

## Stop persecution of Tamils!

Despite an attempted cover-up by the brutal Sri Lanka regime, evidence is emerging about the mass slaughter that was inflicted on the Tamil people in the North East of the island last year. During the final stages of the Sri Lankan army's military offensive, it is estimated that tens of thousands of Tamil civilians were slaughtered. At the end of the bloody 26-year war by the Sri Lankan armed forces against the Tamil people, the remnants of the Tamil mini-state were destroyed, the nationalist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which has been fighting for an independent Tamil state for the last three decades, suffered a military defeat and its leader, Vellupilai Prabhakaran, was executed. Some 300,000 Tamils who were trapped

in a small area of the North East were interned in horrific prison camps and interrogation centres.

The Sinhala-chauvinist regime of Mahinda Rajapaksa, who was re-elected president in January in a grotesque display of anti-Tamil triumphalism, has continually sought to extract vengeance on the beleaguered survivors of this blood-bath. Over the past year many desperate refugees have lost their lives on the high seas as they attempt to flee to safety abroad. When nearly 500 Tamil refugees managed to make it to Canada, the Sri Lanka regime obscenely tried to vilify them as "terrorists".

The Canadian government whipped up a racist furore, sending a naval warship on 12 August armed

with guided missiles to intercept the barely seaworthy cargo ship carrying the refugees, which had left Thailand in May and had already been turned away from Australia. Canadian police as well as the military boarded the vessel and took the migrants into custody; the majority of the refugees languish in jail while the state demonises them as potential "terrorists". The Canadian government also vowed to work with Australia and other countries to stop the Tamils from even setting sail. Australia already sends its navy to intercept refugees on the high seas, turning them back or redirecting them to Indonesia, which incarcerates them in Australian-funded detention centres. Those captured in "Australian waters" are

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## All Indian and Pakistani troops out now!

# Down with India's bloody repression in Kashmir!



Farooq Khan/EPA



Roshan Mughal/AP

Srinagar, Indian-controlled Kashmir, August 2010: Indian paramilitary soldiers attack Kashmiri protesters (left). Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistani Kashmir, April 2004: rally demands freedom from both India and Pakistan (right).

In recent months the Indian state has stepped up its murderous repression of the majority Muslim population in the Kashmir Valley. On 11 June, 17-year-old student Tufail Ahmad Matoo was killed by police who fired a teargas canister at his head, sparking angry protests. Youths armed only with stones have fought daily battles with Indian police and soldiers, while hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets demanding "Go India! Go back!" and "We want freedom".

More than 60 people have been killed in the latest shootings and hundreds injured, many of them teenagers. An article titled "The angry housewives setting Kashmir ablaze" on the *BBC News* website (16 August) quotes a woman protester, Firdousi Farooq,

whose son was also killed by a teargas shell fired by Indian police:

"Why should I not protest? Why should I not pick up a stone? I am doing this in the honour of my martyred son. I am doing this for azadi (freedom) from subjugation and repression."

The latest round of killings is but the continuation of decades of repression of the Kashmiri people's struggle against national oppression. Since 1990, when around 100 unarmed demonstrators were shot dead by Indian troops on Gawakadal Bridge in the summer capital Srinagar, as many as 80,000 have been killed. The Indian military maintains an occupying force of nearly 700,000 troops and paramilitaries there, enforcing a brutal regime of curfews, arbitrary arrests, execu-

tions, rape and torture.

But the conflict in Kashmir has potentially catastrophic consequences beyond the sufferings of the Kashmiri people. The Himalayan territory is a major bone of contention between India and neighbouring Pakistan, nuclear-armed foes who have already fought three wars for control of Kashmir, in 1947-48, 1965 and again in 1999. The 1947-48 war, fought while both armies were still under British generals, resulted in the partition of Kashmir. Hundreds of thousands of troops still face each other across the Line of Control, the *de facto* border dividing Kashmir. The on-off "peace talks" between the two countries were abruptly halted following the criminal 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai which

killed 174 people and for which India blamed Pakistan.

In the event of war between these equally reactionary capitalist powers we call on the workers of India and Pakistan to turn the war into a struggle against their "own" capitalist rulers. We applied this revolutionary defeatist position towards India and Pakistan in 1971 when India seized upon the just struggle by East Pakistan (Bangladesh) for independence from West Pakistan as a pretext for war. When the nationalist Awami League handed military control of the Bengali independence struggle over to India, we said, "the just struggle of the Bengalis was entirely subordinated and integrated into the interests of the predator India at the expense of the

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# Kashmir...

(Continued from page 1)

predator Pakistan". We added that: "Under these conditions to call for support to the Bengali independence struggle is to play into the hands of Indira Gandhi and the Bengali national traitors. Revolutionary defeatism, the policy that calls upon both armies to turn their guns against their own rulers, is the only policy which can achieve the aspirations of the working masses" (*Workers Vanguard* no 4, January 1972).

Today, insofar as the Kashmiri struggle is not decisively subordinated to a military conflict between the Pakistani ruling class and its Indian rival, Marxists uphold the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir, which means the right to independence or—should they so choose—to merge with Pakistan (or India). Historically, despite the virulent Hindu-chauvinism

of New Delhi, union with Pakistan has found little support in Indian-controlled Kashmir, whose population, in addition to the four million Muslims in the valley of Kashmir, includes two million Hindus, concentrated in Jammu, as well as a smaller number of Sikhs and Buddhists. Pakistan is a stultifying Islamic theocracy which has long denied basic civil and political rights to its own people, much less to the Kashmiris in so-called Azad (Free) Kashmir on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control. Like India, Pakistan is a prison house for its national and religious minorities.

In supporting the right of self-determination for Kashmir we do not give an ounce of political support to any of the competing Kashmiri opposition forces—neither the "secular" separatist Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), nor the various Islamic-fundamentalist outfits like Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. All of these forces are hostile to the class

struggle of the workers and peasants against capitalist oppression and exploitation whether in India, Pakistan or Kashmir. Especially since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and the subsequent counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, many of the imperialist-backed Islamic-fundamentalists who were fighting the Red Army in Afghanistan have shifted to Kashmir where they have largely supplanted the JKLF in the leadership of the anti-India struggle. Far from fighting for the national emancipation of the Kashmiri people, these reactionary forces engage in communalist terror against non-Muslim religious minorities in Kashmir and India, and pose a deadly threat to Kashmiri women in particular.

While power remains in the hands of the bloody capitalist rulers in Islamabad and New Delhi, backed by the imperialists, the prospects for Kashmiri national liberation are slim indeed. This is especially so given Kashmir's strategic location and historical role in relations between India and Pakistan. The cause of national justice for the Kashmiri people is inseparably tied up with the revolutionary struggle of the working masses of both countries against their capitalist oppressors. There can be no genuine expression of the right of Kashmiri self-determination without the withdrawal of both occupying armies. In opposition to the chauvinism of the rulers in New Delhi and Islamabad workers in both countries must demand: all Indian and Pakistani troops out now!

deprived of the regiments which effected this, could unhesitatingly employ those very tribes to disarm and quell those regiments when in mutiny—a nation which could do this, is destined indeed to rule the world!"

—*The Tale of the Great Mutiny* (1902)

The continued slaughter in Kashmir today is a legacy of the 1947 partition of India, carried out under Clement Attlee's Labour government. India was divided along religious-communal lines, creating the modern states of India and Pakistan. The partition led to the slaughter of up to a million people and massive population transfers. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, despite having a majority Muslim population, was ruled at the time by a Hindu maharaja (under the suzerainty of the British Crown) who, according to Indian sources, opted to accede to India. When Pathan tribesmen from Pakistan crossed the border in 1947 in an attempt to force the issue in favour of Pakistan, the popular Kashmiri leader Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, fearing the dominance of the Muslim Punjabi landlords, also opted for India, conditional upon an eventual plebiscite. However the Indian bourgeoisie reneged on this promise; a vote has never been held, and while the Hindu-chauvinist Indian bourgeoisie today declares Kashmir to be an "integral part of India", there is overwhelming sentiment among the Muslims of the valley of Kashmir for an end to Indian occupation.

## For a socialist federation of South Asia!

Kashmir is strategically placed on India's borders not only with Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also with China, which controls Aksai Chin, a territory that India claims as part of Kashmir. The Tawang district in Arunachal Pradesh is also disputed by India and China who fought a war in 1962. Today the rivalry between the two countries is acute. In any military conflict between capitalist India and the People's Republic of China, we Trotskyists stand for unconditional military defence of China, a deformed workers state. The 1949 Revolution, led by Mao's peasant-guerrilla army defeated the Guomindang nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek, shattered capitalist rule and liberated the country from subservience to Japanese and western imperialism.

The Chinese Revolution resulted in enormous social gains for workers, peasants and women. But the workers state that issued out of it was *bureaucratically deformed*, ruled by a privileged caste headed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). We fight for

## Dialectical materialism and science



TROTSKY

In 1939-40 the anti-Soviet opposition of Burnham and Shachtman in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in the US maintained that dialectical materialism had no bearing on political positions. In the course of the factional struggle, Trotsky showed that the opposition's rejection of dialectics and their substitution of the pragmatic method led to incorrect political conclusions. For those not familiar with



LENIN

dialectical materialism, Trotsky outlined the main points of its method and explained that the opposition's attitude towards the nature of the Soviet Union reproduced point for point their attitude towards the dialectic. Trotsky's document is reprinted in *In Defence of Marxism*.

Dialectical thinking is related to vulgar thinking in the same way that a motion picture is related to a still photograph. The motion picture does not outlaw the still photograph but combines a series of them according to the laws of motion....

We call our dialectic, materialist, since its roots are neither in heaven nor in the depths of our "free will", but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of the nebulae. On all the rungs of this ladder of development, the quantitative changes were transformed into qualitative. Our thought, including dialectical thought, is only one of the forms of the expression of changing matter. There is place within this system for neither God, nor Devil, nor immortal soul, nor eternal norms of laws and morals. The dialectic of thinking, having grown out of the dialectic of nature, possesses consequently a thoroughly materialist character.

Darwinism, which explained the evolution of species through quantitative transformations passing into qualitative, was the highest triumph of the dialectic in the whole field of organic matter. Another great triumph was the discovery of the table of atomic weights of chemical elements and further the transformation of one element into another....

Marx, who in distinction from Darwin was a conscious dialectician, discovered a basis for the scientific classification of human societies in the development of their productive forces and the structure of the relations of ownership which constitute the anatomy of society. Marxism substituted for the vulgar descriptive classification of societies and states, which even up to now still flourishes in the universities, a materialistic dialectical classification. Only through using the method of Marx is it possible correctly to determine both the concept of a workers' state and the moment of its downfall.

All this, as we see, contains nothing "metaphysical" or "scholastic", as conceited ignorance affirms. Dialectic logic expresses the laws of motion in contemporary scientific thought. The struggle against materialist dialectics on the contrary expresses a distant past, conservatism of the petty-bourgeoisie, the self-conceit of university routinists and... a spark of hope for an after-life.

—"A petty-bourgeois opposition in the Socialist Workers Party",  
Leon Trotsky, 15 December 1939

# WORKERS HAMMER

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For a Socialist United States of Europe!

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# Defend anti-fascist protesters!

On 7 September, Martin Smith, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and Unite Against Fascism (UAF), was outrageously found guilty of assaulting a police officer at the October 2009 protest against the BNP when its leader Nick Griffin appeared on BBC's *Question Time*. Other anti-fascist protesters are facing criminal charges for their involvement in demonstrations against the BNP and the English Defence League (EDL). At least five protesters including UAF leaders Weyman Bennett and Rhett Moran will be hauled into court in October potentially facing charges of "conspiracy to incite violent disorder" stemming from the protest against the EDL in Bolton last March (see justice4bolton.org).

