



Australian Military Get Out of Aceh Now! Indonesian Troops Out!

Australian Imperialists Seize On Tsunami Catastrophe

Science in Service of Humanity Could Have Saved Thousands

The massive tsunami that crashed onto the shores of eleven South Asian and African countries on 26 December last year has left hundreds of thousands dead, and millions without housing, food, water and employment. The scope of the devastation and the terror delivered on the peoples affected is hard to comprehend. Now disease and starvation haunt the traumatised survivors seeking to reconstruct shattered lives, which overwhelmingly were already defined by poverty and oppression. As pointed out by our comrades in the U.S., in *Workers Vanguard* No. 839, 7 January 2005, "The mind numbing death toll, and the deaths yet to be counted, are the result of disaster magnified by class inequalities and the subordination of science to capitalist rule." Indeed, in a society where science is wielded in the service of all humanity—instead of for the profits of a tiny class of exploiters—tens, if not hundreds, of thousands could have been saved.

Following the tsunami, there was an



February: Prime minister Howard with Australian soldiers in Aceh. Australian imperialists have been expanding military presence in Asia-Pacific region. Right: Troops take over Solomon Islands, July 2003.

immediate and generous outpouring of monetary and other aid by trade unionists and individuals across Australia. Geelong oil refinery workers voted to increase their union's initial proposal of ten thousand dollars for the victims of the disaster to one hundred thousand dollars. These are real expressions of solidarity by the working class for its sisters and brothers in South Asia and fly in the face of the deep-going white racism of this backward and insular society.

However, the various imperialist powers seized on the disaster to position their blood-soaked militaries in the affected



regions under the pretext of providing "aid." The U.S. despatched planes and helicopters and 20 U.S. warships, along with 13,000 military personnel to the Indian Ocean. The *USS Abraham Lincoln* and Seahawk helicopters were ostentatiously positioned off the coast of Aceh. Meanwhile Japan also rushed 1,000 troops to the area. The Australian imperialists, for their part, stationed the warship *Kanimbla*, C-130 Hercules aircraft, helicopters, landing craft and up to 900 military personnel in and off the coast of Aceh.

The capitalist media have been broad-

casting images of Australian soldiers in Aceh doing some work apparently to provide clean water supplies. The "Aussie" military is being portrayed as saviours of the dark-skinned Asian masses. Don't buy a word of this! This is the same military that three years ago was kidnapping Afghan, Near Eastern and South Asian asylum seekers on the high seas and dumping them on the remote Pacific island of Nauru. This is the military that has been used in the past to smash workers strikes (the coal miners in 1949, the airline pilots in 1989 who struck against the Labor government's pro-business "Accord") and which will be used in the future when struggles of workers and the oppressed threaten bourgeois class rule. This is the military whose white soldiers from the elite IRAR Townsville regiment were photographed in 2000 dressed as fascist Ku Klux Klansmen humiliating non-white soldiers. This is also the military that is today taking part in the murderous U.S.-led colonial occupation of Iraq including, as described by Australian defence intelligence scientist, Dr. Rod Barton, directly carrying out brutal interrogations of Iraqis.

To fully comprehend the motives behind the military expedition to Indonesia one needs to understand imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism and how

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Heroic Aboriginal Militants Hit With Heavy Sentences Free Redfern Political Prisoners Now!

FEBRUARY 23—Ten days ago, hundreds of Aboriginal people and leftists marched in protests in Sydney and Melbourne to mark the one-year anniversary of the killing of Thomas "TJ" Hickey. The 17-year-old Kamilaroi Murri youth died after being pursued, and by all indications rammed, by a police vehicle while riding his bicycle in Redfern. But today, those in jail are not the racist cops who caused the youth's death. No, those in jail are the Redfern Aboriginal militants who, following TJ's killing, heroically defended their community against marauding police in a nine-hour pitched battle.

Several of the 35 or so people arrested over the battle on 15 February 2004 have already been convicted on charges including "riot" and "affray." Some have been hit with lengthy jail terms while

others have received non-custodial sentences. Last week, Raymond Carr, a cousin of TJ, lost his appeal against a 12-month jail sentence for his participation in last year's struggle. We say: **Free the Redfern political prisoners now! Drop all the charges!**

From arrests of picketers during the 1998 MUA struggle to the violent cop attacks against the 2003 high-school student strikes against the Iraq war, there has certainly been plenty of vicious state repression meted out against struggles of the working class and oppressed in the last several years. But the heavy jail sentences handed down to Redfern militants, and the sizeable jail term received by Victorian trade-union leader Craig Johnston last year, is a new mark in right-wing political repression in the recent history

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Redfern, 13 February 2005: March commemorating one-year anniversary of death of TJ Hickey. Spartacist League supporters joined protest, called for union/black actions to protest killing of the Kamilaroi youth at hands of racist state.

ASp photo

Tsunami...

(continued from page 1)

that plays out in this region. As explained by Russian revolutionary leader, V.I. Lenin, this system is one in which the ruling classes of the richest capitalist countries are compelled, through their very inner workings and thirst for profits, into an unrelenting drive for new markets, ever-greater natural resources and sources of cheap labour in the neocolonial countries. The various imperialist bourgeoisies enforce this neocolonial looting abroad and exploitation of the working class at home, and protect their own spheres of exploitation from rival powers, through the deadly coercive power of their state apparatus. The military, alongside the police, courts and prisons, is at the core of this capitalist state, which is constantly being strengthened.

While much weaker than their counterparts in the U.S., Japan or Germany, the Australian ruling class is a wealthy imperialist bourgeoisie in its own right. Alongside defending strategic geo-political interests, its post-tsunami intervention into Indonesia has much to do with protecting and expanding the vast profits that Australian companies such as BHP-

the "lion's share" devoted to assist Australian and New Zealand companies to gain a foothold in Aceh.

The entire Australian ruling class, and its Labor Party (ALP) lackeys, are ecstatic over the intervention into Indonesia. Australia's increasing militarism in the region had been widely viewed in Asia with deep suspicion. In the months before the tsunami struck, even the pro-imperialist leaders of the semicolonial countries in ASEAN protested the Howard government's repeated assertion of Australia's "right" to military strikes into Asian countries without their permission. Now, however, Australian troops have been stationed in the most populous country in Southeast Asia without overt opposition and with the support of that country's president. Even if this particular expedition ends up being temporary, it has set a precedent for future military adventures into Indonesia and other large Asian countries.

The expansion of Australian military and police in Southeast Asia is a deadly threat to the region's toiling masses. It was the Australian Secret Intelligence Service stationed in Jakarta, that in collaboration with the CIA, helped orchestrate the 1965-66 anti-Communist bloodbath in Indonesia. This led to as

North Korean and Vietnamese deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution! In the face of renewed imperialist hostility in response to North Korea's announcement that they hold nuclear weapons, we assert again our stand for the right of North Korea and China to hold such weapons to defend themselves.

For Class-Struggle Opposition to Australian Imperialism!

Australia and the other imperialist powers have relished the chance to try out military techniques in Aceh. They are also gaining practice in establishing the kind of support infrastructure that would inevitably accompany future colonial expeditions. What this has meant is that while tsunami victims face death from hunger, lack of water and poor sanitation, purported disaster "relief" has often been inappropriate. The Indonesian minister coordinating the relief effort in Banda Aceh, Alwi Shihab, revealed that the World Health Organisation (WHO) had asked Germany to turn around a hospital ship because it was not needed. "We don't want them to come over from a far distance just to have a very limited number of patients ... [but] they insisted on coming," he said. "I said no, but they are tourists, too, they want to see, so I said 'let them come.'" The exasperated coordinator of WHO in Aceh, Professor Ronald Waldman declared, "When I think medical, I think public health, I think food, water, sanitation—primary health-care services. The aid tends to come in an inverted fashion; hospital assets come in before what we really need..."

Indeed, it is clear that the scale of the loss of life on 26 December itself was largely a product of capitalist neglect and contempt for the subjugated masses of the neocolonial countries. So, while wealthy countries like Japan and the U.S. along the Pacific "ring of fire" can get early warnings from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) headquartered in Hawaii, and utilise other advanced technologies to alert seashore populations, no such systems were in place for the poor and oppressed countries of South Asia.

Even though the Indian Ocean is officially outside the domain of the PTWC, scientists there recognised the threat and reportedly sent an early alert to 26 countries, including Thailand and Indonesia. Yet as scientists scrambled to alert the world, government officials, including in Australia did next to nothing. Scientists on the Cocos Islands, 600 kilometres from Sumatra, alerted Australian emergency planners of the tsunami but, it is claimed, "key officials within Indian Ocean nations could not be reached" (*Belfast Telegraph*, 28 December 2004). This is simply not believable. Rather, the way in which the relative value of human life and property is calculated by the American and Australian imperialists is seen by the fact that the huge U.S. military base on the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, which prior to the imperialist occupation of Iraq was the main U.S. launching pad for death and destruction in both Iraq and Afghanistan, was given plenty of warning! (See article on page 3.) And while the U.S., supported by Australia, spends U.S.\$228 million every day bombing Iraq and terrorising its population, the installation of a basic tsunami warning system in the Indian Ocean could be had for a paltry U.S.\$20 million.

