



Indonesia: For Workers Revolution!



David Gray/Reuters



AFP

Student protesters (left) celebrate resignation of Suharto, but brutal capitalist state (right) is intact. We warn: No illusions in "democratic" generals—Workers must rule Indonesia!

After Suharto—Imperialists Back "New" Dictatorship

MAY 29—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 South-east 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 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
(continued on page 6)

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

Young Spartacus

Leninists vs. Maple Leaf Eco-Freaks

TL Debates Vancouver Anarchists

We reprint below a report by a comrade from the Vancouver Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste on a March 26 debate.

* * *

The Vancouver branch of the Trotskyist League was invited by the "Left Unity Caucus" of the "International of Hope" (or IHOP, as we call it) to participate in a panel-style debate consisting of "three local Marxists" and "three local anarchists." The audience numbered about 80 people, mostly youth, almost all "anarchists." The debate period was very raucous, and all of our floor speakers were heckled. We clearly polarized the meeting, turning it into a debate centrally over three questions: Quebec, "Copwatch" and Afghanistan, with the underlying theme the necessity for a Leninist vanguard party.

Jaggi Singh—whom readers of *Spartacist Canada* (No. 115, Winter 1997/98) will recognize as having called on the racist Canadian state to arrest Indonesian president Suharto for "war crimes" upon his visit to Canada for the APEC summit last November—spoke first for the anarchists. He asserted that the anarchists were the genuine communists and the debate was really between anarcho- and "totalitarian"-communists. He railed against the Leninist "glorification of work" (read, recognition that the working class is the only revolutionary class), its "cult of ideology" (recognition that there is no revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory), "faith in industry" (opposition to capitalism's gutting of industry along with general pro-science attitudes) and belief in a "necessary stage of capitalism," while saying Marxism was "anti-scientific" and anarchism was "class-based."

William Kay of the "Left Unity Caucus" spoke next for the "Leninists." (This guy is a real political chameleon; if one of the anarchists had gotten sick, he certainly would have filled in.) His speech was primarily a mating call for "uniting" the various "Marxists" in Vancouver into one party and for "building bridges with the anarchists." He also distorted Marxism by saying that we would need a state after the rev-

olution—presumably into the indefinite future—not to fight counterrevolution, but to coordinate economic planning. Marxists, however, believe that the proletariat "needs only a state which is withering away" (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*) and then "the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production" (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*).

Sarah S. spoke next as a "femino-anarchist." The highlights were that she said "modernism has ended," which meant that workers revolution in Canada is "not viable" and that Marxism has been stagnant and unable to keep up with changes in society. So, she said, Marxism can't deal with women's and racial oppression and that Marxism portrays special oppression as a "side issue." Next, Ken H. spoke for the rump Socialist Challenge, affiliates of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec). Another paean to "working together on a day to day level." Also, according to Ken, apparently the bloody Pinochet dictatorship came to power in Chile in 1973 thanks only to the lack of "centralized armed resistance to the coup," and not because the Chilean left criminally supported the popular-front government of Salvador Allende and refused to mobilize the working class to fight for power.

After Ken, the next speaker was an eco-freak anarchoid who criticized "human-centrism," factories, fur and "big cities" like Vancouver. He also brought up "a problem with the TL" over our advocacy of Quebec independence and said he would only recognize the right of Quebec to secede once they started treating Native peoples better, which is a typical excuse for the rad-libs here to capitulate to Anglo chauvinism. One funny story is that, in response to a point from a TL comrade that we seek to intervene into the proletariat, as opposed to among bears and wolves, the environmentalist speaker heatedly responded that whales and other mammals had self-consciousness, "use rudimentary technology" and generally "compose distinct nations" (as opposed to the Québécois, I guess).

We had only ten minutes to make four points: 1) why the working class is central; 2) the need for a vanguard party; 3) the Marxist understanding of the state vs. the anarchists and the "fake left" who supported counterrevolution in East Europe and capitulate to the social-democratic New

(continued on page 6)

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Independence for Quebec!

Anglo-Chauvinist Furor Over New Ottawa Hospital Boss

In May, a vicious outburst of English Canadian chauvinism greeted the hiring of Montreal-born David Levine to oversee the merger/closure of three Ottawa hospitals to create a new "megahospital." Levine, a Jewish anglophone, is a former member of the Parti Québécois who once stood as a PQ candidate 20 years ago. At a public meeting in Ottawa on May 19, a mob of over 500 reviled the "separatist," screamed chauvinist abuse against the "traitor" (long a code word for both "French Canadian" and "Jew"), gave the finger to hospital directors and sang "O Canada!" to drown out Levine's supporters.

