution, we hold on to the dearly bought lessons of the past as part of our fight to be the revolutionary leadership that can rearm the proletariat with the consciousness of its historic interest in the struggle for new October Revolutions.

For the first and only time in human history, the Russian Revolution took the Marxist programme of proletarian revolution out of the realm of theory and gave it living reality, creating a society where the proletariat ruled through its own class dictatorship. The Bolshevik Revolution was a beacon to the workers of the world. The Bolsheviks understood that socialist revolution in the imperialist countries was essential to the survival of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia, and saw the Russian Revolution as the opening shot in the overthrow of capitalism internationally, expecting it to be quickly followed by workers revolutions elsewhere.

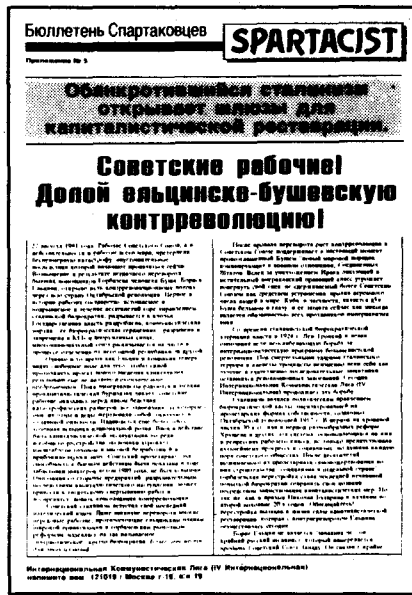
The defeat particularly of a revolution in Germany in 1918-19 and imperialist hostility to the fledgling Soviet republic, which was invaded by 14 capitalist armies, led to prolonged isolation of the workers state in a very backward country. Writing in 1921, Lenin noted: "The workers' state is an abstraction. In reality we have a workers' state with the following peculiar features, (1) it is the peasants and not the workers who predominate in the population and (2) it is a workers' state with bureaucratic deformations" (cited in Trotsky, "From a Scratch—To the Danger of Gangrene", 1940). In 1922, Lenin urged Trotsky to take up the fight against the increasing bureaucratisation of the Bolshevik Party. Particularly following the failure of a second revolutionary opportunity in Germany in October 1923 and the consequent demoralisation of the Soviet proletariat, quantity turned into quality, as the bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin usurped power from the proletariat through a *political counterrevolution*.

In his retrospective analysis of the triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy over the Trotskyist Left Opposition, Trotsky wrote:

"Socially the proletariat is more homogeneous than the bourgeoisie, but it contains within itself an entire series of strata that become manifest with exceptional clarity following the conquest of power, during the period when the bureaucracy and a workers' aristocracy connected with it begin to take form. The smashing of the Left Opposition implied in the most direct and immediate sense the transfer of power from the hands of the revolutionary van-



Syigma



Workers Power said that Yeltsin's barricade was manned by "spivs and racketeers" but this didn't stop WP standing shoulder to shoulder with them. ICL statement said, "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

guard into the hands of the more conservative elements among the bureaucracy and the upper crust of the working class. The year 1924—that was the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor."

—"The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism" (1935)

In 1924, the Stalinists repudiated the internationalist programme of Lenin's Bolsheviks and adopted the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country", which Workers Power barely mentions. Instead, echoing the position of Tony Cliff, it claims that the qualitative degeneration of the Russian Revolution occurred in 1927. Like Cliff, Workers Power declares that this signalled the restoration of a capitalist state in the Soviet Union. WP disingenuously asks why "did Trotsky never argue that the Stalinist state machine should be 'smashed' in the course of the political revolution?"

The answer is quite simple. Unlike Cliff and WP, Trotsky understood that the degeneration of the Russian Revolution was *political* and did not signify a social counterrevolution. That the Stalinist bureaucracy ruled through massive repression and terror was not a reflection of any change in the class character of the Soviet Union but rather of the fact that the bureaucracy was based on an enormous contradiction. Trotsky described the Soviet bureaucracy as a brittle, privileged and parasitic *caste* that is "recruited, supplemented and renewed in the manner of an administrative hierarchy". As Trotsky insisted, the "bureaucracy derives its privileges not from any special property relations peculiar to it as a 'class,' but from those property relations that have been created by the October revolution, and that are fundamentally adequate for the dictatorship of the proletariat" ("The Class Nature of the Soviet State", 1933).

The Trotskyist programme was very clear: unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist

attack and internal counterrevolution, and proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. "*Unconditional defence*" meant explicitly that this defence was not conditional upon the prior overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Trotsky used the term proletarian political revolution to make clear that what was necessary was not a new form of class rule, but a change in the political character of the regime which exercised the dictatorship of the proletariat. The bureaucratic caste had to be overthrown and genuine workers democracy—through the rule of soviets—restored.

Trotsky carefully distinguished such a political revolution from a social revolution to overthrow capitalism, which would require the smashing of the existing state apparatus. In a workers political revolution, said Trotsky, "what will be involved is not an armed insurrection against the dictatorship of the proletariat but the removal of a malignant growth upon it" ("The Class Nature of the Soviet State", 1933).

Trotsky v the predecessors of Workers Power

Trotsky waged a tireless political struggle against those who claimed that capitalism had been restored in the USSR or that a new exploiting class had consolidated power. According to WP, "the smashing of the Stalinist state machine had been a programmatic necessity ever since the counter-revolutionary political expropriation of the working class by the Stalinist caste". Ridiculing earlier anti-Marxist renegades who, using the vulgar rhetoric of "democracy", claimed that Stalin had replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat with the "dictatorship over the proletariat", Trotsky wrote:

"The most widespread, popular, and at first sight, irrefutable argument in favor of the non proletarian character of the present Soviet state is based upon the reference to

the strangulation of the liberties of proletarian organizations and to the almightiness of the bureaucracy....

"Such enticing reasoning is constructed not upon a materialistic analysis of the process as it develops in reality but upon pure idealistic schemas, upon Kantian norms. Certain noble 'friends' of the revolution have provided themselves with a very radiant conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and they are completely prostrated in the face of the fact that the real dictatorship with all its heritage of class barbarism, with all its internal contradictions, with the mistakes and crimes of the leadership, fails entirely to resemble that sleek image that they have provided. Disillusioned in their most beautiful emotions, they turn their backs to the Soviet Union."

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (1933)

Workers Power's line that a capitalist state was restored in the Soviet Union in 1927 is simply a rehash of the same social-democratic methodology that Trotsky refuted 60 years earlier. Indeed, its "new theory" bears some resemblance to the bureaucratic collectivism of James Burnham, who with Max Shachtman headed a petty-bourgeois opposition in 1939-40 inside the then-Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party to the programme of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union.

Burnham asserted that the Soviet Union had a non-capitalist economy, while claiming that a new "bureaucratic collectivist" exploiting class had taken power in the Soviet Union. This "theory" was later taken up by the Shachtmanites as an after-the-fact rationale for reneging on defence of the Soviet Union—in capitulation to liberal petty-bourgeois "public opinion"—at the time of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact.