This harassment by the state is nothing other than an attempt to intimidate anti-fascists into silence and passivity. Charges of "conspiracy" enable the state to repress opposition without evidence of any criminal activity. Conspiracy laws are used against trade unionists and leftists in order to round up, prosecute and jail anyone the state perceives as an enemy. **The trade unions, minority organisations and the left—all intended targets of the fascists—must rally behind those accused and demand all charges be dropped immediately.**

During its 13-year reign Labour's relentless pursuit of the racist "war on terror" against Muslims nurtured fascism, spawning the EDL which mobilises racist scum on the basis of anti-Muslim bigotry. Since summer 2009 the EDL has staged provocative racist demonstrations up and down the coun-



London, 22 October 2009: Protest against BNP leader Nick Griffin appearing on *Question Time*.

try, targeting Muslims. The EDL was set up by BNP members/ex-members and organised through networks of football hooligans.

As we wrote in "Fascists feed on Labour government racism" (*Workers Hammer* no 209, Winter 2009-2010):

"It is in the interests of the multiethnic working class as a whole to combat these racist terrorists. We call for trade union/minority mobilisations to stop fascist provocations. At the same time, as Marxists we make clear that the decaying capitalist system breeds the social conditions in which the fascists thrive and therefore the struggle against fascism is inseparable from the fight for socialist revolution."

Our understanding of the need to link

the fight against fascism to the struggle to overthrow the capitalist order distinguishes our programme from the SWP's reformism. Mobilising the social power of the trade unions to defend immigrants, minorities and the working class requires a **political struggle** against the Labourite trade union bureaucracy, which has kept the unions on their knees before the capitalists' attacks. It is necessary to combat politically the chauvinist poison expressed in the "British jobs for British workers" strikes last year which most of the "left" (and the BNP) supported.

We print below a 4 September letter from the Partisan Defence Committee

(PDC)—a class-struggle, legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League—to the South Western Magistrates Court and the Ministry of Justice, protesting the prosecution of Martin Smith. The PDC has contributed to the defence fund for the Bolton anti-fascists and encourages others to do the same. Make cheques payable/send to: AFDC (Anti-Fascist Defence Campaign), PO Box 56959, London N10 9AZ.

\* \* \*

We demand charges be dropped against Unite Against Fascism officer and Socialist Workers Party organiser Martin Smith. Charged with assaulting a police officer, Smith is due to appear in court on 7 September. The charge, which Smith denies, stems from the protest outside the TV studios when the BBC's *Question Time* obscenely provided a platform for fascist BNP leader Nick Griffin last October.

Smith's arrest and prosecution reflect the racist capitalist state's efforts to criminalise protest against the fascists. The BBC programme at which Smith was arrested displayed fascist Griffin sparring with representatives of the Labour, Tory and Liberal Democrat parties squarely on the BNP's terrain of virulent anti-immigrant racism, each arguing over who is to "blame" for immigration.

The Con-Dem government is today preparing savage economic attacks on the working class which will fan the flames of anti-immigrant chauvinism, lending a hand to the BNP/EDL and their ilk. We demand: Hands off anti-fascist protesters! **Drop the charges against Martin Smith!**

proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy in Beijing and to establish a regime of workers democracy. Stalinism—of which Maoism is a variant—arose as an ideology in the Soviet workers state following the defeat of the revolutionary wave in Europe that followed the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Beginning in 1923-24, a conservative bureaucratic caste which Stalin came to lead usurped **political** power from the proletariat, while resting on the social and economic gains of the revolution. The Soviet Union thus became a degenerated workers state.

In the treacherous tradition of Stalin and the bureaucratic caste which ruled in the former Soviet Union, Mao and his heirs in the CCP leadership aligned themselves with US imperialism, and with Pakistan, betraying the interests of the oppressed masses. During the 1980s, the Chinese Stalinists supported the imperialist-backed Islamic *mujahedin* in Afghanistan—ultra-reactionary forces who were waging *jihād* (holy war) against the Soviet Union.

The Red Army posed the possibility of a social transformation that would have lifted Afghanistan from the feudal social conditions that prevail, especially for women. Instead, Mikhail Gorbachev's withdrawal of the Soviet troops was a precursor to counterrevolution in the USSR itself in 1991-92. This catastrophe for the working masses of the world had a direct impact in Kashmir, where the *mujahedin* turned their attention, strengthening the hold of the most reactionary forces within the

national liberation struggle.

Kashmir epitomises the seething complex of national and communal conflicts that extend from Afghanistan to Pakistan and India. The brutal repression in Kashmir, the only majority Muslim state in India, gives the lie to New Delhi's claims that it is a "secular" democracy. The Indian state was founded on naked Hindu chauvinism and brutal oppression of minorities has been the rule under the "secular" Congress party, as well as the avowedly chauvinist BJP. Today India's much vaunted economic progress has brought fabulous wealth to a tiny elite while the vast majority of workers and peasants are mired in abject poverty. Age-old caste oppression remains pervasive while women are the slaves of slaves throughout the subcontinent.

For Pakistan, Kashmir represents its pretence to stand for "one nation" of all Muslims. Pakistan's rulers can ill afford to support independence for Kashmir, which would pose the same question for the minorities within its own borders, including Baluchis, Pathans and Sindhis, who chafe under Punjabi domination. But Pakistan itself is an artificial state—Pathans are divided between Pakistan and Afghanistan; Baluchis between Iran and Pakistan and today such ethnic divisions are once again being exacerbated by the US and British imperialist occupation of Afghanistan.

The key to ending the national oppression of the Kashmiri people, as well as the myriad sufferings wrought

by capitalism, is the fight for socialist revolution throughout the subcontinent and the establishment of a socialist federation of South Asia. For that it is necessary to forge Leninist-Trotskyist parties which would seek to mobilise the powerful proletariat of India and Pakistan at the head of all the oppressed

to sweep away the capitalist system. Indian and Pakistani workers in the diaspora in Britain, the US, Canada and elsewhere form a human bridge to the working class in the imperialist centres where socialist revolution can lay the basis for a socialist future for mankind. ■

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# Sri Lanka...

(Continued from page 1)

imprisoned behind razor wire on remote Christmas Island. Five refugees died and scores were injured last year when their boat exploded after it was seized by the Australian navy. More recently, the Labor Party government there suspended the processing of all new asylum claims by Tamil as well as Afghan refugees and signalled its intent to ramp up deportations.

The plight of the refugees was captured in a 16 August letter issued by the Canadian Tamil Congress which stated:

"We have undergone severe hardships with very little or no access to basic necessities such as food, water, sleeping space, medicine and sanitary facilities. We have traveled for almost four months with much suffering and pain. We have come here, to this wonderful country Canada, to protect ourselves and our family members from the murders, disappearances and violence that still exist in our native country."

Protesting the government's racist treatment and detention of the Tamils in British Columbia, our Canadian comrades wrote: "We demand that all those now detained in B.C. be released immediately and that all Tamil refugees be given full asylum! The fight to end the racist deportations and for full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it here is part of the struggle to sweep away the brutal rule of capitalism through socialist revolution" (*Spartacist Canada* no 166, Fall 2010). The working class internationally must defend the Tamil people! **From Britain to Canada to Australia we demand: Asylum for Tamil refugees, fleeing the murderous onslaught by the Sri Lankan government and army!**

US imperialism gave clear backing to the Rajapaksa government's offensive against the Tamils. On 6 January 2009 the American ambassador in Colombo issued a statement welcoming the fall of the Tigers' administrative capital, Kilinochchi, to the Lankan army and affirming that the US "does not advocate that the Government of Sri Lanka negotiate with the LTTE" (*Asian Tribune*, 9 January 2009). Soon after, a high-level delegation from the US Pacific Fleet Command arrived for "discussions" with the heads of the Lankan security forces (Indo-Asian News Service, 21 January 2009). Only **after** the army drove the LTTE from its final urban bases in early February did the US and Britain call for a "temporary no-fire" agreement (*International Herald*

*Tribune*, 4 February 2009).

Over the past year tens of thousands of Tamils in London, Toronto and other cities around the world have taken to the streets in protest at the desperate plight of the Tamil people on the island. The Spartacist League/Britain and other sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) have joined protests against the massacre, distributing literature in solidarity with the besieged Tamils and putting forward our proletarian-revolutionary perspective for national and social liberation. We have long upheld the right of self-

There should be absolutely no illusions that the UN, or the governments in Ottawa, London, Washington or other imperialist centres will defend the interests of the Tamil people. The often heated diplomatic rifts between the Colombo government on the one hand and the UN or the British government merely reflect tactical differences. The imperialist powers, including the UN, would prefer the blood-soaked Sri Lanka regime to adopt a hypocritical concern about "human rights" now that the war has ended. But the vindictive Rajapaksa regime is not about to pay lip

"fostering of reconciliation" as well as "reflecting the commitment by Sri Lanka to the promotion and protection of human rights". The UN panel will also assist the "Lessons learnt and reconciliation commission" set up by the Rajapaksa regime to investigate why the 2002 ceasefire ended—ie to take the heat off the army and put the LTTE into the frame.

The UN is preparing a whitewash of the Sri Lankan military's heinous crimes and of the "democratic" imperialist powers who backed the Sri Lankan state in carrying out its brutal war

## Asylum now for all Tamil refugees!



Sri Lanka, 2009: 300,000 Tamil refugees were imprisoned in prison camps and detention centres such as Menik Farm.

determination for the Tamil people—ie, their right to form an independent state in the largely Tamil North and East. We stand for the military defence of the LTTE against the army assault and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Lankan army from the area.

At the same time, we give no political support to the LTTE—bourgeois nationalists who, following the logic of nationalism, have staged their own inter-ethnic attacks on Sinhalese villagers and expelled Muslims from the historic Tamil city of Jaffna, the capital of the northern region, while employing murderous violence against other Tamil nationalist groups. Our perspective is the fight for Marxist workers parties throughout the region that can unite the working people and oppressed in the struggle for workers revolutions in Lanka and throughout South Asia. That is the only road to liberation from the poverty, oppression and national chauvinism that are endemic to capitalist rule and have been visited with particular brutality on the masses of imperialism's neocolonies in Sri Lanka and the Indian subcontinent.

### No illusions in UN "human rights" hypocrisy

Leaflets for Tamil protests in Britain have appealed to Western imperialist governments and the United Nations to come to the aid of the Tamils. A press statement issued following a July London rally by the British Tamils Forum reports that thousands gathered carrying placards and hoisting flags "appealing to the UK establishment and the UN to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sri Lanka".

service to "human rights" for Tamils. Indeed other repressive regimes such as in Israel, Myanmar and Thailand are beating a path to Colombo to learn how to apply the "Sri Lanka option"—ie mass slaughter—against the oppressed peoples on their own terrain.

When in February 2009 David Miliband, as foreign secretary under the then Labour government, addressed a meeting of the Global Tamil Forum in London (alongside the present Tory foreign secretary, William Hague) furious Sinhala chauvinist protests in Colombo attacked the British High Commission and burned an effigy of Miliband. Needless to say Miliband used his speech to the Global Tamil Forum to denounce the LTTE, describing it as "a terrorist organisation which committed countless atrocities". This is rich, coming from a spokesman for a government that has responsibility for the brutal occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq that have led to countless thousands of deaths.