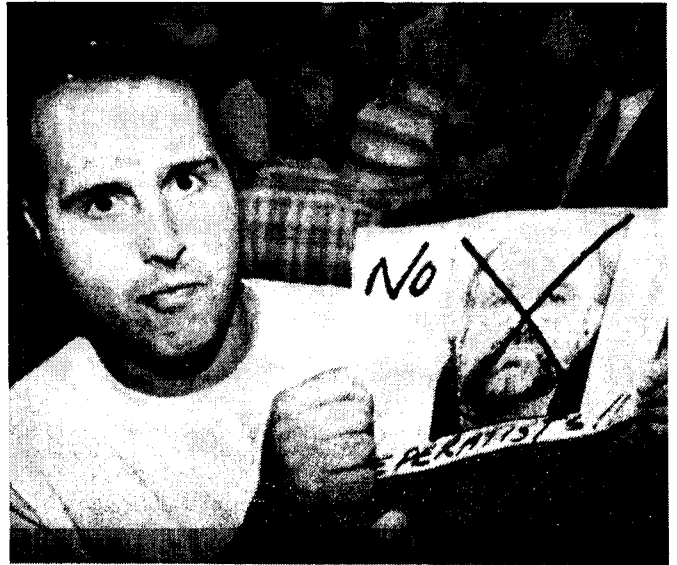
Jean Chrétien's Plan B attack dog, Stéphane Dion, dismissed the pogromist reaction as "deplorable, but understandable." Ottawa's mayor and both of its daily newspapers joined in the chorus, demanding Levine's resignation on the basis of his PQ connections. Later, while standing by their man, hospital directors offered a groveling apology to the chauvinist mob for "opening wounds."

On Quebec radio talk-shows, the phone lines were jammed. Referring to the massive federalist "national unity" rally staged in Montreal on the eve of the last vote on independence, one caller said: "I wonder how many people in that room in Ottawa last night were here before the referendum in 1995 saying they loved us." Another remarked, "They love us as long as we're on our knees. But if we dare even lift a little finger, then they rush to put us back in our place" (*Toronto Star*, 21 May).

In turn, sovereignist leaders leapt on the incident to boost their support. Lucien Bouchard and federal Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe chided the city of Ottawa for "intolerance." A PQ motion in the Quebec National Assembly denouncing the attacks on Levine won unanimous consent. When Ontario Tory premier Mike Harris expressed his "preference" that the hospital hire "a Canadian, or even a non-Canadian who believes in Canada and keeping Canada together," PQ deputy premier Bernard Landry noted that the outpouring of Anglo vitriol "is illustrating in an absolute way that there are two nations. There is ours and there is the other" (*Globe and Mail*, 22 May).

Down With Anglo Chauvinism!

The forcible confinement of Quebec within Canada has poisoned relations between the English Canadian and Québécois working class, and the backlash against Levine's appointment once again illuminates the depth of those national antagonisms. While the Anglo capitalist rulers of "united" Canada use anti-French chauvinism to rally English Canadian workers, Quebec's bourgeois nationalists finger English Canada as the source of all the ills of capitalist society in Quebec. The recognition by the workers of each nation that their respective capitalist rulers—not each other—are the enemy can only come through Quebec independence.



CP
Anglo-chauvinist bigot at May 19 Ottawa meeting.

The Levine affair ignited the highly flammable bigotry of "Upper Canada," which is a legacy of British colonialism. At one time in Ontario, the political power of the Protestant Orange Order was enough to ensure the 1885 lynching of Catholic, francophone Métis leader Louis Riel. Ottawa, a bastion of such Anglo-Protestant reaction, is divided hard on linguistic and religious lines, with francophone Catholics on the bottom.

The façade of bilingualism in the capital is wafer-thin. Official bilingualism, a policy begun under Pierre Trudeau, has long fueled simmering Anglo resentment in Ottawa, where advancement in the civil service (the main employer) requires facility in both English and French. Moreover, bilingualism is a skill disproportionately acquired by francophones, who must learn English to survive anywhere outside of Quebec (and, often, to get ahead within Quebec itself).

In fact, there are only two truly bilingual enclaves in the city: the federal civil service and the University of Ottawa. Both are foci of anglophone malice. Thus the fusion, under a Jewish "separatist," of the historically Protestant, English-speaking Civic Hospital with the General Hospital, which is linked to the University of Ottawa, was bound to produce an explosion of bigotry.

As implacable opponents of Anglo-chauvinist reaction and anti-Semitism, as consistent defenders of democratic rights, we say David Levine has as much right as anybody to head the new Ottawa Hospital. However, Levine was hired to carry out the closing of beds and firings of union workers mandated by the Harris Tories. Defending his hiring,

(continued on page 4)

Anglo-Chauvinist Furor...

(continued from page 3)

an Ottawa Hospital official stated explicitly, "The hospitals ran a deficit last year and will this year. We need to get the savings from restructuring as fast as we can" (*Toronto Star*, 22 May). Indeed, Levine's much-touted "qualifications" centrally included his "experience" in Montreal as a hatchet man for Lucien Bouchard's savage cuts to health care. We say: Fight Anglo chauvinism! Smash the capitalist austerity attacks through class struggle!

Chauvinism, Nationalism: Poison to Workers Struggle

Chauvinism and nationalism are the main chains which shackle the working people of this country to their "own" capitalist rulers, diverting struggle away from the exploiters and directing it against the other nation. This is clear as day in the Levine affair. The refusal of the social-democratic Ontario union tops to oppose the wave of chauvinism over Levine's appointment has allowed the raving Anglo bigots to bury the union-busting *purpose* of Levine's appointment under a mountain of dead dogs.

Similarly, when Harris moved last year to shut down Ottawa's Hôpital Montfort—the sole French-language hospital in Ontario—the labor bureaucrats remained overwhelmingly silent on the chauvinist thrust of this attack. The union tops thereby exposed their own chauvinism, notwithstanding their paper "support" for francophone rights in Ontario and the right of self-determination for Quebec. The Montfort remains open as an out-patient facility, for now, only thanks to mass demonstrations by tens of thousands of francophones in the capital region.