Similarly, Workers Power's belated "discovery" that the Soviet Union became a "bourgeois" state in 1927 is a convenient rationale for its support for the forces of counterrevolution during Cold War II. It also serves to suggest that nothing decisive happened in 1991-92 when a capitalist state was indeed restored as a result of Yeltsin's imperialist-backed counterrevolution. Workers Power bragged about standing on Yeltsin's barricades among the rabble of "spivs and racketeers" in a "united front" for "democracy".

Workers Power v the dictatorship of the proletariat

As far back as 1918, in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin denounced German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky's support to capitalist "democracy" against the dictatorship of the proletariat: "It is natural for a liberal to speak of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: 'for what class?'" The LRCI's "new" analysis revises the Marxist definition of the state by divorcing it from the property forms it defends. For Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky the state was an organ of class rule. The bourgeois state consists of "special bodies of armed men"—committed to the defence of capitalist private property. Through socialist revolution, the working class must establish its own rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat—by smashing the existing capitalist state apparatus.

Lenin wrote in *The State and Revolution* that the state begins to "wither away" from the first day of the proletarian dictatorship. Workers Power points to the 1919 Russian Communist Party programme, which looked forward to the early replacement of the standing army by an armed people. Citing the fact that these norms were not realised in the Soviet Union, and that the state machine grew to monstrous proportions under Stalin, WP concludes that a capitalist state had re-emerged, describing this in language taken straight from the anti-communist ideologues for "democratic" imperialism: "Soviet power had been comprehensively smashed or 'blown up' and replaced by the absolutist rule of a totalitarian bourgeois bureaucratic-military state machine, but one which



Reuters/Bettmann



Borrel—SIPA/BlackStar

Soviet tanks in Afghanistan. Afghan women took up arms against CIA-funded cut-throats. Spartacists proclaimed: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan—Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!"

drew the source of its power and material privileges from nationalised property and planned economy" (TI). Trotsky was scathing in his response to such arguments:

"To these gentlemen the dictatorship of the proletariat is simply an imponderable concept, an ideal norm not to be realized upon our sinful planet. Small wonder that 'theoreticians' of this stripe, insofar as they do not denounce altogether the very word dictatorship, strive to smear over the irreconcilable contradiction between the latter and bourgeois democracy."

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (1933)

Trotsky insisted that the growth and consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus proved not that a capitalist state had been consolidated, but that building "socialism in a single country"—moreover a backward and isolated one—was a Stalinist *lie*. The material basis for socialism is the elimination of *scarcity*, which requires surpassing the highest level of development achieved by capitalist society. For this reason, socialism can only be achieved on an *international basis*.

The necessary prerequisite for the state to "wither away" is the abolition of class society, which cannot be achieved in the absence of proletarian revolution in at least several advanced capitalist

compulsion, insofar does it also remain a 'bourgeois' state, even though without a bourgeoisie" (*The Revolution Betrayed*).

WP is forced to acknowledge that Trotsky's references to "bourgeois norms of distribution" in the Soviet Union did not mean that he considered the USSR a "bourgeois state". Castigating Trotsky for this, it writes: "the legacy of Trotsky on the issue of the class character of the state machine in the USSR is at best ambiguous. Nowhere did he clearly point to the fact that, conceived in abstraction from the property relations defended by the bureaucracy, this state machine was bourgeois". Indeed, no Marxist could or would conceive the class nature of the state independent of the property relations it defends! Only for vulgar petty-bourgeois democrats like Workers Power is the question of property relations an abstraction!

In his 1937 polemic against Burnham's position that the Soviet Union was "neither a workers nor a capitalist state", Trotsky argued that "only the intrusion of a revolutionary or a counterrevolutionary force in property relations can change the class nature of the state". Trotsky went on to acknowledge that there are *temporary* cases where the economy and the state stand in contradiction: "In the first months of Soviet



Der Spiegel

Workers Power called for "solidarity" with CIA/Vatican-inspired anti-Communist Polish Solidarność in early 1980s, now embraces imperialist "death of communism" lie.

This is followed by WP's claim that the Bolsheviks merely reformed the tsarist army:

"But almost immediately they were thrown into a civil war and the norm was compromised with the reality as they inherited it—the Tsar's army, with its ranks and general staff. Trotsky had to make use of this army. They did subject it to workers' control—party commissars supervising generals etc—as the next best bet in the circumstances."

This is tantamount to denying that the capitalist state was smashed and replaced by a new state power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. WP falsely presents Trotsky, the organiser of the Red Army, as an advocate of a pure militia system. For the same reason the state could not "wither away" overnight, the Soviet republic could not replace the standing army by a militia system. In *The Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky pointed out that the militia (or territorial) system requires a "high economic basis" which could not be achieved within the confines of the Soviet Union. He wrote: "Granted the necessary material conditions, the territorial army would not only not stand second to the regular army, but far exceed it. The Soviet Union must pay dear for its defense, because it is not sufficiently rich for the cheaper militia system." But Trotsky never called for the abolition of the regular Soviet army, which would have been tantamount to calling for the disarming of the degenerated workers state in the face of the imperialist powers.

While in *The Degenerated Revolution* WP at least recognised (in words) the need for a standing army to defend the Soviet workers state from attack, today it argues that "the formulation that the standing armies of the Stalinist caste have a dual character—'instruments of bureaucratic tyranny as well as defence' surrenders too much to the Stalinists, above all in the light of events since 1989." In short, Workers Power can see no class difference between the Soviet army and the armed forces of imperialism. As for events since 1989, it was

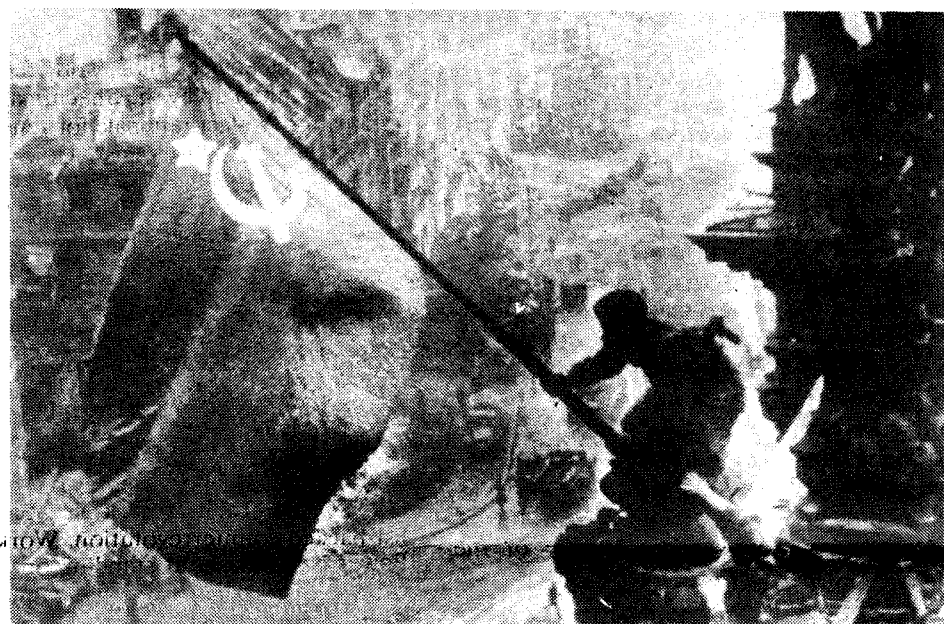
Workers Power who joined the West German imperialists in demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from East Germany. The withdrawal of these troops by Gorbachev was an integral part of the sellout of the former East German deformed workers state.