The Colombo government also went foam-flecked in June when UN secretary general Ban Ki Moon appointed a three-member advisory panel, which was intended to deflect external pressure from human rights groups and figures in the US Congress. But this toothless UN body drew mobs of government-backed protesters onto the streets of Colombo, where the UN office was besieged and a cabinet minister, Wimal Weerawansa, went on a hunger strike. In response, the UN made it abundantly clear that the panel's aims are to award the Sri Lanka regime a "human rights" stamp of approval. A UN statement of 9 July said the panel's objectives include the

against the Tamil people. The UN panel was set up over a year **after** the war had ended and amid widespread anger when information about Sri Lankan atrocities against the Tamils began to leak out into the public domain. Moreover, the UN itself was under criticism. A report in the (London) *Times* said that Ban Ki Moon's chief of staff, Vijar Nambiar, was told in late May 2009 that "at least 20,000 Tamil civilians were killed in the Sri Lankan government's final offensive" (30 May 2009).

In addition to aiding in the murderous anti-Tamil offensive, the "democratic" imperialist powers—the US, Britain, Canada—have declared the LTTE a "terrorist" organisation, as has the European Union, effectively giving the Lankan regime a green light for its attacks. As we wrote in protest against the Tony Blair Labour government's Terrorism Act 2000 which outlawed the LTTE, among other organisations:

"This Labour government has committed heinous crimes at home and abroad—from the bombing of Serbia and Iraq to drumming up anti-immigrant racism. The British state itself is an international force for terrorism—it carried out colonial massacres in Ireland, Asia and Africa—yet it brands political organisations from the Indian subcontinent and Ireland as 'terrorists'. This illustrates what British 'justice' and democracy is all about—the capitalist state is the repressive apparatus which defends the private property and rule of the bourgeoisie against the working class and oppressed."

—*Workers Hammer* no 176, Spring 2001

The roots of the decades-long Tamil insurgency lie in systematic discrimination against the Tamil people by successive Sri

International Communist League Pamphlet

**The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution**

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE

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Lankan governments following independence from British colonial rule in 1948. The deep communal division in Sri Lanka today is itself a legacy of divide-and-rule by the British imperialists who incorporated many Tamils into the colonial administration. But following independence the Sinhalese displaced the Tamils in government service and in access to higher education. The agitation for a chauvinist “Sinhala only” language policy, led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in the mid-1950s, codified anti-Tamil communalism as official policy and unleashed a wave of anti-Tamil pogroms.

The national chauvinism of the Sinhalese ruling class led to growing communal polarisation that culminated in massive bloodshed in 1983 with government-inspired pogroms against the Tamils, many thousands of whom were murdered. Tamil homes and businesses in the capital, Colombo, were burnt to the ground, often with the occupants inside. Following the 1983 pogroms, orchestrated under president JR Jayewardene of the United National Party, we wrote:

“The massive atrocity taking place in Sri Lanka marks a watershed in that island’s history. The bloodletting and the mass population transfers have set the economy back at least a decade and are forcing the separation of the peoples. J.R. has ripped the country apart, massacring many thousands and forcing the survivors into a virtual ‘bantustan’ in the barren North.”

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

### Lessons of bitter defeat

The dire situation of the Lankan Tamil people today is testimony to the reactionary logic of nationalism. It also confirms that under capitalism, where two peoples are interpenetrated within the same territory, the national rights of one people can only be expressed at the expense of the other people. Prior to 1983 there was considerable economical and geographic interpenetration of the Tamil and Sinhalese peoples. But the bloodletting and mass population transfers of 1983 forced a separation of the island’s peoples. Tamils were increasingly compacted in the North and the East, which had been largely Tamil but had also historically been a region of mixed populations, including a substantial Muslim component. Only the overthrow of capitalism through workers revolution can lay the basis for the equitable resolution of the conflicting national claims of the peoples of Sri Lanka.

Drawing the lessons from a bitter defeat is difficult, but necessary. For Tamil (and Sinhalese) pro-working-class

activists who are reeling from this massive defeat, the chief political lesson is that the programme of nationalism has proven bankrupt for the oppressed Tamils. We base ourselves on the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution, a programme for the semi-colonial countries which means the industrial and agricultural proletariat must lead all the oppressed in the struggle against semi-feudal backwardness that is the heritage of centuries of colonial subjugation, a struggle which can attain victory only through the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of proletarian power.

The core of this programme is proletarian *internationalism*: a perspective for socialist revolution not only in Lanka but throughout the Indian subcontinent. Developments in Sri Lanka do not take place in isolation but are subject to developments in the international situation. The venal ruling class is beholden to the imperialist powers and the Sri Lankan economy is dependent on foreign investment and on the European Union as a market for the island’s textiles. The working class — including textile workers who are mainly women, and the strategically placed “Indian Tamil” tea plantation workers in the central highlands, descendants of a deeply exploited population brought in from India as indentured labourers by the British — are class brothers and sisters of the more powerful working class in India and elsewhere. We fight for Marxist workers parties throughout South Asia that can unite the working people and oppressed in the struggle for workers revolutions which provide the only road to liberation from the poverty, oppression and national chauvinism that are endemic to capitalist rule, particularly in the neocolonies.

The authentic programme of Trotskyism is today upheld by the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The once-Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) abandoned the interests of the proletariat and the defence of the Tamil people when it entered the Sinhala-chauvinist government of the SLFP in 1964. This was prefigured by the LSSP’s support to the “Sinhala only” campaign against the Tamil minority. Again in the 1980s, government terror against the Tamils drew the line sharply between revolutionists and fake Trotskyists, who capitulated to Sinhala chauvinism.

At the time of the 1983 pogroms, our international tendency was virtually alone on the left in initiating and joining protests internationally in defence of the Tamils. Noting that the blood-bath had “catastrophically altered for the foreseeable future the prospects for common class struggle between the Sinhalese working class and the oppressed Tamil minority”, we raised the call for the *right of Tamil Eelam* — a separate Tamil state in the North — and for a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka as part of a socialist federation of South Asia.

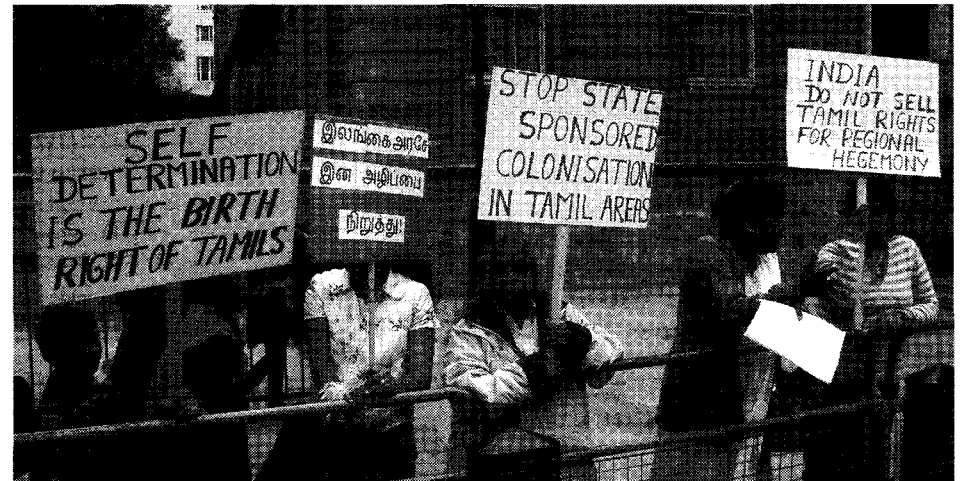
Prior to 1983 our organisation had upheld the right to Tamil self-determination while counselling against separation, arguing in favour of united working-class struggle for Tamil freedom and socialist revolution in Lanka (formerly Ceylon) and its extension through the Indian subcontinent. But as we wrote, “in the wake of the mass killing of Tamils, the bitterness and hostility between the peoples of Ceylon has evidently become insurmountable at least in the short run”. While calling for the right of Tamil Eelam, we also noted: “The bloody communal struggle argues that even with proletarian revolution in Ceylon and South Asia gener-

ally, a *federated* socialist republic in Ceylon will be necessary to achieve the unity of Tamils and Sinhalese on a basis of justice and equality” (*Spartacist* [English edition] no 35, Autumn 1983).

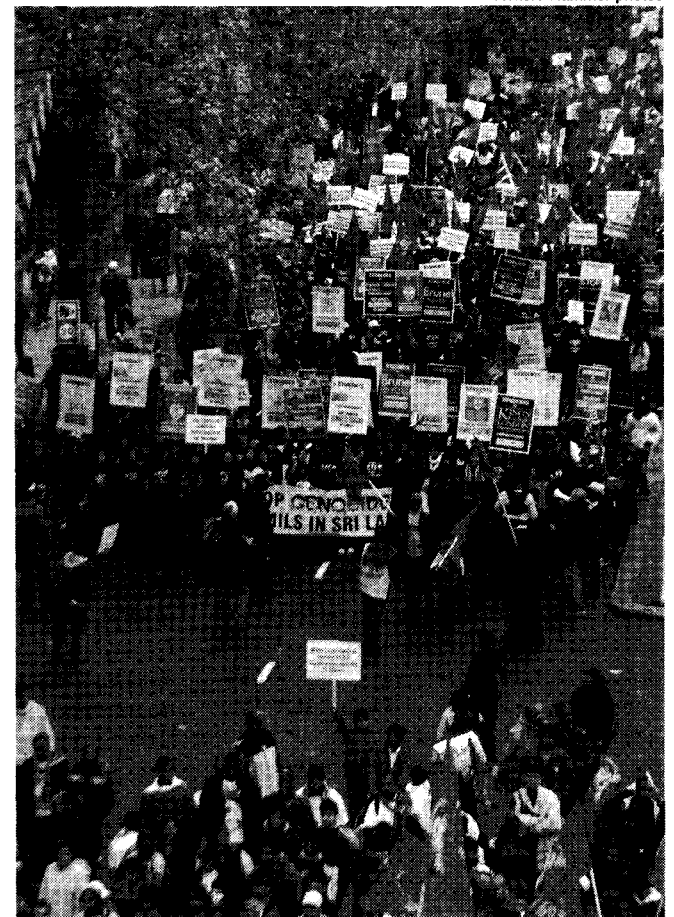
At the same time we noted that the prospects for an independent Tamil capitalist state in the underdeveloped North were poor. Nor would the formation of such a state ensure the national survival of the Tamils, who were interpenetrated with the Sinhalese majority throughout much of the island. On the other hand, the establishment of a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka would

challenged Mahinda Rajapaksa for the presidency in the last election. Stable bourgeois democratic rule is not on the historic agenda in Sri Lanka, nor is a democratic resolution of the oppression of the Tamil minority. Washington’s central strategic goal on the island is a stable regime that can provide access to the strategic deep-water harbour of Trincomalee in the Eastern Province.

Successive Sri Lankan governments have engaged in brutal “ethnic cleansing” and a bloody process of “Sinhalaisation” has forced hundreds of thousands



Workers Hammer photos



London demonstrations: 15 August 2010 rally, at Indian High Commission against killings in Kashmir and in defence of Sri Lankan Tamils (top) and 100,000-strong demonstration in defence of Tamils, 1 April 2009.

be a beacon to the oppressed and subjugated masses throughout the subcontinent, including among the 65 million Tamils across the Palk Strait in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

In the years of civil war that followed the 1983 pogroms, at least 70,000 civilians have been killed and hundreds of thousands of Tamils driven into exile or squalid refugee camps. The LTTE managed to compact a Tamil mini-state in parts of the North and East and eventually signed a ceasefire agreement with the Colombo government in 2002. But the Sinhalese-chauvinist army’s provocations never stopped. After the 2005 election of hard-line SLFP president Mahinda Rajapaksa, who ruled out even autonomy for Tamil regions, the government abrogated the ceasefire and then withdrew from it entirely in early 2008.