All wings of the capitalist ruling class—English Canadian and Québécois alike—are united behind the wholesale assault on health care and other social services. In these attacks they are seconded by the social-democratic NDP. Remember: it was the Bob Rae Ontario NDP government, with its union-busting Social Contract, that paved the way for Harris in the first place. In B.C. and Saskatchewan, NDP governments are gutting health care at a pace that would make Harris wheeze. At the same time, these governments are among the most strident "national unity" chauvinists.

In Quebec, outbursts like the Levine affair are used by the nationalist union tops to build renewed support for the bourgeois-nationalist PQ. Such class collaboration disarms the working class, allowing the péquiste government to cynically manipulate national feeling to dupe the workers even as it cuts their throats.

For example, on December 17 last year, wildcat strikes hit Montreal's Notre Dame and Hôtel Dieu hospitals in protest over PQ cuts to jobs and beds. The two hospitals had recently amalgamated under job-slashing David Levine. (Levine was then paid off by his PQ crony Landry with the position of Quebec Delegate-General in New York, a post he held until he accepted the Ottawa job.) Quebec health minister Jean Rochon refused to negotiate and threatened to "use the full force of the law" to break the strikes. In response, Gerald Larose, nationalist head of the CSN union federation, quickly called "his" minister to beg "a few more hours to settle the matter" and promise that "the situation would return to normal at midnight" (*Globe and Mail*, 18 December 1997). Thus the sovereignist labor bureaucrat Larose offered himself as a strikebreaker to quell a confrontation with "his" government.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party, Tribune of the Oppressed!

At every level, social reality in this country is shaped by the national oppression of the Québécois in the Anglo-dominated state. Earlier this year, the headlines were dominated by the "flag flap," after Liberal and Reform MPs garlanded their parliamentary desks with Maple Leaf flags in an orchestrated insult to Bloc MP Suzanne Tremblay. Then, in prequel to the later Ottawa mob scene over David Levine they launched into a chorus of "O Canada!" when she rose to speak.

Even the bourgeoisie's sacred "market forces" are not immune. During the "flag flap," Don Cherry—the archtypical chauvinist pig—used his "Hockey Night in Canada" pulp to revile Quebecers as "whiners." After complaints, Be Canada pulled its sponsorship of Cherry's "Coach's Corner" but only in Quebec. As a company spokesman explained "There's no problem in Ontario (with Cherry); we don't want to create one" (*Toronto Star*, 16 April).

Against the Maple Leaf social democrats of English Canada and the bourgeois nationalists of Quebec, it is necessary to forge a revolutionary workers party of the Leninist type. Such a party will act as the tribune of all the oppressed women, gays, Native people, immigrants, a not least the French-speaking population. Proletarian struggles cannot go forward to victory without a fight against every manifestation of Anglo-chauvinist hatred. As we wrote in an article headlined, "For Quebec Independence!" (No. 105, September/October 1995):

"We advocate independence for Quebec to clear the way for united struggle by the racially integrated working class of the whole continent against the system of exploitation and oppression that threatens the future of all humanity. For independent Quebec! For class struggle against all the capitalist exploiters, from Bay Street Ottawa, to Rue St-Jacques and Quebec City Wall Street and Washington! Forward in the fight for North American socialist revolution!" ■

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ICL Protests Murder of WCP-Iraq Leaders

The following is a statement of solidarity with the Worker-Communist Party (WCP) of Iraq and Iran by the International Communist League in response to the murders of WCP Politburo member Shapoor Abdul-Kadir and Kabil Adil, a member of its Kurdistan Leadership Committee. The statement, initially issued in slightly different form on April 23 by the Trotskyist League of Canada, has been distributed at WCP memorial meetings in Toronto and Vancouver, as well as in Sydney, Australia and Cologne, Germany. ICL spokesmen were also invited to address these meetings.

An April 23 statement by the Politburo of the WCP of Iraq indicated that these assassinations were the result of murderous *fatwas* (edicts) by Islamic reactionaries in Iraqi Kurdistan "against communists and militant women and youth." The WCP statement noted: "The Islamists' target is not only our party, but this terrorism is an attempt to create an atmosphere of horror, to intimidate women, freedom-loving and civilised people of Kurdistan."

Reactionary Islamic terror sharply escalated throughout the region following the Khomeinist "Iranian revolution" in 1979, which was supported by virtually every left group internationally and in Iran. As a Trotskyist League spokesman noted in his greetings to the Toronto memorial meeting:

"This so-called revolution opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Khomeini's seizure and consolidation of power in Iran was similar to Hitler's crushing of the German proletariat in 1933, albeit on a narrower, regional scale. The International Communist League's slogan 'Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs!' and our focus on the woman question—as in our slogan 'No to the veil!'—stood in sharp opposition to the rest of the left's capitulation to mullah-led reaction."

* * *

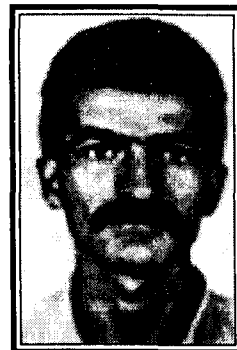
The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) denounces the brutal assassination of leaders of the Worker-Communist Party of Iraq in Arbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, on April 18. These anti-communist killings by the so-called "Islamic Movement" are aimed against all fighters for the liberation of workers and the oppressed, in Iraq and around the world. We express our solidarity with the WCP of Iraq against these bloody murders.