Trotsky described the restoration of the officer corps and the Cossacks as "one of the clearest expressions of the Thermidor". He was scathing in his denunciation of Stalin's disorganisation of the Soviet armed forces and his beheading of the military leadership on the eve of World War II. Nonetheless, writing in "The USSR in War", (1939) at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact, Trotsky stressed that when Hitler turned his armies against the Soviet Union, the obligation of Bolshevik-Leninists was clear:

"Under these conditions, partisans of the Fourth International, without changing in any way their attitude toward the Kremlin oligarchy, will advance to the forefront, as the most urgent task of the hour, the military resistance against Hitler. The workers will say: 'We cannot cede to Hitler the overthrowing of Stalin; that is *our own task*.' During the military struggle against Hitler, the revolutionary workers will strive to enter into the closest possible comradely relations with the rank-and-file fighters of the Red Army. While arms in hand they deal blows to Hitler, the Bolshevik-Leninists will at the same time conduct revolutionary propaganda against Stalin preparing his overthrow at the next and perhaps very near stage."

Trotsky was unambiguous about which class should overthrow the bureaucracy—the proletariat. As he wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?": "Stalin serves the bureaucracy and thus the world bourgeoisie; but he cannot serve the bureaucracy without defending that social foundation which the bureaucracy exploits in its own interests.... However, he carries through this defense with methods that prepare the general destruction of Soviet society. It is exactly because of this that the Stalinist clique must be overthrown. But it is the revolutionary proletariat who must overthrow it. The proletariat cannot subcontract

continued on page 8



Yevgeni Khaldei

Red Army crushed the Nazi war machine. Soviet occupation forces in Eastern Europe expropriated domestic capitalists and created deformed workers states. WP now says that bourgeois state apparatus was not smashed.

countries. As Trotsky wrote in "Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?":

"The USSR as a workers' state does not correspond to the 'traditional' norm. This does not signify that it is not a workers' state. Neither does this signify that the norm has been found false. The 'norm' counted upon the complete victory of the international proletarian revolution. The USSR is only a partial and mutilated expression of a backward and isolated workers' state."

At times, WP contends that the Soviet degenerated workers state was simultaneously the dictatorship of the proletariat *and* the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie: "the dictatorship of the proletariat had taken the paradoxical form of a political dictatorship of 'a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie' over the proletariat". It uses Trotsky's phrase "'bourgeois' state without the bourgeoisie"—deliberately omitting the inverted commas Trotsky placed around "bourgeois"—in his seminal analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936). Trotsky used this expression in the same sense that it was used by Marx and Lenin—to explain the general necessity under the dictatorship of the proletariat to maintain a public force to regulate distribution while scarcity remains.

Trotsky noted that even in an advanced industrial country like America, a workers state could not immediately provide for everyone's needs: "Insofar as the state which assumes the task of socialist transformation is compelled to defend inequality—that is, the material privileges of a minority—by methods of

rule the proletariat reigned on the basis of a bourgeois economy.... Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in the USSR, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon the nationalized economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between the economy and the state mean? It means a *revolution* or a *counterrevolution*" ("Not a Workers' and Not a Bourgeois State?", 1937).

The victory of Yeltsinite counterrevolution in the USSR led to exactly such a situation. But Workers Power, arguing that some industry remains in the hands of the state, ludicrously characterised the former Soviet Union as a "moribund workers state". At bottom, WP's view of "workers rule" derives from British Labourism, which equates "socialism" with nationalisation of the "commanding heights of the economy" under a *capitalist* parliamentary democracy.

Workers Power v Trotsky on the Soviet army

Seeking to justify its "support" to the Bolshevik Revolution on the basis of purely democratic considerations, Workers Power makes much of the counterposition between a Red Army based on a militia system and a standing army. To do this, it presents tortuous and self-contradictory accounts of what happened in the October Revolution. One version quotes Trotsky: "The October revolution dissolved the tsar's army wholly and without leaving a trace. The Red Army was built anew from the first brick" (*The Revolution Betrayed*).

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Workers Power...

(continued from page 7)

this work to the imperialists." Subcontracting this work to the imperialists and other counterrevolutionary forces is exactly what Workers Power did.

Workers Power and the myth of the "Stalinist state"

WP's description of the overthrow of capitalism in Eastern Europe is profoundly revisionist: "After the Second World War the Stalinist bureaucracy, far from smashing the capitalist state, simply took hold of the old apparatus of political domination and, utilising bureaucratic, military, police measures transformed/purged its structures.... In the first period this state, controlled by the Stalinists, was used to defend and rebuild capitalism, and then later the same state machine was used as a lever for the economic expropriation of the bourgeoisie" (TI). As we have noted, the idea that the bourgeois state can be taken over and used for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is utterly reformist.

In the case of post-war Eastern Europe, the Soviet army—the army of a degenerated workers state—was the decisive military power, the "special bodies of armed men", which smashed the Nazi war machine. Faced with imperialist hostility and the onset of the Cold War—specifically in the form of the West European Marshall Plan—the Soviet occupation forces expropriated the domestic capitalists and created bureaucratically deformed workers states. Likewise, in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam and Cuba, under exceptional circumstances, petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces were able to establish deformed workers states, qualitatively the same as the degenerated Soviet workers state. But in each case the bourgeois state was smashed. (See *Cuba and Marxist Theory*, Marxist Bulletin no 8, published by the Spartacist League/US.)

WP's use of the term "Stalinist state machine" is simply an obscurantist version of Tony Cliff's position that the Stalinist bureaucracy was a new ruling class. In contrast, Trotsky understood that the bureaucracy was a deeply contradictory caste which rested on the proletarian property forms while serving as the transmission belt for the pressures of world imperialism in undermining those gains.

Falsifying history to suit its ends. Workers Power says that the Hungarian political revolution of 1956 "showed that the ruling Communist Party, the army, the secret police and the state administration would act as agents of repression against any working class attempt to establish its own control over a state which claimed to be proletarian" (TI). In fact, Hungary 1956 showed that the bureaucracy was a brittle, contradictory caste, as the workers' revolt drew in its wake the majority of the army ranks and Communist Party cadres. Unlike Polish Solidarność in the early 1980s, the Hungarian workers *explicitly defended* the planned nationalised economy, establishing soviet-type workers councils and workers militias in every major industrial centre.

The Kremlin had to send in two waves of troops, who had been told that they were sent in to suppress Anglo-French imperialists or fascists. A first wave of Russian-speaking units had to be withdrawn after the Hungarian workers fraternised with them, winning many over to their cause. The essential element that was missing was a conscious proletarian vanguard party, which would have counterposed revolutionary internationalism to nationalist prejudices and illusions in the United Nations fostered by liberal Stalinists like Imre Nagy. Only such a party, based on the programme of unconditional military defence of the gains of all the degenerated and deformed workers states, could have successfully fought to win over the ranks of the Soviet army in the fight for political revolution in Hungary and across Eastern Europe and the USSR.

