



Down with the UN Starvation Blockade!

Defend Iraq Against U.S./Australia Imperialist

Attack!

FEBRUARY 28—U.S. President Clinton has announced conditional acceptance of the deal worked out by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi leader has reportedly offered to comply fully with imperialist dictates for "weapons inspection," eliminating the pretext for Washington's threat to carry out a renewed round of mass murder against the Iraqi people. But the threat of a massive military slaughter is far from over. Clinton immediately warned Iraq of "serious consequences" if Washington does not get what it deems to be full "compliance."

Washington emphasised that it is not about to withdraw the massive array of firepower it has assembled in the Persian Gulf—over 300 warplanes, 32 ships and 30,000 troops. Should bombing and missile strikes go ahead, the International Communist League proclaims forthrightly, as we have in protest statements and demonstrations in Australia and internationally over the last two weeks: **Defend Iraq against imperialist attack! Down with the UN starvation blockade!**

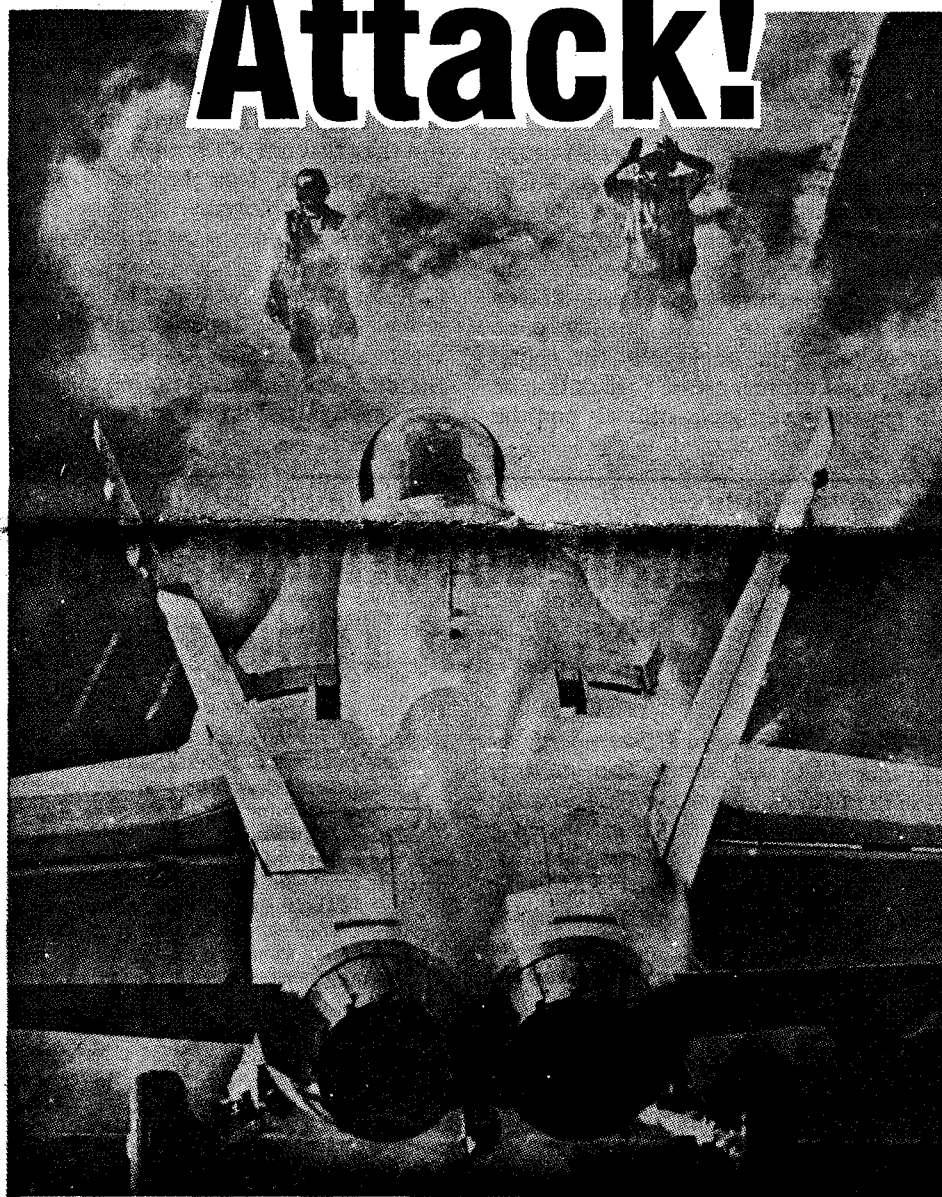
We publish below a 23 February statement by the Spartacist League/Australia.

U.S. imperialism, the strongest military power in the world, is preparing a massive attack on the people of Iraq deploying tens of thousands of troops, scores of fighter-bombers and a huge flotilla of cruise missile launchers and other warships, including aircraft carriers. The Australian imperialists, America's junior partners in the South Pacific, leapt at the chance to prove their loyalty, dispatching SAS commandos and aircraft to help with the intended slaughter.

In demonstrations in Melbourne and Sydney, the Spartacist League, section of the International Communist League, and Spartacus Youth Clubs have proclaimed: **U.S./Australia: Bloody hands off Iraq!**

The Opposition Australian Labor Party is backing the right-wing Coalition government 100 percent. ALP leader Kim "Bomber" Beazley made it a point to join Prime Minister John Howard in farewelling the Australian troops in Perth. But this is hardly surprising. As an SL spokesman said at a Sydney protest: "In 1991 it was the Labor government who joined the U.S. in attacking Iraq. It was Labor who first cut back welfare to immigrants, and under Hawke's government that Aborigines were killed in the jails. Everything that Howard's doing now—the way was paved by Labor."

The racist white rulers of this country have been well-served by the ALP, social-democratic frontmen for imperialism. In 1989, it was Beazley, defence minister in



AP/Erik Kenney

U.S. jet prepares terror-bombing of Iraqi people. Australian Imperialists, backed by ALP, sent troops to Gulf, fully support American war moves.

the Hawke government, who oversaw the Australian bourgeoisie's brain-trusting and arming of the Papua New Guinea military's murderous war on the people of Bougainville. Over 20,000 have died since the start of the revolt against Australian mining giant CRA's (now Rio Tinto) arrogant plunder of the island. **Australian military get out of Bougainville now!**

Since the horrific Gulf slaughter seven years ago, Australia's capitalist rulers have supported every subsequent U.S. missile strike against Iraq. Australian Richard Butler heads the UN agency responsible for "weapons inspection," whose demand to spy on Iraq unhindered provides the pretext for renewed deadly imperialist aggression. Meanwhile, the UN economic embargo, choking off food and medicine, has killed more than a million Iraqis—primarily among the poorest and most vulnerable

layers—including well over 600,000 children. We say: **Down with the imperialist starvation blockade!**

Australia's main contribution to imperialist terror against Iraq, as it was in the last Gulf War, will be from the U.S. bases at Pine Gap and Nurrungar. These spy satellite ground stations collect

electronic and photographic intelligence from around the world and are key to targeting U.S. missile strikes. The fact that the SAS killers sent to the Gulf are involved in the drive to smash the Maritime Union of Australia underscores that anti-imperialism abroad means class-struggle at home. Political strikes against the war would be a powerful inspiration to working people and the oppressed around the world. Not one penny, not one man for the Australian bourgeois army! It is in the immediate and direct interest of the Australian working class to drive out the U.S. bases and smash the U.S./Australian imperialist alliance in the fight for socialist revolution. Only proletarian rule, here and internationally, can put an end to the capitalist system of war, poverty and oppression.

While we unconditionally oppose imperialist war moves against Iraq, as we did during the 1990-91 Gulf War when we demanded "Sink U.S. and Australian Imperialism! Defend Iraq!", at the same time we give absolutely no political support to the bloody regime there. The Iraqi capitalists rule through anti-Communist massacres, anti-working-class repression and murderous subjugation of the Kurdish people. It is the task of the Iraqi proletariat, leading oppressed women and ethnic and religious minorities, to sweep away the bloody regime of Saddam Hussein through socialist revolution.

Down with Jackal Australian Imperialism!

As the Spartacist League/U.S. wrote when the U.S. rulers last threatened to bomb Iraq a few months ago:

"Behind the U.S. military moves in the Persian Gulf is the intensified inter-imperialist rivalry over Near Eastern and Central Asian oil fields and pipeline routes. The Gulf War was an attempt by the U.S. to secure control of the region through projecting its military power, ultimately aimed against Japan, Germany and other U.S. rivals. Following the collapse of the USSR, conflicting interests between the imperialist allies, which had been subordinated to

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The Main Enemy Is at Home!

The Leninist Struggle Against Imperialism

SEE PAGE SIX

Protest Brutal Police Attack on Thai Workers

In Thailand, as the economic meltdown continues, currency devaluation has brought mass layoffs and huge cuts in real wages. In response to the harsh imperialist dictates of the International Monetary Fund, workers have mobilised in struggle. Thousands marched in Bangkok last September under the slogan, "Poor people pay off the debt while the evil capitalists sell off the country." In January, striking workers at the Thai Summit Auto Parts Industry Co. were savagely attacked by cops, and many were arrested. We print below a 25 January protest statement by our fraternal comrades of the Partisan Defense Committee in Japan addressed to the Thai ambassador in Tokyo.

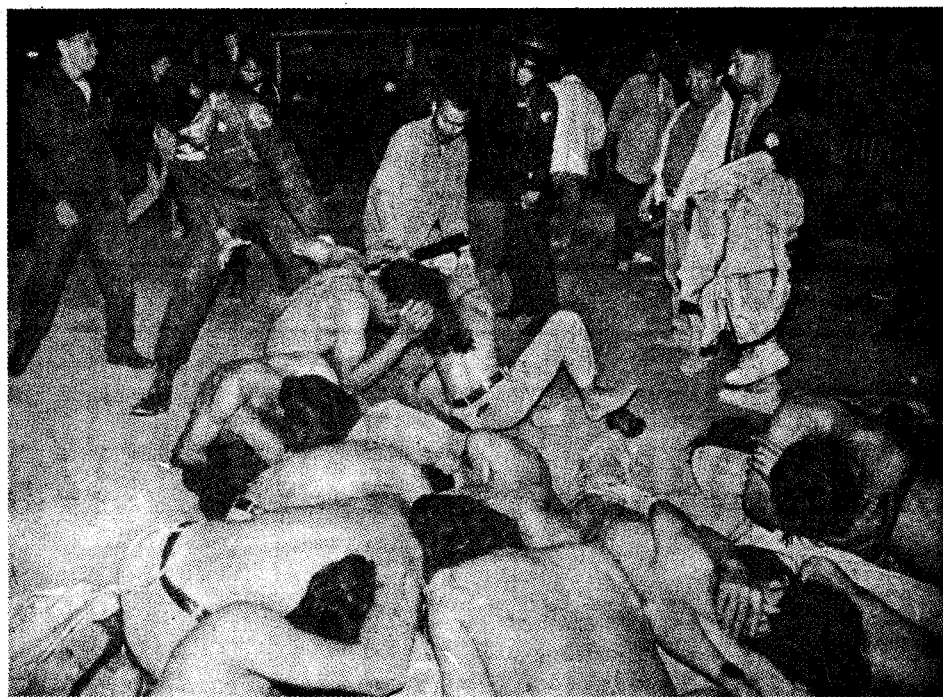
We demand the immediate release of the 58 striking Thai Summit Auto Parts Industry Co. workers who were arrested January 21 in a pre-dawn attack carried out by 600 police armed with riot sticks and shields. During this vicious assault on workers fighting for better wages and working conditions, dozens of other strikers were injured. Those arrested are being charged with "causing public unrest" and "damaging public property" and face from 5 to 10 years imprison-

ment. We demand that all charges be dropped.

Following the arrests, the government warned workers "it would take tough action against violent or unruly protests." The only violence here is that of the ruling class, owners of industry and the armed bodies of men who protect their property and investments. The auto parts workers were protesting a cut in overtime hours and reduction of their bonus—essential to live on—to half of one month's wages.

The strike by these courageous workers has sent a chill through the capitalist classes from Indonesia to South Korea to the Philippines, who are fearful the toiling masses throughout the region will fight against International Monetary Fund dictates. Threatened with over 2 million layoffs by year-end in Thailand alone, this was a strike in defense of all the working people, particularly women workers who make up as much as half of the proletariat and played a leading role in recent anti-government protests.