Once the tsunami did strike without warning, the scale of the ensuing disaster was magnified by the immense poverty of South Asia where in order to eke out an existence supplemented by the sea, millions subsist in ramshackle housing bereft of the most basic necessities let alone technologies. Rudimentary social infrastructure, inadequate access to medical care, poor transport facilities and often sparse supplies of running water all compounded the catastrophe for those who initially survived the wave's impact. *This poverty is the direct product of the imperialist looting of South Asia*—from the brutal exploitation of labour, to the



Paul Jones

October 2003: Thousands of unionists protest attacks on workers' safety following death of 16-year-old worker Joel Exner. Struggle against bosses' assaults on unions at home must be combined with opposition to Australian imperialist militarism.

plunder of raw materials, to blood-sucking debt peonage. In 2003 alone, the eleven countries hit by the tsunami repaid a total of 68 billion dollars to foreign creditors in debt repayments, more than eleven times what they had been promised in aid as of 18 January!

It is then truly nauseating to now see the racist Australian prime minister (John Howard), government and capitalist state—fresh from vindictively deporting the Bakhtiyaris, a family of Afghan refugees—portray themselves as the oh-so-generous friends of the South Asian tsunami victims. Meanwhile, a blitz by the capitalist media has sought to channel the outpouring of generosity by working people into chauvinist ideas of moral superiority over other nations.

This celebration of the Australian nation and state seeks to obscure the truth that capitalist Australia was founded on the bloody wars of dispossession against the Aboriginal people, which resulted in some 20,000 Aborigines being massacred by white settlers and the early colonial military; that capitalist Australia was founded on an official policy of White Australia anti-Asian racism. Instead, the masses are to be proud of the "spirit" and "values" of capitalist White Australia and its military, all the better to be lined up by the ruling class to support its future colonial expeditions. Meanwhile, workers are meant to accept the government's concerted union-busting attacks, including the draconian legislation planned to be introduced in July, because that is in the "great" country's "national interests."

Against such poisonous nationalism, we revolutionaries fight to advance the understanding that *proletarian solidarity with the South Asian masses requires opposition to the imperialist depredations conducted by the Australian ruling class*. Imperialist exploitation not only causes terrible suffering in the neocolonial countries, it also strengthens the capitalist ruling class against the working class at home. So while the Leighton Holdings bosses are today salivating at the prospect of expanding their profits in Indonesia, Leighton subsidiaries Thiess and John Holland have tried to weaken workers' conditions at Melbourne's Mitcham-Frankston tollway construction project. On 16 February, Victorian members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union struck a range of Leighton's Thiess and John Holland sites. What is needed is to combine the fight against the escalating union-busting at home with a struggle against imperialist subjugation abroad.

In this we look to the better traditions of the workers movement in this country when it engaged in powerful acts of struggle on behalf of the oppressed peoples. For instance at the end of World War II Australian waterfront workers, many of them pro-Communist, refused to load or

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AP Photo/Andy Eames

January: Women stand amid ruins of Kuede Teunon, Aceh. Catastrophic tsunami obliterated entire towns and villages across South Asia including in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand.

Billiton, Leighton Holdings, Clough Engineering have gouged from the superexploited masses across the archipelago. Following the 1997 economic collapse and the criminal Bali bombing in October 2002 Australian companies have divested billions of dollars from the Southeast Asian region, particularly Indonesia. Now with a surge of aggressive militarism, the Australian capitalist rulers are intent on establishing a more "secure" and "stable" environment for revitalising and broadening economic plunder in the region under the pretext of the "war on terror."

Capturing the true motivation behind the Australian rulers' intervention in Aceh, a 3 January *Australasian* editorial baldly stated, "A disaster recovery effort in Indonesia that runs for months and years to come will benefit our commercial cause and strengthen regional commitments to co-operate with us in the war on terror by demonstrating to all of Southeast Asia that Australia is not just a polite neighbour but a friend that sticks by its mates." This is also the real purpose of the \$1 billion in Australian government "aid" to Indonesia, which was announced with much self-congratulation in early January. The money will be controlled by Australia through a partnership with the blood-drenched Indonesian regime and

many as one million workers, rural toilers and ethnic Chinese being killed by the Indonesian military and reactionary Islamic mobs. *We say: Australian/all imperialist military/cops get out of Aceh now! Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military!*

Today the various imperialist ruling classes are using the "war on terror" to impose their imperialist diktats on the region. The history of imperialist military adventures in Asia has been one of bloody campaigns to suppress struggles against neocolonial subjugation and capitalist rule. The U.S. and Australian imperialists killed millions of workers and peasants in their murderous counterrevolutionary wars in Korea and Vietnam. Today, they seek to use various combinations of military pressure and economic penetration to try and reverse the anti-capitalist revolutions that triumphed in China, North Korea and Vietnam. They have seized on the tsunami catastrophe to brandish their military hardware in a part of the world not too distant from these deformed workers states. Meanwhile, Japan and the U.S. have recently been working in tandem to provocatively restrict the Chinese navy's access to the Pacific Ocean through the network of islands off China's eastern seaboard. *For the unconditional military defence of the Chinese,*

Australasian

SPARTACIST



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

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British Imperialism and Diego Garcia

Removing a People From History

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer (No. 189, Winter 2004-2005), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

In one of the least known crimes of British imperialism, between 1968 and 1973 the people of the Chagos islands in the Indian Ocean were expelled from their homes, forced into ships' holds and dumped thousands of miles away in the Seychelles and Mauritius, where they were left to die in poverty. This racist atrocity against the 1500-strong black population of the Chagos islands was prepared by the Harold Wilson Labour government in the service of the anti-Communist Cold War drive against the Soviet Union. Diego Garcia, the largest island, was leased as a military base to US imperialism. Recently a group of Diego Garcia campaigners, fighting against the British authorities' refusal to grant them accommodation in Britain, protested in Downing Street, chanting "Tony Blair is a thief. Give us our islands back." **US/British imperialism out of Diego Garcia now! For the right of return and compensation to the islanders!**

Diego Garcia is located halfway between Africa and Indonesia, and encloses one of the largest deep-water harbours in the Indian Ocean. At the height of the Vietnam War, the establishment of a military base there was considered to be of strategic importance by the imperialists. In 1965, the British rulers created the "British Indian Ocean Territory", with Diego Garcia as the main island, including by annexing the Chagos islands from Mauritius before that country was granted independence in 1968. This annexation resulted from a secret deal to lease Diego Garcia to US imperialism as a military base for the next 50 years.

Mark Curtis in his book *Web of Deceit* (2003) quotes recently declassified Foreign Office documents, suffused with racist imperialist contempt for the people of the Chagos islands, demonstrating that the depopulation was calculated to suit the aims of British and US imperialism. One official wrote that the removal of the islanders "was made virtually a condition of the agreement when we negotiated it in 1965". In return, Britain would receive cut-price Polaris missiles.

The expulsions were brutal. Lizette Tallate, who was one of those expelled, told journalist John Pilger that by way of a chilling threat as to what would happen if the islanders did not acquiesce, over a thousand of their pets were rounded up and gassed using the exhaust fumes from US military vehicles. "They put the dogs in a furnace where the people worked... when their dogs were taken away in front of them, our children screamed and cried." One islander, Lindsey Collen, describes the anguish of forced exile in her article "The island of Diego Garcia,

U.S./British Imperialism Out of Diego Garcia Now!



Lee Besford/Reuters

A group of islanders from Diego Garcia (above) arrive at the High Court in London. Families protest against British imperialism's racist expulsion of islanders (right).



Scotland on Sunday

B52's and you and me" (focusweb.org). Families who had lived on the islands for generations were "shoved into ships' holds against their will and transported to Port Louis and dumped on the quayside. Homeless and lost, mothers and fathers and grannies and children and grandfathers wandered into the slums of the Mauritian capital. By the thousand. The poor of Port Louis took them in. But many people from Diego Garcia died. Others ended up in prison. Children ate green mangoes and salt. That is rock-bottom poverty in Mauritius. Emptiness in their hearts."

The Wilson Labour government went to extraordinary lengths to fabricate the lie that there were no local inhabitants on Diego Garcia. Curtis writes, "British policy was: after removing the islanders from their home, to remove them from history". However, for over thirty years the Chagossians have fought desperately for justice through the courts only to be denied time after time. Responding to a High Court ruling in 2000 that the expulsions were illegal and that the Chagos-

sians could return to the outlying islands, the Foreign Office announced it would be impossible to abide by this ruling because of treaty obligations with Washington. Last June the Blair government invoked the archaic royal prerogative to crush the 2000 judgement, and a decree was issued that banned the islanders from ever returning to their homes.