More than 30 years later, the contradictions inherent in Stalinism were played out in capitalist counterrevolution. Under the pressure of the imperialist world market the Stalinist bureaucracies introduced "market reforms", laying the basis for the full-fledged restoration of capitalism. Warning of this possibility in 1933, Trotsky wrote:

"In the event of this worst possible variant, a tremendous significance for the subsequent course of the revolutionary struggle will be borne by the question: *where* are those guilty for the catastrophe? Not the slightest taint of guilt must fall upon the revolutionary internationalists. In the hour of mortal danger, they must remain on the last barricade."

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (1933)

In sharp contrast to WP and the rest of the fake left, in the hour of mortal



AP

Leon Trotsky defended the USSR against threat of capitalist restoration while fighting for workers political revolution to oust the parasitic bureaucracy.

danger, the ICL fought to the bitter end to defeat capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In 1989-90, we mobilised our forces internationally to provide leadership to the incipient political revolution in the DDR and to stop the juggernaut of counterrevolution, raising the call "For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist United States of Europe!" In late 1991, our supporters in the Soviet Union distributed tens of thousands of leaflets in Russian declaring: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" Today we fight to win the Chinese proletariat to the urgent perspective of proletarian political revolution to stop the galloping drive towards capitalist restoration there.

The demise of the degenerated and deformed workers states in the USSR and Eastern Europe is ultimately the responsibility of the Stalinist bureaucracies, which undermined those states and destroyed any semblance of revolutionary consciousness among the working class. (For a further analysis see *Spartacist* no 45-46, Winter 1990-91.) As Marxists we understand that the preservation of proletarian power depends for its survival on the political consciousness and organisation of the working class. In the Soviet Union the traditions of the October Revolution had been systematically expunged from the memory of the working class and replaced by the nationalist outlook of the Stalinists, who made the lie of "socialism in one country" a self-fulfilling prophecy by betraying and helping to suppress revolutionary opportunities in the West. To the extent that they had any influence, fake-left groupings like Workers Power,

the British SWP or the United Secretariat bear their share of the responsibility for politically disorienting the proletariat.

WP has now drawn the requisite "theoretical" conclusions from its scabberding role, retrospectively writing off the Soviet degenerated workers state more than six decades before its destruction. Shortly after its emergence from the Cliff group, WP entered into a brief "fusion" with Sean Matgamna's fake-Trotskyist outfit, which at the time was formally Soviet-defencist. To justify their merger, both sides dismissed the Russian question as a "tenth-rate question". As he liquidated ever more deeply into the Labour Party, Matgamna subsequently repudiated even lip-service to Trotsky's line on the Russian question, advising Workers Power that it should do likewise if it was not to follow the road of the dreaded "Sparts". Some two decades later, WP has completed the centrist circle and openly reverted to its "third camp" origins.

The utter repudiation by these groups of Bolshevism, the October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is a reflection of the enormous impact this world-historic defeat has had on the consciousness of the proletariat internationally. Within our own party as well, we have had to wage sharp struggles against the disintegrative effects of this period of post-Soviet reaction. The former editor of our American newspaper *Workers Vanguard*, Jan Norden, who later defected with a small coterie of other long time comrades to form the Internationalist Group (IG), pushed a "regroupment" orientation to the geriatric remnants of the former East German Stalinist bureaucracy. Norden argued that these Stalinist has-beens maintained "attachments" to the former East German deformed workers state—which *they had sold out!*

Since defecting from our organisation, the IG has graduated to apologising for state intervention into unions in Brazil and promoting economist trade union struggles as a back door to pressuring social democrats in Western Europe and "left" bourgeois nationalists in Latin America. Behind the IG's Pollyannish enthusing over trade union militancy lies the same denigration of the October Revolution as that of WP et al. By the IG's account, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union was of such little significance that it has supposedly had no impact on the consciousness of the proletariat.

As Trotsky once noted, "Those who are incapable of defending conquests already gained can never fight for new ones." We stand with American Trotskyist James P Cannon in proclaiming: "We are the party of the Russian Revolution." We fight to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties, which are essential to bringing revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat, to rearm it and lead it to its historic task—the *fight for new October Revolutions.* ■

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

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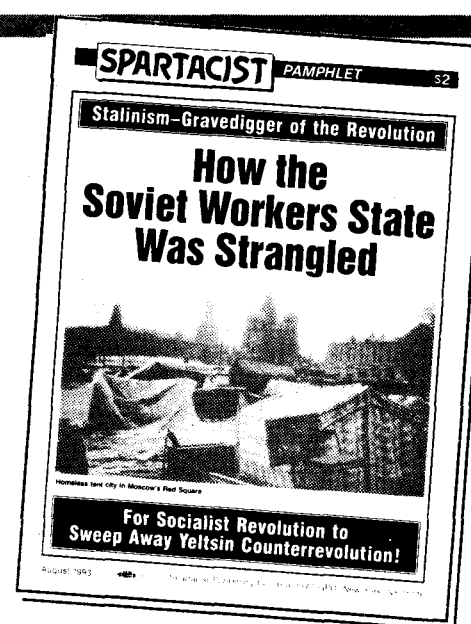
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Indonesia...

(continued from page 5)

the husband's as the family protector and provider.

The regime's key vehicles for inculcating this ideology have been government-controlled women's organisations such as Dharma Wanita and particularly the PKK (Family Welfare Movement) which permeates both urban and rural areas throughout the Indonesian archipelago. These organisations promote the doctrine of *Panca Dharma Wanita*—the "Five Duties of Women." This is a companion piece to the regime's *Panca Sila* doctrine, which has been promoted from the time of Sukarno, Indonesia's first nationalist ruler following independence from the Dutch in 1948. Where *Panca Sila* puts forward the five "principles" of belief in one god, humanism, patriotism, democracy and social justice, *Panca Dharma Wanita* lays out the five basic roles making up the fundamental oppression of women in the family: companion and supporter of one's husband, caretaker of the household, producer of future generations, prime socialiser of children and an Indonesian citizen.

At the same time, the contingencies of economic development have required the government to encourage women to take on employment outside the home, even as they are supposed to maintain their primary role within the family. Increased participation by women in the workforce has been accompanied by greater access to education, at least for a layer of women, along with declining birth rates, delayed marriages and greater population mobility. One reflection of the position of middle-class and bourgeois women in Indonesian society, where economic development has taken place alongside continuing social backwardness, is the development of a distinct but small Islamic feminist movement which tries to bridge the unbridgeable gulf between access to the modern world and the demands of religion and the family.

Imperialist capital investment has also led to the emergence of an urbanised and educated, though deeply exploited, proletariat, particularly in manufacturing. Twenty million workers live in urban areas like the Jakarta-Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasik industrial belt. Women, particularly those who come from villages and have little education, form the bulk of superexploited workers in the prison-like factories in such areas. Despite hellish conditions, the ability of women to work outside the home means that their relationship to male workers increasingly becomes one of comrades in the class struggle, not household slaves shut away from the world.

