



## Recession-rocked ALP/ACTU Play the Racism Card

# Smash Hawke/Hand's Anti-Immigrant Campaign!

Lightning Gestapo-style raids were carried out routinely over May and June on workplaces across the industrial suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney. An Immigration Department assault forcibly removed 24 Cambodians from the Villawood immigrant hostel on 20 May, including an 82-year-old grandmother carted away for deportation in a wheelchair. In the northern NSW country town of Moree immigration officers accompanied by police raided cotton fields arresting another round of "suspects," this time Fijian-born. ALP "left" immigration minister Gerry Hand plans to slash the "illegal" immigrant pool. "Pack your bags and go home" was his message giving the go-ahead to daily police terror directed at poor, working class immigrants working in non-union sweatshops across the country—victims of greedy profit-hungry bosses. Hand's boast that his campaign has dramatically reduced numbers of "illegals" by 12 percent, was greeted as "welcome news" by Liberal shadow immigration minister Ruddock.

Hand's crackdown has been urged on by the ACTU trade union bureaucrats. ACTU president Martin Ferguson fired the opening shots in the campaign when he blamed immigrants for the loss of jobs, calling on the government to slash the immigrant intake by 22,000 (*Daily Telegraph Mirror*, 11 April). The government responded with the announcement that the intake would be reduced by 10 percent. Last year's intake had already fallen well short of the proposed annual 126,000 figure. Now senior cabinet member John Dawkins is circulating proposals to slash immigration levels by half, blaming immigrants for worsening the current account deficit. Dawkins was echoing a broad bourgeois consensus that stretches from the ALP and the Liberals to racist Green outfits.

### Full Citizenship Rights for All Foreign-Born Workers!

The government's crackdown has spread fear through immigrant communities, including those that have been living and working here for a decade and more. It is unashamedly racist. Immigration officials have taken to describing their actions as "trawling" or "hauling." One Cambodian reported that those deported in May were "... escorted back to their rooms under guard ... given suitcases and told to pack. Their telephones had been disconnected and they were forbidden from talking to any other Villawood resident" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 May). This tiny community has for years lived in constant fear of returning to Cambodia, where U.S. and Australian imperialism are preparing the way for the return of the genocidal Pol Pot, under cover of UN troops.

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Bulletin



Bulletin



Smaradey Khmer

**Fairfield Community Centre, Sydney, 24 May: hundreds of Cambodians demonstrate against Gestapo-style raid on Villawood immigrant hostel, orchestrated by Hawke's Immigration Minister Gerry Hand (Inset).**

Meanwhile the interception of Indonesian fishermen, and the impounding of their vessels, in the Arafura Sea to Australia's northwest has become a regular event. Yet Indonesian fishermen worked these seas for hundreds of years, trading with local Aborigines in the past, until early this century when they were banned under the White Australia Policy.

Under existing legislation those that manage to enter the country to apply for refugee status are given temporary permits and denied social security, making them particularly vulnerable to corrupt and exploitative bosses. If you test positive to the compulsory HIV test, you're out. One of the few spending decisions the Hawke government had no hesitation in making was to fund the upgrading of detention centres to imprison captured "illegals."

This anti-immigrant onslaught must not go unopposed. A 21 June demonstration in Melbourne called to protest the wave of deportations included members of the Turkish, Kurdish and Tamil communities, and was addressed by a Spartacist League speaker:

"Immigrants are being scapegoated by the trade union bureaucrats for the economic crisis and decay that Australian capitalism is facing. The anti-immigrant campaign can't be seen in isolation from the massive attacks on the working people; our unions, wages and conditions and the rising unemployment. But rather than fight unemployment the union leadership is working with governments and companies to administer the sackings and at the same time blaming immigrant and overseas workers....

"The working class must defend all the so-called 'illegal' immigrants, fight against racist protectionism, oppose all racist immigration laws and close down the concentration camps—the detention centres. The Spartacist League says: Stop the deportations! Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers and students!"

A number of demonstrations have so far been held in Melbourne, including a recent protest outside the Maribyrnong Detention Centre on 3 July. These actions have been called by the Anti-Deportations Action Campaign (ADAC) which consists of an assortment of fake-left grouplets, some immigrant groups, and various social welfare groups. Its component parts vary between those who are open anti-communist opponents of working class action, to opportunist Labor-loyal and anti-Soviet organisations like Workers Revolution and the Freedom Socialist Party. Included amongst ADAC slogans is a call to "open the borders." Under capitalism the "open borders" call is essentially utopian. We do not advise capitalist governments on their necessarily chauvinist and exploitative immigration policies. But we aggressively oppose the White Australia immigration laws and all forms of racially and nationally discriminatory quotas, and defend the rights of migrant workers—"legal" or not—against chauvinist persecution and deportation. Free movement of people will occur only after the triumph of socialism internationally, when the nation state, and therefore borders and immigration laws, will have disappeared.

### Working People Face Recession Nightmare

Today whole sectors of the economy are being closed down and abandoned by the capitalist class. Bankruptcies rose a staggering 54 percent in the March quarter and the unemployment rate has hit double figures. The manufacturing sector of the economy, particularly car, metal and textile factories, has been ravaged. Amongst the first and hardest

hit are immigrant workers, a great proportion of whom are unskilled, speaking little to no English. Those immigrant workers who have held on to their jobs are usually subjected to the lowest paid and most gruelling conditions, with immigrant women suffering the most. Widespread exploitation, entrenched racism, high levels of injury and unhealthy conditions are commonplace.

Women process workers earn on average 30 percent less than the average women's wage, which itself is lower than that of men—without any basic award entitlements such as sick pay and maternity leave. Alongside the brutal exploitation goes the almost daily racist abuse both inside and outside the workplace. A recent Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report indicated that one in ten Asian people have been victims of racially motivated violent assault, and 66 percent of immigrants surveyed reported incidents of racial abuse. Aboriginal women from the Northern Territory revealed that dealings with cops frequently lead to rape or threat of rape (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 April).

The Laborite union bureaucracy maintains at best a racist indifference to the plight of immigrant workers. The bureaucrats have always pushed racist company-loyal protectionism, peddling the lie that it will "save jobs" and blaming Asian workers for company closures. Now they are using it to divert anger at their complicity in company job-slashing. Over the last two years the Vehicle Builders Employees Federation (VBEF) has actively collaborated in enforcing job cuts at Toyota and Ford plants in Melbourne. Secretary Wayne Blair described it as "necessary if the

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# Poland: Walesa Demands Dictatorial Powers

## Pope Rants As Anti-Abortion Crusade Stalls

This June, Pope John Paul Wojtyla made his first visit to Poland since counterrevolutionary Solidarność came to power in 1989. But he found a very different Poland from that of his last visit in 1987. In town after town, the turnout was decidedly lukewarm, the vast meeting halls and stadiums only half-full to greet the Polish Pope. The attempt by pro-clerical forces to ram through a total ban on abortion before the pontiff's visit fell flat in the face of widespread opposition. The Vatican chief made a distinct anti-Soviet appeal, holding provocative open-air "masses" (rallies) in towns along the border with the USSR.

Despite the Pope's call for "social peace," strikes have broken out recently in schools, hospitals, several state enterprises and by air traffic controllers. A recent poll showed 43 percent of the population reporting they were better off two years ago, before the capitalist onslaught. As labor protest escalates, President Lech Walesa has threatened the use of "all means and force" to stop "anarchy." He declared, "Strikes interfere with Poland," and added that strike organizers are "breaking the law." Walesa simultaneously demanded powers to issue economic decrees for one year, and threatened to dissolve parliament if it overrode his veto on a new electoral law. "My dilemma is whether to rule by decree above the law or within the limits of the law," he said (*Financial Times*, 14 June). Polish workers must resist "the man with an ax" who would be a new Pilsudski, the fascistic dictator of inter-war Poland.

Two weeks before the papal visit, the lower house of parliament, the Sejm, postponed action on a bill that would have banned all abortion. As the enraged Pope thundered against this sacrilege, the heavens opened up and lightning punctuated his anathema on the godless legislators. The scene at the open-air mass in Kielce, as he raved against abortion and demanded retribution from his fellow Poles for their sins, was reported in the *New York Times* (4 June):

"His normally sonorous, pacific voice shaking with rage, the Pope departed from his prepared text and assailed Poland's moral state as if it were a personal affront. 'All of you who lightheartedly approach these matters, you must understand that I cannot but be concerned with these matters, that I cannot but be hurt.... You should also be hurt.'

"As thunderclouds darkened the sky above an airfield where the Pope spoke, flashes of lightning first lit the white-block buildings in the surrounding hills, and later brightened the altar where John Paul stood....