The billions of yen, dollars and Deutschmarks which previously flowed into the country have mainly gone directly into the pockets of the ruling elite, used for real estate speculation or to pay off government officials and the



AFP

Thailand, 21 January: cops terrorise striking workers.

military while the majority of the population lives below the poverty level and the government threatens to deport one million migrant laborers, mainly Burmese.

The so-called "Asian miracle" was built on the sweat and blood of the proletariat and peasants. The economic boom in Southeast Asia, like all capitalist booms, could not be sustained. Over 150 years ago Karl Marx pointed to "the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on trial." Now the workers, peasants and unemployed are the ones being made to pay, suffering under the hammer blows of IMF imposed austerity.

Before World War II Thailand welcomed Japanese imperialism's drive to create a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which brought untold misery to the laborers and toilers of Asia. During

a recent visit to Tokyo, a high level Thai government official was instructed that the Japanese bourgeoisie would not tolerate strikes against their firms in Thailand. Thai Summit Auto Parts supplies parts to some of the wealthiest and greediest corporations on Earth—Mitsubishi, Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki and Isuzu—who have moved their production overseas to countries throughout Asia in search of greater profits through superexploitation while ratcheting up the rate of exploitation at home.

The continued protests in the face of government warnings speak to the working class' deep determination to oppose attempts by the IMF, Japanese and American imperialism, Thai bankers and the comprador bourgeoisie to destroy their livelihoods.

We demand that all the detained be released and all charges be dropped. ■

Australian Government Denies Entry Visas to East Timorese Activists

We publish below an 8 December letter by the PDC to immigration minister Philip Ruddock, protesting the Australian government's outrageous denial of entry visas to a group of East Timorese activists. This racist, politically repressive act followed the Indonesian government's own brutal crackdown. On 14 November Suharto's troops fired on students at the University of East Timor in Dili who had assembled in response to provocations by undercover security thugs. Eyewitnesses reported at least three students killed, others hospitalised and over a dozen beaten and arrested. The PDC issued a protest demanding the immediate release of those arrested and the dropping of all charges. As we said in that letter:

"It is no coincidence that this escalation in bloody terror against the East Timorese people comes as the Indonesian economy—along with the other capitalist economies of South-East Asia—is engulfed in a financial crisis. The Indonesian 'miracle' has always meant the

brutal superexploitation of the workers and peasants to produce fabulous profits for Australian, Japanese and U.S. corporations and for the thoroughly corrupt Indonesian rulers. Now, as the toiling masses are once again being made to pay for the crisis of Indonesian capitalism, the Suharto dictatorship is escalating its murderous war against the East Timorese people in order to try and intimidate the increasingly combative working class."

slaughtered. Then ASIS provided valuable assistance to the American CIA as it drew up "hit lists" of PKI supporters to be murdered. Following the 1991 Dili massacre the Australian military stepped up its arming and training of the Indonesian military, including of the elite Kopassus counter-insurgency torture/killer units, who are the cutting edge of repression throughout the archipelago. Since it invaded East Timor 23 years ago, the murderous Indonesian military—armed and trained by the racist Australian imperialists, among others, has overseen the killing of over 200,000 East Timorese through gunfire, disease or starvation. Independence for East Timor!

This vindictive ban on the East Timorese activists marks another step in the escalation of your government's racist war on immigrants, refugees and Aborigines, the spearhead for broad-gauged attacks on the working class and trade unions. João Carrascalão, president of the Timorese Democratic Union noted that the denial of visas is related to the question of the 1,300 East Timorese refugees in Australia who are waiting for a decision on their requests for political asylum. Meanwhile untold numbers of Cambodian, Chinese, Tamil and other refugees languish in hellish detention centres and concentration camps around Australia. Recently, desperate Tamil refugees concluded a hunger strike in support of their demand for asylum, and they still face possible deportation to Sri Lanka. Full asylum now—no deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants and their families! Stop visa denials based on political beliefs and associations! ■

Dear Sir:

We sharply condemn the Australian government's refusal to grant entry visas to seven East Timorese residents of Portugal who had planned to participate in the Second Congress of the Timorese Democratic Union, which began in Perth on 3 December. Among the seven was Pascalina Cabral, a niece of commander David Alex, who was executed last June by the Indonesian military, and Levi Corte Real, a survivor of the hideous 12 November 1991 Dili Massacre in which more than 200 were murdered by the Indonesia military. Your ministry's actions come just two weeks after East Timorese students marking the sixth anniversary of the Dili massacre were fired upon by troops, leaving three dead. This is clearly an act of blatant political censorship, underscoring the Australian government's complicity in the Indonesian government's slaughter and suppression in East Timor.

The alliance between Australian governments—the current one and its predecessors—with the Indonesian capitalist rulers dates from at least the 1965 bloodbath in which the Indonesian Communist Party was annihilated as more than one million people were

Partisan Defense Committee
CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES
Winter 1997-98

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No. 25 — Winter 1997-98

Published by the Partisan Defense Committee of the U.S.

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Australasian

SPARTACIST

For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!

Marxist newspaper, published quarterly by the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

EDITOR: Oliver Stevens

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mike Wallace

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Chris Cunningham

Printed by trade-union labour.

Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co., GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001.

Subscription \$5 for 4 issues; overseas \$7 airmail/\$5 surface.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

Printed by Spotpress Pty Ltd, 105 Victoria Rd, Marrickville.

ISSN: 0311-3264

Autumn 1998

Date of issue: March 1998

Free Abortion on Demand!

Drop the Charges Against Doctors Chan and Lee!

For the first time in 30 years doctors in Western Australia have been charged with "procuring an illegal miscarriage," i.e., an abortion. The doctors, Victor Chan and anaesthetist Hoh Peng Lee, face a possible 14 years in jail. The intended chilling effect of this vicious crackdown was felt immediately. Perth doctors and nurses announced they would stop performing abortions for fear of prosecution; 24 hours later two dangerously ill women were hospitalised after trying to end their own pregnancies. In 1970 abortion was the leading cause of maternal death in Australia; the charges have sparked real fears of a return to those days. Dr Chan, a respected physician who has been providing abortion services in Perth for over 20 years, said, "I will vigorously defend the charge for the cause of all women." Drop the charges against Chan and Lee! Smash the reactionary abortion laws!

Some 18 months ago, Dr Chan gave an abortion to a Maori woman. She requested to take the foetal material away for burial according to her customs, and Dr Chan agreed. When the woman's child spoke about this in a school "show and tell" period, the teacher called the cops—leading to the doctors' persecution.

This crackdown reeks of a high-level, government-directed campaign. WA is run by the right-wing Coalition government of Richard Court whose "Women's Interests" minister is a known anti-abortion campaigner. For 15 months the Director of Public Prosecutions and the cops sought to bring charges against anyone and everyone involved in this case. Dr Chan said, "they picked the wrong case." But for the rulers of this brutally racist country, this case involving two Chinese doctors and a Maori woman was made to order. It was in WA, land of free-booting mining magnates and rich pastoralists, that eight drunken cops in the remote town of Roebourne savagely assaulted a group of black youth in 1983. The cops beat 17-year-old John Pat unconscious, and dragged him by the hair to a police van. "They threw him in like a dead kangaroo," said one of the witnesses. An hour later, Pat was dead. Little has changed for Aborigines and immigrants in WA.

Abortion is in the criminal statutes of every state and territory. Within that framework, each state defines the narrow circumstances in which a woman may obtain an abortion legally. In WA, a woman's life must be in danger. Painfully evoking Australia's history as a

convict colony where women were especially brutalised, the sentence for a woman convicted of having an "illegal" abortion is *seven years hard labour!*

At bottom, women's access to this basic medical procedure rests tenuously on a series of court rulings, the by-product of social struggle in the early 1970s and the efforts of courageous fighters for women's rights like the late Dr Bertram Wainer. As the attack on the Perth doctors shows, these rulings are readily reversible, as are all reforms under capitalism. There are about 100,000 abortions a year in Australia—performed by a mere 50 doctors. For women outside major cities, poor women, immigrants, Aboriginal women and youth, abortions are difficult to get, a situation exacerbated by massive cuts to health-care budgets and huge waiting lists for surgery. In WA there are two clinics in the entire state.

Here, as in the U.S., there is a growing campaign against late-term abortions which acts as a wedge to undercut women's right to abortion in general. While the procedure is quite rare—in Australia one or two in 1,000—the women seeking such abortions are desperate. The legal requirement for both birth and death certificates in such cases cruelly reflects the fact that the capitalist state considers abortion a crime.

The charges against Drs Chan and Lee will further embolden anti-abortion fanatics both in government and on the streets. Dr David Grundmann, who specialises in providing late-term abortions, has been especially targeted. While religious bigots thunder against him, the anti-abortion Queensland government has ordered the Medical Board to "investigate" abortions beyond 20 weeks, as has the Victorian government. Meanwhile in Melbourne, Dr Grundmann's clinic has repeatedly been targeted by anti-abortion fanatics, and in Perth these bigots routinely torment women outside the clinics. Yet these women-haters have not been countered by abortion-rights defenders. We fight for mass union-centred mobilisations to defend the clinics and put some real fear into these "god-fearing" bigots.

Abortion Rights and the Class Struggle

Abortion, posing the legal equality of women, is an explosive *political* issue. Engaging deep fears and prejudices which the capitalists stoke in their attacks on health care and other social services, the right to abortion is thus

subject to the ebbs and flows of the class struggle. The current anti-abortion offensive occurs in a climate of right-wing reaction resulting from the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, and is part of a generalised assault on the living conditions of workers. In WA the attack on abortion rights goes hand in hand with the Court government pushing through the most vicious anti-union legislation in the country. A class-struggle fight against the capitalist union-busting offensive necessarily includes working-class action in defence of embattled women and minorities. But the current leadership of the working class, the pro-capitalist Labor Party and the union tops, act as a transmission belt into the workers movement of the brutal male chauvinism and "culture of white pigs" which characterises this country.

The ALP in power in WA maintained the anti-abortion laws. Today, in opposition, they indignantly deny that ALPer Cheryl Davenport's private member's bill, introduced in response to the prosecution of Drs Chan and Lee, would create the legal right to abortion on demand. And it doesn't; the bill keeps abortion's criminal status, only slightly broadening the criteria under which doctors may perform the procedure. What is needed is a sharp political struggle against the Laborite misleaders and their poisonous anti-woman chauvinism in the fight to build a revolutionary workers party.

Marxism versus Feminism

Young women who hate the ingrained anti-woman bigotry of this society often refer to themselves as feminists. But feminism as a political program is a bourgeois ideology—be it dressed up as "radical" or "socialist"—which holds that the main division in society is between the sexes rather than the struggle between the working class and the capitalist rulers. Some feminists argue that women can achieve full social equality if men would change their chauvinist thoughts and women stop thinking they're oppressed—it's just a matter of ideas. But it doesn't work that way. As Karl Marx said, "Liberation" is an historical and not a mental act."

The oppression of women is rooted in the family, bulwark of conservatism and



ASp photo

Spartacist League contingent at protest against anti-abortion bill, Sydney, 1991.

social control, and crucial prop for the capitalist system of exploitation. In giving women a modicum of control over whether or not to have children, abortion is viewed as a threat to this central institution of bourgeois society. The inextricable link between capitalist class society and the family makes it clear that the liberation of women can only come about in a socialist society which puts all of its resources at the service of humanity. Then the material foundations for replacing the family will be laid, its tedious and repressive functions replaced through socialised childcare and housework, freeing women to be full participants in social and political life.

Feminism, which had a mass base in Australia in the 1970s, is politically incapable of resolving the most basic aspects of women's oppression because it accepts the capitalist framework. Thus many "militant" feminists of yore ended up in the very male-chauvinist Labor Party. Far from fighting for the full emancipation of women, they seek merely to ameliorate the worst aspects of this society through the dead-end strategy of relying on successive Labor governments and the capitalist state they administer.

Looking to the capitalist state, feminists call for "choice" and "control of our bodies." Yet to appeal to this state—protector of private property and bourgeois privilege—is to have fatal illusions in the nature of class society. The wealthy women of the bourgeoisie can buy access to abortion—legal or not. But working-class, immigrant and poor women cannot. And most women, often without knowledge of and access to the too few abortion clinics, are dependent on their GP and the public hospital system. Thus we Spartacists have always linked the fight for abortion rights to the fight for free quality health care for all and free 24-hour childcare. Our program is the fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution.