The struggle for women's emancipation is tied to the proletarian class struggle to overthrow the system of capitalist exploitation. We fight to end patriarchal practices oppressive to women, like the polygamy system and the bride price—legacies of social backwardness which are today upheld by re-



Tempo

Women workers have played key role in labour struggles throughout Southeast Asia, as in this strike in Indonesia.

SYC: For Workers Revolution in Indonesia!

On 22 May Spartacus Youth Clubs at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Sydney and at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) organised speakouts to demand: "Down with Habibie! Down with the Generals! Workers to Power in Indonesia!" SYC speakers and placards proclaimed: "Down with Anti-Chinese Terror!", "No Illusions in Megawati/Amien Rais—Indonesian Workers Need a Bolshevik Party!", "1,2,3,4: Independence for East Timor! 5,6,7,8: For an Indonesian Workers State!" and "Australian Imperialism Get Out of Irian Jaya and Bougainville!" In London and in cities across the U.S., the International Communist League (ICL) initiated similar events.

On 24 March, UNSW campus cops tried to shut down an SYC protest centred on the struggle for women's liberation through socialist revolution in Indonesia. They backed off as SYCers loudly noted that this attempted censorship was an echo of the Indonesian dictatorship's repression of leftists.

On both campuses, various self-proclaimed socialist groups refused to participate, despite invitations to do so. Quite simply, that's because they reject the ICL's revolutionary, internationalist, proletarian program, in particular our intransigent opposition to our "own" bourgeoisie. As an SYC speaker chanted at RMIT: "Untuk revolusi buruh di Indonesia! Untuk revolusi buruh di Australia! Untuk revolusi sosialis internasional! For workers revolution in Indonesia and Australia!"



ASP photo

ligious reactionaries in league with the capitalist rulers. Women's liberation can only come about through socialist revolution extending to the advanced capitalist countries. In a socialist planned economy, the family as a social unit will be replaced by socialisation of childcare and household duties. Only then can relationships be entered into freely and

highlighted earlier this year when a number of doctors and nurses were arrested for performing abortions and their clinics closed and files seized. At the same time, abortions are reportedly not uncommon among middle-class women, who have greater access to education and a certain degree of personal freedom, along with the money to

single women are excluded. While the government's KB (*Keluarga Berencana*) program provides free access to contraception for married women, many have been threatened or bribed into participating. These pressures are intensified by the involvement of the Indonesian military (ABRI) in the program as part of its so-called "dual function" in military and civilian affairs—the recipe by which bloody military terror has been repeatedly unleashed to regiment and suppress the population.

Another aspect of the population control program is the regime's "transmigration" policy, resettling landless poor from densely populated areas, particularly in Java, to outlying and ethnically distinct areas such as Irian Jaya and East Timor. This policy has stoked the flames of longstanding ethnic and religious unrest. For example, the East Timorese have been struggling for independence against the genocidal Indonesian military occupation since 1975. More than 200,000 East Timorese—fully *one-third* of the population—have died either by direct murder, such as the slaughter of over 200 demonstrators in the East Timor capital of Dili in 1991, or from disease and starvation.

The infant mortality rate in East Timor is one of the five worst in the world. East Timorese suffer high levels of malnutrition, TB, malaria and sexually transmitted diseases, while desperate economic conditions have led young women into prostitution or forced marriage. East Timorese women, who are largely Catholic and reject birth control on religious grounds, are often coerced into compliance, intimidated when visiting health care facilities where doctors and nurses are often accompanied by soldiers. Covert sterilisations and injections are widely suspected, such as when only female students at a senior high school were given alleged anti-tetanus injections. Such barbarity underscores the very real fear of the East Timorese that the Indonesian government intends to carry out the genocide of their people.

Only a revolutionary overthrow of the existing capitalist imperialist system can even *begin* to address the oppression, degradation and misery of women as well as the rights and emancipation of national minorities throughout the archipelago. Indonesia is a prison house of peoples—home to some 300 different ethnic and national groups who suffer under the repression of the Java-centred bourgeois regime. Most notably, there have been struggles for independence waged by the Acehnese of north

continued on page 10

Hundreds of thousands were massacred in 1965 anti-Communist bloodbath which ushered in Suharto's rule.



New York Times

without economic compulsion. As in the 1917 Russian Revolution, women workers will be in the forefront of the fight against capitalist and semi-feudal enslavement in Indonesia.

Free Quality Health Care for All! Free Abortion on Demand!

An important question addressing the oppression of women in Indonesia is abortion, which is illegal. This issue was

pay for the procedure. For poor and working-class women, access to free, safe abortion is an explosive issue. There is a huge stigma attached to pregnancy outside marriage, with illegitimate children and their mothers shunned by society. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald* (3 January), 1994 statistics revealed that 450 out of every 100,000 pregnant women died in Indonesia—the highest maternal death rate in Southeast Asia. Sixteen percent of these deaths were reportedly from unsafe abortions.

The fight for free abortion on demand is closely linked to the struggle for free, quality health care for all. Medical care in Indonesia is poor even by standards for the so-called "developing" world. Along with very high rates of death in childbirth are high infant mortality rates. In the countryside, some 80 percent of pregnant women and children under five years of age are undernourished. This situation is aggravated by the collapse of the rupiah and skyrocketing costs for goods like medical supplies.

With a population of over 200 million, Indonesia is the fourth-largest and one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The Suharto regime has pursued an aggressive population control program, from which

Indonesia...

(continued from page 9)

Sumatra and the people of Irian Jaya, as well as by the East Timorese. We call for the immediate independence of East Timor.

Islam as a Political Factor

Some 90 percent of Indonesia's 203 million inhabitants describe themselves as Muslim, making Indonesia the largest Islamic country in the world. However, particularly on Java where Islamic beliefs were syncretised with pre-existing animist, Hindu and Buddhist traditions, a large proportion of Muslims have been described as *abangun* (nominal). Alongside the *abangun* are the *santri*, or devout, Muslims. Approximately 56 million belong to two organisations reflecting the main strands of *santri* Muslims: the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), based on the rural Islamic schools called *pesantren*, and the urban-based, "modernist" organisation Muhammadiyah. With widespread resentment among the new middle classes at the nepotism, cronyism and corruption of the Suharto clique, there has been an increasing "santrification" of *abangun* Muslims.

The Suharto regime has nurtured a special relationship with the "modernists," reflected in shifts in the army leadership and in the formation in 1990 of the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), led by Suharto's vice-president Habibie. Suharto has also sought to appease conservative Muslim interests by elevating the status of the Islamic courts and passing laws mandating, for example, compulsory religious instruction in the schools. In the late 1980s, registry offices were no longer permitted to perform marriages, making marriage between people of different religions virtually impossible to obtain. The rise of Islam as a political factor in Indonesia can only be as a force for reaction. It is necessary to fight for the separation of state and religion and to combat theocratic reaction, including opposing discrimination against all religious minorities.