"Land of my brothers and sisters!' the Pope cried, shaking his fists. 'How can we continue to destroy the Polish family? We cannot speak here of liberty. This is the kind of liberty which makes man a slave!'"

**Pope and his president, Lech Walesa, call for a new Inquisition. Polish counter-revolution wants women terrorised, doctors jailed for abortion.**



Chesnot/SIPA

For a decade, the Vatican, Wall Street and the labor lieutenants of capital in the "AFL-CIA" braintrused and bankrolled Solidarność and counterrevolution in Poland, to the applause of an unholy alliance stretching from outright fascists to fake-leftists. With the collapse of the Stalinist regime in the summer of 1989, the way was opened for carrying out the full-blown restoration of capitalism in Poland. But in practice it's not been so easy, as foreign capitalists failed to invest, and workers' resistance has flared against the brutal austerity program. Now the attempt to outlaw abortion, the spearhead of a crusade to assert church dominance over society, has sparked a furor against enforced religious obscurantism and clerical power.

On June 4, the Pope and his "moral crusade" waded deeper into the morass of bigotry. In Radom (where in late 1981 Solidarność plotted a grab for power, provoking General Jaruzelski's counter-coup) the Pope grotesquely compared abortion to the Nazi Holocaust! Speaking of the extermination of millions of concentration camp victims in World War II as "a time when vast areas of our continent became graves of innocent people," he said that today there is "yet another vast cemetery, that of the unborn child"! Yet the Vatican refused repeated pleas to denounce the Holocaust as it was happening—its silence was deafening. This horrendous equation of the genocide of the Jewish people with interruption of pregnancy attests anew to the deeply ingrained anti-Semitism of the Vatican. It comes in the context of a sharp escalation of anti-Semitism fueled by Walesa's election campaign.

### Fight Clerical Reaction

It is no accident that the growing anti-clerical backlash in Poland is being

fought out over the question of abortion rights. Abortion was legal and free on demand from 1956 on. It has long been the most popular method of birth control in Poland, especially with a chronic shortage of contraceptives, with an estimated one million abortions yearly. Elsewhere in East Europe, there has been a sharp rise of abortions, as the right to a job, free medical care and childcare are wiped out. With an uncertain present and even bleaker future, many decide that they do not want to bring a child into this world. Economic conditions in Poland are as bad or worse than anywhere else in the former Soviet bloc. Working women facing mass layoffs are among the most harshly affected. Poignant scenes abound of people in the flea markets selling their meager possessions to survive. But in Poland, the number of reported legal abortions has actually *dropped* dramatically.

For the last year, abortion has become much more difficult to obtain: now permission of two gynecologists, a psychologist and an internist is necessary in state hospitals, while the cost in private clinics is prohibitive. And the Catholic church has launched a campaign of intimidation and sheer terror. This includes public denunciation at Sunday mass of women who have abortions and picketing of pharmacies that carry contraceptives. The *Washington Post* (2 June) reported, "Many saw the long arm of the church behind a recent government decision to end government subsidies for

birth control pills. The move will triple the price of the pills, putting them beyond the reach of many women." But meanwhile doctors and public health officials report a rise in self-induced miscarriages (frequently using crochet needles) and "a small but noticeable rise in infanticide (virtually unknown here during four decades of abortion on demand)" (*Washington Post*, 14 June).

With all the church pressure, resistance to changing the liberal law has grown. Clerical reactionaries in the Senate pushed through a bill banning all abortion, even in cases of rape, which they hoped to present to the Pope on his visit. But the Sejm didn't go along, and buried the bill in committee, sending it back for a rewrite (being too cowardly to vote against it directly). As a result of the June 1989 "round table agreement" which brought Solidarność to power, the lower house of parliament has a substantial majority of seats reserved for the former Stalinist ruling party, now presenting themselves as social democrats, and its allies. The refusal to ban abortion has now prompted renewed demands to wipe out the round table agreement in upcoming October elections.

Popular opposition has also intensified. Recent polls showed over 60 percent of the Polish population opposed to making *any* change in the abortion laws, and in a survey of railway workers 89 percent were against the blanket ban in the church-proposed law. In another poll, 67 percent agreed with the statement that the church has "too much influence." Meanwhile, the government of President Lech Walesa is becoming increasingly unpopular as it tries to push through its capitalist austerity program orchestrated by the International Monetary Fund and "Harvard Boy" Jeffrey Sachs. With average incomes of under \$150/month, where two black coffees and two mineral waters in Warsaw cost more than a day's pay, working people are resentful of priests riding around town in their Mercedes-Benz limos.

One woman political activist, Izabella Sierakowska, a member of the successor to the Polish Communist party, said a ban on abortion rights would immediately lead to a "new kind of gynecological underground." "The choice here is whether the road to Europe leads through Iran," she said (*New York Times*, 18 May). The analogy to Khomeini's Iran is not far-fetched. Since the fall of 1989, the church has succeeded in turning back four decades of secular law in Poland. The clerical hierarchy has persuaded the government to reimpose religious education in public schools, instituted broadcasts of Catholic church services on state television, taken back more than 1,200 church buildings and lands seized after World War II, and replaced political commissars in the armed forces with Catholic chaplains. As far as Cardinal Glemp and his bishops are concerned, the separation of church

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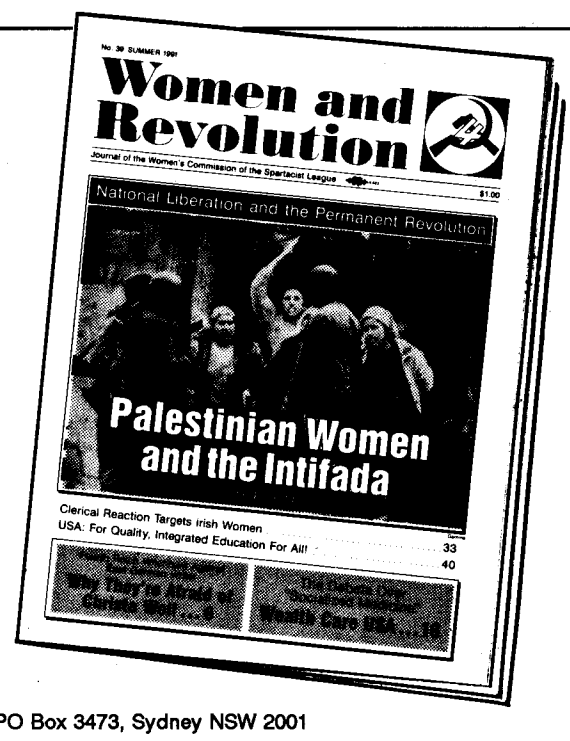
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# Trotskyism vs Bankrupt Stalinism

## Lively Debate at SL Forums

The Spartacist League "probably are the only people with a policy on the Soviet Union and a direction. I congratulate you.... My organisation's in the dark." So concluded a seaman supporter of the Stalinist Association of Communist Unity (ACU) after a spirited debate at our 21 May Sydney forum on the crisis in the Soviet Union. A forum on the same topic was also held in Melbourne on 1 June. Both attracted supporters of various Stalinist organisations and featured lively discussion periods.

Spartacist speakers stressed the critical task facing the Soviet working class: to build an independent, revolutionary workers party which cracks the false divisions between the "democratic" and "patriotic" wings of the bureaucracy, who simply disagree over the *pace* of capitalist restoration. Such a party would oppose all attempts at privatisation, combat national chauvinism, especially Great Russian chauvinism, and fight to restore genuine Bolshevik internationalism to the Soviet Union. It would fight all forms of chauvinism in social life, championing the rights of women and homosexuals and oppose all forms of petty censorship and police tyranny.

This perspective means fighting for genuine organs of working class power—workers soviets. Factory committees of workers struggling to defend their plants and living conditions against capitalist restoration can provide the basis. The 1989 Soviet miners strike was a tremendous demonstration of working class power. Their strike committees looked very like soviets in embryo. But what was missing was revolutionary leadership, without which the working class is prey to all kinds of reactionary forces, like Boris Yeltsin or worse. For example, in Poland the working class, lacking a viable alternative, was driven by decades of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule into the hands of counterrevolutionary Solidarność.

In contrast to the revolutionary program of the SL the Stalinist speakers at the forums exuded abject despair at the ability of the working class to fight in its own name and interests. "They're not ready to form soviets like they did in 1917," said the ACUer. "So let's support them in a realistic manner.... It's all very well criticising Gorbachev, I do too. Let's be positive about Gorbachev too. He turned the doomsday clock back."