Not so the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). They don't so much as mention

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Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

the anti-Soviet Cold War consensus, have increasingly come into the open."
—"U.S. Out of the Persian Gulf!"
Workers Vanguard No. 679,
28 November 1997

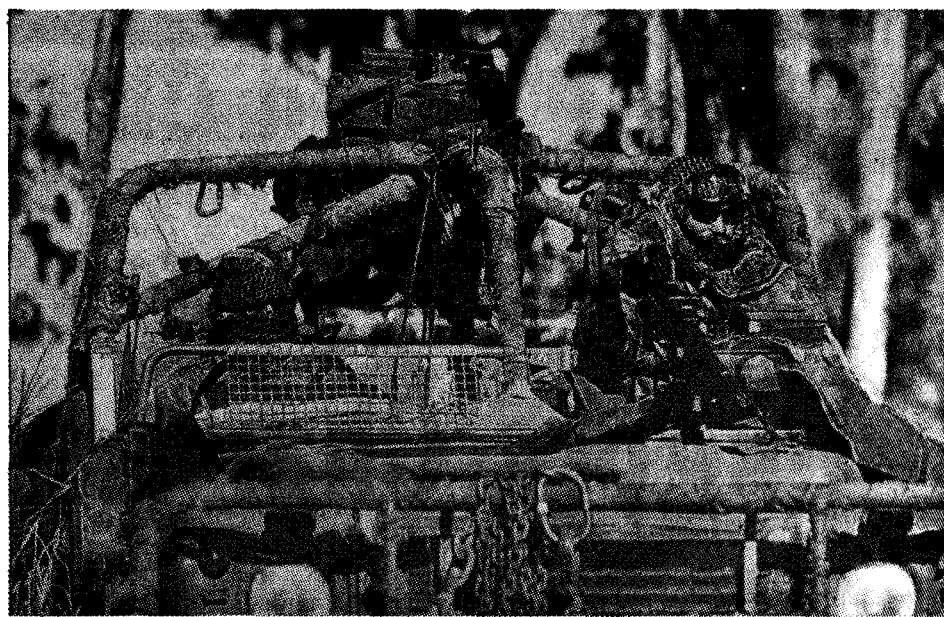
With the exception of Britain, Canada and New Zealand, other imperialist powers have made it clear that their support to a U.S. attack is tepid at best. France, whose oil companies along with Russian and Italian interests have signed agreements for a huge share of Iraqi oil production once sanctions are ended, has more or less openly opposed a new military attack. Meanwhile Russia's besotted would-be tsar, Boris Yeltsin, warned that "Clinton's actions could lead to world war. He is acting too brazenly there!" Indeed, the U.S. imperialists have refused to rule out the possibility of using nuclear weapons.

The Asian currency crisis is reverberating around the world, revealing the fragility of the capitalist order and exposing the conflicting appetites of American, Japanese and German imperialism. Especially do they yearn to feast on China. The Stalinist regime has brought the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state to the brink of capitalist counterrevolution. Only the Trotskyist program of proletarian political revolution can defend and extend the gains of

workers revolution to bring down the bloody Suharto dictatorship!

The Australian bourgeoisie's terror against the ex-colonial peoples of the world goes hand in hand with anti-working-class austerity and all-sided social reaction at home. Following on from thirteen years of ALP rule, the Howard government has intensified vicious attacks on Aborigines, immigrants, women, gays, all the oppressed. Having first gone after those they perceive as the most powerless, the government is openly orchestrating a union-busting crusade, targeting in particular the Maritime Union of Australia. A determined class-struggle fight to defeat Australian capitalism's war moves would also strike a powerful blow against the bosses' anti-working-class offensive at home.

This is no pipedream. When the U.S. started bombing Iraq in 1991 waterfront workers walked off the job in Brisbane, Sydney and Port Kembla, shutting down the docks to attend anti-war rallies and meetings. The Brisbane Waterside Workers Federation called for a one-day national general strike. But as with earlier working-class industrial actions during the Vietnam War, the ALP and trade-union misleaders derailed and dissipated these powerful acts of class solidarity, diverting and submerging the militant workers into impotent class-collaborationist channels. Unchaining labour's clout requires a concerted political fight against the pro-capitalist ALP and trade-union bureaucrats who shackle



no credit

Australian Imperialists' SAS commandos train in the Northern Territory. The main enemy is at home!

cally supported the only use of nuclear weapons in wartime, when 200,000 people were incinerated in the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1950 the Australian government invited the British to conduct nuclear tests at Maralinga, on the lands of the Aboriginal Tjarutja people, irradiating the site and contaminating it with plutonium. We revolutionary Marxists say: The main enemy is at home!

This is in sharp contrast to the Workers Communist Party of Iraq—WCP(I)—who refuse to take a side with the peoples of semi-colonial Iraq against imperialism. While claiming to oppose a military assault on Iraq, the WCP(I) calls on the imperialists' World Court to try Hussein. Similarly the WCP(I) tells the Kurdish people to look to the UN, which provides a useful figleaf for the U.S.'s war designs, as their potential liberator against national oppression. At a recent WCP(I)-organised demonstration in Sydney, a Spartacist spokesman counterposed to these deadly illusions our fight "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!" Down with the oil sheiks, emirs, kings, colonels and Zionist rulers—workers to power!

Then there are the self-proclaimed leftists of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP). Their, respective, slogans of "No Blood for Oil!" and "No new Gulf war!" are deliberately tailored to avoid taking a class stand against Australian imperialism. Some young ISOers have told us they want to proclaim defence of Iraq against U.S./Australian imperialist attack. But the ISO won't raise this slogan because, as does the DSP, they long to be in a "coalition" with pacifists, preachers, greens and social democrats who complain that joining the U.S. attack on Iraq is "un-Australian." Indeed, "we are one, we are Australian" was the cry of the Communist Party of Australia at a 21 February protest in Sydney—where attempts were made to censor an SL contingent and, we later learned, WCP(I) supporters were attacked.

Their occasional rhetoric and left posturing notwithstanding, the ISO and DSP opportunists have a weathervane rather than a revolutionary backbone. They proved their utter bankruptcy in 1995 when they ran point for the chauvinist mobilisations sponsored by the Australian capitalists and their agents in the labour movement against nuclear testing in the Pacific by Australia's

French rivals, thereby whitewashing their "own" bourgeoisie.

Considerably more left-sounding are the centrists of Workers Power (WP) who are distributing a statement by their "League for a Revolutionary Communist International" (LRCI) which calls to "Defend Iraq against US and UK attack." Only three years ago this group explicitly *refused* to defend the Serbs when they were being bombed by NATO forces, leading several groups in the LRCI to split. Sensing that an attack on Iraq is rather less popular than going after the Bosnian Serbs, today WP genuflects to the left, even denouncing the "imperialist character" of countries with "Labour and Social-Democratic governments." This is pretty rich—WP everywhere and always calls upon the working class to vote for these Labour and social-democratic parties. Indeed, loyal to the end, WP advises the proletariat to "call on the Labour or Social-Democratic MPs to speak openly against the war [and] vote against its approval and all war credits..." Haven't they noticed that Tony Blair's and Kim Beazley's MPs have already made it crystal clear where they stand? WP's "anti-imperialist" antics are bogus, serving in reality to bolster illusions in the social chauvinists of the British, Australian and other social democrats.

For Socialist Revolution to End Imperialist War!

Against these various leftists who at bottom capitulate before the pressure of their "own" ruling class, we fight for socialist revolution in this country and internationally. We understand that the capitalist system inevitably leads to war—the redivision of world markets and resources to increase profit. The social-democratic parties and the trade-union misleaders are not half-way opponents of imperialism, but its political agents, indispensable for lining up the working class of one country against their class brothers and sisters around the world. As were Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, we are guided by the principle that the main enemy is at home. The International Communist League is committed to building a genuinely internationalist party of the working class, the necessary instrument to lead the fight for the overthrow of imperialism and capitalism across the planet. Reforge Trotsky's Fourth International—world party of socialist revolution! For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■



ASp photo

Spartacist League calls for defence of Iraq against U.S. and Australian imperialism, Sydney, 21 February.

the 1949 Revolution. We say defend China, Vietnam and North Korea against imperialism and capitalist restoration!

The white racist Australia rulers keenly feel that their imperialist interests in the region are at risk. As a leading bourgeois mouthpiece, *The Age* (11 February), stated, "Australia needs to be seen to be supporting the United States so that, in the event of a conflict in our region, we can rely on their support."

Indonesia, seething with discontent, is of particular importance to the imperialists, not only as a source of fabulous profits sweated out from its impoverished working class but also because of its strategic location. The Malacca Strait, running between the Indonesian island of Sumatra, Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, provides the quickest route for shipping between the Pacific and Indian oceans and the oil-rich Gulf via the South China Sea. In the event of inter-imperialist conflict, control of the Malacca Strait will be vital, as it was in World War II when Japan's imported oil supplies were cut off. Today, two of the three U.S. aircraft carriers accompanied by escorting ships and submarines now in the Gulf reached there via the strait. The Canberra-Jakarta military treaty and the Australian bourgeoisie's training and arming of Suharto's military, including the Kopassus killers—the Indonesian equivalent of the SAS—are a dagger at the heart of the Indonesian proletariat. **Independence for East Timor! For**

the workers to the bosses with the nationalist lie that "all Australians" have the same interests.

What is urgently needed is the building of a revolutionary workers party to fight for the principle that those who labour must rule. Such a party must be a champion of all the oppressed. During the last Gulf War Islamic colleges, cultural centres and schools were firebombed, and already at least one heavily immigrant Sydney-area school has subjected its students to anti-bomb drills. Particularly threatening is the "shop" established a year ago by the National Action fascist terrorists in the heavily Arabic and Turkish Melbourne suburb of Fawkner. The working class must take up the defence of the Arab community and all those under racist attack. **For mass union/minority mobilisations to stop the fascists! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

Imperialist Barbarism

Day in and day out the imperialists rant about Saddam Hussein's supposed "weapons of mass destruction." This is truly grotesque coming from the Australian ruling class who murdered Aboriginal people by poisoning their food and sources of drinking water. And they have zealously maintained the U.S. spy bases whose main purpose during the Cold War was to help direct a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union. Indeed, the Australian capitalist class enthusiasti-

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BT's Bill Logan Waltzing with WOSA

"Death of Communism" Confab in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG—In early December, we were witness to what will probably become an increasingly common phenomenon in the post-Soviet political landscape: self-styled leftists gathering to express their heartfelt relief at the "death of communism." Bowing to imperialist triumphalism over the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and East Europe, much of the left is rapidly abandoning even any pretence to Leninism. This was manifest at an "International Conference" hosted by the South African Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) in Cape Town. Co-sponsored by the Italian Socialismo Rivoluzionario (SR) group, this "death of communism" confab was one of a number of recent "regroupment" attempts by centrists and reformists internationally.

Trotskyists called for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counter-revolution while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, as we still do in regard to the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states. Marxists recognise that despite the usurpation of political power by a nationalist bureaucratic caste in 1923-24, the Soviet degenerated workers state remained based on collectivised property relations—the central surviving gain of the October Revolution of 1917—i.e., *no capitalists*. Stalinophobic outfits like WOSA and SR, in contrast, reneged on their duty to defend the gains of the Russian Revolution while the USSR existed and now seek to use its demise as a stepping stone into mainstream social democracy.

The "base document" submitted by WOSA and SR as the condition for delegate status at the conference made this amply clear. Capitalist counter-revolution in the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states—a catastrophic defeat for the international proletariat—is greeted enthusiastically by WOSA/SR: "For socialists it means that the international working class can now mount a proper challenge to the rule of international

capital." Concomitant with their sneering dismissal of the purpose and continuing relevance of the Bolshevik Revolution, they repudiate the instrument by which this revolution was made, insisting: "It is certainly not a centralised international party that we are proposing." Such outfits blanch at the very idea of a democratic-centralist international party because they want to be free to pursue their particular opportunist appetites on their own national terrains.

The International Communist League was invited to send delegates to this conference, but we declined, noting in a 24 November 1997 letter sent by Spartacist South Africa: "We have substantial differences with your previously circulated base document, including our insistence on the need for an international democratically centralist Leninist vanguard party. The 'Russian Question' remains central for us. We struggle for new October Revolutions, and stand for unconditional military defence of the Cuban, Chinese, Vietnamese and North Korean deformed workers states against capitalist counterrevolution, while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies."

We won grudging respect at the Cape Town gathering for putting our political differences and opposition to the WOSA/SR "base document" out in the open. This stood in sharp contrast to the conduct of the centrists. The Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL), a Stalinophobic South African grouping, tried to have its cake and eat it, too. Having accepted delegate status, once inside, the WIVL sought to denounce the base document as "reformist," and ended up being ejected by WOSA leader Neville Alexander. The next day, the WIVL threw a whining "open letter" on a table and ran for cover, without uttering so much as a word about their differences for the remainder of the conference, including at two public meetings they attended.