The past few years have seen an increasing number of violent attacks by Islamic mobs on Sino-Indonesians and Christian churches, such as the attacks that broke out in towns around Tasikmalaya in West Java in 1996. Today, the Chinese minority, which includes a fabulously wealthy elite, is being made a scapegoat for the economic crisis besetting Southeast Asia. The British television program *ITN World News* carried a report recently that at least one of the recent anti-Chinese pogroms, in the town of Praya on the island of Lombok, was organised by government security forces. In the wake of the attack, many Chinese residents simply fled, too frightened to reopen their shops. Muslim shopkeepers interviewed by ITN



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First meeting of young women's political group in Tashkent, Central Asia, following October Revolution of 1917. Bolshevik victory was giant step toward liberation of women throughout former tsarist empire.

described how they were warned in advance by cops to stay out of the marketplace that day. They said that the "rioters" had never been seen in the village before, but had been bused in by the police. It was only when the mob, finding Chinese shops closed, moved on to non-Chinese areas that security forces stepped in.

Today, anti-Chinese attacks are reaching a level not seen since 1965. In the absence of a revolutionary proletarian party uniting workers across ethnic and national lines, discontent is likely to be further deflected in the direction of pogroms. Every manifestation of anti-Chinese chauvinism must be fought down the line by class-conscious workers throughout Indonesia. Down with anti-Chinese terror!

The need for united, internationalist proletarian struggle is underlined by the fact that increasing numbers of Indonesian workers have been compelled to cross the straits to Malaysia and Singapore, where Chinese make up 30 and 78 percent of the population, respectively. Now, amid the deepening economic crisis in Southeast Asia, hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers have been savagely expelled from one country after another. Working-class militants must oppose all deportations and demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

For Permanent Revolution!

Just as the Dutch plundered massive wealth from Indonesia during its colonial rule, the country today is a rich source of superprofits for the imperialists, with impoverished workers brutally exploited in the factories, oil fields, mines and rubber plantations. Particularly in land-starved Java, industrial expansion has transformed the rural sector, with peasant households displaced by development projects. One result has been a significant depopulation of villages, particularly of women. Those from rural areas moving to the cities in search of work cannot fail to notice the vast gulf between the rich and

poor. In Jakarta alone, millions live in shantytowns without running water or electricity.

Indonesia is a country where Leon Trotsky's theory and program of permanent revolution is manifestly applicable. The 1917 Russian Revolution showed the way forward for countries like Indonesia. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, the capitalist class was expropriated and a workers state erected on the foundations of a planned, collectivised economy—the precondition for an egalitarian socialist society. This happened in a country with a small but socially concentrated working class, alongside a large, backward peasantry and many national minorities.

The Bolshevik Revolution represented an enormous leap forward, particularly for women. The new Soviet government immediately removed all impediments to legal equality for women, giving them the right to vote, making marriage and divorce simple matters of civil registration, legalising abortion and outlawing discrimination against homosexuals. Day-care facilities and communal dining rooms and laundries were established to free women from household drudgery.

But in an isolated, backward country, these efforts could only hint at the possibilities for women had socialist revolution spread to the advanced industrial countries. In 1923-24, a consolidating, conservative bureaucracy led by Stalin usurped power through a political counterrevolution. Under the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country," the Stalinist bureaucracy opposed the fight for international extension of the revolution. It glorified the backwardness of the young Soviet state and reversed many of the Bolsheviks' measures to liberate women. Strangled by the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Soviet Union was finally destroyed through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. This was an enormous setback for workers and oppressed the world over. However, it was not communism that

died in the Soviet Union, but its nationalist perversion, Stalinism. Today, we raise the call for new October Revolutions—the only solution to the wars and poverty rooted in capitalism.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

Indonesia has special importance to the imperialists because of its strategic location. The Malacca Strait, running between the Indonesian island of Sumatra and the Malaysian peninsula and Singapore, provides the quickest shipping route between the Pacific Ocean and the oil-rich Persian Gulf. In the event of imperialist conflict, control of the strait will be vital. Indonesia is also the largest supplier of oil to Japan outside the Near East, while 90 percent of Japan's oil imports pass through Indonesian waters. Reinforcing the appetites of Japanese imperialism toward Indonesia is the memory of the U.S. naval blockade of oil which impelled Japan's entry into World War II.

Political groups which are simply the left wing of the existing capitalist order cannot offer any perspective for the liberation of women, or anyone else for that matter. As part of the fight to forge a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class, we seek to win the most advanced workers to the understanding that the political independence of the proletariat from the ruling class is a necessary precondition for successful struggle against the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression.

We seek to build an internationalist revolutionary party to act as a tribune of the people, mobilizing the proletariat in defence of all the oppressed against the common class enemy. Particularly in Asia, the fight for the emancipation of women is a key component of this perspective. We call for equal pay for equal work, and for their full integration into the workforce. We champion the complete equality of women. The elimination of women's oppression requires a tremendous leap from the existing material conditions. And this can only be achieved through socialist revolution, leading to the creation of an *international planned economy* based on elevating human production to meet the needs of all.

The Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League, stands with our class brothers and sisters of the region in opposition to all the imperialist machinations of the Australian ruling class—from its depredations in Bougainville to its role in spying for and training Suharto's military terror regime. We seek to break the most class-conscious elements away from the racist Labor Party—the key obstacle to forging the vanguard party necessary to lead the workers to victory in this country. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution! ■

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Waterfront...

(continued from page 12)

and all the charges are dropped against picket line defenders!

John Howard has made it clear that no matter what various judges pronounce, the Coalition will continue its union-busting drive against the MUA: "Court decisions will come and go but nothing will alter the determination of my government to reform Australia's waterfront." Howard has said aloud what the capitalist rulers normally prefer to conceal—the true purpose of the legal system is to serve the interests of the tiny minority that lives by expropriating the fruits of the working class' labour. Indeed, the *Workplace Relations Act*, especially the laws against solidarity strikes, was crafted precisely to make legal this type of attack on the MUA.

While the bourgeoisie's judges played the sacked waterfront workers like a yoyo, the union bureaucracy bowed before the capitalists' union-busting laws, turning what should be mass pickets that no-one dares cross into traffic signals as the lines were ordered open to let the scab thugs enter. In Sydney the MUA tops cut deals to allow scab cargo—race cars, "emergency" medical supplies, mining equipment, syrup for McDonald's—to move off the wharves.

The state-orchestrated union-busting against the MUA is a watershed for the working class in this country, comparable to the great British Miners Strike of 1984-85. Just as Iron Lady Thatcher staked all on destroying the miners, so the Australian rulers are out to crush the MUA. It is widely understood that a defeat for this union would embolden the capitalist rulers' drive against all unions, immigrants and oppressed. Thousands of workers across the country have stopped work in solidarity with the MUA and bolstered the picket lines, despite obstacles placed by the ACTU leadership.

While the number of unionised workers dropped from 50 per cent to 35 per cent from 1982 to 1994 (under the rule of the Australian Labor Party), there is still union clout to wield. The working class, through its labour, produces all the wealth in society. Its power lies in its numbers and organisation, and its ability to withhold its labour, bringing the wheels of capitalism to a grinding halt. But to unleash this power requires winning workers away from the pro-capitalist ALP and forging a revolutionary workers party dedicated to smashing the entire system of capitalist exploitation.