The Islamic Movement is a vicious enemy of the oppressed. Like other forces of Islamic reaction—from the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran—it attacks workers, leftists and women with brutal terror. The Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which controls Arbil and much of Iraqi Kurdistan, is also an enemy of the working people, just like its petty-bourgeois competitor, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. The KDP nationalists even support the murderous air strikes by Turkey on Iraqi Kurdistan, part of Ankara's war of annihilation against the nationalist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).

We Trotskyists defend the Kurdish people against all their oppressors, and call for a socialist republic of united Kurdistan. But we emphasize that this requires joint revolutionary struggle with the Arab, Turkish, Persian and other workers of the region against their common oppressors. From Iraq to Turkey, from Iran to Israel, the capitalist regimes of the Near



Shapoor Abdul-Kadir and Kabil Adil (right), Worker-Communist Party of Iraq leaders assassinated by Islamic reactionaries on April 18.



WCP photos

East have the blood of millions on their hands. *Socialist revolution* is the only road to freedom and equality, and this is unbreakably tied to the fight for workers power in the imperialist West. Down with the oil sheiks, the dictators, the Zionist butchers! For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For a socialist federation of the Near East! For world socialist revolution!

While standing against Islamic reaction and other capitalist terror in the Near East, we emphasize that the biggest terrorists in the world today are the Western imperialist powers. The rulers of Washington, London, Paris, Berlin and other imperialist centers lord it over their Third World neocolonies and brutally exploit millions. In the Gulf War of 1991, the U.S. and its allies butchered more than a hundred thousand Iraqis. Since then, United Nations-sponsored imperialist sanctions have killed over a million more, including more than 600,000 children. During the Gulf War, and again this year in the face of renewed imperialist threats, we Trotskyists called on the international working class to defend Iraq against bloody attack by U.S. imperialism and its allies. It is up to the workers of Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein—not imperialism or its agencies like the UN or the World Court, who would only replace him with another anti-communist dictator.

Despite our political differences with the WCP of Iraq and Iran, we defend them against terror by the capitalist state and by Islamic reactionaries. We are also proud to have stood with them in protest, as at International Women's Day in Toronto on March 7, where our comrades of the Trotskyist League of Canada joined their successful action to drive out agents of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The WCPI also joined with us in driving out a Canadian armed forces recruitment table. These were symbolic blows for the liberation of women, workers and all the oppressed around the world. We condemn the feminist organizers who invited and defended the army and the agents of the Iranian regime, and also self-styled leftists like the International Socialists, who vilely denounced the WCPI protest as a "racist assault" in order to cover for the Iranian ayatollahs' brutal regime.

The working class of Iraq and internationally will avenge the brutal murders of leaders of the Worker-Communist Party by overthrowing the bloody system of imperialist capitalism worldwide. The International Communist League fights to build Leninist parties of the working class to lead this struggle. We say: Down with anti-communist terror and murder! Workers of the world, unite in the fight for socialist revolution! ■

Vancouver Debate...

(continued from page 2)

Democratic Party at home; 4) that the Stalinists led the counterrevolutions in East Europe and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early '90s and today threaten to do the same in China, Cuba; we fight for new October Revolutions. At the point where our speaker turned to the two self-styled "Marxists" to take them out, there was general laughter among the anarchos in the audience since the "Marxists" were supposed to stick to debating the anarchists, but everyone in the crowd knew the "Sperts" wouldn't miss an opportunity to blast "their fellow Leninists."

The debate from the floor was 57 varieties of anarchism vs. the TL, especially after we rocked the room with our presentation from the floor on Afghanistan (there was nothing in the other two "Marxist" presentations, which were totally toothless and liberal, for the anarchos to object to). A TL comrade got up and contrasted our hailing of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan, where the Red Army defended women's rights against the CIA-backed *mujahedin*, against Sarah S.'s defense of feminism and the anarchists' denunciation of "Soviet imperialism." Also, a young woman TL comrade made a very powerful intervention on why Marxists fight for Quebec independence, pointing out the need for a Leninist party to fight against national oppression. In response, Sarah S. baited her by asking why she wasn't the speaker on the panel for the TL, as opposed to a man, and whether it was because she was "lower down on the hierarchy" than the men. Our comrade jumped back up and hollered out that she had total faith in *all* her comrades to defend

our revolutionary line. Sarah S. looked appropriately sheepish.

Comrades made points in the discussion on the "Cop-watch" organization with its strategy of "policing the police," which is supported by anarchists, and showed why it breeds illusions in the reformability of the capitalist state. Our speakers also took out illusions that the racist Canadian federal government would defend Native peoples' rights. The point was made, against the anarchists who denounce capitalists and communists "evenhandedly," that defending the anti-Soviet 1921 Kronstadt revolt and Mahkno's anti-Semitic bands means, in practice, siding with the White Army against the Russian Revolution; opposing Quebec independence means siding with the Anglo-chauvinist Canadian bourgeoisie.

In his summary, the TL speaker spoke to how many anarchists—like Alfred Rosmer and Victor Serge—were won over to communism by the example of the Russian Revolution and how the state would wither away through the international extension of the revolution. The USec supporter made a few capitulatory points on "socialist feminism" and William Kay sided with Bakunin against Marx that "revolutionary will" was more important than a material basis for socialism. All in all, a good time was had by all comrades, and the debate turned into a hot topic in the "radical" milieu in Vancouver overnight. We succeeded in making the point, against the anarchist polemics against "vanguardism," that, as the TL speaker said:

"History is full of examples like Spain in the 1930s and France in May 1968, where potential opportunities for revolution were betrayed and defeated only because of the lack of a party. Yet the anarchists are hostile to the very idea of a vanguard party, and thus doom the workers to defeat after defeat." ■

Indonesia...