Today, contrary to imperialist hype about reconciliation and a return to “stability” on the island, the Rajapaksa family oligarchy makes little effort to maintain even the trappings of “democracy”, having even locked up Sarath Fonseka, who was head of the military during the war on the Tamils and who

of Tamils to leave the area while those who remain live under a state of siege. Large tracts of land are still prohibited areas and in all likelihood Tamils will not be allowed to return to certain locations. Foreigners and journalists are still restricted from travelling to the North, where permanent military cantonments are being built on former Tamil areas. Many Tamil refugees remain in camps in the North and thousands of alleged LTTE cadres are held in camps to which relatives, aid organisations or the Red Cross have no access.

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

**SPARTACIST** [English edition] no 61, Spring 2009

Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!

**Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics**

Against Apologists for the Treachery of the P.O.U.M. Then and Now

**Trotskyism vs. Popular Frontism in the Spanish Civil War**

Women and Revolution

**Women Workers and the Contradictions of China Today**

Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution! For Workers Political Revolution!

Gérard Le Métell, 1959-2007

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— Against quackery, monarchy and libel laws —

# Defend scientific medicine!

The following article is an expanded and edited version of a presentation given by comrade Eibhlin McDonald at a Spartacist League dayschool in London on 8 May 2010.

On 14 December 2009 we issued a statement defending Simon Singh, a renowned science writer, against an outrageous libel action by the British Chiropractic Association (BCA). The BCA sued Singh because of an article that challenged its claim that chiropractic could help treat childhood ailments such as colic, ear infections and asthma. Our leaflet noted:

“In the reactionary political climate of today’s post-Soviet world, we Marxists find ourselves defending the basic principles of materialism, secularism and the rational humanism of the 18th century Enlightenment. Against this ideological background, snake-oil treatments, commonly referred to as alternative ‘medicine’, are growing in popularity and many are even being funded by the state. The British government spent £20 million of taxpayers’ money on the refurbishment of the Royal London Homeopathic ‘Hospital’, while accident and emergency units are being closed down.”

—“Defend Simon Singh! Defend scientific medicine!” *Workers Hammer* no 209, Winter 2009-2010

The book *Suckers, How Alternative Medicine Makes Fools of Us All*, by Rose Shapiro (Vintage Books, 2009) opens with the statement: “We are witnessing an epidemic of alternative medicine. There are as many as one thousand different alternative therapies, most with little in common bar one rather important thing: there’s no evidence that they work. From chiropractic to colour therapy, reflexology to reiki, such therapies are now used by one in three of us”. Singh’s book *Trick or Treatment? Alternative medicine on trial* (Corgi Books, 2009), co-written with Edzard Ernst, provides a detailed critique of acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic and herbal medicine. The book gives a cogent explanation of the difference between science-based medicine, which is subject to quantitative experiment and double-blind clinical trials, and “alternative” therapies which are based on anti-scientific nostrums and which reject rigorous testing.

In Britain as elsewhere, so-called alternative “medicine” has become big business, worth an estimated £4.5 billion per annum, which amounts to an increase of nearly 50 per cent in the last ten years. There are nearly 50,000 practitioners of “alternative” therapies, **more** than the number of general practitioners and an estimated 50 per cent of GPs now offer referral to such quacks or — even worse — dabble in these arts themselves. The House of Commons science and technology committee called for an end to government funding of homeopathy (which costs the taxpayer £4 million each year) and for an end to official licensing of products based on homeopathy, because there is no evidence it works other than as a placebo. But David Cameron’s Con-Dem coalition government rejected this advice. Presumably while facing savage attacks

on healthcare spending, patients may console themselves with placebo pills consisting of sugar and water.

Appropriately enough, a foremost exponent of anti-scientific quackery in Britain is Prince Charles. The heir to the throne was president of the Foundation for Integrated Health (FIH) which in 2005 produced a report by Christopher Smallwood recommending that the government could save the National

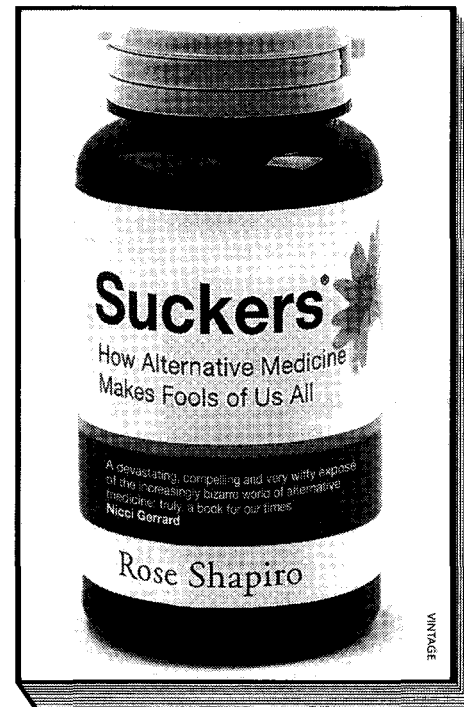
Porter, 2001). Charles II also revived the practice of laying his “royal” hands on the sick to cure them of scrofula (a manifestation of TB) and it is estimated that over a period of 21 years he “touched” some 91,000 people.

Modern science-based medicine developed through rejection of pre-scientific and anti-scientific practices and philosophies which are today making a comeback. While some popular “thera-

Promoters and practitioners of quackery today have increasingly resorted to England’s draconian libel laws to intimidate and silence scientists who expose “alternative medicine”. With the backing of the Libel Reform Campaign, Simon Singh won his case against the BCA. But the cost of defending oneself against libel in England is so high—over 100 times higher than in most other European



Faundo Artzabalaga



London, 31 January: Mass “overdose” in protest against sale of homeopathic potions by Boots chemist (left). One of many popular books exposing alternative medicine scams (right).

Health Service £3.5 billion by offering manipulation therapies and could cut £480 million off the national drugs bill by issuing homeopathic prescriptions for conditions such as asthma. The FIH milked £900,000 from the Department of Health to “help initiate voluntary self-regulation of other complementary professions” (*Suckers*). So-called “voluntary self-regulation” is a scam which means universities are squandering public money on anti-scientific courses and qualifications. As academia becomes quackademia, Westminster University is offering a Bachelor of Science (!) degree in a “Chinese medicine” course which, according to Ben Goldacre, teaches students “that the spleen is ‘the root of post-heaven essence’ and is responsible for the ‘transformation of qi energy’, ‘keeping the muscles warm and firm’” (*Guardian*, 20 February).

Prince Charles’s parasitic FIH was ignominiously closed down in April amid a criminal investigation that saw two of its senior officials arrested and £300,000 “unaccounted for”. As an exponent of quackery, Prince Charles is a worthy heir to his namesake, King Charles II, who came to the throne in 1660 with the restoration of the monarchy which had been abolished by the English Revolution. Charles II made England a haven for quacks and charlatans “by shamelessly issuing his own medical patents that gave nostrum sellers exclusive rights to peddle their powders”, patents which have been aptly described as licenses to kill (*Quacks, Fakers & Charlatans in English Medicine*, Roy

pies” may be relatively harmless, at most they have only a placebo effect. Often they are dangerous in themselves and divert patients from the necessary medical treatments. As a result of reactionary anti-science ideology, vaccination rates are so low that Europe is expected to miss the World Health Organisation’s target of eliminating measles and rubella by the end of 2010. Anti-vaccine hysteria was given scientific credibility by the *Lancet*, a prestigious scientific journal, which in 1998 published an article by Andrew Wakefield falsely linking the measles, mumps and rubella triple vaccine to autism. Despite subsequent studies showing no link between the MMR vaccine and autism, it was only this year that the *Lancet* finally issued a full retraction of this study. In May Wakefield was struck off the medical register by the General Medical Council for serious professional misconduct.

The *Lancet* was founded in the early Victorian era under Thomas Wakley and others who led a campaign against quackery and for reform of the medical profession. A series of major reforms such as the Apothecaries Act of 1815 and the Medical Registration Act of 1858 placed medicine on a more scientific plane. The separation between quackery and scientific medicine required material developments in science and was achieved “in part through erecting a tighter *cordon sanitaire* between it and what it abhorred as money-mongering quackery” (*Quacks, Fakers & Charlatans*).

countries — that the laws often work by intimidation. In order to fight his case Singh first had to pay out legal fees of £100,000. He recovered his fees, but others are not so fortunate. In 2007-08, *Guardian* journalist Ben Goldacre, author of the book *Bad Science* who writes a regular column of the same name, was sued by vitamin pill magnate Matthias Rath. Rath published advertisements in South Africa condemning AIDS drugs while promoting his own vitamin supplements. Although the *Guardian* won the legal battle against Rath, the newspaper only recovered part of its £500,000 fees. Dr Peter Wilmschurst, a consultant cardiologist at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital faces financial ruin as a result of a libel suit by US firm NMT Medical. Wilmschurst, who was sued because he dared to criticise the research data used by the company to promote their new heart implant, said he was prepared to risk losing his home to take the case to trial because “victory would set a precedent protecting other scientists from ‘legal bullying’” (*Times*, 26 November 2009).

## Down with the monarchy, and the libel laws!

The libel laws are so notoriously weighted against the defendant that London has been labelled the libel capital of the world. (In August the US Congress passed legislation aimed at protecting American authors and journalists from English libel laws.) The chilling effect of these laws on press



freedom was seen last year in the case of Trafigura, a company that was secretly dumping toxic waste in the Ivory Coast. Trafigura's libel writ against the *Guardian* led to a "super-injunction" preventing the paper from reporting that there was a question in Parliament about Trafigura's activities, what the question was, who asked it, or why the paper was prevented from reporting it. As *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger noted: "Legal obstacles, which cannot be identified, involve proceedings, which cannot be mentioned, on behalf of a client who must remain secret" ([guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), 13 October 2009).

As we noted in our leaflet defending Simon Singh, the English libel system is nothing but a protection *from the truth* for the rich. The late Peter Carter Ruck, founder of one of London's most feared libel law firms, acknowledged the real purpose of the laws: to protect a "gentleman's" honour and reputation. In his memoirs Carter Ruck quoted the Duke of Norfolk in Shakespeare's *Richard II* on honour, saying:

"Mine honour is my life; both grow in one: Take honour from me, and my life is done"  
—quoted in "Bunfights" by Paul Foot, *London Review of Books*, 7 March 1991

Or, as Claud Cockburn, who published a news sheet called *The Week* in the 1930s, pithily noted, England's libel laws "seem designed to prevent a man being kicked until he is down". During the crisis surrounding the abdication of King Edward in 1936, Cockburn said, "the distributors of *Time* magazine in London were so uncertain and alarmed that they sat up for hours with scissors, cutting out the revealing or offensive references to the blazing affair", between the king and Mrs Simpson (quoted in *The Years of The Week*, Patricia Cockburn, 1971).

Our leaflet said:

"The libel laws in this country are part of a system, including the institution of Parliament, that exists to keep the working class 'in its place'. We look forward to the day when the libel laws and the system of lies they uphold—including feudal relics such as the monarchy, the House of Lords and established churches—will be swept away by socialist revolution."  
—*Workers Hammer* no 209, Winter 2009-10

## Marxism and the Enlightenment

Modern, science-based medicine is very recent in historical terms and although it is far from being able to treat all diseases, the use of antibiotics and widespread vaccination has made possible the control of many infectious diseases like measles, polio, diphtheria and mumps that were mass killers only half a century ago. Before it was eradicated, smallpox threatened 60 per cent of the world's population and killed every fourth victim (some 500 million in the 20th century alone). The Marxist programme is based on a dialectical materialist worldview, thus we defend science against religious and other forms of obscurantism. We defend science-based medicine against the alternatives, which are based on anti-materialist philosophy and consciously reject historic scientific advances such as the germ theory of disease. For the first time, the cause of deadly epidemics such as cholera and typhoid was proven to be micro-organisms, and not evil spirits or bad karma.