What's been needed from the very beginning is a solid national port strike, mobilising not only trade unionists but youth, immigrants and Aborigines—mass picket lines to keep scabs out and stop trucks from entering the docks. Hundreds of thousands of workers are looking for a way to strike back at this greedy, incompetent ruling class. Hunter Valley miners, whose strike last July sparked important solidarity actions by railworkers, have massively rejected Rio Tinto's latest take-back offer. Privatisation of Telstra has seen tens of thousands of jobs slashed, while Howard has thrown over 77,000 government workers out of work. Drawing on the palpable support for the MUA in the working class, a call to extend this struggle to other strategic sectors—construction, transport and mining—would strike a chord. But the union bureaucrats, who let thousands of Telstra jobs bleed away and betrayed the miners in the Hunter Valley, are not about to call out their members on behalf of the MUA, especially when the MUA tops have criminally kept the rest of the union—tugboat operators, linesmen and seamen—at work.

Our call for a class-struggle fight to bust the union-busters, based on our

revolutionary opposition to the capitalist system, is welcomed by the most conscious militants, but many feel that right now they have to stick with what the union leadership is preaching. But beating back this union-busting assault requires breaking out of the framework of the Labor Party and the capitalist system it upholds. The union misleaders have emboldened the bosses through class-collaborationist deals, accepting the gutting of wages, working conditions and the slashing of jobs. It is their ability to hold the working class in line that makes the ALP, the party of the trade-union bureaucracy, so valuable to the ruling class.

From stopping mass strike action against the CIA-backed sacking of the Whitlam government, to overseeing massive union give-backs, to calling out the capitalists' army against strikers—the ALP in power rules for the bosses. The ALP, like the British Labour Party and Canada's New Democratic Party, is what V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, called a "bourgeois workers party." Based on the workers' own organisations, these parties chain the working class to the capitalists and their state, claiming, as does the ALP today when their leaders put in photo-ops at the picket lines, to represent the interests of the workers. For nearly a hundred years, a crucial instrument in this has been the Arbitration system which mandates the compulsory settlement of labour disputes in special, supposedly "neutral" courts.

Bourgeois Reaction and Cop Terror

The union bureaucracy not only betrays the most elementary economic interests of the workers, it also serves as a transmission belt to the working class of bourgeois reaction, part of the political mechanism which ties workers to their exploiters. Most dangerous and disorienting is the lie—peddled incessantly by the union leaders—that the cops are potential "union allies." But to picketers at Fremantle, where the cops have been particularly brutal, or to the 185 arrested picketers in Brisbane, or to Aboriginal peoples who are routinely brutalised, beaten and killed by the cops, reality has taught otherwise.

The fact is, the cops aren't neutral, and they're not "workers in uniform." They are the armed fist of what Friedrich Engels called the "executive committee" of the ruling class—the state. When the cops demand more rights, whether in the guise of "union" rights or not, these are demands for *more power*, better guns and less restraint. That they haven't simply waded in with truncheons, tear gas and guns reflects the tactically conflicting messages coming from their paymasters. But when the order comes, the cops will attack mercilessly. Their job is to do the daily dirty work of the ruling class, defending the interests of the rich and powerful. The police are a sewer of concentrated racism, sexism and anti-socialist consciousness in capitalist society.

While praising the cops and looking to the capitalist courts, the MUA leadership (and the ACTU/ALP) declares Patrick and the Coalition government "un-Australian." But the "Australian" way is savage union-busting, racist murder of Aborigines and "White Australia" chauvinism. Taught in this racist school, some picketers have hurled abuse at the scabs, not as scabs, but because they are Maori or other non-white people. This racism is poison to the kind of integrated class struggle that is necessary to win. Maori and Pacific Islanders, particularly from the construction unions, many of them veterans of the Builders Labourers Federation smashed by the ALP in 1986, have been in the forefront of support to the MUA. Aborigines have joined the pickets, knowing that it is the same racist government attacking both them and the waterside workers. Immigrants and refugees, facing imprisonment in detention centre hellholes (established by the ALP)

and deportation, have also joined the MUA's fight. The rights of immigrants, Aborigines and labour will go forward together or will fall back separately.

Various self-styled socialists have advanced a range of "militant" demands. But, following the lead of the ACTU/MUA bureaucracy, they are simply pimping for the ALP. The International Socialist Organisation (ISO) says "Sack Howard, not the wharfies," a naked call for an ALP government. The ISO calls for a one-day strike, while the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) calls for "wider industrial action" or a "national strike." But the kind of class against class political struggle needed for the MUA and the rest of the working class to win means a fight against the Laborite misleaders—whom groups like the ISO support and seek to pressurise to "do the right thing." Even worse is the DSP, which has no problem voting for the bourgeois Democrats, who to this day uphold the *Workplace Relations Act*.

A step to the left is Workers Power (WP), which calls for an "indefinite general strike." But a general strike, the mobilisation of the entire working class, by its nature poses the question of *power*—which class shall rule in society. But to WP it's a more "militant-sounding" slogan than the calls for one or two day "actions." Whatever their criticisms of the trade-union bureaucracy, WP is as firmly in their orbit as the ISO and DSP, calling on workers to pressure the ALP/ACTU—the very forces which have worked overtime to demobilise and derail the waterfront struggle in the service of getting Labor back in power—to carry out a general strike! Thus they call to put the ALP "to the test of office," as



No credit

1953: Menzies Liberal government sent troops to smash Waterside Workers Federation in Bowen, Queensland. Busting the union-busters requires class-struggle program.

though 13 years of the ALP's anti-working class, anti-immigrant rule needs further testing. No wonder they condemn as "abstract sectarianism" what they term our "ritual calls for a break with the ALP and the founding of a new Bolshevik Party."

Workers of the World, Unite!

Workers around the world, especially dock workers, are following the MUA's struggle closely—our comrades of the International Communist League from the North American West Coast to Britain to South Africa have brought news of this fight and the class-struggle program needed to win it to union meetings and demonstrations, hiring halls and dock entrances. The war on the MUA is part of a broader anti-union offensive around the Pacific rim. With narrow profit margins, the maritime bosses need to turn ships and cargo around quickly, so from Los Angeles to Vancouver, and Tokyo to Manila, they're out to reduce labour costs and weaken, if not destroy, the unions. But as the bitter defeat of the Liverpool dockers' strike reveals, the battle must be fought and won against the bosses and their state "at home." The Liverpool dockers were stabbed in the back by the Trades Union Congress and their own leaders in the Transport and

General Workers Union who got what they wanted: a Labour Party government which is going after unions, students, the sick, the unemployed, minorities and the Irish Catholics, among others.

The nationalist ACTU tops act to poison international solidarity action with their protectionist calls to "save Australian industry," pushing the lie that workers have a common "national interest" with "their" exploiters at home, especially against the peoples of Asia. Down with racist protectionism! International class-struggle solidarity with the combative working classes of Asia means opposition to Australian imperialism and its bloody role of suppressing the struggles of the working class and oppressed in the region. Australian troops out of Bougainville!