(continued from page 1)

butchers would agree to back some less discredited bourgeois political figures, either from Suharto's 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 had run the country into the ground. And among the protesters, particularly the students, illusions in a "democratic" wing of the military and civilian political establishment are rife. The new president, Jusuf Habibie, a fanatically anti-Chinese racist with ties to German imperialism, is very much a creature of his patron Suharto. *We warn: This "reformed" Indonesian capitalist regime will be just as repressive and bloody as its predecessor and just as determined to force the country's toiling masses to pay for the capitalist crisis.*

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

The proletariat must take its place at the head of the unemployed poor, the rural masses, women, the hundreds of

brutally subjugated ethnic and national minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the capitalist class. This is the only way to satisfy the aspirations of the masses and break the 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 counterrevolution. 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. The U.S. and other imperialist powers—which have armed Suharto to the hilt—would immediately seek to use their financial and military might to stamp out any challenge to capitalist class rule. The sections of the International Communist League in the U.S., Canada



Independent

“People Power” fraud: Aquino regime enforced police-state terror against Filipino working masses.

and other imperialist countries fight to mobilize the multiracial proletariat in struggle against “their” rapacious bourgeoisies. *IMF, CIA, U.S. and Canadian imperialism: Keep your bloody hands off Indonesia!*

U.S. Promotes “Democratic” Military Butchers

From its braintrusting of the 1965 anti-Communist bloodbath, when the CIA provided hit lists to Suharto’s butchers, to the arming and training of the dreaded Kopassus Red Berets notorious for the torture and killing of suspected political opponents, the U.S. has been a chief backer of the military regime. Canada too has supplied the Indonesian dictatorship with millions of dollars in military goods as well as specialized military training equipment. Now the imperialists are intent on cohering a more stable and reliable regime capable of implementing the IMF’s dictates.

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

A class-struggle labor 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 union misleaders who embrace

the aims of their imperialist masters. The British Labour government has sent over 50 arms shipments to Suharto in the past year, while the Australian Labor Party recently voted against a Senate motion calling for the release of leftists in Suharto’s dungeons.

And while the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy in North America bleats about “multinational” low-wage sweatshops in Indonesia and occasionally mouths “concern” for imprisoned trade unionists there, this is only in order to push protectionist chauvinism and to further the broader interests of American and Canadian imperialism. What is needed is a fight to break workers and minorities from the pro-capitalist NDP social democrats in Canada and from the capitalist Democratic Party of racism and war in the U.S., in order to forge revolutionary parties of the working class. *Imperialist hands off Indonesia!*

“People Power” Fraud

Imperialist spokesmen have churned out endless streams of propaganda glorifying the “people power” movement which led to the installation of Corazon (“Cory”) Aquino in the Philippines in 1986, upholding it as an example for Indonesia. In fact, the “people power” mobilizations on the streets, heavily backed by the powerful Catholic hierarchy, were used as a vehicle for the U.S.-orchestrated removal of dictator Ferdinand Marcos and the installation of a more credible and reliable government. Aquino’s “people power” sham only succeeded because two top military leaders, 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.

To carry off this charade, Washington had in Aquino a ready candidate with impeccable anti-Communist credentials and proven allegiance to its dictates. Aquino was a member of the landed aristocracy, owner of one of the country’s largest estates. Her husband Benigno, who was assassinated in Manila in 1983, had long been groomed by the CIA as a potential replacement for the increasingly despised Marcos regime. A graduate of the CIA school in Quantico, Virginia, Benigno Aquino began his political career by participating in the suppression of the Communist-led Huk rebellion in the late 1940s and early ‘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 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

Whatever deal the imperialists and their Indonesian bourgeois lackeys cobble together will solve nothing, even in the
(continued on page 8)

Indonesia...

(continued from page 7)

short term. The “new” Habibie regime will still have to push through the starvation policies demanded by the world bankers against an increasingly restive proletariat. “Moderate” generals like armed forces chief Wiranto are up to their necks in the blood of countless victims, from the slaughter of '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, who was Suharto’s predecessor—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 proletariat and plebeian masses with the bourgeois “opposition” of Megawati and Rais, who in turn look to a wing of the military. Thus the left-nationalist People’s Democratic Party explicitly calls for an alliance with Megawati and the Islamic PPP. The role of “moderate” Islamic leaders is typified by Rais—head of the 28 million-strong Muhammadiyah, the second-largest Muslim organization in the country—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. 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. PKI chairman D.N. Aidit proclaimed: “Long live Sukarno! Long live the PKI!” With the full backing of its Stalinist mentors in Moscow and especially Beijing, the PKI preached “national unity” with the bourgeois-nationalist rulers, the Islamic establishment and the military officers. The PKI gained a number of cabinet

posts in Sukarno’s government, embracing his strategy of “Nasakom”—an alliance of bourgeois nationalists, Islamic groups and “Communists.” This nationalist popular front chained the proletariat to its class enemy.