"Gorbachev's emboldening imperialism," replied a Spartacist. "With the collapse of Stalinism and Gorbachev's continuing concessions to imperialism we have now entered a period of hot wars and we're going to see a few more of them. The most recent example was the imperialist carnage in the Persian Gulf. We alone fought for the defeat of our own imperialists and for the defence of Iraq, while the rest of the left, including the ACU, supported a popular front with the racist Australian bourgeoisie. This meant supporting sanctions to starve the Iraqi people into submission rather than bombing them into the Stone Age."

Another Spartacist speaker pointed out that Gorbachev "arm-twisted Vietnam to leave Cambodia. That means the genocidal Pol Pot forces are threatening to come back to power. The imperialists under the fig leaf of the UN are planning to invade Cambodia! Their target is eventually Vietnam. What we can do here is oppose any plans of Australian imperialism via the Labor Party and the Evans Plan to send troops to Cambodia. We owe a debt to the Vietnamese

Revolution for defeating Australian imperialism."

Out of the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" flows the deadly illusion of "peaceful coexistence with imperialism." The presenter pointed out this idea was "unknown to the revolutionary Bolsheviks, who knew that imperialism would never be satisfied until their revolution was crushed." In the name of "peaceful coexistence" Stalinism has placed the revolutionary gains of the working class from Vietnam to the Soviet Union itself in grave danger. The East German Stalinist regime carried out the logic of this program by handing over the collectivised property and the gains of the working class to counterrevolution without a fight. Our comrades in the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany alone demanded, unequivocally, "No to Capitalist Reunification!" They fought for workers political revolution in the DDR and social revolution in West Germany.

Falsely equating socialism with the bureaucratic caste of one or another

and that requires a revolutionary leadership."

The ACU epitomises Stalinist class collaboration. They supported the Accord from its inception. They supported Hawke's 1989 use of the military to smash the Pilots Federation, and the ACU-dominated BWIU was a crucial component in Hawke's smashing of the BLF in 1986. The ACU supporter defended this, saying "you should start to realise who the allies of the BLF are." "Of course the BLF has bad allies" replied the Spartacist presenter. "That isn't the point. Do we stand for the destruction of the Soviet workers state because it has bad allies, which it certainly has? No we do not! We defend it in spite of those things. Because it's a workers state. It's for the working class to deal with its misleadership—not for the ruling class, not for the capitalists. The smashing of the BLF was a watershed in the regime of the Hawke government. It cemented the Accord and the destruction of workers living standards."

On the waterfront, the ACU is helping

Spartakist



East Berlin, December 1989—Spartakist banner at anti-fascist demonstration. Uniquely, we fought against capitalist reunification.

degenerated or deformed workers state, all the various Stalinists can offer is support to a faction of the disintegrating Soviet bureaucracy, or to long for the "good old days." At the Sydney forum a Turkish follower of Albania's late Enver Hoxha spoke in praise of Stalin. But the Gorbachevite bureaucracy are the legitimate political heirs of Stalin! The ACUer exclaimed at one point: "If we don't support the remnants of the Gorbachev supporters, who are we going to support ... the Chinese?" China's version of "market socialism" provoked an incipient workers political revolution in 1989, brutally crushed by the Beijing bureaucracy at Tiananmen Square! Then there's the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), which supports the "patriots" in the CPSU. This faction, exemplified by the Soyuz group of the Supreme Soviet, do not oppose "market reforms." They want a return to Stalinist "order," and appeal to reactionary Russian nationalism and even outright anti-Semitism.

"Socialism in one country" means the Stalinist parties in capitalist countries carry out popular-front betrayals, keeping the lid on class struggle at home. In Australia that means subservience to the ALP. Referring to the May re-election of the Liberal Greiner government, the ACUer declared "we just lost the NSW elections.... I think we all supported a social-democratic government in the elections." "What?" exclaimed a Spartacist spokesman, "you mean like the one that carried out war in the Gulf, you mean like the one that cut living conditions, smashed the pilots, the BLF. You mean that sort of government? We stand for something different, hard class struggle. That's what we have faith in

the bosses and the government eradicate jobs. Crews on merchant ships have suffered savage cuts to manning levels, over 50 percent in some cases. The ACU supporter glibly maintained that "the Seamen's Union is the only Western maritime union in the world that's expanding by a policy of shedding ... by doing this they've got more ships." In fact the major recruitment by the Seamen's Union in recent years has been of other unions' members, under the ALP/ACTU's "restructuring" plans. The Seamen's Union leaders are faithful servants of the shipping magnates, pushing the racist poison of protectionism under the slogan "build a competitive Australian merchant shipping industry."

Another Spartacist speaker countered our revolutionary strategy: "The working class must break from the ALP and struggle for a real workers party that acts as a tribune of all the oppressed. The fight to defend workers unions, wages and conditions also means fighting against the racist protectionism of the union bureaucracy. It means opposing all the necessarily racist immigration laws of Australian capitalism and fighting for full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers. What we're talking about here is forging a multi-racial, internationalist and revolutionary workers party. A party which as Liebknecht said understands that the main enemy is at home."

Without any revolutionary perspective, Australian Stalinism wrapped itself in the colours of nationalism and anti-Asian racism, perhaps best exemplified when the Communist Party's *Tribune* (16 August 1945) printed a vile racist cartoon, captioned "Jappy Ending," celebrating the atomic bombing of Hiroshima

and Nagasaki. The ACUer fatuously declared "the Seamen's Union of Australia was the first seamen's union in the world to say 'Hell no, we won't go to Vietnam.'" But such honourable acts as the maritime unions' strikes and bans in solidarity with the workers and peasants of Vietnam belong not to the ACU leadership of the Seamen's Union, nor the SPA, nor any wing of racist Laborism, all of whom trample such traditions in the muck of national chauvinism and poisonous protectionism. We Trotskyists proudly uphold these exemplary actions, for successful revolution in this country will only come about when the Australian working class champions the rights of all the oppressed—immigrants, Aborigines and especially its Asian class brothers and sisters. Forward to a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

Australian Stalinism has long been in an advanced state of decay. The Communist Party went over to social democracy in 1971 essentially over the 1968 Warsaw Pact suppression of the Prague Spring. A pro-Moscow minority split at that time to form the SPA. Most of their conservative trade union bureaucrats split away under the impact of Cold War II in 1983, reducing the SPA to a small, withered outfit with little influence and no future. The splitters formed the ACU, which is basically a vehicle for defending bureaucratic, privileged positions in the trade unions by policing the working class for Hawke and the bosses.

For decades the most energetic and active Stalinists have been the various immigrant groups—Italian, Greek, Turkish, Kurdish, Latin American, Middle Eastern—who identified with the Stalinist parties of their country of origin and formed allied organisations here. To the extent the tired old SPA maintained any spark of life at all it came from its fraternal relations with many of these groups. But with the collapse of Stalinism internationally all the immigrant Stalinists are undergoing crises paralleling those of their parent parties.

These working class militants face a choice. Following the logic of Stalinist class collaboration and defeatism to its inevitable conclusion means liquidating into mainstream Laborism, which is dismissive and downright racist towards the immigrant workers whose labour built this country. On the other hand those serious about fighting for communism can break from Stalinism and join the International Communist League in our struggle to build an international party of world socialist revolution. ■

**WORKERS VANGUARD**

German Spartakists at 8 May 1945 Anniversary  
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# Immigration...

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company intended to stay." In a blatant clampdown on union militants, on 25 June Ford sacked 21 workers from their Broadmeadows plant including Turkish-born shop steward Hasan Donmez. Donmez responded by mounting a hunger strike outside the factory gates demanding reinstatement. This individual act, however courageous reflects despair at the do-nothing, pro-company union bureaucracy. The VBEF bureaucracy opposes any action in defence of the sacked workers and has callously dismissed Donmez' claims as "nonsense." *Union action now to reinstate Donmez and all sacked workers!*

Union membership has steadily dwindled in the 1980s, and the bureaucracy has completely abandoned the great bulk of non-unionised immigrant workers. The last ten years have seen a steady erosion of basic union rights and conditions, many of which were once taken for granted, like shift penalty rates and even the 40-hour week. It is testimony to the historic bankruptcy of the ALP that its recent centenary conference noted that the right to strike does not exist in this country, after years of union-busting, "common law" damages and anti-union laws like Section 45D of the Trade Practices Act. Now the government plans to force the unem-

**Melbourne: tramway workers march during bitter 1990 struggle to defend jobs.**



no credit

class urgently needs to assert its massive social power in defence of its unions, jobs and conditions. Waterfront unions must link up with road and rail transport workers. What is needed are mass strikes backed up by militant mass picket lines that no one dares cross, to defend jobs through sharing the work around at no loss in pay—30 hours work for 40 hours pay. Smash the chains of Arbitration! Bust the ALP/ACTU Accord! Down with all racist protectionism! But even beginning that struggle requires dumping the sellout union tops. It's urgently necessary to build a revolutionary workers party forged through splitting the ALP's working class base from its bourgeois tops.

no credit



**Workers at A F Bambach factory, raided by Immigration cops in May. Laborites push protectionism, blame Asian workers for company closures.**

ployed to sign contracts agreeing to "retrain" after a year in order to receive paltry "job search" benefits.