The savage expulsion of the Chagossians from Diego Garcia was integrally linked to the imperialists' anti-Soviet

Cold War drive, aimed at overthrowing the gains of the world's first workers state that remained despite its Stalinist degeneration. The establishment of a military base on the island was critical to US imperialism's aim of securing hegemony over the Indian Ocean as a staging ground for control of the Indian subcontinent and Persian Gulf and as part of its military encirclement of the Soviet workers state. Similarly, their ambition to gain control of the strategically important deep-water harbour of Trincomalee in Sri Lanka was prepared through the removal of Tamil peoples from the area which in turn paved the road for the genocidal anti-Tamil pogroms in the mid-1980s.

Today, in the words of the US State Department, Diego Garcia is an "all but indispensable platform" for the "fulfilment of defence and security responsibilities in the Arabian Gulf, the Middle East, South Asia and East Africa". It was a launching pad for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the base from which US B2 stealth bombers have flown thousands of miles and back to rain terror on the Iraqi peoples. Various sources also suggest that "terrorist" suspects are being interrogated there under conditions even more secret than those at Guantánamo, where sadistic torture and barbarism reign. And, just as they were assisted in securing Diego Garcia by an Old Labour government, US imperialism continues to be served by the loyal toadies of Blair's New Labour government in the one-sided slaughter and colonial occupation of Iraq, and in the racist "war on terror" at home and abroad.

In 1983 our international tendency organised emergency protests around the globe against the terror against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, writing in our urgent appeal for such protests: "The defense of the Tamils, now facing genocide, must be linked to a revolutionary socialist perspective, which alone can secure national justice for all the peoples of South Asia" (see "Stop Anti-Tamil Massacre in Sri Lanka", *Workers Vanguard* no 335, 29 July 1983). So too, the defence of the right of the Chagossian people to return to their homeland or even to receive compensation for the countless lives that were shattered in advancing the interests of the imperialist rulers, is necessarily linked to a revolutionary internationalist perspective—one which fights to liberate all of humanity from the depravities of imperialist exploitation and oppression. ■

U.S. Bases Out!

While U.S. military aircraft have flown off from Diego Garcia to rain bombs on Iraq, the joint U.S./Australia Pine Gap spy station in the Northern Territory has no doubt been active in pinpointing imperialist strikes against the people of Iraq. The Pine Gap base collects electronic and photographic intelligence from around the world. It forms part of a string of U.S. bases in the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific region. Like Diego Garcia and U.S. bases in the Philippines, South Korea and Okinawa, Pine Gap was used for decades to target the Soviet degenerated workers state. Today it forms part of the platform used to support increasing imperialist military intervention by the U.S. and Australia in East Asia and the South Pacific.

Last July, the Howard government,

with ALP support announced that tens of thousands of U.S. and Australian troops will carry out "training" in three joint bases in the Northern Territory and Queensland. The new Joint Combined Training Centre will allow Australian facilities to be linked through high-technology communications to the U.S. Pacific War Fighting Center in Hawaii. Centrally, the anti-communist U.S./Australia alliance is aimed at overturning the gains of the anti-capitalist revolutions in China, North Korea and Vietnam. As part of our defence of the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban deformed workers states and our opposition to jackal Australian imperialism, we demand: **U.S. bases out now! Down with the U.S./Australia alliance! Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military!**

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Beslan Massacre and the Putin Regime

Independence for Chechnya! Russian Troops Out Now!

We reprint below an article, slightly adapted, from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 840, 21 January), newspaper of the *Spartacist League/U.S.*

With the massacre of hundreds of hostages, half of them children, in Beslan, North Ossetia on 3 September 2004, Russia's savage war against Chechnya returned to world headlines. This three-day standoff, in which over 1,200 people were taken hostage, capped a chain of terrorist attacks. They began the night of August 24-25, when two airliners from the same Moscow airport were almost simultaneously blown out of the sky by suicide bombers, killing all 89 on board. Then, on August 30, a Moscow subway station was targeted by a suicide bomber, killing ten.

These attacks were a real gift to Russian president Vladimir Putin, who has regained a level of popular support for what was becoming a very unpopular war. Islamic fundamentalist Shamil Basayev, a longtime leader of the Chechen resistance, who first came to national prominence in 1995 with the seizure of some 2,000 hostages (according to UPI) in a hospital in southern Russia, claimed responsibility for the Beslan hostage taking in a written statement. Basayev also took responsibility for the 2002 hostage-taking in a Moscow theater. That attack was suppressed by Russian police using poison gas, resulting in the murder of at least 129 hostages.

These attacks are criminal from the viewpoint of the working class. Not only are they counterposed to the cause of Chechen national rights, they embrace



Grozny: Russian soldiers threaten woman and child during neighborhood sweep. Ruins of Minutka Square, once Grozny's largest marketplace.



bourgeois nationalism. We forthrightly oppose the Great Russian oppressor embodied in Putin & Co., as we militarily defend Chechnya against the Russian imperialist occupation. We are for proletarian action against Russia's war on the Chechen people. The fight for Chechen independence is essential to the interests of the multinational working people of Russia, who face continued attacks on their own lives by the very state power that is carrying out the war in Chechnya.

At the same time, we extend not an iota of political support to the nationalism of Chechen resistance leaders like

Revolution and against the capitalist restoration led by Boris Yeltsin. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, Chechen independence was proclaimed. Russia invaded Chechnya in 1994 and by 1996 Chechnya had won de facto independence at the cost of 60,000 to 100,000 lives (based on data from human rights organizations), the vast majority civilians, as 6,000 Russian soldiers were sent home in body bags according to official figures, while estimates are as high as 14,000.

Estimates of the number of Chechen civilians killed in the first Chechen war of 1994-96 and the second war launched in 1999 range from about 100,000 to 200,000! Chechnya's cities and towns have been leveled. Industrial sites like Grozny's Krasny Molot factory, which before the Chechen wars was Europe's biggest producer of oil drilling equipment, are now piles of brick and refuse. Documented examples of Russian Army methods of terror and collective punishment are as extreme as they are barbaric. Chechen men have been chained to armored trucks and forced to watch while both female and male companions are raped and sodomized by Russian soldiers, as reported by *Newsweek*. In some villages, everyone over the age of twelve was chained together and blasted to pieces with artillery, leaving their remains to be dragged off by packs of wild dogs. *Russian troops out of Chechnya!*

The Putin Regime: Repression and Bonapartism

During Putin's first term in office, he rammed through a new labor code that greatly restricted the rights of trade unions, in effect banning strikes. Putin predictably sought to use the Beslan massacre to increase his already considerable powers. Within days, he issued a proposal, which was duly passed, to end direct elections of Russian governors and other regional leaders. Putin can now appoint leaders, subject to ratification by regional parliaments. If the regional parliaments reject his appointees twice, he has the authority to disband them. More recently, Putin won overwhelming parliamentary support for a counterterrorism law that hands the Kremlin broad powers to declare states of emergency, restrict free speech and clamp down on the news

media. The Beslan massacre also increased calls to end the moratorium on the death penalty that was enacted in 1996 as a condition for Russia joining the Council of Europe.

In the wake of Beslan, pogromist hysteria was whipped up against non-Slavic peoples from the Caucasus and Central Asia. Putin's nonstop media barrage against the "two-legged beasts" provided the backdrop for nationwide xenophobic attacks. In Moscow alone, 11,000 people were rounded up by state authorities, and 890 were deported in a one-day sweep. Vigilante auxiliaries to the police were organized nationally. In Ekaterinburg, five cafes frequented by refugees from the Caucasus were attacked by skinheads, killing one person and sending two to the hospital.

After the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Putin repackaged the repression in Chechnya as part of the "war against terrorism." Washington granted Putin a free hand in Chechnya in return for Russia withholding its veto of the UN Security Council Resolution authorizing the American invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003. But this has its limits, as was seen recently in Ukraine, where Washington thumbed its nose at Putin by bankrolling the presidential candidate seeking closer ties with the West (see "Democracy Movement Made in U.S.A.—Ukraine: Robber Barons and Nationalist Demagogues Fall Out," *WV* No. 838, 10 December 2004). While turning a blind eye to Russia's war in Chechnya, both the U.S. and its close ally, Britain, have extended political asylum to exiled former cabinet ministers of Maskhadov's government. Washington is intent on checking Russian hegemony along the periphery of the former Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, a bevy of right-wingers in Washington have formed an American Committee for Peace in Chechnya (ACPC), whose message, in the words of the *New Left Review* (November-December 2004), is "that authoritarianism is in Russians' DNA and that Putin would do well to learn the lessons de Gaulle drew from Algeria." The ACPC includes former national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and former secretary of state Alexander Haig as well as

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Beslan families mourn their dead after school massacre.

the same mentality as that of the racist rulers of the Russian capitalist government—identifying the multinational working masses with their capitalist exploiters and oppressors. In the case of Beslan, located in North Ossetia to the west of Chechnya, this can only lead to further interethnic bloodletting, with the historically Christian Ossetians pitted against the primarily Muslim Ingush and Chechen peoples. Formerly integrated schools in North Ossetia are reportedly being segregated by nationality since the massacre. Yet the hostage-takers' demand for Russian withdrawal from Chechnya is a just demand that has widespread support, even throughout Russia.