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

In the aftermath, those leftists and liberal intellectuals who had escaped the slaughter found themselves locked away in Suharto’s dungeons for decades. Twenty-five years later, PKI leaders were still being executed. Untold thousands of ethnic Chinese were also slaughtered in 1965-66. Following the massacre, Suharto closed down Chinese-language schools and newspapers and even banned Chinese writing. Ethnic Chinese are virtually banned from the political system, civil service and academia. At the same time, the fabulously wealthy Suharto clan deeply entwined its interests with a tiny Chinese elite who control some 70-80 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. Indonesian workers must champion the defense of the persecuted Chinese minority as part of the fight against their blood-drenched capitalist rulers.

Indonesia and Permanent Revolution

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

In order that any of the deeply felt needs of the masses can be met, the proletariat must seize power from the national bourgeoisie, expropriating its holdings and those of the imperialists. Indonesia won formal independence under Sukarno’s nationalists in 1949, after centuries under the boot

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ch colonial rule. Under Dutch colonialism, there was only anything resembling a modern proletariat. In the immediately after World War I, Communist leaders Malaka and Henricus Sneevliet pursued a futile strategy on political blocs with and accommodation to “revolutionary nationalists.” They carried out an entry into the bourgeois-nationalist (and anti-Chinese) Sarekat Islam and defended pan-Islamism as corresponding “to the national liberation struggle.” In *The Permanent Revolution*, Trotsky wrote:

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

“A backward colonial or semi-colonial country, the proletariat of which is insufficiently prepared to unite the peasantry and take power, is thereby incapable of bringing the democratic revolution to its conclusion.”

Today, Indonesia remains a neocolony of imperialism—a place of cheap natural resources and low-wage labor—living with unresolved national and social contradictions. What has changed is the emergence of a young proletariat which has indicated its potential power in a series of strikes beginning in the early 1990s, many of them in the Jakarta-Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasih industrial belt of central Java. This is the social force which can sweep away the military dictatorship and put an end to the brutal oppression of women and the subjugation of national and religious minorities.

There is no democratic wing of the bourgeoisie, and there can be no genuine democracy under capitalism in backward, dependent countries saddled by imperialist exploitation and grinding poverty. The proletariat must be made conscious of its historic role as the leader of the oppressed masses and the gravedigger of this system of capitalist exploitation. It is the task of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to bring that understanding to the working class. Amid the deepening economic crisis in Southeast Asia, hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers have been savagely expelled from one country after another. Working-class militants must oppose all deportations and demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants. In Indonesia itself, hundreds of national and ethnic minorities suffer under the whip of the Java-centered bourgeoisie. This is particularly clear in East Timor, which has been the scene of one bloody military massacre after another. Proletarian revolutionaries in Indonesia must uphold the right of self-determination for oppressed nations. **Independence for East Timor!**

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



Racist pogroms torched Chinese neighborhoods.

explain to the masses that it is doubtful if such an assembly will be convened, and even if it were, it would be powerless so long as the material power remains in the hands of the Kuomintang generals.”

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

At the same time, this deepgoing oppression has impelled the new generation of women workers into the forefront of the class struggle (see “Women Workers and the Fight for Socialist Revolution: Indonesia Seethes Under IMF Austerity,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 688, 10 April). The proletariat must fight for the separation of state and religion and against theocratic reaction, opposing all discrimination against religious minorities. We call for free abortion on demand and free quality health care for all as part of the fight **for women’s liberation through socialist revolution**.

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

This perspective was confirmed in both the positive and the negative in the experience of the Soviet Union. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution transformed backward Russia, a preponderantly peasant society and a prison house of oppressed

(continued on page 10)

Indonesia...

(continued from page 9)

peoples under the reign of tsarist despotism. But seven decades of Stalinist betrayal of revolutionary opportunities around the world, perpetrated in the name of "socialism in one country," finally led to the undoing of the October Revolution. This ultimate Stalinist betrayal only underscores the need for a revolutionary-internationalist program for proletarian power.

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

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

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

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

PRD activists have exhibited unquestioned courage in going up against a regime that has never countenanced more than the tamest "opposition." However, the leftist PRD advances a nationalist 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. The PRD's occasional calls for independence for East Timor are couched as appeals to the imperialist United Nations to implement its bogus resolutions. And the PRD's own 1996 "Resolution on East Timor" calls not for the immediate withdrawal of the bloody Indonesian occupation forces but to "reduce military operations and administration in East Timor." At any rate, this is all belied by the PRD's avid support to the Javanese-chauvinist Megawati, who demands the territory's incorporation as Indonesia's 27th province!



SC photo

Toronto, May 24: TL protests "new" dictatorship.

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 Australian 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, Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party (SWP)—parent group of the Canadian International Socialists—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. The SWP cheered the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, proclaimed itself "over the moon" when Blair was elected and supported the introduction of troops into Northern Ireland by an earlier Labour government.

We warn revolutionary-minded militants in Indonesia: beware these "socialist" apologists for imperialist terror, who buy into the bourgeoisie's lie that "communism is dead." In Indonesia, the military dictatorship and its imperialist patrons sought to ensure that anything smacking of communism was buried under a mountain of corpses. Nonetheless, a new generation of workers and 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 new October Revolutions! Reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution!

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard No. 691, 22 May*

Islamic Reaction...

(continued from page 16)

women." This lie was immediately refuted in a 14 March Trotskyist League leaflet (reprinted on page 14), which was widely distributed on the left.