At the same time, we are primarily concerned with the fundamental problem which is the social system under which science and medicine operate. Under the capitalist system medicine is driven not only by social use but by the pursuit of profit. Government spending on healthcare, which is grossly inadequate and today is under renewed attack, results from the fact that the



Beheading of Charles I in 1649 in English Revolution led by Oliver Cromwell (left). Spartacists protest visit by Prince Philip to New York, 1980.



Workers Vanguard

capitalist class has to give up part of its surplus value to maintain a basic level of health for the working class, to maintain productivity. But to achieve a qualitative development in medical science and to put those achievements in the service of all humanity, providing good quality healthcare for all, requires a socialist revolution that will free the productive forces from the fetters of the capitalist system of private property.

Modern science had its birth in northern Italy during the Renaissance of the 16th and early 17th centuries in the city states of Venice and Florence where mercantile capitalism flourished. The Renaissance brought advances in

Marxism has as its foundation the gains of the Enlightenment and bourgeois revolutions which freed scientific and social development from the shackles of feudalism. As noted by Joseph Seymour in our 1998 pamphlet, *Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism*:

"The Enlightenment was the link at the intellectual level between the English bourgeois-democratic revolution in the mid-17th century and the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century. The Enlightenment was in its original and central axis a defense of science against religious obscurantism and religious-sanctioned dogmatism."

...It's not at all surprising that science is under attack today. Like all other human

"The enlightenment was a beautiful thing. People cast aside dogma and authority. They started to think for themselves. Natural science flourished. Understanding of the real world increased. The hegemony of religion slowly declined. Real universities were created and eventually democracy took hold. The modern world was born. Until recently we were making good progress. So what went wrong?"

"The past 30 years or so have been an age of endarkenment. It has been a period in which truth ceased to matter very much, and dogma and irrationality became once more respectable."

—"The age of endarkenment", *guardian.co.uk*, 15 August 2009

In a similar vein Gerald Weissman, editor-in-chief of the journal published by the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (*FASEB*), wrote that while on one hand the prospects for science "have never been more splendid" than they are today, on the other hand:

"much of society at large is beating a hasty retreat to the dark ages: the wars of religion are back, superstition threatens our schools and Bible-thumpers preach that Darwin got it wrong. Our heritage of reason, formed in the enlightenment, is becoming eclipsed by what a cynic might call the endarkenment. It's no trivial matter when the editor of *Science*, Donald Kennedy, asks us whether it's 'Twilight for the Enlightenment?'"

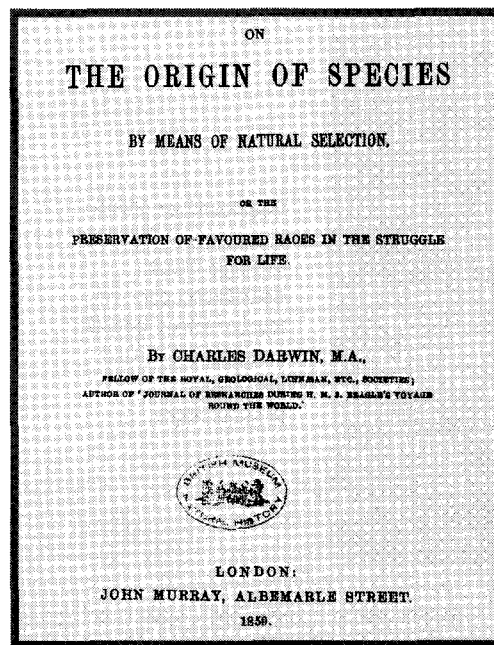
—*FASEB Journal*, 2005

## The English Revolution

In contrast to liberals who support the capitalist order based on private property and look back to the Enlightenment as a "golden age" of capitalism, Marxism is a programme that aims to liberate humanity from the yoke of capitalism through proletarian socialist revolution on an international scale. This will lay the basis for overcoming scarcity and achieving a qualitative leap in the development of the productive forces. Only then can the achievements of science and technology be placed at the service of all humanity. As Marxists, our attitude to the Enlightenment is shaped by our understanding that the bourgeois revolutions had a two-fold character. When it was an *ascending class*, the bourgeoisie embraced the Enlightenment in its struggle against the old feudal order and against its ideological bulwark—the Church.

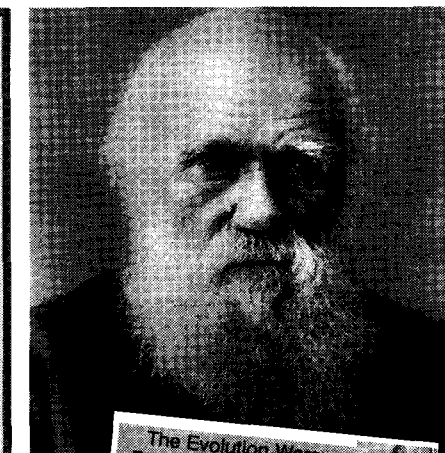
The bourgeois revolutions broke the power of the feudal order in Europe—the rule of the Catholic Church and the nobility—and cleared the way for a new capitalist order, bringing about

*continued on page 10*



Charles Darwin's groundbreaking 1859 *Origin of Species* presented theory of evolution by natural selection. *Workers Vanguard*, 16 September 2005, hails Charles Darwin.

knowledge about anatomy, including through post-mortem examination of the human body which the Catholic Church regarded as disrespectful to God. The Catholic counterreformation, led by the absolutist monarchies of France and Spain, sought to crush the early scientific revolution. Galileo was threatened with torture by the Inquisition unless he recanted his view that the earth revolved around the sun, rather than the other way around. Capitalism would later emerge in the Protestant countries of Europe, including Holland, England and also Scotland—which became a centre of the Enlightenment and of scientific and technological innovation.



Culver



behaviour, science takes place not in a vacuum but within the framework of class society. Today's assault on science takes place in the context of the triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92 which ushered in a period of theoretical, political, social and not least sexual reaction. Many liberals today also defend science and uphold the values and achievements of the Enlightenment against what they describe as today's climate of "endarkenment". Thus David Colquhoun, a professor of pharmacology at University College London Hospital and prominent campaigner on behalf of science against "alternative medicine" has written that:

# India...

(Continued from page 12)

area. Meanwhile left-wing activists are gunned down by police in extrajudicial “encounter killings”. Protest the state witch hunt! Down with Operation Green Hunt!

## Permanent revolution v Stalinist class collaboration

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) denounces the Indian government’s war against the CPI (Maoist) and adivasi villagers, which is being waged at the behest of the venal Indian bourgeoisie and the international mining magnates. The working class in India and internationally must take up the defence of the Maoists and tribal peoples against the bloody state offensive.

But the political strategy of the CPI (Maoist) provides no way forward for India’s oppressed masses. Like all the many variants of Indian Stalinism, the Maoists seek an alliance with a mythical “progressive” wing of the capitalist class in the “first stage” of a “two-stage” revolution. Party general secretary Ganapathy made this explicit in an interview:

“We have a clear-cut understanding to unify all revolutionary, democratic, progressive, patriotic forces and all oppressed social communities including oppressed nationalities against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism. Our New Democratic United Front (UF) consists of four democratic classes, i.e. workers, peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie.”

—Sanhati, January 2010

The strategy of allying with a wing of the bourgeois exploiters—whether dubbed “national”, “patriotic” or “progressive”—has produced defeat after defeat for the workers and oppressed, in India and around the world. All wings of the Indian capitalist class are tied by a thousand threads to the imperialist powers of Europe, North America and Japan; none are in any sense potential allies of the working class and oppressed. In *The State and Revolution* and many other works, VI Lenin, leader of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, savaged the idea that the class interests of the bourgeoisie and proletariat are anything other than irreconcilable.

The Russian workers were able to take power in 1917 thanks to the Bolsheviks’ intransigent struggle for class independence from the capitalists. The result was a workers state, a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. Key to cementing the workers’ alliance with the peasants was the Bolsheviks’ support for peasant seizures of the landed estates and the division of the land among those who worked it. The Bolsheviks also won widespread support among the peasantry through their revolutionary opposition to the first interimperialist war, in which countless hundreds of thousands were killed among the working-class and peasant base of the army.

The perspective of permanent revolution, first developed by Leon Trotsky during the 1905 Russian Revolution and vindicated by the October 1917 proletarian seizure of power, outlines most clearly the road to liberation for the Indian masses. Like tsarist Russia, present-day India is marked by combined and uneven development, with stark contrasts of wealth and poverty, modern industries directly abutting unspeakable squalor. Myriad forms of special oppression—based on sex, caste, nationality, religion—are among the

heritages of a pre-industrial past that were reinforced and deepened by nearly two centuries of brutal British colonial rule. This culminated with the British partition of the Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan, which unleashed communalist slaughter and the forced migration of millions of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. Since independence, and mainly under the rule of the nominally secular Congress Party, the Indian bourgeoisie has continued to fan the flames of every kind of murderous division.

National and social liberation for the masses cannot be carried out by, or in alliance with, India’s capitalist exploiters. What is required is the smashing of capitalist class rule and the creation of a workers and peasants government. The Indian proletariat is the only social force that can lead such a struggle. Due to its central role in production—where its collective labour in the factories, mines, transport systems and other industries is exploited by the capitalists for profit—the working class has vast potential power.

The essential instrument for victory is an internationalist Leninist vanguard party of the working class. Rejecting the centrality of the working class, the CPI (Maoist) bases itself on the rural peasantry. But the peasant masses, highly stratified and dispersed in small villages all over India, are incapable of cohering an independent social policy. There are only two decisive classes in capitalist society: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The peasants are part of a heterogeneous intermediate layer, the petty bourgeoisie. Their immediate felt interests are centrally proprietary, for the defence or acquisition of land. Thus peasant parties are at bottom pro-bourgeois or bourgeois, even though sections of some of such parties may be



September 2009: Labourers in village near southern city of Hyderabad break coal to be used for steel production.

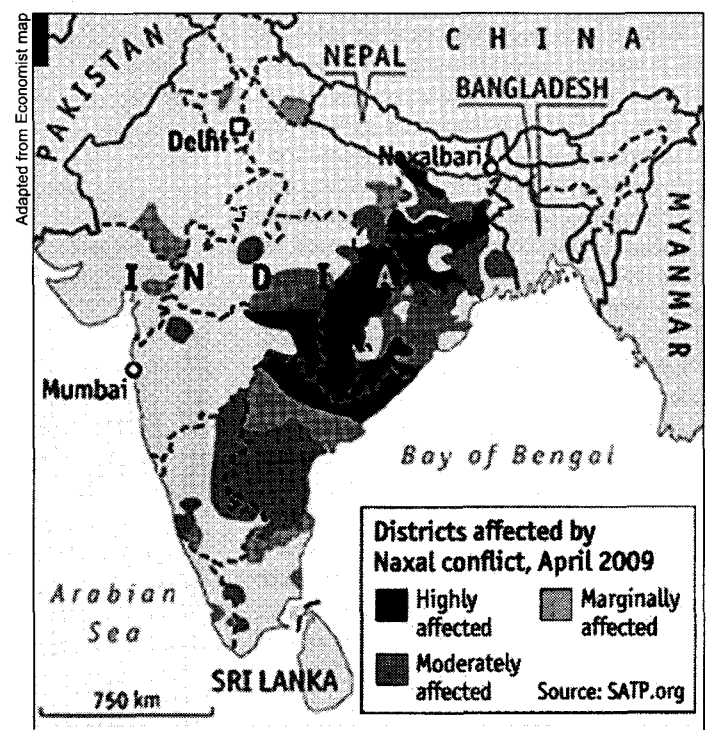
won to the side of the revolutionary proletariat.

Especially in countries like India where the working class is numerically smaller than the peasantry, the question of agrarian revolution is a key component of the programme for proletarian state power. The working class must win the support of the masses of poor and/or landless peasants, including through demands for expropriation of the landlords and land to the tiller, while seeking as much as possible to neutralise the middle and upper strata of the peasantry.