Even the WIVL's tame opposition was too much for the "International Bolshevik Tendency" (IBT), which was not restrained by any scruples in rushing

to accept delegate status at the Cape Town conference. These self-styled "Bolsheviks" eagerly signed on to a document which, echoing anti-communist diatribes, warns that "international parties run the risk of establishing predatory relationships with unaffiliated revolutionary groups." They endorsed WOSA/SR's pointed refusal to draw any class distinction between imperialism and the former Soviet Union, expressed in the base document's evenhanded reference to the "rivalry between capitalism and the Eastern block [sic]." Nor did the IBT object that the document writes off the need to defend the surviving deformed workers states against capitalist restoration and instead proclaims that "it is time now for us to overcome all those forms of sectarianism that characterised the immediate past: a time in history

national conference for crimes "against communist morality and its substrate human decency." Logan went ballistic when he saw us at the Cape Town conference circulating an ICL pamphlet titled "The International Bolshevik Tendency—What Is It?" and three iSt internal discussion bulletins documenting the brutal and sadistic nature of Logan's regime when he was at the head of, first, our Australian and, later, our British section (see, for example, *International Information Bulletin* No. 16, "On the Logan Regime, Part III: The Dishonorable Schoolboy Sent Down," November 1983).

The IBT's participation in the Cape Town conference is not surprising, given the origins and history of this outfit. It was founded by embittered ex-members who quit the iSt in the early 1980s, at the height of Cold War II, when defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state was posed pointblank. In the early years, calling themselves the External Tendency (ET), they often sought to present a blurred carbon copy of our program. But while screaming about how they had been "bureaucratically purged" from our organisation, in reality they aspired to join the anti-Soviet swamp. As we noted in a 1984 polemic, "If the ET were more honest, they would admit that they hated it when we hailed the Soviet Red Army's military intervention in Afghanistan." We recognised that, whatever the intentions of the venal bureaucrats in the Kremlin,



Spartacists demonstrated near Wall Street as Russian president Boris Yeltsin met his paymasters in 1992. Centrists and reformists reneged on defence of Soviet Union, now embrace "death of communism" lie.

when we had to confront Stalinism and Maoism, represented by powerful nation states, as well as confront the capitalist system itself."

The base document explicitly laid out the terms for an unprincipled lash-up, insisting: "Our differences about how to deal with the regime in the USSR and with Maoism are less important now." In line with this, the IBT distributed a long-winded, eight-page supplement to its journal, *1917*, titled "The Struggle for South Africa," which totally disappears the Trotskyist position on the Russian Question which this outfit formally claims to uphold. Indeed, the IBT statement did not even mention—let alone criticise—WOSA or the other conference sponsors. The message was obvious: the IBT is willing to unite with anybody, no matter what their politics. Thus they have no qualms about adhering to a common document with the likes of Socialismo Rivoluzionario, which supported every counterrevolutionary force that sought the destruction of the Soviet Union, from the CIA-backed Afghan *mujahedin* and Polish *Solidarność* to fascist-infested Lithuanian nationalists.

In short, the IBT completely blended in with the rest of the centrist flora and fauna at the Cape Town conference. But their representative there, *lider maximo* Bill Logan, is a creature of a different stripe. Logan is a sociopathic liar, manipulator and creep who has no place in the workers movement at all. He was expelled from the international Spartacist tendency (iSt—now the ICL) by a unanimous vote at our 1979 inter-

this military action offered the possibility of extending the gains of the October Revolution to Afghanistan. For the ET/IBT, however, continued verbal adherence to this slogan had been a millstone around their necks. Sure enough, four years after our polemic they openly renounced our call, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

In August 1991, seizing on the Kremlin "gang of eight" coup attempt and Russian president Boris Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter-coup, the IBT finally found an excuse to wash its hands of even pro forma defence of the Soviet Union. After the fact, the IBT trumpeted its "military support" to the incompetent coup plotters, who were just as committed to capitalist restoration as Yeltsin. Hiding behind this veneer of what they absurdly labeled Soviet defencism, the IBT rushed to proclaim that the Soviet degenerated workers state had been destroyed the moment the "gang of eight" capitulated. The IBT defeatists happily wrote off in advance any possibility that decisive working-class resistance could have swept away the Yeltsin-ites and opened the road to proletarian political revolution. The ICL, in contrast, distributed tens of thousands of leaflets in Moscow and elsewhere calling on Soviet workers to "Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

The IBT's occasional attempts to posture as orthodox Trotskyists have become far less frequent since Logan took the helm several years ago. In New Zealand, like Australia a white imperialist enclave, his "Permanent Revolution" *continued on page 11*

Special ICL Bulletins

On the Logan Regime (Three parts)

In 1979, Bill Logan was expelled from the international Spartacist tendency for crimes "against communist morality and its substrate human decency." Logan is now the leader of the "International Bolshevik Tendency." As a service to the workers movement we have made our international bulletins documenting Logan's crimes publicly available.

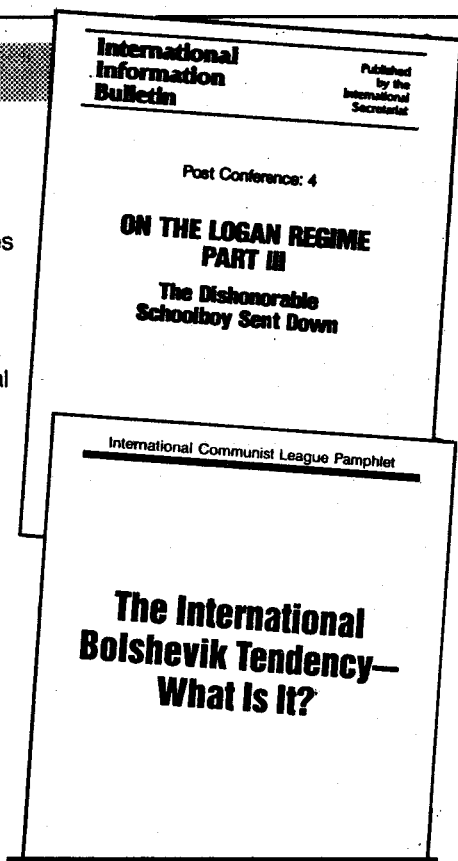
Part I \$4 (82 pages)
Part II \$4 (44 pages)
Part III \$4 (79 pages)

The International Bolshevik Tendency—What Is It?

International Communist League pamphlet, August 1995

\$1.50 (10 pages)

Order from/make cheques payable to:
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GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001



Young Spartacus

The Main Enemy Is at Home!

The Leninist Struggle Against Imperialism

We reprint below an internal educational presentation which was published, in edited form, in *Workers Vanguard* No. 682, 16 January. The presentation was given at a Spartacist League meeting in New York City in January by comrade Mark Douglass of the New York SL and Spartacus Youth Club.

WORKERS VANGUARD

A study of V.I. Lenin's 1916 work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, is not only timely in light of the current collapse of the Southeast Asian "economic miracle," but crucial for arming our party in the more general context of the post-Soviet "New World Order." After being held up for years as a model of how countries of the so-called Third World can overcome backwardness and join the ranks of the developed world, the "Asian tigers" have begun a sharp financial descent whose casualties and potential casualties include the most powerful industrial and financial institutions of the region. Set against the backdrop of a lengthy recession in the region's dominant imperialist power, Japan, this has provoked speculation as to whether the crisis will be contained in Asia or will have a significant negative impact on the U.S. and European economies, ushering in a worldwide depression.

After the initial drop on the Hong Kong stock market, share prices on the New York Stock Exchange fell so sharply last October that trading was halted for the first time in 16 years. Bourgeois economists seized on a significant rebound of the markets the following day to convince themselves that this was simply a necessary and healthy "adjustment." Not only will the robust U.S. economy not enter a recession, said the more optimistic commentators, but its strength will prop up the world economy as a whole. Like Tolstoy's character Ivan Ilyich, the bourgeois nervously consoles itself that the illness is only minor and temporary when they sense something far more serious.

But as the Asian economic decline deepens, the behavior of the U.S. market was more aptly captured in a cartoon in the *London Economist* in which a broker bungee-jumps headfirst out of the window of a Wall Street firm. It is now generally accepted that the current crisis in East and Southeast Asia will not be resolved any time soon and that the recession in Japan will deepen. Whether or not the current collapse will lead directly to a worldwide depression is not yet clear. What is clear is that, rather than reflecting some temporary or superficial feature of capitalism, the current events reflect the fundamental workings of this economic system.

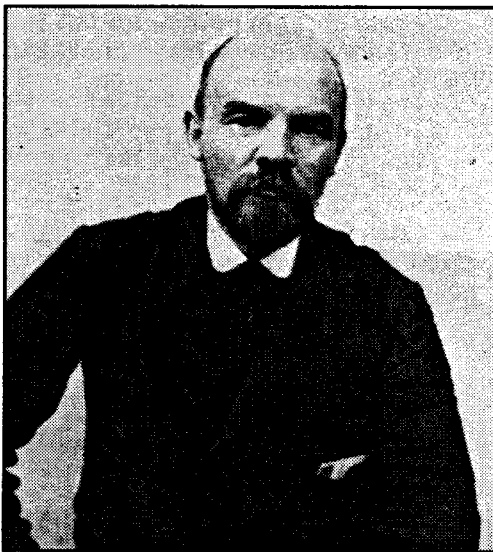
Internationalism Is Key

The strong performance of the U.S. economy in recent years and the counter-

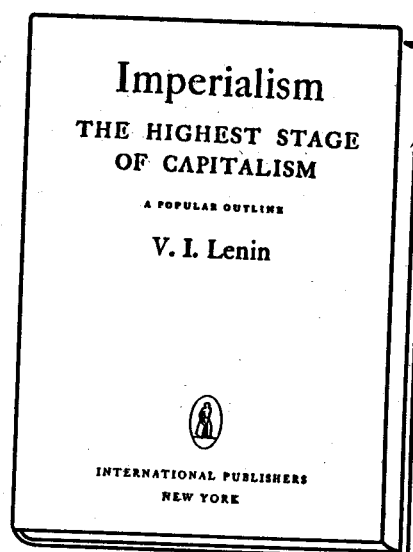


Salgado/Magnum

Textile workers in Bangladesh. Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin analysed imperialism as stage of capitalism marked by dominance of finance capital and subjugation of colonial and semicolonial countries.



P.A. Otsup



revolution in the Soviet Union led bourgeois economists to project a new stage of capitalism in which the periodic and devastating crashes described by Karl Marx well over a century ago are effectively controlled, leading to more or less steady growth. Since Marx exposed the insoluble contradictions inherent in capitalism, many a bourgeois spokesman has claimed this to be a feature only of the capitalism of Marx's time. From Keynesian economics to "braking mechanisms" on the stock exchanges, the bourgeoisie has desperately sought the magic bullet which will prevent the damned "periodic crises" analyzed by Marx. Now, as so often in the past, bourgeois economists are scrambling in a desperate attempt to salvage theories that new events have shown to be utterly bankrupt.

Early in this century, German Social

Democrat Karl Kautsky tried to deny that the workings of the capitalist economic system necessarily lead to colonial subjugation and interimperialist war. As the leading theoretician of the Second International, Kautsky was sometimes known as the "Pope of Marxism," but he moved right in reaction to the defeat of the 1905 Russian Revolution and the congealing rightism of the German Social Democracy, occupying a centrist position between the party leadership and the left wing of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Kautsky argued that imperialism was not a necessary product of capitalism at its highest stage of development and claimed that the competing interests of massive capitalist enterprises, monopolist cartels, could be resolved peacefully through agreements to jointly exploit the world.

A significant part of Lenin's *Imperialism* is a polemic against Kautsky's theory. The development of monopolies tends to suppress competition within individual countries. But Lenin documented how worldwide competition on an unprecedented scale between these enormous trusts and cartels led to a scramble by the various imperialist bourgeoisies to carve the world up into markets and spheres of exploitation under the domination of one or another power, leading ultimately to a war which engulfed the whole world in 1914-18. Today, as in Lenin's time, this competition pushes toward interimperialist war.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union has significantly altered the world which we as a revolutionary party seek to intervene in and change. Far from eliminating the contradictions of capitalism, the post-Soviet world is characterized by more and more frenzied competition between the world's dominant imperialisms—the U.S., Japan and Germany. The U.S.-led anti-Soviet coalition which tended to dampen such interimperialist competition has given way to a mad scramble to redivide the world. Just as U.S. imperialism incinerated Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 as a warning of the impending Cold War to the Soviet Union, the slaughter of over a hundred thousand Iraqis in 1991 was meant to assert Washington's unquestioned dominance as the "one superpower" in the "New World Order." But while the end of World War II signaled the emergence of the U.S. as the dominant imperialist power, the end of the Cold War sees a growing challenge to this position by the Japanese and German imperialists.