As proletarian internationalists, we are fundamentally opposed to all forms of

Shamil Basayev, who promotes reactionary Islamic fundamentalism, or to President-in-exile Aslan Maskhadov. After participating in the successful 1994-96 resistance against Moscow and being elected president in January 1997 (after the Russians assassinated Chechen president Dudayev in April 1996), Maskhadov was driven from power when Russian troops rolled back into Chechnya in 1999. Today he seeks imperialist intervention and the enrichment of his own capitalist backers.

The war against Chechnya is a direct result of the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. We of the International Communist League were unique among the left in our forthright defense of the gains of the 1917 Bolshevik

The Founding of the Trotskyist Group of Greece

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 838, 10 December 2004), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League. The article was earlier published in Greek in November 2004.

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is pleased to announce the founding of the Trotskyist Group of Greece, as a sympathizing section. The Greek comrades were won to the program of the ICL over a period of time through debate over programmatic differences and testing our agreement in common work.

The first contact with the ICL was made in 1995 by Spiros, a leader of the Socialist Workingmen's Organization (SOE) which split in 1994 from the Stalinophobic fake-Trotskyist Morenoite tendency. In 1996 the majority of the SOE founded the Revolutionary Workers Communist Organization (KOEE). In January 1999, Spiros resigned from the KOEE and began to correspond with the ICL, which had been sending literature to the KOEE since 1998. In May-June 1999, the KOEE leadership purged elements perceived as sympathetic to the ICL when our principled opposition to imperialist war against Serbia found a hearing among some members. Some of those thus expelled undertook to study the ICL program and in March 2000 formed an informal discussion group. In January 2001 the members of this study circle wrote to a group of ex-members of the Communist League-Workers Power (KSEE), a 1995 split-off from the SOE, and in March 2001 constituted a discussion group with these ex-KSEE members.

The Trotskyist Group of Greece was founded by comrades who fought on the question of women's oppression in Greece and split from Spiros, primarily over the need to champion the rights of Greece's oppressed minorities, a crucial question for a Leninist-Trotskyist organization in a Balkan country.

The ICL's record of fighting against counterrevolution in the DDR [East Germany] was central to the recruitment of the TGG comrades. In the "Agreement for Common Work" printed below we make clear that we stand counterposed to organizations like the Socialist Workers Party (SEK—affiliated to the British SWP), International Workers Left (DEA—ISO) and the Taaffeite *Xekinima*, which backed Yeltsin's counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-1992 and, in the latter case, even had supporters present on Yeltsin's barricades. While preparing for a class on capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, one of the Greek comrades wrote in June 2000:

"I studied anew Trotsky's books *The Class Nature of the Soviet Union*, *The Revolution Betrayed* and the "Declaration of Principles" of the ICL. Thereafter, together with our own discussions I consider that the positions of the ICL on the question of Afghanistan are consistent with our ideology and I agree with them on the basis of the defense of a bureaucratically degenerated workers state against the threat of the bourgeois counterrevolution.

"In regard to the question of China, what I consider applies is what Trotsky maintained in 1933, when he fought against the conception that the bureaucracy had already destroyed the Soviet workers state: Trotskyists judge that situation as dangerous but not desperate and they consider it an act of cowardice to announce that the revolutionary fight has been lost before the fight and without a fight."

In November 2000 another comrade left the KSEE after fighting in that

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στηκαν από τον Σπύρο, κυρίως πάνω στην αναγκαιότητα της πρότασης των δικαιωμάτων των καταπιεσμένων μειονοτήτων της Ελλάδας, ένα κρίσιμο ζήτημα για μία Λενινιστική-Τροτσκιστική οργάνωση σε μία Βαλκανική χώρα.
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organization for the position of defending China as a deformed workers state.

On the National Question

The Balkan peninsula is a region with myriad interpenetrated peoples and oppressed minorities. An equitable resolution of the national question in the Balkans requires a socialist federation. The ICL recognizes that the question of Macedonia is a test of the authenticity of any group claiming to be internationalist in Greece. The TGG defends the national rights of the Macedonian minority in Greece, including their right to set up their own state or unite with the existing state of Macedonia. *For full democratic rights for national minorities in Greece! For a Balkan socialist federation!*

On this basis we were won to the ICL's program, strongly opposing Greek national chauvinism, following in Trotsky's footsteps in his discussion with the Archio-Marxists on the Macedonian question:

"It's not our task to organize nationalist uprisings. We merely say that if the Macedonians want it, we will then side with them, that they should be allowed to decide, and we will also support their decision. What disturbs me is not so much the question of the *Macedonian peasants*, but rather whether there isn't a touch of chauvinist poison in *Greek workers*. That is very dangerous. For us, who are for a Balkan federation of soviet states, it is all the same if Macedonia belongs to this federation as an autonomous whole or part of another state. However, if the Macedonians are oppressed by the bourgeois government, or feel that they are oppressed, we must give them support."

—Leon Trotsky, "A Discussion on Greece," Spring 1932, in *Writings of Leon Trotsky Supplement (1929-33)* (Pathfinder, 1979)

The split inside the group in Greece came to a head over Spiros' refusal to recognize and fight against the national oppression of the Arvanites—an Orthodox Christian minority of Albanian descent who migrated to what is now Greece during the Middle Ages. The Arvanites have been forcibly Hellenized and face hideous discrimination and punishments even for speaking their own language in public.

To simply mention that national minorities exist in Greece is not merely taboo, it carries the risk of prosecution. In 2001, Vlach activist Sotiris Bletsas was dragged through the courts for distributing a leaflet that stated there are five linguistic minorities in Greece. Bletsas' acquittal after an appeal is regarded as a landmark legal decision because it tacitly

accepts that Arvanitika, Vlach, Macedonian, Turkish and Pomak are spoken on Greek soil. We defended Bletsas against the Greek bourgeois state in our intervention during the Polytechnic demonstrations in 2001.

Under capitalist rule, anti-Roma [Gypsy] racism has been rife throughout the Balkans. In Greece, 137 Roma were forced to move from their houses which were located in the vicinity of the Olympic Stadium construction site. Roma, along with Albanian immigrants, have increasingly been the victims of brutal police violence. One Albanian was murdered and around 100 injured after a football match between Greece and Albania in early September and racist mobs attacked Albanians in several cities, including Athens and Thessaloniki. Albanian immigrants in Greece number around one million people. Immigrants are not merely victims of racist terror but an integral part of the proletariat, which confirms the importance of our call for the workers movement to defend immigrants and to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. The defense of the rights of oppressed nationalities and immigrants is the only means by which the proletariat, consisting of workers of different ethnicities, can be united in the struggle for socialist revolution.

Another key question for revolutionaries in Greece is combatting anti-Turkish Greek chauvinism in regard to Cyprus, as we state in the "Agreement for Common Work." Any proletarian, internationalist perspective for Cyprus needs to begin with the call for the immediate withdrawal of all the Greek troops from Cyprus, as well as the Turkish army, the British troops and bases and the UN contingent!

The Greek Orthodox church is a central pillar of the Greek capitalist order and fuels national chauvinism, directed particularly against Turkish people and against all Muslims,

enforcing the ties between the Greek working class and its exploiters. An example of the sinister, chauvinist role of the Church was seen in 2000 when proposals by the then-PASOK government that would have removed the documenting of a person's religion on national identity cards were met with reactionary mobilizations led by the Orthodox clergy. We are for the separation of church and state!

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The main institution for the oppression of women is the family. For the ruling class the family serves as the vehicle for

continued on page 10



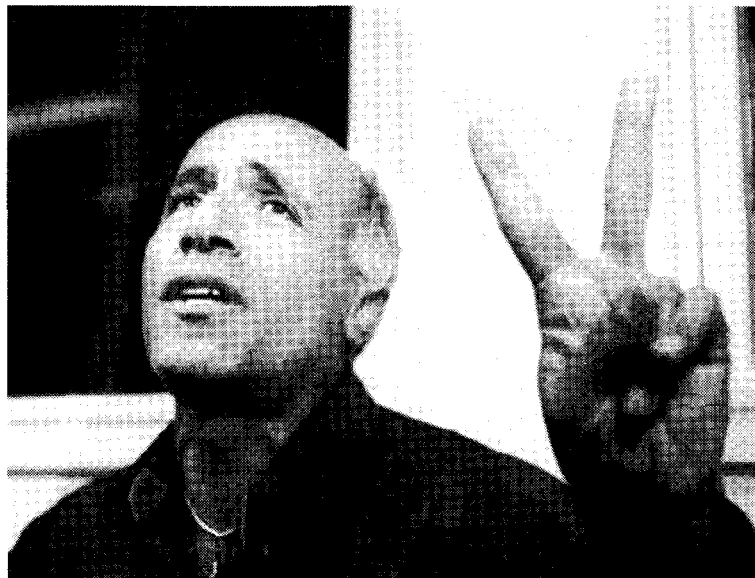
Mass demonstration in Athens during April 2001 general strike against attacks on pensions. Reuters

Israel: Vanunu Arrested Again

We reprint below an article from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 837, 26 November 2004), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League.