## ALP—Chief Obstacle to Working Class Fightback

All governments are deeply despised by wide layers of the population today. The ALP has taken to internecine squabbling over how to maintain their recession governments in office. In June Hawke unconvincingly survived, for now, a leadership challenge from former treasurer Paul Keating, and only then with the backing of his loyal "left" toadies. Keating's aspirations were bolstered by widespread bourgeois support (including from the Murdoch press) concerned that Hawke was not proceeding fast enough with his anti-union agenda and had become in the words of ex-government minister Walsh, a "jellyback."

The ALP and ACTU bureaucrats have staked their strategy for another Labor Party term in office on the new Accord Mark VI. Key to this is the waterfront "reform" package which aims at gutting this strategic centre of union power by reducing the workforce by 2,000 jobs in return for a \$12 increase. The working

There is a great reservoir of untapped working class power in this country. Immigrant workers have been in the vanguard of some of the major class battles of the last two decades, from the Ford Broadmeadows strike in 1973 where workers exploded in anger at the Laborite merchants of betrayal, to last year's five-week-long struggle of Melbourne tramway workers in defence of jobs. Many come from more combative and politically conscious workers movements in Southern Europe, Turkey and the Middle East. A revolutionary party will be built in big part from amongst these layers of the working class.

## Australian Capitalism Sinking Deeper Into Crisis

Throughout the so-called economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s, immigrant workers were the factory fodder in Australia's highly protected textile, car and metal manufacturing industries. A feature of today's recession is the cold hard fact that the protectionist schemes of the bosses and union tops have come to less than zero. Rather than being an industrial powerhouse in the region, Australia today is less industrialised than it was 20 years ago.

During the 1980s the Accord offered the bosses the semblance of "stability," as the government and union bureaucrats slashed wages and conditions and busted militant unions like the Builders Labourers Federation. The temporary and limited job growth of the 1980s was underpinned by huge borrowing abroad. Today some 60 percent of all export earnings are absorbed by the foreign debt. While Hawke and his new

Treasurer, John Kerin, insist the worst is all but over, more level-headed bourgeois commentators realise that signs of business wobbles in Japan can only further worsen Australia's economic malaise. The ruling class's racist mentality was expressed by journalist Peter Hartcher when he said: "The only thing standing between Australia and its claim to the title of poor white trash of Asia is New Zealand" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 February).

## "New World Order"—A Step Toward New World War

The Hawke government was an eager participant in the U.S.-led imperialist massacre in Iraq. Australian imperialism's Gulf war effort was kicked off by the Navy video of Australian sailors performing a racist parody of Arab peoples. This fuelled racist attacks on Arab-Australians at home. U.S. imperialism has been emboldened by the spectacular collapse of Eastern European Stalinist regimes, and the seemingly unending appeasement policies of the disintegrating Gorbachev bureaucracy.

U.S. military bellicosity is intended to bolster its own economic position against its more economically successful Japanese and German imperialist rivals. This leads towards intensified trade wars and increases the prospect of all-out world war. The "New World Order" won't pull Australia's ailing economy out of its long term decline. Australian officials are still smarting from the broadside delivered when U.S. subsidised wheat exports undercut Australian wheat exports in the lucrative Kuwait market. Intensified trade battles between the EC, the U.S. and Japan have left Australia, a minor player, high and dry. For an economy overwhelmingly dependent on minerals and agricultural exports the consequences are disastrous.

Such "uncertainties" of the world order foster the underlying xenophobic racism of Australian imperialism—both domestically and in its foreign policy. Recent U.S. plans to downgrade its Pacific presence along with the question mark about the future of the strategic U.S. military bases at Subic Bay and Clark Airfield in the Philippines, prompted Foreign Minister Evans to vehemently argue for their retention as

part of a U.S. military network that extends into Australia. But Evans and the rest of Australia's policy makers soon found themselves choking on the fumes of Mt Pinatubo's eruption, worried that a volcano may have sealed the bases' fate. *U.S. Bases Out of Australia and the Philippines!*

The latest in Canberra's defence strategies, the Wrigley Report, envisages a bolstered military perimeter to the north and northwest of the country. Australia's neo-colony, Papua New Guinea, is the focus of much attention not just because of its mineral wealth, but also as a defence rampart, principally against Indonesia, a prime Defence Department "concern." Australian military officials have over the last couple of years been the guiding hand and willing suppliers of PNG's brutal suppression of the Bougainville secessionist movement. Recent reports indicate that it was Australian-supplied helicopter gunships that were used to carry out atrocities committed in Bougainville. Since 1989 more than 1,500 people have died in the bloody secessionist uprising and a further 3,000 are believed to have been killed by PNG's total blockade of the tiny island last year. *Bloody Australian imperialists and PNG lackeys: Hands off Bougainville!*

## Smash Australian Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

The Vietnamese Revolution inspires fear and hatred amongst Australia's rulers. For them Vietnam embodies the prospect of social revolution in Asia, and its spread to this white imperialist enclave. Reversing their crushing defeat at the hands of the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants has been U.S. and Australian imperialisms' preoccupation since 1975. For the working class however, the Vietnamese Revolution was a victory against our "own" imperialism, which put a dent in White Australia imperialism. Today, defence of the gains of the October Revolution in the USSR and of the social gains of the Vietnamese Revolution remains a key strategic task of the Australian working class.

Like Apartheid South Africa, Australia's rulers share racist garrison-state perceptions about their existence. The difference is that whereas South African Apartheid is aimed against its majority black population, Australia directs its enmity to an external "Asian threat" across the seas whilst carrying out vicious oppression against its Aboriginal minority at home. When former Labor leader and "international statesman" Dr Evatt fought tooth and nail for South Africa's "right" to define its own "internal race policy" at the United Nations in 1947, he was simultaneously speaking for the White Australia Policy. The historic role of the Australian working class is to destroy racist White Australia imperialism root and branch and link up with the Asian working people in international socialist revolution. It is only this course which can establish an international socialist division of labour and economic planning according to the needs of all. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■

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# Furore Over Gorbachev's Tokyo Visit

## Oppose Japan's Designs on Soviet Kuril Islands!

The following is condensed and adapted from Spartacist offprint No. 9, published by our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan. It first appeared in Workers Vanguard No. 526, 10 May 1991.

TOKYO, April 20—Soviet president Gorbachev, hat in hand, spent four days in Japan trying to pry loose about ¥3 trillion (over US\$20 billion) in economic aid for the disintegrating Soviet economy. But he left empty-handed. The Japanese bourgeoisie, sensing political instability in Moscow and a slowing down of perestroika, hardlined it on the Kuril Islands dispute, closed their pocketbooks and decided to wait and see. At the beginning of April, Gaisha Hiraiwa, chairman of the powerful Keidanren business association, told the press, "Particularly after the '500-day plan' for economic reform was dropped last October, I had the feeling that economic assistance by Japan to the Soviet Union would become difficult." So prime minister Kaifu had his marching orders and tied, as a *precondition* to all economic aid and a peace treaty, recognition of Japanese sovereignty over all four of the southern Kurils (generally referred to in Japan as the "Northern Territories").

Japanese bankers, like their Western counterparts, are worried about the reduced pace of capitalist restoration in the USSR on the one hand, and the real catastrophic existing economic conditions on the other. Japanese capital is certainly interested in the development of natural resources in Siberia, especially oil, but they're uncertain over the profitability of such ventures right now. The Keidanren is insisting upon a free-market system, decentralized economic decision-making and ownership of natural resources, and the ruble becoming an internationally traded currency with the USSR joining the IMF. A Japanese trading house spokesman summarized this problem when he said, "There is no business where there is no money." Economically Japan holds all the cards.

The Kurils are hardly central to Japan's economy and many business interests would not want this remote real estate to stand in the way of profit. But the Japanese government, representing the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole, seeks title to the southern Kurils to reverse some of its losses in the Pacific War (World War II) and reassert its imperialist appetites. The fact that they hold the upper hand economically has been consciously used, as a Liberal Democratic (LDP—the ruling party) member of the Diet (parliament), Yukio Hatoyama, said after returning from Moscow in October 1988: "I was considering the problem [Kurils] as something separate from the bilateral economic issue at first, but now I have changed my mind because Japan can take advantage of its economic strength and use it as a lever to pry some concessions from the Soviet Union on the issue" (*Japan Times*, 19 December 1988).