Freedom from the imperialist yoke, the destruction of all forms of oppression, economic development in the interests of the vast majority—these urgent tasks require proletarian revolution and its extension to the advanced capitalist countries of North America, Western Europe and Japan. A socialist revolution in India would reverberate

throughout South Asia and the world over, finding powerful allies in the proletariat of the imperialist centres as well as that of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. A crucial task of an Indian workers state supported by the peasantry would be to generate the material basis to end poverty and hunger, including through the collectivisation and modernisation of agriculture. Success in this endeavour hinges on the resources that would be made available by socialist revolution in the imperialist heartlands.

A revolutionary workers party in India would champion the cause of all the downtrodden, including the rural and urban poor, oppressed castes and tribal peoples. It would intransigently fight for the liberation of India’s hideously oppressed women and defend



a few years earlier—the Naxalite movement attracted thousands of educated urban youth misled by the “revolutionary” rhetoric of Mao’s China during the late 1960s. In opposing the crass parliamentarism of the CPI and CPI (Marxist), these youth abandoned the cities for the countryside and upheld a perspective of peasant-based “people’s war”.

The initial peasant uprisings were largely defeated by the early 1970s and China later renounced the Naxalites. The Indian Maoists soon fractured into dozens of competing outfits, some of which ended up centring their activities in urban slum districts rather than the countryside. Today the urban-based Maoist groups are in considerable decline and disarray. The largest remaining rural-based groups united in 2004 to form the CPI (Maoist), setting the stage for the present expanded insurgency.

Indian Stalinism has a long and sordid history of class collaboration. As early as 1926, under the guidance of the Indian pseudo-Marxist adventurer MN Roy (then a close ally of Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin in the leadership of the Communist International), the CPI began building a cross-class “Peasants’ and Workers’ Party” in Bengal. This party in turn operated as a pressure group on the bourgeois Indian National Congress of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Roy urged the CPI to go even further and create “a loyal nationalist party with a radical republican programme (Peoples’ Party)” (cited in *History of the Communist Movement in India*, Volume 1, Communist Party of India [Marxist], 2005).

From the mid 1930s on, the CPI time and again gave political support to the bourgeois-nationalist Congress. For a period during World War II, they even renounced the struggle for Indian independence in favour of an alliance with the “democratic” British imperialist oppressors. (For more detail, see “The ‘Quit India’ Movement 50 Years On—Stalinist Alliance with Churchill Betrayed Indian Revolution”, *Workers Hammer* nos 131 and 132, September/October and November/December 1992.)

Today the CPI and CPI (Marxist) act as overt supporters of Indian capitalism. Since 1977, these Stalinists have controlled the state government in West Bengal, wielding its repressive powers in defence of private property and profit against the poor and oppressed. In recent years, the “Left Front” regime headed by the CPI (Marxist) has repeatedly seized land from the peasants at the behest of Indian and international capitalist corporations, provoking widespread popular resistance.



In December 2006 the West Bengal government expropriated land in the Singur district on behalf of Tata Motors, one of India's largest capitalist conglomerates. Those who resisted were severely beaten and arrested while a young woman activist was brutally raped and murdered. The following March, thousands of police and armed CPI (Marxist) cadre assaulted peasants resisting a forced expropriation in Nandigram. At least 14 were killed and over 200 injured. (See "India: The Nandigram

movement itself are very powerful proprietary and reactionary tendencies, and at a certain stage it can become hostile to the workers and sustain that hostility already equipped with arms. He who forgets about the dual nature of the peasantry is not a Marxist. The advanced workers must be taught to distinguish from among 'communist' labels and banners the actual social processes."

—"Peasant War in China and the Proletariat" (September 1932)

It was only under the highly exceptional circumstances of the immediate

to reaffirm the Marxist-Leninist concept of the proletariat as the only social force capable of making the socialist revolution. The ICL fundamentally opposes the Maoist doctrine, rooted in Menshevism and Stalinist reformism, which rejects the vanguard role of the working class and substitutes peasant-based guerrilla warfare as the road to socialism."

—*Spartacist* (English-language edition) no 54, Spring 1998

The Naxalite movement misdirected a generation of leftist Indian youth, who abandoned the struggles of the urban working class in favour of the chimera of rural guerrillaism. The bankruptcy of this perspective is even more evident today with the substantial growth of the Indian proletariat.

While over two-thirds of the population still lives in rural areas and slightly over half the workforce is engaged in agriculture, both the urban population and manufacturing output have grown rapidly over recent decades. Some 14 per cent of the overall workforce toils in industries ranging from textiles, chemicals and food processing to steel, transportation equipment, machinery production and more. There are thousands of large factories and major industrial concentrations throughout the country.

Despite the misleadership of the CPI and the CPI (Marxist), as well as the influence of the bourgeois Congress Party and various regional and caste-based parties, the Indian working class has repeatedly demonstrated its social power. An article titled "Deadly Labor Wars Hinder India's Rise" in the *Wall Street Journal* (24 November 2009) described how recent strikes and occupations have been "fueled by the discontent of workers, many of whom say they haven't partaken of the past decade's prosperity". Last year alone, major strikes hit companies from the domestic automaker Mahindra & Mahindra to plants owned by Finland's Nokia, South Korea's Hyundai and the Nestlé food conglomerate.

In September 2009, a six-week strike

hundreds of thousands of telecommunications workers and coal miners struck against privatisation and job cuts, while unions staged a countrywide one-day general strike on 27 April against soaring price rises for essential goods. An even larger general strike on 5 July, organised by a tacit alliance of the Stalinist Left Front parties and the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was called to protest rising fuel prices.

The Maoists *at best* confine the restive urban working class to the role of passive spectator of their rural "people's war", leaving the workers in the clutches of the overtly pro-capitalist Left Front parties and bourgeois forces like Congress and the BJP. Meanwhile, the CPI (Maoist) has extended the Naxalite policy of "annihilation of class enemies"—the executions of individual landlords and state agents—to the kidnapping and killing of cadres of rival Stalinist parties, including union leaders, whom they label "social fascists". Such murderous violence against other left and working-class parties, so typical of Stalinism, is repugnant and must be condemned.

The Maoists also regularly seek alliances with one or another openly capitalist party. During the protests against the Singur and Nandigram atrocities, they made a scarcely concealed alliance with the right-wing Trinamool (Grassroots) Congress of Mamata Banerjee, the main parliamentary rival of the Left Front in West Bengal. Having joined the UPA government in New Delhi, Banerjee & Co have now endorsed the armed offensive against the Maoists.

#### Mass plebeian revolt in Nepal

The logic of Maoist class collaboration has played out clearly just to the north in the Himalayan country of Nepal. Over the past two decades, Nepal has been wracked by a deepgoing revolt centred on the oppressed peas-



October 2009: Auto workers protest in Gurgaon, outside New Delhi, after worker was killed in clash with strikebreakers.

Massacre", *Spartacist Canada* no 159, Winter 2008/2009, reprinted in *Workers Hammer* no 205, Winter 2008-2009.)

More recently, the West Bengal regime has mobilised police to attack adivasi villagers protesting expropriations in Lalgarh on behalf of the Jindal Steel and Power conglomerate. And today the CPI and CPI (Marxist) support the central UPA government's bloody offensive against the Maoists. Such is the political logic of the programme of "revolution by stages": the masses remain brutally oppressed by capitalism, and the second, supposedly socialist, stage never comes.

From the beginning, the Naxalite forces have upheld a variant of the same Stalinist class collaborationism. Calling for a "People's Democratic Revolution", founding leader Charu Mazumdar wrote in 1970 that "the majority of the business community will come with us. They are a large part of the national bourgeoisie" (quoted in Sumanta Banerjee, *India's Simmering Revolution: The Naxalite Uprising*, 1980).

While talking of "worker-peasant unity", in retreating to the countryside the Naxalites turned away from the working class and transformed themselves into a petty-bourgeois, peasant-based movement both in composition and political outlook. Their model is the "people's war" waged by Mao's Chinese Communist Party in the 1930s and '40s. Mao's retreat from the cities to the countryside followed the defeat of the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution, during which Stalin and his henchmen—prominently including MN Roy—ordered the Chinese Communists to subordinate the workers to the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang. The result was a bloodbath of tens of thousands of Communist-led workers in Shanghai and other cities.

In polemicising against the peasant-based perspective of the Chinese Stalinists in the 1930s and upholding the independent class mobilisation of the urban proletariat, Leon Trotsky wrote:

"The peasant movement is a mighty revolutionary factor insofar as it is directed against the large landowners, militarists, feudalists, and usurers. But in the peasant

post-WWII period that Mao's peasant-based People's Liberation Army was able to take the cities and smash capitalist class rule in 1949. These included the collapse of the corrupt Guomindang forces, the absence of the working class as an immediate contender for power and, crucially, the existence of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, as an economic and military lifeline. From the outset Maoist China was not a "New Democracy" based on a "bloc of four classes"—the standard parlance of the Stalinists—but a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the Chinese workers state was bureaucratically deformed from its inception, ruled by a nationalist bureaucracy hostile to the independent struggles of the working class and the necessary perspective of international socialist revolution. This was shown clearly in China's counterrevolutionary alliance with US imperialism against the Soviet Union during the 1970s and '80s.

Despite the bureaucratic rule of Mao and his successors, the Chinese Revolution was a beacon for millions of oppressed toilers in Asia. China's collectivised economy has brought immense gains for workers, peasants and women, not least an end to centuries of chronic starvation in the countryside. This stands in stark contrast to developments in capitalist India. Today, US imperialism sees India as a strategic ally in its drive to overturn the gains of the Chinese Revolution. The ICL stands for the unconditional military defence of China against imperialism and counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for a proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist ruling caste in Beijing and create a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

#### The revolutionary potential of the Indian working class

As we wrote in the 1998 ICL "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program":

"The partial character of the anti-capitalist revolutions in the colonial world leads us



Kathmandu, 6 May: Maoists in Nepal rally during general strike demanding ouster of prime minister.

by over 2000 workers at an Indian-owned auto supplier in the Gurgaon-Manesar industrial belt near Delhi left the US auto giant Ford without transmission parts, leading to production shutdowns at plants in Canada and the US. More than 100,000 workers at upwards of 70 plants in the Gurgaon-Manesar area joined a one-day walkout to protest the murder of a striker by company thugs. The direct impact of the strike on Ford's North American operations underlines the need for active solidarity by US and Canadian workers with their class brothers and sisters in India.

In the first few months of this year,

and again led by Maoist forces. A major impetus for this struggle was opposition to the monarchy. By 2006, Maoist forces, which significantly include a large number of women, controlled up to 80 per cent of the countryside, where they enacted significant social reforms including legal equality for women, incursions into the caste system, the establishment of schools and road construction. Following a period of mass demonstrations including a prolonged general strike in 2006, they were able to entrench themselves in the capital, Kathmandu.

The Maoists then entered a bourgeois

*continued on page 11*

# Science...

(Continued from page 7)

unprecedented liberty. But that liberty was restricted to the rights of *private property* and soon after the capitalists triumphed they used religion as a means to prop up their class rule. Against any perceived threat from the oppressed classes they resorted to military subjugation abroad and the suppression of the "lower classes" at home, as can be seen during the reign of Oliver Cromwell.