On November 11 at dawn, over 30 police armed with machine guns descended on St. George's Cathedral in East Jerusalem to re-arrest Mordechai Vanunu, the brave whistleblower of Israel's hidden massive nuclear arsenal. He was grabbed along with his laptop and papers and taken to Petah Tikva, the Shin Bet (internal security) interrogation center near Tel Aviv, where he was questioned for ten hours and released on bail to house arrest. On November 17 he was pulled in again for further questioning. The crazed and vindictive Zionist state will not rest until Vanunu is permanently silenced for having revealed almost 20 years ago that Israel's capitalist rulers had enough nuclear weapons not only to incinerate every Arab capital, but to bomb major cities in the Soviet Union as well—and the missile capacity to do so.

Vanunu was released from the notorious Ashkelon prison hellhole on April 21 after spending 18 years there, eleven and a half in solitary confinement. In 1986, Vanunu, a former technician at the Dimona nuclear weapons facility, was kidnapped by the Mossad (Israel's secret intelligence agency) in Italy, drugged



Reuters

Heroic nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu speaks to reporters while in court on 11 November following his arrest.

Down With the Gag Order!

and tried in total secrecy after revealing to the London *Sunday Times* that Israel had amassed upward of 200 nuclear warheads and was building hydrogen and neutron bombs. Despite Vanunu's having served his full prison term, the Israeli government has used a State of Emergency statute passed in 1945 when Palestine was under British Mandate to

commit Vanunu to virtual imprisonment within its borders. While he is no longer under house arrest, he continues to be barred from leaving the country, talking to non-Israelis, going near airports, ports, embassies, and is under 24-hour police surveillance.

As soon as he passed through the prison gates, Vanunu gave a press conference and has continued to speak out defiantly to the international press to denounce the Zionist doomsday machine. In an August 18 interview with Amy Goodman on her show, *Democracy Now!*, Vanunu said, "I'm very happy and glad that I...let all the world and the Israeli people see the true face of Israel who used to remind the world 'holocaust, holocaust' every hour, every day, but in fact Israel [has] a holocaust factory. This Jewish state was producing holocaust weapons."

Another cell in the same Ashkelon dungeon was inhabited by Marcus Klingberg who had intimate knowledge of Israel's other secret arsenal of megadeath, its stockpile of chemical and bacteriological weapons (see "Free Israeli Scientist Marcus Klingberg!" *WV* No. 596, 18 March 1994). Klingberg worked at Nes

Tsiona, the top-secret research center where "non-conventional weaponry, from viruses to poison derived from mushrooms," was developed (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6 January 1994). Klingberg was disappeared and secretly tried in 1983 and sentenced to 20 years, convicted of spying for the Soviet degenerated workers state—no crime in the eyes of the world working class. He was finally released to house arrest in 1998, and in 2003 was allowed to leave Israel at the age of 84.

At nearly the same time the police were dragging Vanunu in to threaten him yet again, the Israeli military killed three Egyptian border cops with a tank shell fired into the Egyptian side of the border at Rafah in Gaza, saying that the Egyptians were mistaken for Palestinian "terrorists." Sharon's Gaza "withdrawal" plan has meant the escalation of Israeli terror against the besieged Palestinian masses. The daily death toll of Palestinians continues, and the population in both Gaza and the West Bank was put under lockdown following the death of Yasir Arafat. Some 7,400 Palestinian prisoners languish in Israeli jails. We demand the immediate release of all victims of Zionist state terror and the withdrawal of all Israeli troops and settlers from the Occupied Territories!

As a Sephardic Jew whose family had emigrated from Morocco, Vanunu's own experience of discrimination at the hands of the European-derived Ashkenazi establishment led to his active alienation from Zionism. As a student at Beer-sheba's Ben-Gurion University, he identified with the Palestinian students he met, and participated in protests for Palestinian equality and against the 1982 Lebanon war. Vanunu is further despised in Israel because of his conversion to Christianity in 1986. After his prison release, he sought refuge in the East Jerusalem church because of death threats from Israelis, and he has remarked that the Palestinians in the neighborhood have embraced him. He said in an interview with the London *Guardian* (15 November), "Since the second intifada, the reality is very, very bad. I used to have optimism but when I came out and saw the wall and saw the reality...young people who live here don't have any hope."

The U.S. bourgeoisie often repeats the refrain that their junior partner Israel is "the only democracy in the Middle East." The myriad prison torture chambers where Palestinian prisoners languish, the electric fences of Gaza, three-storey-high concrete walls and checkpoints of the West Bank expose the lie of Israeli "democracy." Vanunu exposed that the vast majority of "weapons of mass destruction" in the Near East has been in the bloody hands of the Zionist garrison state, bankrolled for decades by the U.S. bourgeoisie.

The ICL and the Partisan Defense Committee have actively fought internationally for the release of Mordechai Vanunu. After the Israeli High Court of Justice in July upheld and extended every restriction of movement and speech on Vanunu, the PDC sent an August 7 letter of protest joining with all those outraged at the endless acts of vengeful repression. We stated: "Mordechai Vanunu should not have spent even one day behind bars. As we have said many times, all of humanity owes Vanunu a tremendous debt of gratitude." *Hands off Mordechai Vanunu! Down with the gag order! Let him leave Israel right now!* ■

Correction

In the article "State Out of the Bedroom! Down With Reactionary 'Age of Consent' Laws!" from *Australasian Spartacist* No. 189, we wrongly asserted as proof of anti-gay bias in "age of consent" legislation, "...one need not look past the legislation of several states and territories where the age of consent for homosexual men is higher than it is for heterosexuals (e.g. NSW and NT—two years higher, WA three years higher at 21 years!)." The figures here are based on legislation which has since been changed. Theoretically, "age of consent" is consistent between people of

the same or opposite sexes in all states and territories. Often the reality is quite different. In Queensland for instance, anal sex irrespective of the sexual orientation of the partners involved is 18, two years higher than for vaginal sex. The reality of this law is that it is weighted against homosexual men. In other states, such as New South Wales and Western Australia, legislation reversing the sameness of "age of consent" for homosexual and heterosexual sex is being advocated by some conservative members of parliament.

Young Spartacus apologises to readers for the mistake.

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Chinese Workers Fight Privatisation of State-Owned Industry

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 837, 26 November 2004), newspaper of the *Spartacist League/U.S.*, section of the *International Communist League*.

The number of worker demonstrations and strikes in China has increased sharply in recent years. In particular, moves by the Beijing bureaucracy to privatize state-owned factories, which have resulted in hundreds of thousands being laid off in recent years, have been fiercely resisted by the workers. Though nationwide government statistics on the number of protests since 2000 are not available (itself a telling sign), an analysis of Chinese government reports shows an increase in each of the past three years. According to the right-wing think tank, the RAND Corporation:

"Sichuan, China's largest province, apparently saw an increase in protests of almost 20 percent last year, to nearly 1,500.

"No region has experienced more demonstrations than the aging northeastern rustbelt, known to the West as Manchuria, where market reforms have badly hurt workers and pensioners from inefficient state enterprises. Police in Liaoning Province on the border with North Korea claimed a stunning 9,559 incidents involving more than 863,000 people between January 2000 and September 2002—an average of almost 10 incidents involving 90 people each day for nearly three years."

—*International Herald Tribune*, 3 June [2004]

The *Associated Press* (15 November [2004]) reported that workers in Shenzhen in southern China seized the Hong Kong owners of an electronics company, demanding unpaid wages. In response, the police warned them not to hurt the hostages, but took no action against the workers. Illustrative of the increasing number of labor actions in China was a recent strike by 6,800 mainly women textile workers at the newly privatized Tianwang Textile Factory in Xianyang (Shaanxi province) in northern China. The battle lasted almost seven weeks, the longest known strike since economic "reforms" were introduced over two decades ago. The workers were fighting impending layoffs and wage cuts being proposed by their new capitalist employers, the Hong Kong-based conglomerate China Resources. The company's offer would give laid-off workers a severance payment of one month's wages for each year they worked there. Those not laid off would be required to sign short-term contracts at lower pay and

lose their seniority status. In addition, they would have to serve a six-month "probationary" period during which they would receive 60 percent of their new salary.