The Japanese bourgeoisie has been trying to get the southern Kurils back since the end of World War II. Tokyo has refused to sign a peace treaty with the USSR formally ending the war precisely because of this territorial "dispute." And the demand "Return the Northern Territories" is a main battle cry

### By Spartacist Group Japan

of the Japanese fascists. The Japanese bourgeoisie has been miffed that while Gorbachev's "new thinking" has led to the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the capitalist reunification of Germany, dismantling of the Warsaw Pact, they haven't reaped any benefits in Asia yet. Japanese imperialism wants similar concessions and troop withdrawals in the Far East and is demanding the southern Kurils today, and probably the capitalist reunification of Korea tomorrow, as its

bourgeois press launched a media blitz rewriting history to suit Japanese imperialism's revanchist claims and preparing public opinion to blame Gorbachev if a deal wasn't cut. But for communists the Kurils have nothing to do with the national question, historical "claims," or interpretation of the fine print in imperialist documents. The Kurils are part of the USSR's Pacific defense and while Gorbachev & Co. are willing to undermine this to curry favor with imperial-

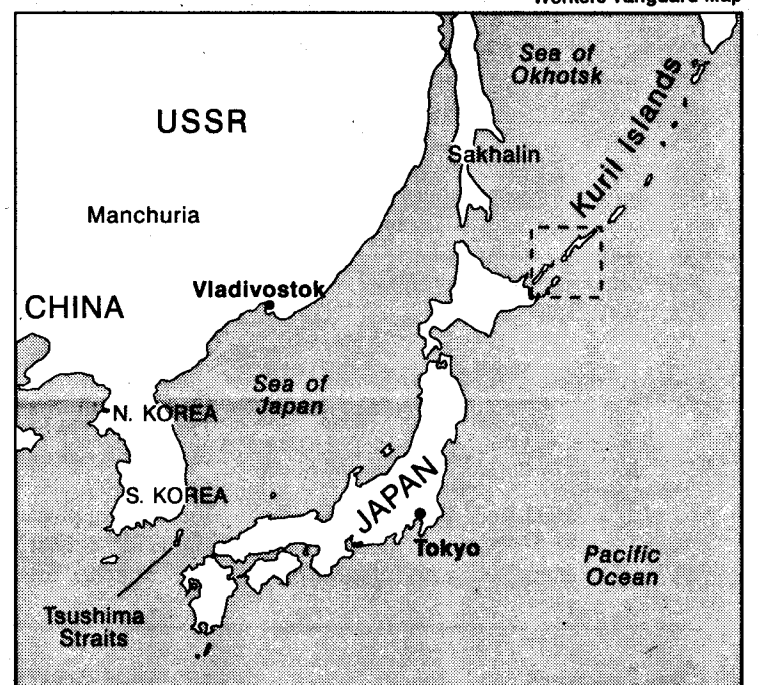
would dominate the region stretching from eastern Siberia through Manchuria into Korea and northern China.

The 1875 Treaty of St. Petersburg gave Russia exclusive right to the mineral-rich Sakhalin island off Siberia, and in exchange Japan got the Kurils. Today the Japanese bourgeoisie proclaims this deal as further proof of their "inalienable" right to the Kurils. But this "historic" 1875 Treaty of St. Petersburg was bitterly opposed by sections of the Meiji ruling class who thought the exchange of Sakhalin for the frozen Kurils was a rotten deal for Japan.

Japanese imperialism launched its first war for territorial expansion in 1894



Japanese prime minister Kaifu (right) tells Gorbachev: give us Kuril Islands (boxed area in map shows islands demanded by Japan). Imperialists want to bottle up Soviet fleet in Vladivostok and Sea of Okhotsk.



price for extended economic aid to the USSR.

Japan's revanchist drive to take back the Kurils has the rest of Asia pretty worried; they remember well the last time Japan set out to expand its territory. Even China, which for years supported Japan's territorial claims to pursue its border dispute with the USSR, backed off to a more neutral stance when there was a likelihood of a deal.

In the wake of the U.S. destruction of Iraq in the Persian Gulf War, the Soviet military has taken a harder line against further concessions to world imperialism, especially the ceding of *strategically important Soviet territory*. Nonetheless, Gorbachev certainly tried to appease Japanese imperialism while he was in town. He offered phased troop withdrawals from the Kurils and reductions in Soviet Far East forces. In a speech before the Keidanren, Gorbachev offered an economic free trade zone in the port city Nakhodka, promised to make the ruble convertible into hard currency and proposed a "Soviet-Japan development bank" to help finance a plethora of projects for Siberia and the Soviet Far East. The Japanese reply was always: yes, we are interested in these proposals—but give us the islands first!

Gorbachev engaged in a series of marathon negotiation sessions with the Kaifu government to trade "interpretations" of who really has "rights" to the Kurils. Prior to Gorbachev's arrival the

ism, the proletariat's interests are quite the opposite.

The "Interim Preliminary Agreement for Common Work in Japan," between the international Spartacist tendency (now the International Communist League) and the Rekken group (now the Spartacist Group Japan), signed on 26 October 1986, says:

"The main enemy is at home! In Japan it is therefore the elementary duty of revolutionaries to oppose Japanese imperialism's revanchist and chauvinist claims to the four so-called Northern Islands, now part of the USSR. For the right of unrestricted passage of all Soviet ships through the Tsushima, Soya and Tsugaru Straits and all other passages connecting the Sea of Japan to the Pacific!"

—see *Spartacist* No. 41-42 (Winter 1987-88)

### Japanese Imperialism and the Kurils

The Kurils are a subarctic archipelago, consisting of more than 30 islands strung in a 1,200-kilometer arc between the Kamchatka Peninsula in Siberia and Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan. The mid-17th century brought explorers from Russia, Japan and West Europe, but permanent colonies, although attempted, were never successful. The history of the Russo-Japanese Kuril boundary, which for nearly two centuries was a relatively unexplored and vague frontier, had nothing to do with resident Russian and Japanese populations and everything to do with the growing rivalry between tsarist Russia and imperial Japan over which power

against China in which Formosa (Taiwan) was seized along with economic control of Korea and other concessions. Japan resolved its Russian border "dispute" during the 1904-05 war in which Port Arthur and the southern part of Sakhalin were seized. In 1910 Japan annexed Korea. In an attempt to block the extension of Bolshevik rule to the Soviet Far East, Japanese imperialism occupied Vladivostok in 1918 and maintained a strong military presence in the Soviet maritime district until 1922. Japanese imperialism only withdrew to southern Sakhalin in 1925 when relations between Japan and the Soviet Union were normalized.

The interwar period in the Far East was marked not only by Japanese expansion into Manchuria and China, but also by a fervent hostility, especially on the part of the Japanese officer corps, toward the Soviet Union. The Soviets, however, defeated Japan's Kwantung Army at Nomonhan (on the Mongolian border) in 1939 and subsequent Japanese expansion in Asia was directed at their Western imperialist rivals.

The 20th century, with its tremendous expansion of naval and air power, now casts the Kurils as a strategic military outpost. While the Japanese expanded their fishing and developed summer cannery operations in the 1920s and 1930s, the only year-round expansion achieved in the Kurils was the fortification and garrisoning of Japanese military units prior to World War II. The attack

continued on page 6



# Kuril Islands...

(continued from page 1)

on Pearl Harbor was dispatched from the Kurils, and during the war one of the reasons the U.S. decided not to attempt bombing raids on Japan from the Soviet maritime district was the understood inability of the American navy to resupply, through the Kurils, any bases in the Soviet Far East.

At Yalta, Roosevelt and Churchill sought Soviet military intervention against Japan and offered no objection to their then ally taking control of the Kurils. So at the end of WWII the Red Army not only liberated Manchuria and North Korea from Japanese domination, but also seized this strategic island chain in an important act of self-defense to ensure access of the Red Navy to the Pacific:

"Japan's ownership of the Kurils in the years prior to 1945 prevented the full development of Vladivostok and other Soviet Far Eastern ports. But for occupation

of the Soviet Union. Property was nationalized in February 1946 and cannery operations have been extended, processing a third of the USSR's Pacific catch. Nearly 30,000 Soviet citizens now reside permanently on these islands. Most significant has been the expansion and construction of aerial and naval military facilities. The Kurils are a strategic component of the USSR's Pacific defense perimeter and the Japanese working class must block any imperialist attempts to undermine this. Japan's revanchist claim to the "Northern Territories" is an attempt to reverse its defeat in the Pacific War and reassert its imperialist ambitions. To support Japanese imperialism's revanchist claims is to undermine the defense of the USSR and once again bottle up the Soviet Pacific fleet in the Sea of Okhotsk.