Right now hundreds of *millions* of workers throughout Southeast Asia, from Thailand to Indonesia, from South Korea to Malaysia, are facing devastation and destitution—the inevitable result of the workings of capitalist imperialism. In Japan, too, workers and minorities in this major imperialist power, jockeying with its rivals in Germany-dominated Europe and the U.S., face mass layoffs. The capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union, strangled by the Stalinist usurpers who betrayed the workers revolution led by the Bolshevik Party in October 1917, has emboldened the imperialists worldwide. In China, the Stalinist bureaucracy seeks to overturn the 1949 anti-capitalist revolution and bring back the days of unbridled and cruel oppression, not least of women. Either the workers, who in dozens of cities have sought to fight back, will oust the Stalinists through proletarian

political revolution or capitalist restoration will triumph. For the unconditional military defence of China against both imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution!

Day in and day out the capitalists (echoed by their labour lieutenants) preach the virtues of "a fair days wage for a fair days work." Over 150 years ago Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, declared that instead of this conservative motto, which accepts the "right" of the capitalists to live off the labour of others, workers must inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword: "**Abolition of the wages system!**" The multiracial working class in Australia must take its place in the international struggle to send the capitalist system of private profit, of poverty, of inevitable war to redivide the world for imperialist exploitation, to the dust bin of history.

The Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League, is dedicated to building a party of the working class, a tribune and champion of all the oppressed, that seeks nothing other than international socialist revolution. Those who labour must rule! Bust the union-busters—Victory to the MUA! For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■



Union Tops Demobilise MUA Struggle

Break With Laborism – For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Victory-Mongering Leftists Alibi Betrayal

As we go to press, scabs are still at Melbourne's Webb Dock, while Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) members have been working without pay for Patrick Stevedores. Now the MUA's John Coombs and Patrick boss Chris Corrigan have emerged from secret talks reportedly agreeing to slash over 600 jobs in exchange for making the remaining 800 "permanent." The MUA leadership's vow that there would be no return to work unless *everyone* went back has been proven empty as at least 30 militants have been blacklisted by Patrick, targeted as "violent," and five docks have been shut down, including Newcastle and Port Adelaide, throwing some 280 unionists out on the street.

Wedded to the pro-capitalist Australian Labor Party, the union bureaucracy's fundamental strategy has been to rely on the capitalist courts. From the very beginning, the Spartacist League has told the truth: the courts and cops—the state—are enemies of labour and the oppressed. As we said in February: "To take on and defeat this government-orchestrated union-busting requires a serious, politically organised *class-struggle* fight." With hundreds of thousands of workers and others hoping to defeat the capitalists' union-busting offensive, the ACTU/MUA misleaders were and are terrified by the prospect of a genuine class against class battle. So they consciously and deliberately hung the waterside workers out to dry, *demobilising* the union and its supporters, directing the workers anger into the well-worn channel of class-collaboration.

Thus ACTU head Jennie George hailed the 4 May High Court ruling (voted 6 to 1), which pronounced against Patrick's mass sacking of 2,000 unionists, as a "David and Goliath" victory, while the MUA's Coombs ceremoniously led workers back to Patrick's wharves on a red carpet under a sign proclaiming "Victory to the Workers!" But everyone knew that far from a union "victory" the court's ruling set the MUA up for the kill. Even Corrigan was able to claim it a win, while the *Sydney Morning Herald* declared in a front-page headline, "Wharfies still face axe."

Having glorified the Laborite MUA bureaucracy from the beginning, the myriad fake-left groups in Australia rushed to cheer along with them. The Communist Party of Australia, headlined "High Court: a huge moral & political victory" (*Guardian*, 6 May). The International Socialist Organisation (ISO) editorialised, "Don't let the Liberals cheat us of our victory." Two weeks later they were still wild about this "fantastic victory," as was the Democratic Socialist Party's *Green Left Weekly* (20 May) which opined that "The MUA's recent victory gives the union movement the chance to counterattack...."

The further away from Australia, the more enthusiastic the hurrahs became. In Britain, *The Socialist* (paper of co-thinkers of the Australian Militant group) proclaimed "Australian dockers victory shows workers can win," while the ISO's parent group, the Socialist Workers Party, cheered "This is how to fight for our rights" (*Socialist Worker*, 8 May). The U.S. Socialist Workers Party (in Australia the Communist League) headlined, "Triumphant workers return to Australia docks" (*Militant*, 25 May).



ASP photo

East Swanson dock, Melbourne, 18 April. Desire to fight government union-busting betrayed by social-democratic misleaders' preaching reliance on capitalists' courts, cops.

The slippery centrists of Workers Power (WP) tried to cover all the bases. In Australia, where the reality of the MUA's situation is painfully obvious, WP did manage to criticise the ACTU's George for creating "the illusion that the bosses' courts can protect workers." What then of their British outfit, which enthused over the court decision—headlining a 5 May statement "Wharfies 6...Coalition Government 1"—and fatuously claimed that "the first round has gone to the Australian dockers"?

Instead of saying what is and what needs to be done, the fake-left vied with each other in who could sound the most tactically "militant"—calling for "general strikes," "national days of action" and the like, but *not* for a nation-wide MUA strike that shut down the ports. They sneered at our insistence that there must be a political struggle to break the stranglehold of the pro-capitalist ALP and the trade union bureaucracy. These "socialists" eagerly await the upcoming federal election so they can, as they always do, campaign to "Vote Labor." Underlying the dishonest and cynical victory-mongering of these assorted leftists is precisely their political confidence in the social democracy and its representatives in the trade union bureaucracy. This is at bottom nothing other than a statement of faith in the capitalist state.

The MUA struggle throws into bold relief the *fact* that "partnership" between labour and capital is a lie, and the *fact* that the capitalist state—with its cops and courts—is the *enemy* of the working class and oppressed. Self-proclaimed leftists who peddle sweet nostrums instead of the bitter truth—that the MUA's struggle was *demobilised and betrayed* by the MUA/ACTU tops, and that the strategy of relying on the

courts instead of the social power of the working class spells defeat, not victory—are not revolutionaries, but mere adjuncts to the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy.

Printed below is a special Australasian Spartacist supplement, first published in leaflet form in early May.

MAY 4—John Howard and Patrick Stevedores' Chris Corrigan thought their massive union-busting assault on the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) couldn't go wrong. But the serious show of union power from Fremantle to Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney, threw a wrench in their plans, as thousands of workers came out to support the embattled MUA. Now, with some 10,000 containers piled up on the docks, Patrick's share prices and Howard's ratings in the polls have fallen sharply. But the union misleaders have consciously demobilised this power, counterposing reliance on the bosses' courts and...electing a capitalist Labor government which will make good on its own threats of "waterfront reform."

Today the High Court ruled against Patrick's 7 April sacking of MUA workers. But MUA members and supporters have little to celebrate—the administrators of Patrick's labour-hire companies have been given complete power to determine whether *anyone* will be rehired. Even before today's decision the MUA tops promised that MUAers would *work for free* to help improve Patrick's cash flow. Agreeing that Sydney and Melbourne ports are "overmanned," MUA secretary John Coombs is also willing to bargain away 200 jobs. *We say no settlement until all 2,000 get their jobs back*
continued on page 11