Strikers maintained an around-the-clock presence at the factory entrance, in rotating shifts of 200 workers. Banners hanging from the factory gate declared: "We want to survive!" "Protect workers rights!" and "Give us back the funds we worked hard for!" Four days into the strike, on September 18, some 1,000 police appeared at the factory gate with water cannons and prepared to forcibly disperse the pickets. Awakened by their comrades banging on wash basins, thousands of workers and their families poured out of the plant dormitories and surrounded the cops. Confronted by this massive show of solidarity, the police retreated without attempting to use their water cannons.

The whole privatization plan of the Tianwang Textile Factory was carried out in a way designed to implicate the workers in their own demise. A few years ago, the factory was turned into an employee- and management-owned shareholding company. Workers paid 4,000 yuan ([U.S.]\$483) for a share in the company (Communist Party officials also invested in the company). But the dream of "cooperative" capitalism did not last long. Now, the workers are reportedly being forced to sell shares back so China Resources can take over.

As with other strikes in this same period, the Tianwang workers' struggle was brought to an end by a "carrot-and-stick" policy. Police rounded up more than 20 strikers and issued "wanted" notices for three others, leading a satisfied China Resources spokesman to proclaim that the strike was "under control." China Resources then got most workers to return to the factory by agreeing to limited concessions: dropping the idea of a probation period and signing longer-term contracts while insisting on the lower wage scale. We demand the release of the arrested strikers—and all those arrested in other, similar strikes—and the dropping of all charges against them!

According to the Hong Kong-based *China Labour Bulletin*, one of the strikers' demands was for the right to elect their own factory-level trade union and to register it with the officially sanctioned trade-union organization, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). To head this off, municipal authorities

announced that the ACFTU itself was already moving to establish a union branch at the factory. However, no elections were held to endorse this officially imposed body.

An integral part of our program for proletarian political revolution in the deformed workers states is the struggle for unions free from state control—as opposed to the ACFTU, which is an arm of the ruling bureaucracy in China. Trade unions are necessary even in a healthy workers state to guard against possible encroachments and abuses by the government, as well as to help plan production, work methods, etc. But the trade unions must be based on defense of collectivized property. We warn against those like Han Dongfang and his *China Labour Bulletin*, which baldly admits that its chief editor has been featured on radio broadcasts of the *Voice of America* and *Radio Free Asia*—both of them official anti-communist mouthpieces for U.S.



China Labour Bulletin

Women workers at Tianwang Textile Factory struck for almost seven weeks against Hong Kong bosses after privatisation of their plant.

imperialism. When the likes of Han and the *Bulletin* promote "independent" trade unions in China, they are promoting capitalist counterrevolution.

In the face of the fundamental hostility of the capitalist states to the very existence of the workers states, it is indispensable to distinguish between working-class opposition to bureaucratic abuse and imperialist opposition to the workers states themselves. No genuine proletarian opposition to the Stalinist misrulers can be built without a firm commitment to defending the gains of the Chinese Revolution. A Trotskyist party in China would inscribe on its banner: Defend the system of collectivized property, the central gain of the 1949 Revolution. ■

Partisan Defence Committee

Hands Off RAC Activists! Drop the Charges Now!

The following protest statement in defence of arrested refugee rights activists was faxed to Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone on 23 December 2004 by the Partisan Defence Committee, a class-struggle defence organisation associated with the *Spartacist League* (SL).

Charges against two of the arrested activists have been dropped but at the time we go to press, the other two defendants, Sunil Menon and John Morris, continue to face charges. On 11 January, supporters of the SL joined some 100 leftists and refugee rights supporters in a demonstration demanding the dropping of charges against the pro-refugee activists. A resolution from the NSW Teachers Federation in support of the defendants was read out at the rally. A further protest on 25 January at the court appearance of the pro-refugee activists at Sydney's Downing Centre saw the courtroom packed with their supporters.

We condemn the 1 December raids by the Australian Federal Police and immigration officers on the homes of refugee-rights activists in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. At least four people face charges, including Refugee Action Coalition (RAC) members, Mark Goudkamp and John Morris. The charges reportedly relate to allegations of "making a false statement in the course of supporting an application for an Australian passport" and "using a false name to operate a bank account."

These grotesque raids, alongside the continuing persecution of the Bakhtiyari family, suggest vindictive reprisals against those refugees who in desperation managed to escape the barbaric Woomera concentration camp in 2002, and against those humane and courageous activists who have supported them.

The federal government's incarceration and deportation of innocent people sometimes to torture and death, fully backed by the Australian Labor Party, is part of the ongoing racist war against refugees, immigrants and Aborigines—a war that ultimately targets the working class as a whole.

Fomenting the deepest racist reaction your government seeks to divide working people in order to minimise united struggle against the union-busting and profit-gouging capitalist rulers. However ongoing actions by refugee rights activists, and the support that hunger strikers at the Baxter concentration camp continue to receive, show that many refuse to be diverted or intimidated by the government's vicious anti-working-class racist persecution.

Struggles by refugees and their supporters against your internationally notorious racist immigration laws, including mandatory detention and forced deportations, are in the interests of all the working people and oppressed. **Hands off the RAC activists! Drop all the charges now! Asylum now for refugees! Close the concentration camps! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all!**

Spartacist Forums

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The Annex, Upstairs at Trades Hall
Cnr Lygon and Victoria Streets
Carlton
(entrance on Victoria Street)

Sydney

7 p.m., Friday, 8 April
Humanist House
10 Shepherd Street
Chippendale
(off Broadway)

Tsunami...

(continued from page 2)

service Dutch ships in aid of Indonesian Seamen's Union actions against Dutch attempts to reconquer their former colony. These actions spread from one country to the next leading to an international working-class campaign that paralysed Dutch shipping and ultimately helped secure political independence for Indonesia from colonial rule.

In the current political climate of all-sided social reaction, many workers and youth are furious at the increasingly racist, militarist and repressive nature of this society. Two years ago there were enormous protests on the streets, including significant union contingents, in opposition to the war on Iraq. In recent anti-war rallies, protesters have carried slogans and worn badges and T-shirts protesting Australia's theft of East Timor's oil. *We say: U.S./Australia out of Iraq! Down with Australian imperialism's plunder of East Timor's oil/gas! Australian military/cops out of Aceh, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands!*

But the fight for class-struggle opposition to Australian imperialism runs smack up against the pro-capitalist Laborite parliamentary and union misleaders of the workers movement. Prostrate in the face of the bosses' renewed union-busting offensive, the nationalist union bureaucrats preach the lie that workers will benefit from the success of Australian companies and promote loyalty to the murderous Australian military. Two years ago when the bombs began to rain on Baghdad, the union tops reneged on their earlier promises of significant industrial action in the event of a military attack on Iraq, arguing they would not want to disadvantage "our troops." Today the bureaucracy's ALP mates in parliament have responded to Howard's announcement of 450 extra troops to Iraq by calling for the troops to be used in this region instead! Indeed, in late 1999, it was the Laborite union tops that were at the forefront of the pro-imperialist rallies calling for Australian "Troops In Now!" to "Save East Timor," which led to Australia's neocolonial occupation and theft of oil and gas.

What is needed is a political struggle to break the working-class base of the Labor Party from its pro-imperialist tops in the fight to build a revolutionary workers party. Such a party would infuse the working class with a staunch internationalism and with hatred for bourgeois militarism. It would be committed to the greatest act of solidarity possible with the toiling masses of this region: the sweeping from power of the rapacious White Australia imperialists through socialist revolution.

Neocolonialism and Imperialist Economic "Aid"

The resource-rich Aceh province has today particular importance for the competing imperialist powers. Aceh flanks the strategically important Malacca Strait through which much of Japan's oil from the Near East is shipped, and through which much of Asia's exports to Europe must move. Aceh has seen a decades-long struggle by the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) for independence from the Javanese-centred Indonesian ruling class. The Indonesian government's brutal war against the oppressed Acehnese people has been accompanied by systematic torture and rape and led to up to 10,000 deaths there since 1998 alone. Australia has backed the Indonesian military's (TNI) renewed offensive against the GAM from the time it began almost two years ago. Today the U.S. and Australian rulers hope that the ostentatious presence of imperialist troops, their control of basic supplies to the desperate Acehnese people and the enormous disruption caused by the tsunami will enable them to oversee the end of the GAM insurgency. They want a "stable" Indonesia to maintain a smooth flow of profits such as those extracted from the huge Exxon-

Mobil oil and gas operation in Aceh itself. They believe this goal is best served by maintaining a unified Indonesia.