## The Kurils and the Japanese Left

To no one's surprise all wings of social democracy support the bourgeoisie's

"The JCP now puts forward the following proposal to achieve the return of the 'two islands,' Habomai and Shikotan, as an intermediate step, whilst looking forward to the return of the Chishima [Kuril] islands to Japan. We are convinced that if these 'two islands' are returned, it will benefit Japan's national sovereignty and the just interests of the Japanese people."

—Japan Press Weekly, 30 March

Some "far left" groups are also calling for the Soviets to vacate the Kurils, however, in the name of establishing there a homeland for the Ainu, the aboriginal peoples of northern Japan. The Japanese section of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat devoted a pamphlet to this proposition in the 1970s. That pamphlet included a few references to defense of the USSR, but today, echoing the bourgeoisie's claims that the Cold War is over and "Communism is dead," the USec has dropped Soviet defensism, proclaiming the national question to be the quintessential Marxist principle. At the time of the first Russian and Japanese colonization attempts in the 17th century, less than a thousand Ainu

The demand for self-determination for the Ainu is a cruel hoax. Not only does it undermine the military defense of the Soviet Union but it accepts the forced segregation of and discrimination against the Ainu by the racist Japanese ruling class. The sad but true fact is that the dwindling Ainu population (in 1980 numbering only about 30,000) is incapable of creating any independent existence. It could be said that anthropologists are more concerned with the question of extinction than nationhood.

The barbarous samurai feudal ruling class is responsible for the genocidal suppression of the hardy and fierce Ainu people, and the proletariat today can do nothing to reverse this history. A Leninist party in Japan, as a tribune of the people, must fight against the second-class citizenship status and segregation of the Ainu. Communists must demand unrestricted integration of the Ainu into the mainstream of Japanese society, while militantly fighting against any forced assimilation schemes. Ainu people should have the right to live anywhere they want to in Japan, with full civil rights and equal access to jobs, education and housing—and the right to maintain every vestige of their culture. The Spartacist Group Japan fights for a workers republic which will tear the enormously productive Japanese industrial base out of the hands of the racist ruling class, laying the material basis to end the segregation and discrimination against the Ainu, grant full citizenship and civil rights to Koreans, Chinese and immigrant workers, and end the caste discrimination against burakumin ("untouchables") and the stultifying oppression of women.

The Kuril Islands are an integral part of the Russian question in Japan. Those "leftists" who abandon the October Revolution now, at the hour of its greatest peril, are political cowards who will never lead a revolutionary struggle against their "own" bourgeoisie. Only the Spartacist Group Japan fights for the Trotskyist program of proletarian political revolution in the deformed workers states to defend the gains of October, and the urgent defense and extension of those gains through international workers revolution. ■



Soviet border guard on Kunashiri in the Kurils (above). Ultrarightist demonstrators in Tokyo (right) demand that Japanese imperialism take back the Kurils and southern Sakhalin.



Okura Kengo

Kondakov/Moscow News

of the Kurils, Soviet vessels would have to exit to the Pacific through the Tsushima straits between Japan and Korea. This strategic waterway is today closely controlled by the US, Japanese and South Korean navies."

—David Rees, *The Soviet Seizure of the Kurils*

The Kurils are today an integral part

claims to the "Northern Territories." But the position of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), which has long since broken with Moscow and seeks to demonstrate its loyalty to the bosses of the Keidanren, rivals that of the revanchist right. In his March 22 public statement, JCP honcho Tetsuzo Fuwa declared:

lived in the frozen, desolate Kurils. Toward the end of World War II, nearly all of the indigenous Ainu were removed by the Japanese authorities and resettled in Hokkaido. When the Soviet Red Army drove Japanese imperialism out of the Kurils, only *three* Ainu were found in the entire archipelago!

# Poland...

(continued from page 2)

and state is a communist plot, and they mean to undo it.

While they were all brothers in anti-Communism, social democrats like Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik and bourgeois liberals like Bronislaw Geremek have fallen out with a Catholic hierarchy that looks back to the Middle Ages as the heyday of religious fervor. (Kuron proposed a national referendum on the anti-abortion law; the bishops retorted that "good and evil" were not subject to a vote.) And capitalist free-marketeers are none too happy when the Pope rants against a "consumer society" in his evangelical crusade to "re-Christianize" East Europe and the Soviet Union. In its attempt to impose the most advanced ideas of the 14th century, Wojtyla's church seeks to whip up the social backwardness of a peasant society, artificially preserved by the former Stalinist rulers who feared to challenge the power of the clergy. But this smallholding peasantry is about to be wiped out under the hammer blows of the capitalist market.

## Workers' Resistance to Capitalist Starvation Plan

Walesa and his cabinet have gone all out to implement the IMF "shock treatment" in Poland. But the pervasive resistance to rolling back social gains was captured in an article in the *New York Times* (3 June), titled, "Factories With Amenities Hinder Poland's Stark Turn to Capitalism." This was focused on the

sprawling Azoty chemical works in Silesia. Prime Minister Jan Bielecki recently visited the area, and the *Times* reported, "What he saw chilled him to his free-market bones."

"It still conducts functions so typical for a socialist enterprise," Mr. Bielecki lamented in an interview. "They have an indoor skating rink, a very nice swimming pool, culture center, soft drink bottling plant and a very nice laundry. They maintain 1,000 free factory apartments, heat 80 percent of the town and still make a profit."

In contrast to the former East Germany, where wages have been raised somewhat while millions have been thrown out of work (and onto the dole or the disguised unemployment of the "short workweek," for fear of a social explosion), in Poland the capitalist government has opted to keep the wheels of state-owned plants turning, while driving real wages to starvation levels through inflation. But if they also eliminate the remaining factory-centered social benefits, they risk a social explosion.

Working-class resistance is growing. A general transport strike paralyzed Warsaw in May. Garbagemen in the capital stopped work for a week, leading to a trash emergency. Copper miners in Lubin struck demanding a doubling of their wages. Then on May 22, Solidarność held an unprecedented protest against the government it brought to power. The protest ranged from eight-hour strikes in Warsaw factories to work stoppages by workers in mines, factories and steelworks across the industrial south. But this was essentially a maneuver to avoid being outflanked by the much larger ex-Stalinist-led unions of the

OPZZ, which are gaining influence. The OPZZ, in turn, has been staging monthly protests as a pressure tactic on the capitalist regime.

With the collapse of bankrupt Stalinism and now the consequences of Solidarność counterrevolutionary program thrown into sharp relief, the time is more than ripe for forging the nucleus of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party in Poland. The Spartakusowska Grupa Polski was formed last fall by militants who through the experience of the last decade were won to the International Communist League, which back when Walesa & Co. were darlings of the left (and of Ronald Reagan) dared to tell the truth and said: "Stop Solidarność

Counterrevolution!" In its paper *Platforma Spartakusowców* and at workers' demonstrations, the SGP has emphasized the defense of women's rights as central to the fight against capitalist restoration, insisting: "Workers Must Mobilize to Defend Women's Abortion Rights!"

Today, as Polish society reels in the throes of counterrevolution, it is urgent to bring this program of revolutionary internationalism to the class-conscious workers, to the women struggling for their most basic rights, and to the youth who are the future of Polish communism. ■

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Australasian

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AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

# India...

(continued from page 8)

problem is that some see progress in the fact that urban upper caste families now keep separate plates for their untouchable employees instead of throwing scraps from a safe distance.

Nowhere is the degradation inherent in this hierarchy of power and poverty more apparent than in the treatment of women. Untouchable and tribal women are routinely subjected to rape, while upper caste women are disinherited and secluded in the name of caste purity. The caste-related dowry system has led to a shocking decline in the ratio of women to men (now 929 to 1,000). This disparity is fueled by infanticide of female babies, deliberate maltreatment of young girls by their parents and murder of young brides by the families of husbands greedy for more or a second dowry—the fate of 690 women in the capital of New Delhi alone last year. “Bride-burnings...are escalating exponentially in modern, urban India, where a new wave of consumerism has spawned a greedy, growing middle class” (*Los Angeles Times*, 29 April).

One recent incident of caste/sex violence shocked the country. When the 16-year-old daughter of a Jat landowner in the town of Mehrana near Delhi eloped with her 18-year-old outcaste Jatav lover, with the help of his Jatav friend, the higher-caste Jat families in the town captured the three youths and subjected them to an inquisition. When the couple refused to renounce their relationship, the two young men were tortured for hours—beaten with clubs and burned with torches in their mouths and genitals while hung upside down. Then the Jat-dominated town council “sentenced” all three to be hanged—by their own parents. When the young men’s fathers balked, they too were clubbed until they finally acquiesced.