Writing in the years leading up to World War II, Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, had the following to say about the tasks of revolutionaries:

"The first prerequisite for success is the *training of the party cadres* in the correct understanding of all the conditions of imperialist war and of all the political processes that accompany it. Woe to that party that confines itself in this burning question to general phrases and abstract slogans! The bloody events will crash over its head and smash it.

"It is necessary to set up special circles for the study of the political experiences of the war of 1914-18 (ideological preparations for the war by the imperialists, misleading of public opinion by military headquarters through the patriotic press, the role of the antithesis defense-attack; groupings in the proletarian camp, the isolation of the Marxist elements, etc. etc.)."

—"War and the Fourth International" (June 1934)

That the Bolshevik Party had infused its members with this understanding of the first interimperialist world war was a prerequisite for their irreconcilable opposition to it. Had they not stood firm during the onslaught of patriotism which swept over the working class at the beginning of the war, there never would have been a Russian Revolution. Kautsky, on the other hand, found himself



Der Hauptfeind steht im eigenen Land!

Es ist seit 10 Monaten, seit dem Angriff Oesterreichs auf Serbien, möglich zu erkennen war, in irgendeiner der Krieg mit Italien zu be.
Die Waffenfabriken der kriegführenden Länder haben begonnen, sich auf den amtlichen Kriegszwecken zu betreiben. Die

Jede Umarmung zwischen die italienischen Kriegsbegrüßer. Über ihr sind nicht als die Wohlhabenden Deutschen und österreichischen Kriegsbegrüßer, jene Hauptfeindlichen am Kriegsausbruch. Gleiche Arbeiter, gleiche Klassen!

German soldiers at the Marne River at outbreak of World War I, August 1914. Revolutionary socialist Karl Liebknecht authored statement of proletarian opposition to the imperialist war, "The Main Enemy Is at Home!"



on the wrong side of the barricades—amnestying his "own" bourgeoisie. Like the Bolsheviks in World War I and the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in World War II, our party must understand the nature of imperialism and the wars which flow from it so that we can mobilize to oppose these needless slaughters with a fight for proletarian power. To this end, I want to look more closely at the fundamental premises presented by Lenin in his writings on the subject.

Monopolies and Finance Capital

The starting point for Lenin's study was the emergence of large capitalist enterprises which more and more dominated huge sections of the economy. While the ideologues of capitalism pointed to free competition as the hallmark and strength of this system, Lenin described a reality that looked different. In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 1873, a lengthy period ensued in which the richest capitalists began extending their investment and control throughout a particular industry and into many different industries. These cartels were the precursors of the massive corporations that are today mistakenly termed "multinationals."

The depression of 1900-03, like every depression, drove large numbers of capitalists into bankruptcy. The cartels proved to have an advantage in surviving the wild fluctuations of the capitalist business cycle. While the cartels had not been sufficiently built up by 1873 and largely failed during the economic crisis of that year, they soon established themselves as a permanent and dominant feature of the capitalist economic system. Part of the advantage that the cartels had over their competitors flowed from economy of scale; they were able to buy what they needed in larger quantities and thus get them cheaper. Having more capital, these companies were also able to employ more advanced technology. Of course, larger companies had always been able to produce their products more cheaply for these reasons. In fact, this is why they began to monopolize huge sections of the market to begin with.

Frederick A. Praeger

Cartels had two advantages over their predecessors. By investing in a number of different industries, the cartel was better able to weather recessions and depressions, offsetting losses in one branch of operations with gains in others. In addition, by having more leeway to sell products for a certain period at a loss and by moving to control all branches of a given industry—including the sources of raw materials—the cartel was able to employ all sorts of methods to drive its competitors out of business. So one of the characteristics of imperi-

of industry controlled by a particular monopoly, the anarchy of production is increased in the system as a whole. As Lenin remarked in his book,

"The disparity between the development of agriculture and that of industry, which is characteristic of capitalism in general, is increased. The privileged position of the most highly cartelized, so-called heavy industry, especially coal and iron, causes 'a still greater lack of co-ordination' in other branches of industry."

Moreover, monopolies and cartels are still subject to the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, the tendency of the

control, he can triple the amount of capital at his disposal by issuing shares.

With the emergence of monopolies, banks began to occupy more and more of a central role in the economy; before that, they had primarily played the role of middlemen in business deals. The monopolies deposit enormous amounts of capital in banks, which in turn lend the money to other capitalists. As the banks make larger and larger profits from the interest paid by debtors, they themselves begin investing directly in industry. This capital, controlled by the banks and invested in industry, is called finance capital. The dominance of finance capital is the primary feature of imperialism.

In the epoch of imperialism, larger banks are constantly gobbling up smaller banks, thus increasing the amount of capital they control. Industry becomes increasingly dependent on the banks for the massive amounts of capital needed to operate and expand. Not surprisingly, the banks take a greater interest in the day-to-day operations of the companies in which they invest. Monopolies become closely linked to the banks through bank officials sitting on corporate boards of directors, family ties between bankers and industrialists, and other means. What emerges is a financial oligarchy which combines gains from industrial investments, interest from loans, commissions from stock sales and so on.

As we noted in the recent *WW* series on "Wall Street and the War Against Labor," in the so-called bank-based economies of Japan and Germany the merging of the banks and industries described by Lenin is almost complete. In Japan, financial, industrial, distribution and commercial capital is organized in tightly integrated groups today called *keiratsu*. And in Germany, the three biggest banks have representatives on over 40 percent of the supervisory boards of share corporations.

In the U.S., this merging of the banks with industry was somewhat obscured by laws enacted before and during the Great Depression which restricted certain banking activity. But the peculiarities of banking laws in individual countries has not qualitatively altered the close relationship between financiers and industrialists, expressed not least in intermarriage. In any case, such laws as existed in the U.S. were sidestepped in numerous ways when they conflicted with the plans of the large banks. And over the last 20 years, one regulation after another has been dropped in an attempt to make American banks more competitive with Japanese and German banks.

Imperialism and Social-Chauvinism

In the early days of capitalism, Britain—the most industrialized country—exported its manufactured goods to the rest of the world. But by the beginning of the 20th century, the dominant capitalist countries had also begun to export significant portions of the finance capital

continued on page 8



Protest in South Korea against austerity dictated by U.S.-dominated IMF. Asian financial crisis could spark outpouring of struggle by combative working class.

alism was the domination of the market by huge business enterprises. As Russian Bolsheviks Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky put it in *The ABC of Communism* (1922), "Free competition' has been replaced by the dominion of capitalist combines, by the rule of syndicates and trusts." The dominance of these massive companies has continued to deepen since Lenin's time. At present, 300 firms control fully one-quarter of the productive assets of the world.

It was argued by some that the dominance of a small number of huge companies would add an element of planning to the capitalist economy, counteracting the anarchy of production described by Marx. But while planning is instituted to a certain degree in the various branches

rate of profit to fall, thereby leading to periodic sharp cutbacks in investment, production and employment.

Another feature that emerged at the turn of the century was the joint-stock company. Heightened competition meant that only those with access to large amounts of capital would survive. The solution was the creation of corporations which traded shares on the stock market. Rather than "democratizing" capitalism, as some of Lenin's contemporaries maintained, this allowed the capitalists to greatly increase the available capital under their control. Since a capitalist normally needs to own no more than one-third of the shares of a corporation to prevent the myriad other scattered shareholders from exerting any real con-

Der Spiegel



Centrist Karl Kautsky (far left) covered for social-chauvinist leaders of German Social Democracy. Left: Social Democratic leader Friedrich Ebert, shown reviewing troops as president of bourgeois republic following World War I.

Imperialism...

(continued from page 7)

they had accrued. Cheap raw materials, cheap labor and cheap land made investment in backward countries a potentially profitable venture. Thus began the explosion of competition between the imperialist powers for the division of the world. Possession of colonies ensured access to raw materials and reserves of cheap labor. In his book, Lenin documented how the enormous expansion of European colonialism coincided with the emerging dominance of monopoly capitalism. Direct military control of dependent countries was the best way for the capitalists to ensure that their massive investments were protected.

In asserting that the monopoly capitalists could come to a peaceful agreement to collectively exploit the world, Kautsky denied the national character of the bourgeoisie, a view today taken up by David North's Socialist Equality Party and other proponents of the theory of "globalization" (see "How David North Embraces Karl Kautsky: The 'Global Economy' and Labor Reformism," *WV* Nos. 660, 661, 662 and 664; 24 January, 7 February, 21 February and 21 March 1997). The so-called multinationals extend their influence across many countries and continents, but they are ultimately dependent on their own bourgeois state. Ford's investments in Brazil, for example, are certainly protected by the Brazilian army and police. But, at the end of the day, it's the U.S. armed forces that Ford and other American capitalists rely on to protect their profits and enforce their dictates abroad, as has been demonstrated all too often in Latin America over the last century. The endless attempts to smash the Cuban Revolution for having dared to expropriate U.S. companies have not been carried out primarily by the United Fruit Company, but by the CIA and the military, agencies of the U.S. state, which serves as the executive committee of the American capitalist class as a whole.

The imperialist state strives to secure control of world markets and spheres of exploitation for its capitalists, engaging in trade wars and other forms of competition. Various capitalist concerns and state powers can and will enter into agreements to divide up the world's markets. But these agreements are necessarily temporary, based on the relative economic and military strength of the imperialists involved, which changes as capitalism develops unevenly from one industry to another and one country to another. Thus every division of the world presupposes a redivision at some future date. Peace under imperialism is nothing more than a truce between wars, as has been shown by two world wars and innumerable lesser conflicts this century.



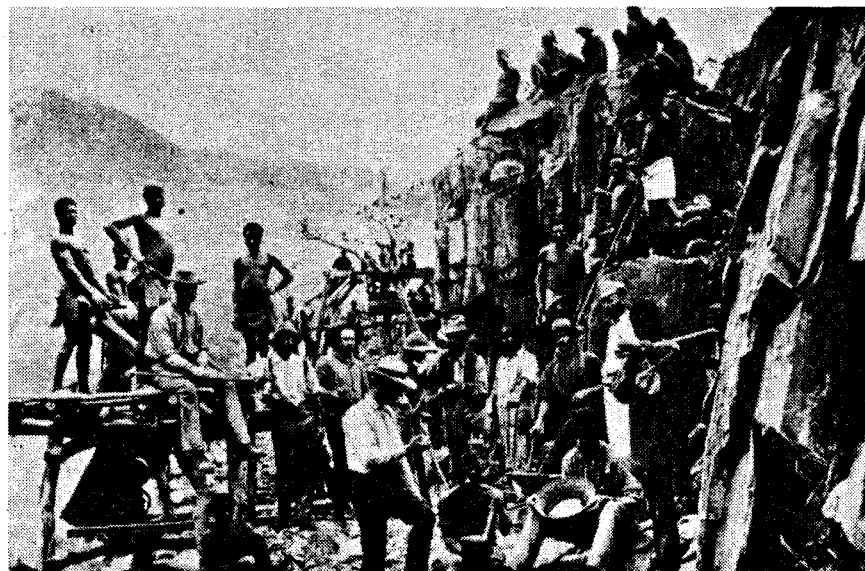
Punch

In his initial attempts to explain the growth of opportunism in the workers movement at the beginning of the century, Lenin identified it as a product of petty-bourgeois influence bearing down on the proletarian party. With the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 and the German Social Democracy's vote for imperialist war credits, Lenin recognized that opportunism could no longer be regarded as a marginal phenomenon. He came to the conclusion that this opportunism was brought into the workers movement by a labor bureaucracy supported especially by the better-off sections of the working class—the "labor aristocracy"—who benefited from the exceptional profits gained by the imperialist bourgeoisie from the exploitation of the colonies and semicolonies.

In August 1914, the German Social Democracy proclaimed, "In the hour of danger we shall not desert our Fatherland," giving the Kaiser its seal of approval to send millions of workers to their deaths. Lenin responded in "The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War" (September 1914):

"The conduct of the leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, the strongest and the most influential in the Second International (1889-1914), a party which has voted for war credits and repeated the bourgeois-chauvinist phrases of the Prussian Junkers and the bourgeoisie, is sheer betrayal of socialism....
"The betrayal of socialism by most leaders of the Second International (1889-1914) signifies the ideological and political bankruptcy of the International."