But the imperialists can potentially countenance a range of tactical options to ensure their interests. For example, for 24 years Australia strongly backed, both militarily and politically, Indonesia's blood-soaked occupation of East Timor. Then, in 1999, concerned that Indonesia's apparent inability to maintain its grip on East Timor would destabilise Indonesia itself and with an eye on the massive oil wealth at stake, Australia, with the backing of the U.S. and the UN, staged a direct colonial takeover of East Timor. Since its formal independence, they have brutally enforced a neocolonial order in which the East Timorese people remain the poorest in Asia, many literally starving, while the Australian government and Australian mining giants, BHP and Woodside Petroleum, steal billions from East Timor's Laminaria-Corallina oil and gas field.

In general, the imperialists prefer to have the bourgeoisie of the neocolonial country enforce their imperialist plunder. A major goal of Australia's intervention



Craig Abraham
Australian "peacekeepers" in East Timor. Troops enforce terrible poverty, defend subservient regime which acquiesced to massive neocolonial theft of oil resources. Above: East Timorese protest visit by John Howard.

in Aceh is to cement closer ties with the TNI and other Indonesian state forces. A recent example of how these forces function to protect imperialist profit making is seen in the Indonesian operations of Melbourne-based Newcrest mining giant. Part of the \$122.9 million in profits raked in by Newcrest in 2003-2004 was extracted from the Toguraci mine on the remote Indonesian island of Halmahera in North Maluku. There, Newcrest have employed TNI and the notorious Indonesian Mobile Brigade (Brimob) paramilitary thugs against indigenous people protesting the rape of their land. In early January 2004, Brimob forces gunned down at least two protesters.

Having the blood-drenched neocolonial regimes in Southeast Asia do their dirty work is cheaper for the imperialists and ties up less of their own troops than direct imperialist occupation. Most importantly, they hope it will provoke less opposition from peoples who remember with hatred the horrors of colonialism. And this is where the whole question of imperialist government "aid" comes in. Foreign aid is specifically directed by the rich countries to prop up the local colonial regimes (including by arming and training its military forces), to buy off military and civilian officials and politicians, and to open up markets to its own companies at the expense of rival powers.

This is borne out by even a cursory review of Australian government aid disbursements. Even the government's own "Summary of Australia's International Development Cooperation 2004-05" states that the aid is aimed at "advancing Australia's national interest," which in this class-divided society always means the interest of the capitalist ruling class. The \$500 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA) assigned by the Australian government to East Asia is aimed at assisting in "promoting stability and security" in Indonesia, including improving "Australia's counter-terrorism capacity building initiative for Indonesian police," and strengthening the capacity to

"combat terrorism" in the Philippines! What the latter means is murderous repression of workers, peasants and the Moro minority in the south. Last November, the Philippine police and army strafed striking Hacienda Luisita sugar workers and their families, leaving seven dead and hundreds wounded.

So while whatever potable water, food, housing and other material aid that the suffering victims of the tsunami can get is welcome, we warn that any economic aid program from the racist Australian government must be treated with deep suspicion. This includes the much ballyhooed \$1 billion package for Indonesia, which in any case is a pittance compared with the massive profits Australian companies have extracted from the Indonesian archipelago.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) provides a good example of how imperialist "aid" works. The Australian ruling class is well aware that its plunder of mineral-rich PNG has bred much resentment against it and its puppet regime. Fully one third of the ODA budget for 2004-2005 is directed to "increased support for basic policing, including in PNG, the Pacific and East

attached" [our emphasis] (*Green Left Weekly*, 19 January).

Leaders of the main grouping within SA, the Democratic Socialist Perspective, have in the past sought to excuse such demands for Canberra to carry out some "progressive" act abroad as an attempt to wrest a concession from the ruling class through struggle, similar to demands for improved social services at home. However, in reality these two types of demands are quite different. Demands on governments at home for increased public funding for schools, hospitals, childcare etc., can serve to mobilise working-class opposition to capitalist governments and, if achieved, improve the lives of working people. As such, communists generally support such demands. But foreign "aid" programs are not concessions to class struggle granted by the imperialists but are calculated choices they make according to their predatory goals. When enacted, Australian foreign aid programs—whatever short-term benefit a part of them may provide to a small number of oppressed people—are always aimed at reinforcing neocolonial subjugation of the Third World masses.

SA's demand for increased foreign aid "without strings attached" promotes the fraud that Australian imperialism can be pressured to act in the interest of humanity and not its own predatory interests. The logic of these views was made explicit as early as 29 December when long-time leader of the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) and Socialist Alliance, Max Lane, grotesquely argued that a detachment of Australian troops deployed to serve in the occupation of Iraq should be diverted to Aceh instead!

By contrast, the reformist Socialist Party of Australia (SP), part of the ostensibly Trotskyist Committee for a Workers International, correctly warned in a recent web posting against any "confidence in capitalist aid agencies or imperialist forces or local military." However, while SP state that "the presence of foreign imperialist troops will generate big anti-imperialist movements in the future," they fail to *call for Australian troops to get out of Aceh*. Instead, their main demand is for "Democratic control of aid by committees of local people, workers and poor farmers organisations...." This demand is at best utopian: is arch-union-buster John Howard about to hand out "aid" money, which is intended to boost the profits of Australian companies, if this money is to be put in the hands of Sri Lankan or Indonesian workers organisations?

When one examines the SP slogan more closely it turns out to be worse than fatuous. Genuine Trotskyists raise slogans seeking to mobilise class-struggle *opposition* to imperialist intervention. As such our key slogans over Aceh and Iraq, for example, are to demand the imperialist troops get out. But by positing the idea that imperialist aid can be controlled by the masses and put to a genuinely benevolent purpose, SP undercut demands for the imperialists to get out.

In September 1999, this perspective—that somehow the imperialists can be controlled to act on behalf of the oppressed—was applied by the Socialist Party and almost the whole gamut of the reformist and centrist left in the most disgusting way when they marched in demonstrations screaming for Australian and UN troops to enter East Timor as "peacekeepers." The SP (then known as the Militant Socialist Organisation) hailed these mobilisations, even gushing that, "If it wasn't for the pressure of the Australian people, Canberra and 'our' armed forces would be once again putting the 'national interest' (i.e. protecting the interests of Australian bosses in Indonesia) before the massacres of the people of East Timor" (*Militant*, October 1999).

Now, when it is widely recognised that Australia's role in East Timor is one of brutal neocolonial domination and theft of East Timor's oil and gas, SP, with a great deal of *chutzpah*, attempt a shabby cover-up of their actions in 1999. They falsely claim that they "stood almost alone against the flag-waving of

Timor" (Australian Government AusAID website). The PNG police have been more than repaying these aid "investments." In late June 2001, they murdered at least six people participating in protests by students and workers in opposition to Australian imperialist interests in PNG, and IMF and World Bank-directed privatisations and cutbacks. Now alongside their cops and military in the Solomons, Australia has more than 200 police on the ground in Papua New Guinea to more directly aid in enforcing "stability" in their main historic neocolony.

Historically, a big aspect of imperialist foreign aid programs has been to "roll back" communism. The most famous economic aid package in history was the U.S. Marshall Plan at the end of World War II. This aimed to prop up the tottering West European bourgeoisies, who were tainted with fascism and facing a working class inspired by the Soviet Red Army's heroic smashing of the Nazi Third Reich. Today, Australian ODA in Vietnam includes support to the "development of the private sector," that is, to undermining the collectivised property forms. The imperialists' goal there is to destroy the deformed workers state issuing out of the 1975 victory of the Vietnamese social revolution, which triumphed through a stunning defeat on the battlefield of the U.S. and Australian imperialists and their local puppets.

Australian Imperialism and the Reformist Left

The attitude of much of the left to Australian capitalism's aggressive interventions in this region since the tsunami is typified by the Socialist Alliance (SA) lash-up. SA has criticised the cynicism of the Australian government aid package and directed people to donate to SEGERA, an alliance of Indonesian non-government organisations. But at the same time they have demanded "that the *Australian government* massively increase its aid to all the countries affected...and give it without strings

the ruling class, its media, the ALP and union leaders, and the petit bourgeois left groups like the DSP who supported [sic] the Australian military intervention into East Timor" (Socialist Party website, 27 October 2004). It was actually the Trotskyist Spartacist League that opposed the September 1999 "Troops in Now!" mobilisations and refused to participate in them. Instead we held speakouts and forums opposing the Australian/UN intervention.

For an Internationally Planned, Collectivised Economy!

The task of rebuilding following the massive destruction wrought by the tsunami and alleviation of the poverty that magnified its human cost demands a massive program of building hospitals, schools, housing and infrastructure. But undertaking such a program itself demands freeing the impoverished South Asian countries from the yoke of imperialist exploitation and cries out for the repudiation of their foreign debt.