A subsequent "Open Letter to the International Socialists" by, among others, the WCPI and an I.S. member who had resigned in protest, noted that "All of the literature and pictures on the display table were full of lies portraying the 'wonderful and full life' women in Iran enjoy, and all of them bore the logo of the Islamic Republic of Iran." The statement continued:

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

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

Stung by the exposure of their lies, the I.S. held a rapid-fire series of branch meetings on "Marxism and Islam." These were no doubt directed at "re-educating" some of their own members who had taken part in the protest. Repackaging their attacks on the WCPI and other leftists, I.S. leader Paul Kellogg declared in a full-page article in the March 25 *Socialist Worker* that the real issue was "racist scapegoating of people from the Middle East." Kellogg asks rhetorically: "Even if there were a booth at IWD that had some backing from the Iranian state, would that justify an attack?" He answers that to protest a display sponsored by the Islamic Republic would be "a concession to anti-Islamic scapegoating coming from the ruling class." So according to the I.S., *any* left-wing protest against the ayatollah regime can only be racist and pro-imperialist!

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

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

To cover for its scandalous defense of the ayatollahs' agents, the I.S. retrospectively embraces the protest against the Canadian army at IWD. Kellogg writes: "Fortunately some at the fair had the good sense to know this [the protest against the Islamic Republic] was wrong. Some tried to defend the right of the Muslim women to stay. Others led an attack on the real enemy—the booth staffed by the Canadian army—and drove it out of the fair." The unnamed "oth-

ers" who led the action against the Canadian army—the TL and OCAP—were also prominent in the protest against the Iranian regime, and numerous WCPI supporters participated in the anti-army protest. Yet the I.S., whose own table was right across the aisle from that of the army, only joined in after hundreds of angry demonstrators had massed in front of the military recruitment station.

I.S. Backs Islamic Reaction: Iran and Afghanistan

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

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

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

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

We fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and

(continued on page 12)

Islamic Reaction...

(continued from page 11)

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

For the I.S., however, the Red Army withdrawal was a "victory." They gloated that "a defeated Russia will spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in Eastern Europe and inside Russia itself" (*Socialist Worker*, March 1989). From East Berlin to Moscow, the I.S. *cheered* these counterrevolutionary "struggles" which led to the restoration of capitalist exploitation, mass unemployment, racist terror and rampant attacks on women's rights.

I.S. Backs Islamic Reaction: Algeria and Indonesia

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

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

But the rise of Islam is not an expression of "anti-imperialism," but rather of despair. It is the reactionary reflection of the evident *dead end* of bourgeois nationalism and the absence of a communist alternative. As Paul Trehwela wrote in an insightful article on the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in *Searchlight South Africa* (July 1989), a leftist journal published by South African exiles in London:

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

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

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

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

And the Cliffites have placed themselves squarely in the

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

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

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

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

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

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

For Permanent Revolution!

In Indonesia, Iran and other countries, the rise of Islamic reaction was conditioned both by the bankruptcy of the bourgeois nationalists and the betrayals of the mass Stalinist parties who preached an alliance of the proletariat with "anti-imperialist" capitalists and generals. Under the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of "two-stage" revolution, the working class is called upon to support the bourgeois nationalists, who are entrusted with the task of creating an independent capitalist "democracy." But in the former colonial and backward countries of the Third World, the bourgeoisie is so tied to its imperialist masters that it is incapable of carrying out even the most basic democratic tasks such as national emancipation. As was brought home in blood and fire in Indonesia in 1965, "two-stage revolution" is a chimera which can only lead to devastating defeat for the oppressed.

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

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

Call for the end of the Islamic Republic... Open Letter to the International Socialists:

Socialist Action

Women's Day... Socialist Action... March 16, 1998

The Disgrace of the Islamic Republic at the International Women's Day Ceremonies in Toronto

Women's Day ceremonies in Toronto, as every year, took place with the participation of activists and human rights sympathizers, leftist and progressive groups. The Worker Communist Party of Iran participated in the program in a well-organized fashion. It was intent on exposing the Islamic Republic and also on getting public attention on the issue of women's rights in Iran.

Getting the representatives of the Islamic Republic removed.

The demonstration culminated at Ryerson University, where the various organizations set up their book-tables, displays and workshops.

RESOLUTION ON TABLES AT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 16, 1998
The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) unreservedly supports the action taken by women from the Worker Communist Party at this year's International Women's Day gathering. With the support of the various organizations, the removal of the Iranian

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

By Kenny Yum
Kenny Yum is a Toronto-based socialist activist.

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

International Socialists: Vile Lies and Slanders in Service of Bloody Islamic Reaction

On March 7, the feminist organizers of the Toronto International Women's Day fair openly embraced agents of racist anti-semitic and anti-Muslim violence. For the first time, both the International Socialist League and the Workers Communist Party of Iran participated in the program in a well-organized fashion. It was intent on exposing the Islamic Republic and also on getting public attention on the issue of women's rights in Iran.

Violence breaks up sisterhood and solidarity

By Kenny Yum
Kenny Yum is a Toronto-based socialist activist.

The Ryersonian

International Women's Day... violence breaks up sisterhood and solidarity

The Canadian army is the enemy, not Muslim women

A head-on collision developed... The Canadian army is the enemy, not Muslim women

Socialist Worker

For immediate release
April 2, 1998
Organizers of the IWD Fair condemn Authors leading to Expulsion of Participants

the crucial instrument for imbuing the proletariat with the consciousness and purpose of its historic task of world socialist revolution.