In contrast to the chauvinist capitulation of the majority of the Second International, Lenin and the Bolsheviks fought for intransigent revolutionary defeatism: "From the viewpoint of the working class and the toiling masses of all the peoples of Russia, the defeat of



Radio Times Hulton

1892 cartoon depicts British colonialist Cecil Rhodes in conquest of Africa. Rhodes built his fortune through brutal exploitation of black workers, as in gold mine in Transvaal region of South Africa, above.

the tsarist monarchy and its army, which oppress Poland, the Ukraine, and many other peoples of Russia, and foment hatred among the peoples so as to increase Great-Russian oppression of the other nationalities, and consolidate the reactionary and barbarous government of the tsar's monarchy, would be the lesser evil by far."

The Trotskyists in World War II

Twenty years later, in outlining the stance of Bolshevik-Leninists toward the impending Second World War, Trotsky explained in "War and the Fourth International": "Lenin's formula, 'defeat is the lesser evil,' means not defeat of one's country is the lesser evil as compared with the defeat of the enemy country but that a military defeat resulting from the growth of the revolutionary movement is infinitely more beneficial to the proletariat and to the whole people than military victory assured by 'civil peace'."

The Fourth International charted the same course of irreconcilable opposition to the second imperialist world war that Lenin had to the first, forthrightly advancing the slogan raised by German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht during World War I: *The main enemy is at home!* While opposing all the imperialist powers, the Fourth International called for unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state.

Unlike the slavishly pro-war Stalinist Communist Party, which denounced trade unionists who engaged in strikes as "fifth columnists," the then-Trotskyist SWP fought for class struggle in defiance of the labor tops' "no strike" pledge and against Jim Crow segregation of blacks and the incarceration of Japanese Americans in concentration camps. Against the Stalinists, the Trotskyists asserted that U.S. imperialism's war against Hitler's Germany (and, centrally, Japan) was no more a "war for democracy" than was the Kaiser's war against tsarist Russia waged to protect Germany's "development toward liberty," as the Social Democratic leaders declared at the time of World War I.

As the German military strategist Clausewitz observed, war is a continuation of politics by other means. The supreme objective of the foreign policy of an imperialist state is the protection of its bourgeoisie's existing markets and the conquest of new ones in which it may invest its finance capital. For this reason, to Marxists the fact that Germany invaded France first and the French bourgeoisie was forced to enter a war that might or might not have come at the most opportune time means nothing. The objectives of the French, German and other bourgeoisies in the war, as in the period before the war, were to protect their own markets and to conquer

those of the rival bourgeoisies. All other concerns were subordinated to this goal.

I was struck when reading Lenin's *Imperialism* how much direct relevance it has in today's world. In the period since Lenin wrote this book, the workers of Russia rose up under the leadership of the Bolsheviks and took state power; the Stalinist bureaucracy usurped political power from the working class and began to act as gravediggers of revolution; a second and even more devastating world war took place for the redivision of the world; Stalinist regimes came to power through social revolutions in large sections of the world; the colonial countries almost all gained formal political independence and the U.S. became the dominant imperialist power. Of these events, only the Russian Revolution, its subsequent degeneration and the creation of deformed workers states in East Europe, Asia and Cuba posed any really new tasks beyond those laid out by Lenin in 1916.

The understanding of Stalinism and the tasks of revolutionaries vis-à-vis the Soviet degenerated workers states was one of Trotsky's significant and unique contributions to Marxism. While the Stalinists had usurped political power from the working class, they rested parasitically on the collectivized and planned economy which had issued out of the October Revolution. As our tendency subsequently elaborated in analyzing the 1959-60 Cuban Revolution, the bureaucratically deformed workers states which emerged following World War II were qualitatively similar to the Soviet Union after its degeneration under Stalinism.

No amount of Stalinist platitudes about "peaceful coexistence" would or will prevent the capitalists from pursuing their drive to overturn the collectivized economies and to dominate the world's markets for the export of capital. The imperialists did not rest until capitalism had been restored in the Soviet Union and East Europe and they will not be satisfied until they see counterrevolution in China and the remaining deformed workers states. Trotskyists fought for unconditional military defense of the degenerated/deformed workers states and for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies. This program remains urgent today, in the wake of the USSR's destruction, as capitalist counterrevolution threatens China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

In preparing the cadres of the Fourth International for the impending war, Trotsky emphasized in his writings leading up to World War II that an attack on the Soviet Union would likely come during the war. When war did break out in Europe in September 1939, it provoked a petty-bourgeois opposition within the SWP led by Max Shachtman and James Burnham, who reneged on their duty to defend the Soviet Union, capitulating in



United Press

U.S. troops outside Manila during Spanish-American War. Over half a million people were slaughtered during American conquest of Philippines between 1899 and 1902.

the first instance to a frenzy of liberal anti-Communism in response to the Hitler-Stalin pact. Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism* and SWP leader James P. Cannon's *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* document the fight to defend the revolutionary program of the Fourth International against these renegades from Marxism.

Like their Shachtmanite forerunners, the "third campists" of Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party and U.S. International Socialist Organization make a mockery of Lenin's understanding of imperialism. Thus they claim that missile testing carried out in the Taiwan Straits by the Chinese deformed workers state in 1996 was an act of imperialist aggression—against capitalist Taiwan, with its thinly veiled police-state regime run by the bloody Guomindang. Cliff embraced social-democratic anti-Communism in 1950 in refusing to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialism during the Korean War, labeling the Stalinist bureaucracies "state capitalist" ruling classes as a cover for his flight from Marxism. Having sided with every imperialist-sponsored force against the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the Cliffites cheered the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and now long for bloody counterrevolution in China, North Korea and Cuba.

National Independence and Permanent Revolution

Lenin's extensive writings on the national and colonial questions, his insistence on the need to uphold the right of national self-determination and to fight for emancipation of the colonies from imperialism, were complemented and deepened by Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. As the current financial crisis in South Korea and Southeast Asia underscores, only through the seizure of power by the proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed, can the colonial and semicolonial countries free themselves of the yoke of imperialist subjugation.

Where Lenin stressed that opposition to colonial and semicolonial exploitation was integrally linked with the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers, the latter-day Kautskyans who talk of "globalization" use this to amnesty the treachery of the pro-capitalist labor misleaders, claiming that "runaway shops" and so on have led to a situation in which American trade unions are powerless to resist attacks on jobs, wages and union conditions. For their part, the AFL-CIO bureaucrats try to line up workers in the U.S. behind their "own" imperialist rulers and blame workers in other countries for plunging living standards here. But as the recent UPS strike showed, the American working class has no lack of social power, but rather lacks a revolutionary leadership to mobilize that potential power against the capitalists. And imperialist investment abroad has led to the creation of a young and combative proletariat in countries like Indonesia and South Korea.

A look at South Korea illuminates the way in which imperialism simultaneously arrests development in the colonial or neocolonial countries and provides the basis for their liberation through the creation of a powerful working class. With South Korea serving as a strategic military staging area during the Cold War, the U.S. and Japan tolerated the development of huge industrial/financial conglomerates, the *chaebol*, by the bourgeoisie there. With the end of the Cold War, the imperialists are asserting their dominance over the South Korean bourgeoisie in a big way. Using the financial crisis as a pretext, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is smashing all barriers to foreign investment and paving the way for Japanese and U.S. imperialists to buy out South Korean companies at bargain-basement prices.

South Korea's capitalists are too weak and subordinate to the imperialists to chart an independent course. But both the domestic and imperialist bourgeoisies are rightly fearful of the South Korean proletariat, with its recent history of militant struggle, which has the power to defeat the IMF's austerity measures. The question is whether the workers' discontent will be channeled into nationalism and class collaboration or into a struggle for proletarian power. Trotskyists call for revolutionary reunification of Korea through socialist revolution in the South and proletarian political revolution in the North. Across Southeast Asia there is a burning need for revolutionary leadership. In the coming period, it is a priority of our international to cohere revolutionary internationalist cadre as the nuclei of Leninist-Trotskyist parties there.

Interimperialist Rivalries Heat Up

America's success in achieving imperialist hegemony at the end of World War II was soured by the emergence of the Soviet Union as the number two military power and the creation of deformed workers states in East Europe, China and North Korea. After briefly toying with imposing a draconian economic regime known as the Morgenthau Plan on Germany, akin to the punitive Versailles Treaty imposed by the victors after World War I, the U.S. rulers opted instead to rebuild the country as a bulwark against the Soviet bloc. Likewise, the U.S. decided to rebuild the Japanese economy in light of the 1949 Chinese Revolution and the Korean War. When the postwar trade rules were set at Bretton Woods in 1945, the United States was indisputably the leading imperialist power, producing two-fifths of the world's marketable products. By the end of the 1960s, however, Japan and Germany were making huge inroads into world markets—including the American market. The position of U.S. imperialism was further weakened in this period by the inflationary pressures generated by its long, losing colonial war in Vietnam. The devaluation of the dollar and the institution of fluctuating exchange rates on 15 August 1971 marked the end of the Bretton Woods system, and of unquestioned U.S. imperialist hegemony.

The unprecedented profits of American corporations in recent years have come primarily from massive attacks on the working class to increase the rate of exploitation. Simultaneously, the U.S. rulers have railed against "unfair trading practices," particularly by Japan, in order to demand that the Japanese bourgeoisie provide a guaranteed market for more expensive and poorer quality U.S. goods. For its part, the Japanese ruling class has



Russian factory workers at May Day demonstration in 1917 carried Bolshevik slogans, including banner reading, "Long Live the Third International!"

sought to maintain its competitive edge by shifting production to low-wage plants in Southeast Asia and attacking wages and job security of Japanese workers. Over the last 20 years or so, Japanese capitalists have increasingly come to rely on part-time workers, for whom pay is lower and benefits are nonexistent. To give an example of this, from 1980 to 1985, the number of temp agencies in Tokyo went from 1 to 150.

Two critical pillars of the economic system set up at Bretton Woods were the IMF and the World Bank. Far from supplanting the power of the nation-state as some "globalization" theorists claim, these have served primarily as tools of their most powerful contributor—U.S. imperialism. As Japanese and German imperialism continue to reassert themselves, the U.S. has had a harder time getting its rivals to pour huge sums of money into programs designed first and foremost to benefit American capitalists. Thus, Germany and Japan openly challenged the U.S.-engineered "bailout" of Mexico a few years ago. For its part, Washington refused to join in the IMF bailout of Thailand recently pushed through by Japan—even while insisting on a role in drawing up the austerity measures imposed as part of the "rescue" package.

The reassertion of Japanese and German imperialist interests has been accompanied by attempts to break the

limitations imposed on their militaries at the end of World War II. Over the last decade, Japan has escalated military spending more than any other imperialist power, concentrating its efforts on obtaining high-tech weaponry. After amending the constitutional ban on deployment of military forces overseas, the Japanese government participated in a United Nations "peacekeeping" mission in Cambodia in 1992-93. And Germany used the UN imperialist intervention in Somalia to amend its constitutional ban on military activity abroad.

While interimperialist rivalries began to heat up even before the end of the Cold War, the demise of the Soviet Union has greatly accelerated this, partly by reopening those areas to imperialist exploitation and also because it eliminated the maneuvering room that Third World nationalist regimes had possessed, making investments in these economically backward countries far more secure. The post-Soviet world has seen a strengthening of imperialist trade blocs. Clinton pushed through the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in an attempt to solidify Wall Street's domination of Mexico—and eventually Latin America as a whole—in part to deal with encroachments by Japanese investors on what the U.S. considers its private preserve. Germany has sought to consolidate its power as the top dog in Europe, while Japan is out to recreate its Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere from the days before World War II.

In all these countries, the social-chauvinist labor bureaucrats assist the imperialists by trying to mobilize the working class behind their own exploiters. Our task is to build revolutionary workers parties that fight all forms of chauvinism and nationalism, which only further the interests of the capitalists in their drive to squeeze more profits from the workers. As in the past, chauvinism and protectionism lead not to greater job security but to the sacrifice of millions of workers as cannon fodder in the bourgeoisies' war for world domination. We are just beginning to see the sort of pressures that will come to bear on our party as interimperialist rivalries sharpen. Following in the footsteps of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, we understand that only through steadfast opposition to the respective imperialist bourgeoisies in each country can we build the sections of a reborn Fourth International needed to lead the workers in revolutionary struggle to smash this system of exploitation. ■

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MUA...

(continued from page 12)

contracts to do likewise. A brazen attempt to use scabs on the Cairns docks last September was turned back.

