A welcome advance for the Pakistani and world working class

Keith Jones
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The *World Socialist Web Site* today begins serialization of a statement issued by Marxist Voice, a Pakistani group that has expressed political agreement with the perspectives of the International Committee of the Fourth International and has undertaken to work with the ICFI to build it as the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

We very much welcome this statement. It represents an important advance in the elaboration of a revolutionary perspective and indicates a political development within the working class in Pakistan.

The utter incompatibility of bourgeois rule with the democratic and social aspirations of the workers and toilers of South Asia is ever more manifest. Six decades after the aspiring national bourgeoisies of India and Pakistan joined hands with British imperialism to suppress the anti-imperialist revolution and partition the subcontinent along communal lines, South Asia is home to the world's largest concentration of malnourished and impoverished people.

Like the US-backed dictatorship of General Pervez Musharraf that preceded it, Pakistan's current Pakistan Peoples Party-led government is imposing brutal austerity measures at the behest of the US- and Western-dominated International Monetary Fund. As for India's much touted rise, the emergence of Indian-based transnationals and a small cluster of Indian billionaires has been propelled by the immiseration of much of the rural population and the emergence of a savagely exploited working class.

Unable to offer any progressive solution to the problems of the masses, the Indian and Pakistani bourgeoisies seek to divert social tensions through their reactionary geopolitical state rivalry and by fanning religious-communal, national-ethnic and caste divisions.

Both Islamabad and New Delhi are eagerly competing for Washington's favor.

All sections of the Pakistani bourgeoisie—from the Islamic fundamentalist parties to the Pakistan Peoples Party—are slavishly collaborating with US imperialism in its war in Afghanistan. This includes conniving in drone attacks inside Pakistan that have killed hundreds of civilians and unleashing the Pakistani military to suppress Taliban-aligned militias across the Pashtun tribal belt with callous indifference to democratic rights and civilian life.

Meanwhile, India, the erstwhile champion of nonalignment, tethers itself ever more closely to Washington's plans to contain China, greedily accepting the US offer of help in becoming a world power.

As the Marxist Voice statement attests, the most class-conscious workers and socialist-minded youth and intellectuals in South Asia have begun to recognize the need to revive a Marxist perspective through a turn to Trotskyism.

For decades, the working class in South Asia has been politically smothered by Stalinist parties. With ruinous results, the Stalinists have systematically subordinated the working class to one or another section of the national bourgeoisie on the grounds that the unresolved problems of the democratic revolution—including the eradication of landlordism and casteism and the establishment of genuine equality among the subcontinent's myriad peoples—is possible only through a bourgeois-led "national" revolution.

Based on a review of the essential strategic experiences of the working class in South Asia and drawing on the lessons of the political struggles led by the ICFI, the Marxist Voice statement demonstrates the necessity of Pakistani workers basing their struggles on

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the strategy of permanent revolution.

"The tasks of the democratic revolution," declares Marxist Voice, "will be realized in Pakistan and South Asia not by, or in alliance with, the bourgeoisie or any section of it, but in revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie and the capitalist social order. The working class will emerge as the liberator of the downtrodden masses and the leader of a revolutionary alliance of the working class and peasantry only by waging a ceaseless struggle to free the masses from the political influence of the bourgeoisie, by exposing its subordination to imperialism, indifference to the democratic aspirations of the masses and venal pursuit of its class interests. A workers and peasants government will combine revolutionary democratic measures, most importantly a radical transformation of land relations, with the expropriation of big business and other socialist measures and place at the heart of its strategy the struggle to mobilize the world working class to put an end to capitalism."

The Marxist Voice statement rejects all forms of nationalism and nationalist and communalist politics, including the reactionary communal ideology enshrined in partition and the rival states of India and Pakistan, as well as those forces that advocate the break-up of Pakistan along national-ethnic lines.

It condemns Islamism and the reactionary politics of terrorism, while posing as a central task the independent political mobilization of the working class against the AfPak war and for the smashing of the Islamabad-Washington military-strategic alliance.

Last but not least, the Marxist Voice statement insists on the crucial importance of basing the struggle to build a revolutionary party of the Pakistani working class on the lessons of the ICFI's implacable struggle against Pabloite opportunism. It provides a brief, but telling, exposure of the political damage wrought by The Struggle (of the International Marxist Tendency), the Labour Party of Pakistan (which is allied with the French New Anti-Capitalist Party) and other Pabloite groups. These groups function in the political orbit of, and are to one degree or another all oriented to, the bourgeois Pakistan Peoples Party, various ethnic-nationalist movements, the trade unions, and NGOs aligned with the World Social Forum.

The WSWS appeals to our readers in Pakistan, South Asia and around the world to carefully study the Marxist Voice statement and contribute to the discussion of the perspectives and program that will guide the building of a revolutionary socialist party of the Pakistani working class by forwarding us your comments and questions.

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See Part one of the statement issued by Marxist Voice

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