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

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

Today the WCPI's program "A Better World" calls for "the overthrow of the Islamic Republic and the immediate establishment of a workers' state." Yet they simultaneously call to "impose on capitalism the most far-reaching reforms," and end up casting about for other, alien class forces to come to the aid of the oppressed. Take for example their appeals to the United Nations, an imperialist "den of thieves" (as Lenin called its predecessor, the League of Nations). As Washington threatened yet more air raids on Iraq in 1996, the WCPI called on the UN to "put an end to the arrogance of the United States," refusing to call for the proletariat to defend this semicolonial country against imperialist assault. More recently they have demanded that the

World Court, another imperialist agency, put Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein on trial. As we have long argued, it is the task of the *Iraqi proletariat* to overthrow the butcher Hussein, not the imperialists who would only replace him with another anti-Communist dictator.

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

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

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

I.S. Slanders Toronto IWD Protesters

The following is the text of a leaflet issued by the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste on March 14.

* * *

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

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

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

No, this is just a pack of lies.

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

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

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

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

In contrast, Trotskyists said "Hail Red Army—Extend social gains of October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!" And we fought for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against the threat of capitalist counterrevolution, noting it was better to fight imperialism in Afghanistan than inside the USSR itself. As we



Reza/Sipa

Islamic "Revolutionary Guards" execute Kurds in Iran, 1979.

CL/Militant: Press Agents for Iran Torture Regime

Also defending the Iranian government representatives at the Toronto women's day fair was the Communist League (CL), Canadian affiliate of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP). An article in the *Militant* (4 May) lauds the Khomeiniite IWD display for its "pictures of Muslim women in Iran carrying out various tasks in society, including debating in parliament" and "leaflets depicting Islam as a 'religion of peace'." After painting this idyllic portrait of life under the Islamic theocracy, the *Militant* rails that "thugs" from the Worker-Communist Parties of Iran and Iraq, the Trotskyist League and Socialist Action "assaulted" the women propagandizing for the Iranian regime.

The CL's outrageous defense of the Iranian government agents flows from its longstanding political support to the Islamic Republic. The *Militant* article continues: "Later that day the forces who had initiated the attack hosted a workshop on the alleged torture of women in Iran." *Alleged* torture? This workshop featured gruesome documentary video footage of a woman being stoned to death in Iran for "adultery." A WCPI spokesman pointed out that one of the women staffing the Iranian government propaganda table had openly supported this barbaric practice. Incredibly, CL representatives used the discussion period after the video to defend the Islamic Republic agents, claiming they had been "emotionally stoned" by the leftist protesters!

Back in 1979, the *Militant* greeted Khomeini's rise to

power with the banner headline, "VICTORY IN IRAN!" It claimed the imposition of the veil, symbol of the Islamic enslavement of women, was "progressive." Calling to "defend the Iranian revolution and the borders of Iran," it denied the right of self-determination for the Kurds and other oppressed nationalities. In April 1980, when armed clerical-fascist Hezbollah thugs solidified Khomeini's rule by driving leftist groups out of the universities, murdering dozens and injuring hundreds more, it *hailed* this bloody purge. A statement by the SWP's then Iranian supporters, issued at the height of these murderous attacks, denounced left organizations which sought to defend themselves against Khomeini's thugs: "The Tudeh Party, Mujahedeen, Fedayeen, Paykor and other so-called Marxist organizations, which always start from their own narrow, sectarian interests, have essentially opposed this brave action" (*Militant*, 9 May 1980).

Far from abandoning these shameful positions, the *Militant* acts to this day as a press agent for the Iranian regime. Interestingly, while Iranian leftists of every political persuasion have been massacred, driven into exile or forced underground, the *Militant* boasts of being able to publicly distribute its Pathfinder Press materials at the annual Tehran book fair. The CL/SWP's grotesque fealty to the Islamic dictatorship in Iran shows with crystal clarity that these people have nothing to do with women's liberation or communism, but are enemies of the struggle to emancipate working people and the oppressed. ■

warned, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan under Mikhail Gorbachev opened the door to the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, and left Afghan women at the mercy of the religious terrorists. In its own small way, the I.S. bears direct responsibility for the horrors of Islamic rule in Iran and Afghanistan, and for the immiseration of the workers and minorities under Boris Yeltsin's Russian capitalist regime.

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

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

On March 7, however, the WCPI took the right side in defense of women's rights. Every organization of the left

and workers movement must stand with them against the poison spewed by the International Socialists, which can only serve the interests of the enemies of all the oppressed—imperialist capitalism and its "Third World" underlings. Down with I.S. lies and slanders! Women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■

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Islamic Reaction and the Left

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

The protest against the agents of the Iranian government—initiated by the Worker-Communist Party of Iran (WCPI) and led by Kurdish and Persian women—has sharply

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

polarized the Canadian left. Members of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), Socialist Action and New Socialist Group all joined this action against the deeply reactionary theocratic regime in Iran. Standing on the other side in defense of the ayatollahs' representatives are several other self-proclaimed socialist organizations, ranging from the burnt-out Stalinists of the Communist Party to the longstanding apologists for the Iranian government in the Communist League.

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

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



Gamma Liason/Abbas

1979 seizure of power by Iranian mullahs reinforced women's enslavement, opened era of reactionary political Islam in Muslim world.

and of the brutally anti-woman Iranian regime.

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

I.S. Slanders Exposed

But the most frenzied slander campaign continues to be waged by the I.S. Initially, *Socialist Worker* (11 March) tried to claim that the table in question had nothing to do with the Iranian regime, but was just “a booth staffed by some Muslim

(continued on page 11)