Then in December details emerged of a sinister plan to train military personnel, ex-servicemen and ex-cops in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) port of Dubai to work the waterfront. These scab mercenaries were hired by an outfit called Fynwest, run by two former Special Air Service (SAS) commandos, Mike Wells and Peter Kilfoyle. Wells got his "experience" as an Australian Army instructor in the dirty, genocidal war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants. Consonant with the SAS's notorious savagery, waterfront workers are to experience "triple retaliation," described to recruits as "whatever is threatened toward you will be inflicted on them three times over."

In the face of a threatened boycott by the International Transport Workers Federation, the UAE pulled the plug on the Dubai scheme, cancelling the Australians' visas. In a vile racist outburst, Wells vowed revenge on the "mongrels" of the MUA. A couple of weeks later MUA workers got a taste of what the SAS shock troops will bring to the waterfront when a shop steward was held at gunpoint and wrestled to the ground on board a container ship in Fremantle, Western Australia during a provocative SAS "training exercise."

On 28 January, the capitalists launched open war at Patrick Stevedores' Webb Dock in Melbourne. Patrick leased a section of the dock to the National Farmers Federation's (NFF) union-busting creation, Producers and Consumers, Stevedores, with the aim of "training" scabs to be deployed around the country. Then, as Patrick locked out 170 watersiders, an army of private security thugs invaded the dock. In response to the naked assault, some MUA members sought to fight back, surrounding a scab bus—but they were ordered to let the scabs through. The MUA picketed the Webb Dock for nearly three weeks (while all other MUA members continued to work), until Coombs ordered an end to the strike on 16 February, bowing to an order by the Industrial Relations Commission.

Howard and his Workplace Relations minister Peter Reith nevertheless raved that the MUA was "totally out of control," and threatened to deregister—make illegal—the union. But the fact is that scabs (including from the Dubai operation) are being "trained" at the Webb Dock as of 23 February while the MUA tops are keeping the workers chained to the job in submission to the court's diktats. Nothing like this has happened on the Australian waterfront in generations!

The War Between Labour and Capital.

A solid national strike, with mass picket lines—swelled by thousands of other workers—that shut down the docks is clearly necessary. But facing the might of the capitalist state, trade-union militancy in and of itself is not sufficient. It is necessary to wage a political fight to oust the current union tops, whose betrayals have brought the MUA members to this desperate pass, and replace them with a class-struggle leadership, armed with the knowledge of the forces involved and the power they can bring to bear.

That is the kind of political understanding the American Trotskyists brought to the fight which organised over-the-road truckers in the great Minneapolis general strike of 1934. Under the leadership of revolutionary Marxists, the strikers faced down cops and armed scabs in pitched street battles, and won—forging the Teamsters as a powerful industrial union. As James P.

Cannon, a leading member of the U.S. Communist Party who went on to found and lead the American Trotskyists, explained:

"The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn. Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups....

"Our people didn't believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity. Consequently, they expected from the start that the union would have to fight for its right to exist; that the bosses would not yield any recognition to the union, would not yield any increase of wages or reduction of the scandalous hours without some pressure being brought to bear. Therefore they prepared everything from the point of view of class war. They knew that power, not diplomacy, would decide the issue. Bluffs don't

century has tied the unions to the capitalist state. Policing this state control, the ACTU seeks to transform the unions from fighting instruments of the workers into an extension of the capitalist state power to discipline and moderate the struggles of the workers.

Indeed, acting as cops for the bosses, the MUA leadership criminally violence-baited and banned militants from the Webb Dock picket line, claiming that "political agitators" are being paid to mingle with strikers. In notes prepared for the Trades Hall Council, the union tops demand: "Keep control over trots/made people/spies etc" grotesquely slandering Trotskyist Marxists. These class traitors are truly, in the words of early American socialist leader Daniel De Leon, "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class."

The union tops pin their hopes on the re-election of the ALP, but 13 years of Labor paved the way for Howard & Co.'s attacks. Far from opposing "waterfront

Howard & Co.'s ravings about overpaid wharfie fat-cats are echoed in the racist-populist appeals to the white "battlers" as against supposed "privileged" minorities such as Aborigines and immigrants. As elsewhere around the world, the capitalist rulers here have launched vicious racist attacks on immigrants and Aborigines as a wedge to destroy trade-union rights and social welfare programs as they drive up the rate of exploitation.

Committed to the capitalist system, the union bureaucracy and the Labor Party transmit bourgeois reaction to the working class. The racist ALP began the ban on immigrants receiving social security benefits. And Labor in power carried out endless attacks on immigrants and refugees, overseeing the emergence of a huge army of more than 300,000 super-exploited outworkers, mainly Asian women immigrants.

In contrast, a revolutionary workers party would champion the rights of all the oppressed, mobilising workers to

MUA tops bow to bosses' rules: scab trucks drive through waterfront pickets, 2 February.



no credit

work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight."

— *The History of American Trotskyism (1944)*

The ALP-loyal union bureaucrats push the lie that there can be a "partnership" between labour and capital. Thus the MUA tops seek deals with "good" capitalists, like Sealand, and bemoan the "attitude" of "bad" ones, like Patrick. But society is divided between two contending classes—workers who must sell their labour power for wages, and capitalists who exploit that labour for profit. The differences between these opposing classes are irreconcilable.

The strength of the working class lies in its numbers, organisation and discipline, and above all the fact that through its labour it uniquely makes the wheels of profit turn in capitalist society. That is why it has the potential power to smash the unrelenting attacks of the ruling class.

Crying that it is "illegal" for pickets to stop scabs, the MUA misleaders bow down before the capitalist state and its anti-union laws. Seeking to avoid court actions against the union, the MUA tops even arranged for a consignment of Toyota cars awaiting export to be moved off Webb Dock. The capitalist state is not some "neutral" arbiter that can be pressured into defending the workers' interests, but the coercive organ of capitalist class rule. The courts (including Arbitration) along with the cops, army and prisons exist to defend the class interests of the capitalist exploiters. The capitalist state is the enemy of the working class, organised both to prevent it from struggling in its own interests and ultimately to prevent the workers from smashing the system of private property and taking power themselves.

The MUA leadership has banked much on "exposing" in the courts the collusion between the Howard government, the NFF, Patrick and other right-wing forces. This is of a piece with the MUA and ACTU union bureaucrats' push to strengthen the Arbitration system, the supposed "neutral umpire," which for a

reform," Labor oversaw the destruction of working conditions and thousands of jobs. They helped chop up the wharves along company and geographic lines, and, in a union-busting move, sold off part of Australian National Line, including Webb Dock. Their later attempt to privatise the rest of ANL was met by a short national MUA strike, but the ALP got unheard-of wins for the shipping bosses through their "special relationship" with the ever-compliant MUA tops. Under the class-collaborationist Accord, workers were hogtied by their ALP union "leaders," and herded into "super-unions" more manageable for the bosses' Arbitration courts. In 1989, Robert Hawke's government launched a massive military strikebreaking operation against the airline pilots. Indeed, Reith claims to have investigated Hawke's moves against the pilots to see if any of his dirty deeds can be used against the MUA!

A Labor government, no less than a Liberal/National coalition government, is a capitalist government. Social-democratic parties such as the very right-wing Australian Labor Party are based upon the illusion that the way to advance the cause of the workers is through the electoral process. History has shown that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the existing apparatus of the capitalist state; rather, that state must be smashed and replaced by one serving the cause of the proletariat.

Workers Must Champion the Cause of All the Oppressed!

The mining and agricultural companies behind the scab-herding NFF are the very forces waging a racist war on Aboriginal land rights. These same mining magnates are slashing workers' jobs, living standards and working conditions from the Hunter Valley to Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Chile. The thugs on the docks are brothers to the cops and prison guards who kill Aboriginal people in custody, lock up immigrant workers in hell-hole detention centres and harass black and immigrant youth on the streets.

fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, and to defend Aborigines against the racist onslaught, the elderly facing cuts to nursing homes, and youth facing a "future" of unemployment. Combating the profound anti-woman bigotry that permeates every level of this society and its misogynist culture of "mateship," it would mobilise workers to repel the attacks on abortion rights, and organise women workers and the wives of strikers to take part in class battles.

Rejecting craftism rooted in the exclusion of minorities and women, a revolutionary party would fight for industrial unions, union programs to recruit those who have been historically discriminated against and union hiring halls run on a first-come, first-served basis. It would organise the unemployed and through fighting for their rights bring them in behind the organised working class. What's necessary is a fight to ensure jobs for all through a shorter work week with no loss in pay. Such challenges to the capitalists' "right" to profit must culminate in placing the working class in power—a rationally planned economy that utilises all of humanity's resources is only possible through destroying the rule of the capitalists through international socialist revolution.

The Workers' Struggle Is International

Today the bourgeoisie's rapacity is further driven by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Like the union bureaucrats at home, the Stalinist usurpers in the world's first workers state bartered away the workers' gains to appease the imperialist rulers, ultimately paving the way for the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state. This has brought intensified attacks on working people internationally as the imperialist powers seek to drive down wages and slash social benefits. In this period of heightened inter-imperialist rivalries and war, the working class needs a leadership that is internationalist, which understands that the main enemy is "our own" capitalist rulers.

In the current struggles of the MUA

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

and in the history of Australian waterfront workers and seamen, international solidarity is a living question. Indeed, the MUA's struggle has brought statements of support from unions around the world, including Greece, Argentina, Canada, Indonesia, the Philippines and Japan.

Between 1945 and 1949 waterfront workers, alongside Indonesian, Chinese and Indian unionists, carried out boycotts, "black bans," of Dutch shipping in support of Indonesian independence—the Black Armada, as the Dutch and Allied imperialists sought to rush military forces and supplies to Indonesia to shore up colonial control. Several times bans were slapped on war materiel intended for use against the Vietnamese revolution. More recently, in September 1996, the MUA launched bans on Indonesian shipping in protest against the Suharto regime's arrests of Indonesian union activists. These were important and powerful acts of international solidarity.

Australian chauvinism nevertheless runs deep. The union leadership, abetted by the Communist Party of Australia, has long pushed that what is important is the "national interest." MUA head John Coombs denounced moves to bring in New Zealand and Canadian scabs, not because they were scabs, but because they were "foreign"! This is interwoven with the call for protectionism, i.e., that workers should fight for the interests of domestic capitalists because of competition from capitalists elsewhere. The anti-Asian racism prevalent among some dock workers reflects this nationalist poison and the xenophobia that goes with it.

By sowing racist division at home and dividing Australian workers from their class brothers and sisters in Asia, the ALP and union tops serve to line up the working class behind the capitalists, including in imperialist wars for markets and spheres of influence. It is the job of a revolutionary vanguard party to introduce communist, i.e., class consciousness, countering the backwardness fostered by the union bureaucracy and by bourgeois society in general. We Trotskyists fight for a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia.

For decades the Stalinist-reformists of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA—from 1971 to 1996 known as the Socialist Party of Australia) have acted as an auxiliary to the chauvinist Laborite bureaucracy. Their numbers and influence have declined dramatically, but

they are still mouthpieces and toadies for the MUA tops. They too, for example, raise the racist, anti-working-class demand of "Australian crews for Australian ships." Article after article in the CPA's *Guardian* sings hosannas to the MUA leadership, demanding "unity"—i.e., backing the bureaucracy's treachery. The CPA applauded the leadership's gutting of the picket line at Webb Dock. For them, allowing the scabs to get through was an example of "firm working class discipline"! If that isn't grotesque enough, the CPA featured a photo of "Wharfies, soldiers of the class war" holding a placard reading "Soldiers for wars not for wharves." This at the very time Australian troops were being sent to the Persian Gulf to aid the U.S. imperialists' drive to slaughter Iraqi men, women and children. Fundamentally loyal to Australian capitalism, the CPA is an organisation of traitors to the working class, whose violence and slander directed at revolutionary Trotskyists, among others, has long served their political masters well.

Some MUA members might have run across the "Socialist Equality Party"—beware! The SEP openly *denies* that the bosses aim to bust the union, claiming that this battle is simply over "working conditions on the waterfront." Equating the unions with the pro-capitalist misleaders, the SEP is *at best* indifferent to whether unions exist or not. The SEP does not call upon the workers to wage a political struggle to oust the union bureaucrats. Thus their talk about "the necessary break that workers must make with the old leaderships and organisations" is a thinly veiled demand that workers abandon their unions—something to which Corrigan and Howard could easily agree.

Today increasingly anti-union, the SEP's predecessor, the Socialist Labour League, spent much of its political existence calling for a vote to the Labor Party, and for the "lefts" to expel the "rights" and form a "workers government." At the same time they openly crossed Builders Labourers Federation picket lines in Melbourne while Labor's Hawke government was smashing that union. These "socialist" scabs are political pirates who will show any flag to attack any target.