In the English Revolution the capitalist class came to power in a civil war in which Oliver Cromwell's army defeated the Royalists backed by the aristocracy and the Anglican Church. In order to succeed, Cromwell had mobilised the lower social classes, who made sure the Civil War was fought to the finish. The execution of King Charles I in 1649 marked the decisive defeat for the feudal order in England. Although it was carried out under the religious doctrine of Puritanism, the liberating effect of the English Revolution was enormous. It put an end to the "divine right" of kings, abolished church and crown courts as well as compulsory attendance at church and church taxes; the monarchy and House of Lords were formally abolished and England became a republic. At the same time the new state was the instrument of class domination by the rising capitalists. This was seen in Cromwell's suppression of the revolt by the Levellers, the radical democratic current in his army that represented the plebeian orders.

Cromwell's crushing of the Levellers was a prelude to his subjugation of Ireland, from where the merchant capitalists of England drew large profits. A similar phenomenon can be seen in the French Revolution, which inspired a slave rebellion in the then French colony that is now Haiti. But the revolutionary class that came to power in France under the banner of "liberty, equality and fraternity" was horrified at the prospect of abolishing slavery in Haiti, because the wealth of the capitalists in France depended on the enormous profits that flowed out of the Antilles.

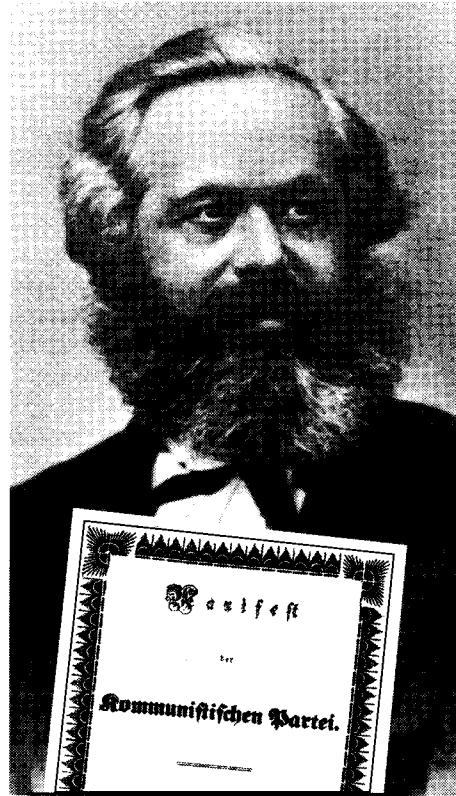
The republic ushered in by the English Revolution was relatively short-lived. Following Cromwell's death in 1658 the monarchy was restored in 1660 under Charles II. The "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 (so called because there was no bloodshed and no mobilisation of the lower classes) was merely the removal of King James II of England who was dragging the country back towards Catholic absolutism. He was replaced by the Dutch Protestant King William and his wife Mary and political power shifted from the Crown to Parliament, which was elected by the propertied classes. But the restoration of the monarchy did not mean a reversion back to the old feudal order, nor could it. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia explained in a 1925 essay on Britain:

"In dispersing parliament after parliament Cromwell displayed as little reverence toward the fetish of 'national' representation as in the execution of Charles I he had displayed insufficient respect for a monarchy by the grace of God. Nevertheless it was this same Cromwell who paved the way for the parliamentarism and democracy of the two subsequent centuries. In revenge for Cromwell's execution of Charles I, Charles II swung Cromwell's corpse up on the gallows. But pre-Cromwellian society could not be re-established by the restoration. The works of Cromwell could not be liquidated by the

thievish legislation of the Restoration because what is written by the sword cannot be wiped out by the pen."

— *Where Is Britain Going?*

The English Revolution led to an unprecedented development of science and technology. According to JD Bernal, a Marxist scientist and historian, the decades 1650 to 1690 saw an outburst of activity which, "in less than 50 years, virtually created modern science in most of its fields" (*Science in History*, London 1969). Bernal described this growth as "more intense than at any time before or since". The Royal Society, which celebrates its 350th anniversary this year, was founded in 1660 to study and promote science. According to convention-



Karl Marx and the Communist Manifesto, published 1848.

al British history, credit for the scientific advances of this period belongs to the stability that followed the restoration period. But that misses the point. The rising bourgeoisie needed science to develop the productive forces; however the new social order that placed them in power would not have been possible without the revolution. As our pamphlet *Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism* noted:

"The England of Newton and Locke was possible only because there had previously been an England of Cromwell based on the revolutionary mobilization of the lower classes against monarchical absolutism and the old feudal order."

Scientists were no longer dependent on royal patronage and were stimulated by challenges presented by the quest for British mastery of the seas. The drive to improve navigation led to significant advances being made in pumping and hydraulics as well as in gunnery. Isaac Newton, the great English physicist, who was born in 1642 and grew up during the English Revolution, made history with his studies of optics, the mathematics of moving bodies such as the planets and the enunciation of the inverse-square law of universal gravitation. In the early 17th century, Francis Bacon projected the possibility of unlimited progress in scientific discovery and technological innovation. Unlimited progress was a revolutionary concept, but one which capitalist society, for all its achievements in science, could not provide.

In England, the most influential Enlightenment figures sought to reconcile scientific discovery with belief in God. Newton used his authority to prop up the Church of England while mainstream Enlightenment thinkers developed a quasi-religious doctrine called

deism and viewed science as the study of God's laws in nature. The big names in the Enlightenment—Newton, John Locke in England; Voltaire and Rousseau in France, Thomas Jefferson in America—were hostile to atheism. The ascendant bourgeoisie had been forced to break the power of the established church, but they saw the existence of a hierarchical society as God-given and feared that if the common people ceased believing in God they might begin to challenge the very existence of private property.

In England, intellectuals like Newton and Locke were representatives of the *already completed* English Revolution. However in France, Voltaire and Diderot confronted the old feudal order that resisted change right up to the fall of the Bastille in 1789. The French Revolution had an immensely radicalising effect on Enlightenment thinkers and provided the theoretical basis for a revolutionary movement of the exploited classes. But although left-wing currents developed, such as the Levellers in the English Revolution and the Jacobins in the French Revolution, it was simply *not* possible to organise the working classes to overthrow the existing social order at that time. The economic preconditions for socialism and communism had yet to be created by the industrial revolution and the new social class it would create—the proletariat.

Scottish and English political economists of the Enlightenment—from Adam Smith in the late 18th century to David Ricardo in the early 19th to James Mill in Marx's formative years—were leading intellectual representatives of liberalism. Central to the liberal worldview was a belief in raising the level of production and productivity through the application of science and technology. They maintained that the wealth of nations—the title of Adam Smith's classic work—would be maximised by the competitive market economy. In order to maximise profits, capitalist entrepreneurs would supposedly be compelled to reduce the costs of production through technical innovation.

## From radical egalitarianism to Marxism

Many Enlightenment thinkers were materialists, but science remained in constant battle with religion, most notably over Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Regarding this conflict, JD Bernal wrote:

"The very persistence of the struggle, despite the successive victories won by materialist science, shows that it is not essentially a philosophic or a scientific one, but a reflection of political struggles in scientific terms. At every stage, idealist philosophy has been invoked to pretend that present discontents are illusory and to justify the existing state of affairs. At every stage materialist philosophy has relied on

the practical test of reality and on the necessity of change."

— *Science in History*

Darwin unshackled biological science from the chains of religion by providing a materialist explanation for the evolution of life on earth through his studies of variation of species. Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection continues to be explosive in capitalist society today because it indicates that all modern humans came from a common African ancestor, and hence there is no scientific basis for separate "races". The truth—that race is not a biological category, but a social and political construct—has profound political implications and the teaching of creationism in schools is inextricably bound up with reinforcing racism.

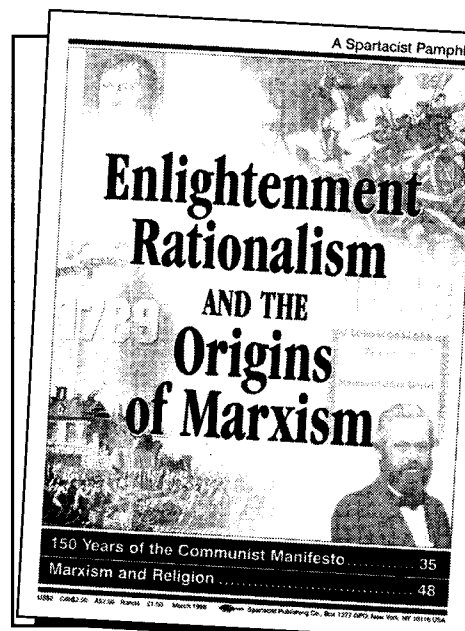
Darwin explained the origin of species by demonstrating how an accumulation of small *quantitative* changes produces an entirely new biological *quality*. Without being aware of it, he applied the method of dialectical materialism, in practice if not in theory. Mendeleev's Periodic Law, a historic breakthrough in chemistry, is also based on dialectics. Despite the fact that the brilliant Russian scientist scorned dialectics, Mendeleev's law deduces qualitative changes in the elements from quantitative differences in atomic weights. The concept of quantitative changes turning into quality owes much to dialectics. Regarding the relationship between Marxism and science, JD Bernal wrote:

"Knowledge of Marxism is essential to the understanding of the place of science in history. Without Marxism natural science would have remained as a growing accumulation of interesting facts about the universe and useful recipes for controlling it; human history would still be restricted to the simple narration of political changes without any coherent thread of explanation."

— *Science in History*

Karl Marx brought together three elements as the basis for scientific socialism: the democratic egalitarianism identified with thinkers like Rousseau; classical political economy developed by Adam Smith and David Ricardo which laid the foundations of the labour theory of value; and a dialectical conception of history derived from Hegel, stripped of the latter's idealism. (See "How Marx Became a Marxist", *Workers Vanguard* no 846, 15 April 2005.) The term "dialectical materialism" was explained by Trotsky saying: "What does this terrible word 'dialectics' mean? It means to consider things in their development, not in their static situation" ("On the 'Workers' Party", August 1940).

Marx's dialectical historical materialism, which Lenin described as "the greatest achievement of scientific thought", emerged following the birth of the proletariat, a new class which entered the historical stage with the industrial



This pamphlet reprints presentations given by Spartacist League/US Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are "150 Years of the Communist Manifesto" and "Marxism and Religion".

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the programme and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

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revolution in Britain and gave rise to the first revolutionary working-class movement, the Chartists, in the 1830s. This period also gave rise to the revolutions of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871, the first attempt by the new working class to take power. The year 1848 also saw the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, authored by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who insisted on the inevitability of revolutionary events in the near future.

The goal of communism is an egalitarian and harmonious society. But such a future society can come into being only through the overcoming of economic scarcity by qualitatively raising the level of production and labour productivity through the further progressive development of science and technology.

The *Communist Manifesto* made the point that the history of all human socie-

ty, past and present, has been the history of class struggle. But this was not new. In 1852 Marx summed up what his particular contribution was, namely: 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production; 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat and 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society. But he did not regard the *outcome* of the class struggle as inevitable and put forward a programme for victory through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The October 1917 Russian Revolution took the Marxist doctrine of proletarian revolution out of the realm of theory and gave it reality, creating a society where those who laboured ruled. Under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, the Bolsheviks broke the

capitalist chain at its weakest link, understanding that unless the proletarian revolution was extended to the major capitalist powers, an isolated dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia could not long survive. Under the pressure of imperialist encirclement, the devastation of the Russian working class in the Civil War and the lengthy isolation of the Russian Revolution, a bureaucratic layer headed by Stalin usurped power in a political counter-revolution beginning in 1923-24, resting on the proletarian property forms of the Soviet workers state. Our programme for the USSR was unconditional military defence against imperialism and internal counterrevolution; for proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and return the USSR to the road of Lenin and Trotsky. The 1991-92 social counterrevolution in the USSR was an unparalleled defeat

for working people all over the world.