## Communal Terror Escalates

Far from being the “social revolution” depicted by the Western press, Singh’s “job reservation” proposal was purely and cynically aimed at cutting into the lower-caste “vote banks” of the other bourgeois parties. But in response to Singh’s announcement, violent high-caste anti-reservation protests erupted across north India, spearheaded by students, scores of whom immolated themselves. Though none of the other parties dared to openly repudiate the scheme for fear of alienating potential voters, Singh’s opponents—including a split from his own party—seized on the uproar to move on him. On November 7, Singh resigned and a minority government headed by a split-off led by Chandra Shekhar governed precariously with Congress (I) support.

The BJP in particular responded to this attempt to divide its base by launching an ugly Hindu-communalist campaign of anti-Muslim provocations. Screaming “Break the mosque!” and “Hail the Lord Rama!” in late October BJP-led mobs stormed a 400-year-old Muslim mosque in Ayodhya which Hindu fundamentalists claim is located on the birthplace of the Hindu god Ram. Anti-Muslim terror and Muslim reprisals escalated throughout the region, leaving over 2,000 dead in a matter of weeks. The scenes evoked the horror of Partition. In Hyderabad alone, 130 people were slaughtered, including 30 children stabbed or axed and burned alive. In Aligarh, the site of an old Muslim academy, Hindu thugs provocatively marched through Muslim areas and three Muslim men were dragged from a train passing through the station and butchered. A 20,000-strong paramilitary force drafted in to stop the communalist terror instead began disintegrating in the face of the Hindu mobs. By the beginning of November, some 40 cities had been placed under curfew.

The BJP’s mixture of rabid anti-

Muslim communalism and mythological Hindu fundamentalism, exemplified by the title of its 1991 manifesto “Towards Ram Rajya” (the rule of Ram), has catapulted it from two seats in parliament in 1984 to 88 five years later to now being a serious contender to form the next government. Much of its explosive support has come from the growing middle class spawned by Gandhi’s economic “liberalization” in the 1980s, who live

**Hindu fascists of the paramilitary Shiva Sena target Muslim minority in terror attacks.**



Dieter Ludwig

in terror at the prospect of sinking back into utter destitution. While advocating Thatcherite economic policies and a pro-American tilt, the BJP offers them a scapegoat for the degradation and misery of Indian capitalist society in the more than 110 million Muslims and other minorities of the country, who are denounced as “ungrateful guests.”

The BJP’s parent organization is the fascist RSS (it was an RSS supporter who assassinated Mohandas Gandhi). While BJP leader L.K. Advani—who is also a longtime member of the RSS—presents the party’s parliamentarist face, his agitators mobilize anti-Muslim pogromists on the streets. “Moslems are like a lemon dropped into cream. They turn it sour,” rants one. “What do we do with the lemon? We cut it up, squeeze out the pips and throw them away.”

And while Hindu/Muslim communalism ominously escalates, threatening to engulf the subcontinent in another India-Pakistan war, as *India Today* (15 October 1990) put it, “Punjab burns, Kashmir burns.” The war against the Punjabi Sikhs continues relentlessly, while the Muslims of Kashmir have been subjected to a “scorched-earth policy” of “terror and violence.” “Kashmir is now beyond solution,” shrugs one Indian political analyst in a *New York Times Magazine* (19 May) article by Barbara Crossette. And in February, 26,000 were arrested during a general strike in Tamil Nadu protesting against the imposition of direct rule by New Delhi.

## For a Trotskyist Party in India!

Forty-four years after independence, the vast majority of the country’s 850 million people live in ghastly poverty, dispossessed and effectively disenfranchised, as flagrantly corrupt politicians, capitalists and landlords amass their wealth and determine election outcomes with naked brute force. For the Sikhs, Muslims and hundreds of millions of lower-caste and “outcaste” Hindus as well as women of all ethnic and caste backgrounds, India’s “secular democracy” has meant only uninterrupted and unendurable oppression. And neighboring Pakistan is no less a prison house for its minority peoples. Already ruled as an Islamic theocracy, Pakistan’s rulers are now attempting to shove through an even stricter, fundamentalist “Shari’a Law.”

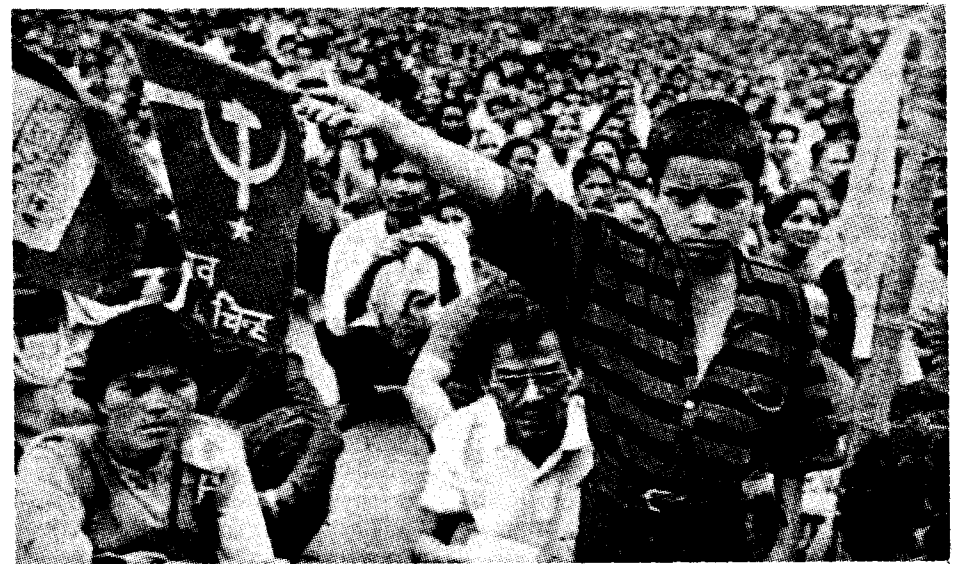
With all the gin-and-tonic arrogance that comes so easily to it, the London *Economist* (4 May) sneers that India’s misery “is largely India’s own doing” and

“not the fault of former colonial masters or wicked western capitalists.” Calling for opening India up to even greater imperialist exploitation, this mouthpiece for the former colonial masters insists, “The changes India needs are not far short of a revolution.”

A revolution is precisely what India needs, not the untrammelled imperialist exploitation envisaged by the *Economist*, but thoroughgoing proletarian socialist

revolution. The small but strategic Indian proletariat, which has historically demonstrated militancy and organization, is the only social force capable of dragging the country out of the quagmire of conflicting nationalist and communalist antagonisms. The working class has a direct and immediate interest in combating communalism. Frequently drawn from local and migrant minorities, it is often particularly the working class that is the main target of communalist terror.

Likewise, drawing behind it the agrarian masses, the proletariat is the only force capable of rooting out the deeply embedded structure of caste and sexual oppression. Even the most elementary demands against caste discrimination—like an end to all discrimination in jobs and social facilities, decent housing for the poor and safe water and sewage systems—requires sweeping away the



AP

## Communist Party election rally in Nepal. Stalinist mass parties in Indian subcontinent tie workers to reactionary bourgeois order.

capitalist system. And integral to the perpetuation of the caste system is the land question. The post-independence land reforms and the so-called “Green Revolution” of agrarian development have benefited a layer of capitalist farmers, including some of the “backward” farmer castes. But half of rural households own no land, while 5 percent own well over a third of the cultivable land. Rural indebtedness is endemic, bonded labor widespread and growing.

Even the Mandal Report linked land reform to the question of countering entrenched caste privilege, but none of the bourgeois parties dare draw that connection. As the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia demonstrated, the road to agrarian revolution in the countryside

lies through the seizure of power by the proletariat in the cities. Only then will it be possible to nationalize the land and expropriate large landlords and capitalist farmers. And the call for land to the poor peasants and a program of government loans and provisions for modern farming equipment can win the peasants and agricultural workers to the side of the proletariat.

The key is forging a Trotskyist party to lead the Indian working masses to power. The thoroughly reformist Stalinist CPI and CPI(M) are both mass parties, holding governmental power in several states. They have gained a certain amount of authority for steering clear of the manipulative communalism which marks all the bourgeois parties. Sikh CPI militants in the Punjab, for example, risked their lives to defend their Hindu neighbors against pogroms by Sikh fundamentalists. And the CPI(M) has been able to retain control over Calcutta and West Bengal for 13 years, largely because of its ability thus far to avert communal clashes. Even in the neighboring Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, the Communists recently scored resounding successes in the first election in 30 years.