Build a Revolutionary Party!

At every step, Laborism is an obstacle to revolutionary class struggle because it ties the working class to their exploiters.

The political hold of the Laborite misleaders must be broken. Unlike the sorry leftists who adapt to existing trade-union consciousness, the Spartacist League's perspective is to build a revolutionary workers party which will split away Labor's working-class base from the pro-capitalist tops.

It is only through such a Leninist party that the workers' struggles can become *class struggle*, when the most advanced workers become conscious of themselves as a single class whose actions are directed against the entire class of capitalists and their government. Under the banner of the working class, all the diverse sectors and layers of society oppressed and devastated by capitalism can be united in struggle to expropriate the capitalist exploiters in a thoroughgoing social revolution. Those who labour must rule! ■

WOSA...

(continued from page 5)

Group" has had barely a word to say on the special oppression of the Maori people (see "Strange Things Under Wellington's Rocks," *ASp* No. 157, Summer 1995-96). In Canada, the IBT wallows in Anglo chauvinism and opposes independence for Quebec, while in Britain, its group has totally liquidated into Arthur Scargill's reformist Socialist Labour Party (SLP). Inside the SLP, IBT supporters linked up in an electoral bloc with supporters of imperialist intervention in Bosnia—the "Workers Aid to Bosnia" crowd—cheerleaders for Polish Solidarność and apologists for Ukrainian fascists (see "Scargill and His 'Left' Critics," *Workers Hammer* No. 151, July/August 1996).

The ICL's intervention at the Cape Town conference was directly counterposed to the anti-internationalist opportunism being purveyed by the various participating groups. Our floor speakers at two public meetings were the only ones to so much as raise the need for socialist revolution! Our comrades also set up a literature table, selling over 90 pieces of ICL material in seven languages, including "Revolutionary Regroupment or Centrist Alchemy?" (*Spartacist* [English edition] No. 53, Summer 1997), a polemic against an earlier "regroupment" farce in London a year ago. (One of the sponsors of the London conference, the Workers

International League, has now announced in a 16 December 1997 letter to subscribers that it has "dissolved to allow the two groupings that had emerged during approximately a year of internal differences to go their separate ways.")

In contradistinction to the fake leftists of all stripes who capitulated to the imperialists and their social-democratic lackeys, the ICL fought to the end to defend the gains of the Russian Revolution. Today as before, we seek to reforge an authoritative, democratic-centralist Fourth International to lead the proletariat to victory over the decadent world capitalist system.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 682, 16 January 1998

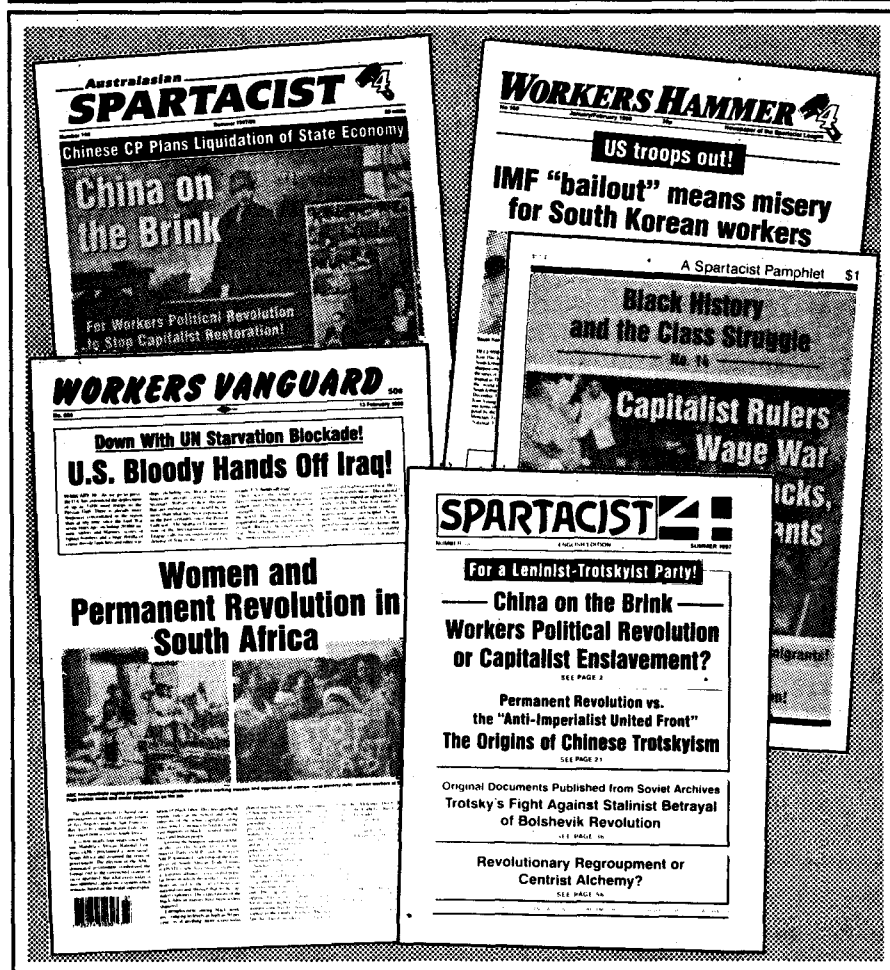
Abortion...

(continued from page 3)

women's need for free abortion on demand in their articles on the Perth case, but only call to repeal WA's abortion laws. They are silent on, and therefore blind to, the blatant racism underlying these charges. Nostalgic for the so-called "second wave" of feminism of the 1960s and 1970s, the DSP seeks to unite women "of all backgrounds" as women, and says that a new women's movement must be "independent of the capitalist class." But the fundamental interests of bourgeois women and working-class women are counterposed. For the DSP, who vote for the capitalist Democrats, this is no contradiction. They use vague anti-capitalist rhetoric to mask the nature of feminism, tying young women to an ideology that offers no hope of eliminating women's oppression here or anywhere else.

For the vast majority of women—oppressed as both women and workers—the social power to break their chains lies in the multiracial working class. Thus the fight for abortion rights cannot be separated from the struggles of all the working people and minorities against the attacks of the capitalist class. The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs fight to build a revolutionary workers party which will serve as a tribune of the people, seeking to mobilise the proletariat against every manifestation of oppression and injustice as part of the fight for an egalitarian socialist society. **For free abortion on demand! Women's liberation through socialist revolution!** ■

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Capitalist Rulers War on Waterfront Workers For a Class-Struggle Leadership to Bust the Union-Busters!

Build a Revolutionary Workers Party, Tribune of the People

The waterfront workers of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) face a battle for the very existence of their union. Two years ago John Howard came to power vowing to break the MUA. With the vast resources of the capitalist state at his disposal, he is delivering on his election promise with a vengeance. The working class and its allies have been weakened by over a decade of blows delivered by the Hawke/Keating Australian Labor Party (ALP) federal governments. Now, smelling blood, the Howard Coalition government is going in for the kill, targeting the MUA—historically one of the most powerful and militant unions in Australia, and the last closed-shop industry in the country. A victory here will embolden the ruling class to further attacks against working people and the oppressed as they drive to remove every potential obstacle to their unbridled pursuit of profit.

The Australian economy, heavily based on exports of bulk materials, is highly dependent on the ports, giving the dock workers exceptional social power—and thereby the ability to push back the union-busting offensive. But the MUA

leadership, as with the rest of the trade-union bureaucracy, is fundamentally loyal to the capitalist system, expressed most directly in its organic links to the ALP social democrats.

The hard truth is that the MUA leadership's response to the savage capitalist onslaught is to demobilise and politically disarm the MUA members, shutting down any meaningful resistance. MUA leader John Coombs has already run up the white flag, promising "years, actually years" of protest. More bluntly, MUA Victorian branch secretary Terry Russell told the *Sydney Morning Herald* (29 January), "No, we are not going to fight." So the union tops have been working overtime to keep this crucial battle within the straitjacket of the bosses' rules: the Arbitration system and vicious anti-union laws, many of them introduced by the ALP.

To take on and *defeat* this government-orchestrated union-busting requires a serious, politically organised *class-struggle* fight. The class-collaborationist union tops are joined at the hip to the ALP who necessarily rule for the bosses. Fighting under these misleaders is like fighting with both hands tied behind your back: workers need a class-struggle leadership imbued with the understanding that the interests of workers and capitalists are irreconcilably counterposed. A revolutionary workers party, able to lead all of capitalism's



Luis Ascui

Melbourne, 28 January: uniformed thugs "secure" Webb Dock, frontline of bosses' drive to break MUA.

exploited and oppressed, is the crucial instrument for victory not only in this struggle, but in the battle to do away with the profit system once and for all.

The Enemies of the Working Class

The first step to victory is to understand exactly what the MUA is up against: the capitalists and what revolutionary Marxist Friedrich Engels termed their "executive committee"—the state.

For nearly a year, the Howard government and maritime bosses have staged one provocation after another in the name of "waterfront reform." The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry called for videotaping union meetings and picket lines, harassing workers and hiring security guards to go after strikers. In October the feds ordered the Navy to employ non-union labour, aiming to compel companies with defence

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Racist Backlash Targets Aborigines

This summer the federal government deliberately whipped up a vicious racist campaign against the deeply oppressed Aborigines. Coalition prime minister John Howard threatened to call special early elections by dissolving both houses of parliament after the Senate, by one vote, modestly changed his "10-point" amendments to the existing Native Title legislation. The Coalition bill aims effectively to eliminate any land rights at all for the Aboriginal peoples. Openly courting the base of fascistic demagogue Pauline Hanson, the government is counting on the racist hysteria they fuelled to propel them to victory in the polls—so they can continue their attacks on all working people and the oppressed.

Day after day government officials and their big business masters ranted that the Aboriginal peoples were going to throw people out of their homes and take over most of the land. Media reports screamed that Aborigines were "arming themselves." The fact is it was the white settler-colonists, arms in hand, who committed mass murder—and whose political descendants maintain a reign of cop terror to enforce horrendous destitution. For

them, the mere assertion that Aborigines have *any* rights at all is a threat they seek to brutally crush.

The High Court's *Mabo* decision of 1992 overturned the racist myth that Australia was essentially uninhabited in 1788, and admitted that Aborigines had some, extremely restricted, right to claim title to land. The 1996 *Wik* ruling held that native title could "co-exist" with euphemistically called "pastoral" leases, but effectively wiped out Aboriginal land rights if they "conflicted" with the interests of agribusiness and other industries.

Following the *Mabo* decision, in 1993 Paul Keating's federal Australian Labor Party government passed legislation codifying the dispossession of the Aboriginal peoples. Now, the Howard government seeks to make explicit what the ALP left implicit. Not surprisingly, the ALP does not oppose the legislation in principle. Indeed, New South Wales Labor premier Bob Carr endorsed it (*Australian*, 28 April 1997). The ALP simply supported a series of amendments put forward by right-wing senator Brian Harradine to blunt the hardest edges. To underscore where the historic party of "White

Australia" stands, the ALP brass slapped down chairman of the Cape York Land Council Noel Pearson, who had rightly branded the government and its allies as "racist scum," when he publicly considered standing for election as an ALPer.

As revolutionary Marxists, we support any attempts by the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders to claw back some of the land which has been stolen from them as well as whatever money they can get. However elementary justice for the dispossessed Aboriginal peoples—indeed for all the exploited and oppressed—demands not some limited, ultimately reversible concessions by the capitalists and their state, but the *expropriation* of industry and agriculture by proletarian revolution.

We seek to mobilise the working class against the racist state terror which has claimed all too many victims and to fight for complete legal equality, for jobs for all and equal wages, and for massive health and education programs to address the oppression of Aborigines on the reserves, in the wretched "fringes" and inner cities. In those cases where land

claims may run up against socially useful developments like railways and hydroelectric projects, the Aboriginal peoples should receive generous compensation for deprivation of land or disruption of activity, based on completely consensual agreement.

The only answer to perpetuation of the crimes of the past—murder, torture and the wholesale destruction of the Aborigines' way of life—lies in the creation of a society not based on exploitation and all-sided racism. We are fighting to overturn this whole brutal capitalist system, for a socialist world in which the diversity of human cultures will not be an excuse for contempt and violence, but a source of enrichment. We struggle to build a genuinely revolutionary workers party, a tribune of the people, in which the best fighters from all sections of the oppressed will play a leading role in the destruction of this whole rotting system. Only the inauguration of the era of socialist development can ensure the all-sided voluntary integration of the Aboriginal peoples into a new society, on the basis of the fullest equality, and meet the special needs created by centuries of injustice and oppression. ■