Marxist historian Isaac Deutscher commented in his speech, "On Socialist Man" (1966), that "Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies—hunger, sex and death—besetting man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labor movement have taken on.... But is it not true that hunger or, more broadly, social inequality and oppression, have hugely complicated and intensified for innumerable human beings the torments of sex and death as well?" When the wealth, tremendous resources, scientific developments and medical technology of this society are put to the service of the many, not the profits of the few, we will be able to build a society, freed of cruel and crippling religious superstitions, where human life, human worth and human dignity count. ■

## India...

(Continued from page 9)

coalition government, and in 2008 emerged as the largest party in parliamentary elections that led to the end of the monarchy. After leaving the government a year later following a stand-off over the dismissal of the army chief, this May the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)—UCPN (Maoist)—launched an "indefinite general strike" for a new "national unity government". The strike was soon abandoned, and the Maoists then signed a deal to continue negotiations towards a new government, while a rival Stalinist-derived outfit, the Unified Marxist-Leninists, remained in the interim regime. Maoist guerrillas are confined to camps, nominally under United Nations control, while their leaders seek their integration into the bourgeois armed forces.

The organisation now known as the UCPN (Maoist) has always had close links to India's Naxalites and upholds a similar dogma of "revolution by stages". Its 2001 "Common Minimum Policy and Programme" demanded a "people's democratic dictatorship with the participation of all the progressive classes including the national bourgeoisie". While running the government in 2008-09, the Maoists explicitly upheld capitalism and supported legislation to ban strikes. Reporting that "the government is planning to restrict bandhs [street protests] and strikes in industries and essential commodities", the *Himalayan Times* online (10 April

2009) quoted Maoist finance minister Baburam Bhattarai: "We are in a new political set-up and it demands a new outlook in business and industries also."

Unlike India, Nepal has very little in the way of an industrial proletariat. Three quarters of the workforce is involved in agriculture and 90 per cent of the urban labour force works in the "informal" sector, largely small family workshops. While trade unions organised by various parties claim hundreds of thousands of members, what industrial activity there is mainly involves the processing of agricultural products like pulses (eg lentils), jute, sugar cane, tobacco and grain. The garment industry, largely based on primitive handicraft technology, once employed as many as 300,000 workers but has now almost entirely collapsed. About three million Nepalese—over ten per cent of the population—have moved abroad to seek work, including important concentrations in India and elsewhere in Asia.

The oppressed masses of Nepal need a *Marxist-internationalist* perspective that links the struggle for social modernisation and liberation to the class struggles of the proletariat in more advanced countries beyond the country's borders. A workers revolution in neighbouring India would have a massive immediate effect on Nepal, posing a struggle for a socialist federation of the subcontinent. Conversely, a huge plebeian upheaval in Nepal drawing in its small working class could help to spark a proletarian upsurge in India.

Sharply opposing such a perspective, the petty-bourgeois UCPN (Maoist) pushes retrograde Nepalese nationalism, including against so-called "cultural pollution" from India. The Maoists' "40 Point Demands", issued in 1996 on the eve of their armed insurgency, includes calls for the Nepal-India border to be "controlled and systematised", for cars with Indian licence plates to be banned, and for the suppression of Hindi-language films, videos, magazines and newspapers. In a series of recent pronouncements, the Indian Maoists have criticised their erstwhile comrades in Nepal for their "dangerous reformist positions". But the Nepalese Maoists are only carrying out the logic of Mao-Stalinist nationalism and class collaboration.

### Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party!

India's vaunted development over the past two decades has benefited only a small section of the population: the filthy rich bourgeoisie and a petty-bourgeois technocratic/managerial stratum in the cities. The working class faces horrific working and living conditions and poverty-level wages, while

squalid slums expand everywhere as displaced peasants descend on the cities to seek work. Caste, religion, language and other divides are fostered by the rulers to maintain their oppressive hold.

The situation cries out for the kind of perspective fought for by Lenin and Trotsky in the 1917 October Revolution: the workers seizing power at the head of the oppressed masses, agrarian revolution to liberate the peasantry, the socialisation and rational reorganisation of the economy in the interests of human needs not profit, and the fight to extend socialist revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist heartlands. In India, such a perspective alone can lay the basis for planned economic development that benefits, rather than destroys the lives of, impoverished populations like the adivasis.

Social liberation in South Asia will not come through isolated struggles in the forests and jungles, but requires the mobilisation of the urban proletariat under revolutionary leadership. In the fight to forge such a leadership, crucial lessons can be drawn from the work of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India (BLPI), Indian section of the Trotskyist Fourth International, during World War II. While the Stalinists backed British imperialism and opposed the struggle for Indian independence, and later returned to subordinating the workers to the bourgeois Congress, the BLPI fought heroically for a Marxist proletarian perspective.

This proud history was later squandered, starting with the dissolution of the BLPI in 1948 to pursue a liquidationist entry into the thoroughly reformist Socialist Party of JP Narayan. Over the following years, the remnants of the once powerful Indian Trotskyist cadre were assimilated into social democracy. Thus when a new wave of youthful radicalism appeared in India in the late 1960s it was led into the dead end of Naxalite Maoism. The small ostensibly Trotskyist groups that operated from the 1970s on, generally associated with the revisionist "United Secretariat" (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel, continued to push abject accommodation to non-revolutionary forces. By the mid 2000s, the Indian USec section collapsed and disappeared.

The ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. Militants in India seeking the road to revolutionary Marxism must examine the programme of Trotskyism and the record of the early BLPI, which uniquely chart a path to the Indian workers revolution and a socialist federation of South Asia. As the BLPI wrote in its founding programme, issued in 1942:

"The peasantry, the largest numerically and the most atomized, backward and

oppressed class, is capable of local uprisings and partisan warfare, but requires the leadership of a more advanced class for this struggle to be elevated to an all-national level. Without such leadership the peasantry alone cannot make a revolution. The task of such leadership falls in the nature of things on the Indian proletariat, which is the only class capable of leading the toiling masses in the onslaught against Imperialism, landlordism and the Native Princes....

"But the leadership of the working class in the bourgeois-democratic revolution poses before the working class the prospect of seizing the power and in addition to accomplishing the long overdue bourgeois-democratic tasks of proceeding with its own socialist tasks. And thus the bourgeois-democratic revolution develops uninterrupted into the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only state-form capable of supplanting the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie in India....

"The ultimate fate of the revolution in India, as in Russia, will be determined in the arena of the international revolution. Nor will India by its own forces be able to accomplish the task of making the transition to Socialism. Not only the backwardness of the country, but also the international division of labor and the interdependence produced by capitalism itself—of the different parts of the world economy, demand that this task of the establishment of Socialism can be accomplished only on a world scale. The Indian proletariat will, of course, proceed with the socialist transformation of society to the extent that this is possible in the concrete circumstances, but the establishment of the socialist society will depend on the course of international revolution. The victorious revolution in India, however, dealing a mortal blow to the oldest and most widespread Imperialism in the world, will, on the one hand, produce the most profound crisis in the entire capitalist world and shake World Capitalism to its foundations. On the other hand, it will inspire and galvanize into action millions of proletarians and colonial slaves the world over and blaze the trail of World Revolution." ■

**"Left Front" state repression in India**

**The Nandigram massacre**



**Workers Hammer no 205,**  
Winter 2008-2009

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## India

# Down with government war on Maoists, tribal peoples!



Indian Vanguard



AFF

Left: Mass rally of Maoist supporters in Hyderabad, September 2004. Right: In crackdown on Maoists, paramilitary troops arrest villagers in West Midnapore district, West Bengal, June 2009.

The following article is adapted from Workers Vanguard no 962, 30 July 2010, paper of the Spartacist League/US. Since it was published, protests have taken place in London and elsewhere against the brutal killings of two leading cadre of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) by the Indian state. Cherukuri Rajkumar, known as Azad, and Hem Pandey were gunned down in early July by police in Andhra Pradesh, who are notorious for abductions and murders. The working class in India and internationally must defend the Maoists and tribal people against state repression.

In a military offensive that began late last year, the government of India has mobilised up to 100,000 heavily armed police backed by the army in an attempt to crush Maoist guerrilla forces in the country's eastern and central interior. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of the Congress Party, which leads the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition regime, has called the insurgency led by the Communist Party of India (Maoist)—hereafter referred to as CPI (Maoist)—“the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country”. Government sources state that the Maoists are active in nearly a third of India's administrative districts, stretching from the northern border with Nepal south to Andhra Pradesh.

The offensive, dubbed Operation Green Hunt, has brought a bloody campaign of terror. One report described how:

“Early one morning last October police forces surrounded the residents of Gompad,

## Only workers revolution can liberate the Indian masses

a remote village in the state of Chhattisgarh in eastern India, and attacked. Sixteen people were killed, including an older couple and their 25-year-old daughter, who was stabbed in the head with a knife and had her breasts sliced off. Her 2-year-old son survived, but three of his fingers were chopped off.... The cops suspected the villagers of sympathizing with Maoist insurgents, believing that some were informants.”

—Megha Bahree, “India's Dirty War”, forbes.com, 10 May

For all the hype about India becoming an economic superpower, the intense poverty suffered by most of the population has been made worse by the neoliberal reforms instituted by the country's rulers starting in 1991. While a small layer of capitalists has accrued immense profits, the working class and urban and rural poor have been hit by savage cuts to public spending and the dismantling of price supports for agricultural products. Land dispossession and debt peonage led to at least 183,000 peasant suicides from 1997 to 2007—one every 30 minutes. Tens of millions of displaced peasants have migrated to the cities where most live in fetid slums. Poverty is so entrenched that more than 40 per cent of India's children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition.

The Maoists' base of support is among the roughly 80 million adivasi

(tribal) people, the poorest and most dispossessed population in all of India. Tribal villages in the forests and jungles have almost no schools or hospitals, or access to modern sanitation. The literacy rate is less than 25 per cent, and only 14 per cent for women, while malnutrition is rampant. The CPI (Maoist) has a record of defending the adivasi population against rapacious landlords and brutal police incursions. On 6 April, they successfully ambushed a heavily armed patrol, killing 76 paramilitary cops.

Five years ago, the state government in Chhattisgarh set up a vigilante outfit called the Salwa Judum (“peace hunt”) to forcibly depopulate hundreds of tribal villages, claiming this was for economic development. Salwa Judum mobs financed by the Tata and Essar industrial conglomerates, who seek to grab huge swaths of the area's land and resources, burned down homes and interned tens of thousands in squalid detention camps. Such actions only produced deeper revulsion towards the authorities and increased support for the Maoists. Now the Indian rulers are expanding their attacks into an all-out war. Their goal is to bring the tribal districts back under central control, which would allow for the forcible seizure of land and the handing over of

vast mineral riches to Indian and international corporations.

This area has immense untapped resources including rich reserves of iron ore, coal and limestone as well as bauxite deposits worth an estimated \$4 trillion—more than three times India's entire annual gross domestic product. As prominent Indian author Arundhati Roy commented in an insightful article in *Outlook India* (9 November 2009):

“Right now in central India, the Maoists' guerrilla army is made up almost entirely of desperately poor tribal people living in conditions of such chronic hunger that it verges on famine of the kind we only associate with sub-Saharan Africa....

“If the tribals have taken up arms, they have done so because a government which has given them nothing but violence and neglect now wants to snatch away the last thing they have—their land. Clearly, they do not believe the government when it says it only wants to ‘develop’ their region. Clearly, they do not believe that the roads as wide and flat as aircraft runways that are being built through their forests in Dantewada by the National Mineral Development Corporation are being built for them to walk their children to school on. They believe that if they do not fight for their land, they will be annihilated.”

Soon after its re-election in May 2009, the UPA government banned the CPI (Maoist) under draconian “anti-terrorist” laws. Others have been targeted merely for speaking out against state repression. Arundhati Roy herself has been investigated for prosecution under the Special Public Security Act following another *Outlook India* article reporting on her visit to a Maoist-controlled

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