But both the CPI and CPI(M) are wedded to the politics of coalitionism, tying the proletariat to the wheels of one or another bourgeois party in the name of democracy, and both uphold capitalist India’s “unity” against “secessionists.” The CPI(M)-led government of West Bengal is aggressively encouraging capitalist businessmen, including the chief minister’s son. India more than perhaps any other country on the face of the earth is proof positive of Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, an object lesson in the futility of seeking to fulfill the tasks of the democratic revolution in a backward country under capitalism. There has been capitalist development: the “Green Revolution” of applying science to agriculture virtually eliminated India’s import of grains; the country has built up large-scale heavy industry. Yet this is combined with truly horrendous social conditions, the bride burning, caste oppression, national subjugation, hunger and grinding poverty on a mind-boggling scale—the list is endless.

As we wrote seven years ago, after the Golden Temple massacre (*Spartacist Britain* No. 60, August 1984):

“If India is not to be wracked by another convulsion of communalist slaughter in the interests of imperialism, what is needed is a mass proletarian party rallying behind the banner of Permanent Revolution the myriad minorities, the agrarian masses and the multitudinous victims of caste and sex oppression....

“The problems of South Asia are inter-related and will not be solved separately. Only the working class can guarantee the right of self-determination to the oppressed nations from the Baluchis in Pakistan to the Tamils in Lanka, the liberation of women from bondage and backwardness, and land to the tiller.” ■

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For Permanent Revolution in India's Prison House of Peoples!

# India: Bloody End of a Dynasty

Late on the evening of May 21 at an election rally in the town of Sriperumbudur in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu, a young woman exploded a bomb, killing herself and 16 others. The terror bombing brought the death toll in India's tenth national election to some 400 people, the bloodiest election campaign in the country's history. But this killing sent shock waves throughout India and the rest of the world. For among the mangle of dismembered bodies lying near the speaker's platform was that of Rajiv Gandhi, former prime minister, head of the Congress (I) party and scion of the dynasty which ruled India for all but 7 of its 44 years since gaining independence from Britain.

And, at least for the foreseeable future, Rajiv Gandhi's bloody end also means the end of that dynasty, founded by India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi met his end much in the manner of many another Congress leader. Nehru's mentor and head of the bourgeois independence movement, Mohandas Gandhi (no relation), was shot by a Hindu ultranationalist in 1948. Only two years after Nehru died in office of a stroke in 1964, his daughter Indira assumed the parliamentary throne. When she was assassinated by Sikh members of her bodyguard in 1984, in revenge for her brutal massacre of rebellious Sikhs at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, it was her son Rajiv who took over as head of Congress and India.

Rajiv Gandhi's assassination highlights the deep crisis of capitalist India. The imperialists are worried at the prospect of an already turbulent India being pushed further down the road to chaos. Even before the killing, the London *Economist* (4 May) wrote:

"The future of India looks more threatened than for many years. In recent months its government has been all but paralysed by political squabbling. The country is divided by violence over caste, religion and demands for regional autonomy. Economic growth is slowing, and poverty on a scale that defies the imagination seems beyond all remedy."

Though no longer the hegemonic party it was in Nehru's day, Congress remained the main party of a fragmented all-India bourgeoisie, with pretensions of representing all caste, religious, national and ethnic groupings. And, as an editorial in the London *Independent* (22 May) wrote, "Congress (I) was the Gandhi family." (The "I" stands for Indira, to distinguish it from the rump party of Congress bosses who fell afoul of her in a power fight.)

For decades, the imperialist press has hailed India as the "world's most populous democracy" and upheld it as the model of a "democratic" alternative to social revolution in the Third World. The *New York Times* (22 May) editorialized, "Whoever killed Rajiv Gandhi yesterday struck at democracy itself." Erstwhile pseudo-Trotskyist Tariq Ali joined in the bourgeois breast-beating, lamenting "the tragedy of the Nehru-Gandhi family" and moaning: "In one foul blow the country's leading secular politician has been eliminated

Rajiv Gandhi's funeral pyre. The latest of the leading figures of "democratic" India to have met with violent death.



Manuel Ceneta-AFP

from the race. Who will now rescue India from the prophets of hate?"

Its "secular" and even "socialist" pretensions notwithstanding, Congress ruled over India's prison house of peoples with an iron fist. Nehru presided over the grisly communalist slaughter of the 1947 Partition which created Muslim Pakistan. Indira Gandhi calculatingly played the Hindu-chauvinist card; her massacre of the Sikhs was characteristic of her long and bloody reign. And despite his "Mr. Clean" image, Rajiv followed firmly in his mother's footsteps, right from the start. As thousands of Sikhs were being hunted down and lynched following his mother's assassination, Gandhi encouraged the bloodbath, intoning: "When a great tree falls, the earth shakes." Several years later, he sent Indian "peace-keeping" forces to Sri Lanka who, under the guise of protecting the country's Tamil minority from a Sinhalese-chauvinist bloodbath, waged a war of annihilation against the separatist guerrilla Tamil Tigers.

Today the Tigers, who are also suspected of blowing away hawkish Sri Lankan defense chief Ranjan Wijeratne two months ago, are considered prime suspects in Gandhi's assassination. In retribution, the Congress party in Tamil Nadu is demanding the deportation of 200,000 Lankan Tamil refugees. But such is the squalid morass of Indian bourgeois politics that the assassin could have come from virtually any ethnic or political direction. The states of Punjab, Kashmir and Assam are under martial law aimed at suppressing regional insurgencies. Even with 1.5 million police and paramilitary forces deployed, the elections had to be staggered over three days to allow for concentration of forces to defend the balloting, with two further dates set aside for Punjab and Assam and no vote slated for Kashmir. "Booth-capturing" by gangs of rival party thugs, who shoot their way into polling places in order to stuff the ballot boxes, alone claimed the lives of dozens during the first day of balloting on May 20.

Meanwhile, a sinister rise in anti-Muslim communalism has been registered with the dramatic growth of the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The spectre looms of a slaughter to match that of the Partition of India in 1947. Commenting on the assassination, the *Times of India* wrote: "At no time since it won freedom has India been as polarised along antagonistic lines as it is today. Caste has been pitted against caste and religion against religion with relentless fury." At no time has the need been clearer for a socialist revolution in India that sweeps away all the encrusted backwardness and hideous oppression that are bound up with capitalist rule.

## Caste Hatreds Explode

Following the elections of November 1989, Gandhi's Congress (I) was replaced by a National Front government led by V.P. Singh's Janata Dal and supported from the outside by both the rightist BJP and the two main Stalinist parties, the Communist Party of India and CPI (Marxist). The immediate backdrop to the present crisis stems from Singh's decision last August to implement affirmative action measures for the country's lower castes based on a report issued ten years earlier. Designating more than 3,700 of the country's castes and subcastes as "other backward castes"—in contrast to high castes like Brahmans and "forward" farmer castes like the Rajputs, and to "untouchables" like the Harijans who are outside and beneath the caste structure—the Mandal Report called for reserving 27 percent of federal government jobs for them.

In line with an earlier 1950 provision, another 22.5 percent of government jobs were already reserved for the lowest "scheduled castes" (untouchables) and "scheduled tribes" (so called because the constitution specifically schedules them for protection). In fact these "job reservations" are effectively meaningless in undermining pervasive caste oppression. To this day, fewer than 5 percent of the elite Indian Administrative Services are

from the scheduled castes and tribes, while 70 percent are high caste. Untouchables often fill their quota in the lowliest work traditionally associated with their status—like cleaning or trash collection—whether or not they have a college degree. Indeed, some 600,000 untouchable families eke out an existence solely by cleaning latrines. As one student pointed out:

"I belong to the backward caste. I have been looking for a job in vain for the last five years. What good is job reservation to me? Who will give me a job? We all know that only the children of the rich and powerful will get jobs, reservation or no reservations."

—*The Hindu*, 15 September 1990

Yet in a country with over 50 million unemployed, where even a menial position in the railways or post office may be the difference between relative comfort and utter destitution, this is an explosive question. In 1989, there were more than 450,000 applicants for some 4,500 jobs in the Union Public Service Commission. Moreover, even the slightest tampering with the caste system is viewed with alarm by the high castes who continue to dominate Indian society in all aspects.

Though the last census enumerating caste status was taken 60 years ago, caste prejudice and oppression remain a powerful and pernicious force, reinforced by popular culture and television epics like the Mahabharata. While the British colonialists hypocritically condemned caste discrimination, they cultivated and recruited the higher castes to their administrative and military apparatus and then tried to build up the lower castes as a counterweight to nationalist agitation, much as they used Muslim-Hindu communalism, to divide and rule. Capitalism and urbanization have impacted on old caste practices and adjusted the status and power of some castes, but the division between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, still broadly parallels that between high and low caste. Indicative of the depth of the

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