Yet the thoroughly corrupt and brutal rulers of the neocolonial countries are tied by a thousand strings to the imperialists, whom they rely on to protect them from the oppressed masses in their own countries. The role of these agents of imperialism can be seen in the period following the tsunami. In Aceh, under the umbrella of the imperialist military presence, the TNI have continued their butchery. Since the 26 December catastrophe alone, the TNI have slaughtered more than one hundred Acehnese, many of them civilians while at the same time thieving, skimming off and selling goods and food donated for relief. Now there are ominous reports that Acehnese villagers are being forced into large relocation camps controlled by the TNI. This is designed to prevent any aid being passed on to GAM, further isolate the GAM fighters and strengthen the control of the TNI over a desperate population. We say: **Indonesian troops out of Aceh! Down with Australia's arming and training of the TNI butchers!**

In Sri Lanka meanwhile, the Sinhala-chauvinist bourgeois government has stepped up its provocations against the oppressed Tamil minority. The military have been blocking aid to, and invading, welfare camps in areas controlled by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the island's north and northeast. In southern India, low caste *dalits* were dragooned to do the dirty and dangerous cleanup after the tsunami, initially without gloves or masks.

In economically backward countries, and in particular those countries subjugated by imperialism, it is only the working class drawing on the support of the rural toilers that can, by seizing state power, throw off the imperialist yoke, give rights to oppressed minorities and lay the basis for ending social backwardness. In establishing its own class rule, the proletariat would inevitably make rapid inroads into capitalist property forms. If such future workers revolutions, in places like India and Indonesia, are not to be strangled by imperialist military intervention and/or economic blockade, or by their own inherited economic backwardness, they will necessarily have to extend to the major imperialist centres, appealing to the proletariat to throw out their own capitalist rulers. This is the perspective of permanent revolution outlined by Russian revolutionary leader, Leon Trotsky, and which was confirmed in the triumph of the 1917 October Revolution.

Speaking from the summit of Soviet power in 1925, Leon Trotsky noted that science has the "capacity to increase man's power and arm him with the power to foresee and master nature" (*Problems of Everyday Life*). But the capitalist class largely constrains science to the narrow purpose of accumulating profits. The road of progress can be unblocked only by toppling rapacious capitalist rule through a series of socialist revolutions and establishing a worldwide planned socialist economy. ■

Redfern...

(continued from page 1)

of this country. The persecution of the Redfern defendants is not only an example of the chemically pure racism of capitalist Australia's "justice" system but an indication of what the ruling class intends to do to others who engage in determined struggles in defiance of the bosses' state. It is thus in the very interests of the working class to fight for freedom for the Redfern political prisoners. And the proletariat—with its numbers, organisation and ability to shut down production—has the social power to decisively push back capitalist attacks on all the exploited and oppressed.

But against the Redfern militants stands a racist NSW Labor government, which is determined to prosecute them and determined to intensify the subjugation of the Aboriginal community living in the Redfern area known as The Block. With the present leadership of the unions beholden to the White Australia chauvinist Labor Party, the fight to mobilise unions in defence of the Redfern black militants must go forward in defiance of the current political domination of Laborite nationalism and racism in the workers movement.

Importantly, there have been some concrete expressions of support for the Redfern militants. A motion passed at a 5 October 2004 meeting of the Australia Asia Worker Links (AAWL) in Melbourne concluded that: "AAWL will encourage unions and labour movement organisations to support campaigns in defence of the Aboriginal people arrested since the Redfern riot." Last year, protest statements in support of the Redfern defendants were sent to the NSW attorney-general by prominent Aboriginal activists Jenny Munro and Sam Watson, by the prisoners' rights group Justice Action and by the Partisan Defence Committee, a non-sectarian class-struggle defence organisation, whose purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League (SL). SL supporters have been raising the need to support the arrested Redfern militants in speeches at left meetings and rallies.

The Socialist Alliance (SA) group has also called for defence of the Redfern militants. A joint Indigenous Social Justice Association (ISJA) and SA leaflet distributed at the 13 February Sydney rally included a slogan demanding "the immediate dropping of charges arising from the Redfern and Palm Island incidents!" An SA speaker at the rally, Raul Bassi, also stated that until all charges are dropped against those in Redfern and on Palm Island who were arrested after protesting police violence in their communities, there will be no justice. We welcome this and say that those serious about defending the Redfern political prisoners should actively broaden support for the arrested militants and use whatever influence they have in the workers movement to mobilise union support for this struggle. **What is urgently necessary are united-front protests and actions to defend the Redfern and Palm Island black militants. Trade unions, Aboriginal activists, immigrant minorities, leftists and anti-racist youth must be brought together in struggle to demand: Drop all the charges! Free them now!**

There is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

Police have meanwhile been carrying out a cowardly campaign of harassment and repression against both the relatives of the Redfern militants and those of TJ. One of the youth's aunts, who is also the sister of arrested Redfern militant Darryl Hickey, has spoken of how she and her family, who live in Sydney's west, have been victimised by police since the killing of TJ and the Redfern upheaval. Police have driven past her house yelling insults over loudspeakers and even her young daughters have been harassed by cops. TJ's teenage cousins living in western Sydney have also been stopped on the



Daily Telegraph

February 2004: Black militants courageously defend Redfern community in nine-hour pitched battle following death of "TJ" Hickey at hands of cops. Racist NSW Labor government is now meting out hefty prison sentences to those who fought off police marauding.

street and subjected to racist abuse by police.

But the Hickey family has defiantly resisted pressures to give up the fight for justice for TJ. "We're not giving up; we're going to fight till they put it there," declared Gail Hickey after the racist NSW Labor government refused to allow a plaque, which noted that her son had died "from a police pursuit," to be erected at the site where he suffered his fatal injuries.

The continuing outrage over TJ's killing and last November's cop killing of Palm Island Aborigine, Mulrunji Doomadgee, has become a focus of anger against racist cop terror. This just anger should be harnessed to defend the Redfern and Palm Island militants arrested for courageously protesting the cop killings. But broadening and strengthening support for class-war prisoners requires a struggle to break illusions that the capitalist courts which try and convict them, are in any way "neutral umpires" in this racist, sexist and class-divided society. The workers and oppressed must be won to the understanding that the courts are an integral part of the capitalist state machinery that the racist ruling class uses to enforce its rule of exploitation.

Yet in the same leaflet (distributed at the 13 February Sydney rally) that correctly calls for dropping of charges against the Redfern militants, SA/ISJA also promote the authority of the courts. The leaflet is mainly devoted to pushing the idea that a new coronial inquest can bring some measure of justice for TJ and his family. But like the first inquiry last year, another "inquiry" conducted by the capitalist state will be another whitewash conducted by the same state whose cops caused the youth's death and whose courts today have convicted (and prisons are holding) the Redfern militants and Victorian trade union leader Craig Johnston.

In contrast to SA, the SL speaker at the 13 February Sydney rally outlined a program for mobilising the working class independently of the capitalist state, calling for union/black mobilisations against racist terror and to protest the killing of the Kamilaroi youth at the hands of the state. A powerful example was seen in 1989 when hundreds of building workers downed tools and joined a black protest outside Sydney's special weapons police headquarters after cops shot dead Aboriginal worker David Gundy. These workers formed a defensive perimeter around the demonstration, facing off the assembled cops who would have loved nothing more than to riot against the protesters. Such powerful actions, hurting the profits of the capitalist bosses in whose interests the racist state acts, would give pause to the vicious NSW Labor government and its killer cops. Ultimately, however, putting an end to racist state terror will require a socialist revolution to overthrow the racist capitalist system.

For we communists, the fight to defend those persecuted for defying the capitalist state is inseparable from our opposition to capitalist exploitation and racist oppression. In this we are inspired by the traditions of the International

Labor Defense (ILD) in the U.S. The ILD was born out of discussions in Moscow in 1925, fusing the revolutionary internationalism of the Bolshevik Revolution with the principle of the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World that "an injury to one is an injury to all!" We recall here the words of James P. Cannon, ILD secretary from 1925-28 and, later, founder of the American Trotskyist movement:

"The class-conscious worker accords to the class-war prisoners a place of singular honor and esteem. The class-war prisoners are stronger than all the jails and jailers and judges.

"... The victory of the class-war prisoners is possible only when they are inseparably united with the living labor movement and when that movement claims them for its own, takes up their battle cry and carries on their work."

—"The Cause that Passes Through a Prison," *Labor Defender*, September 1926.

The Redfern militants are together with Craig Johnston the most significant class-war prisoners in this country for many, many years. Their struggle in February last year, which was joined by Maori and other youth of immigrant background, met with sympathy from opponents of racist oppression around the world. The question of defence of the Redfern Aboriginal political prisoners, in word *and deed* is a litmus test for any group claiming to stand for the working class and oppressed. **Free Craig Johnston and the Redfern political prisoners! Defend the Redfern and Palm Island Aboriginal militants!**

Fax protest statements demanding freedom for the Redfern militants and the dropping of charges, to the NSW Attorney-General, Robert Debus, on (02) 9228 3166. Fax copies to the Partisan Defence Committee on (02) 9281 2185.

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Greece...

(continued from page 5)

transmitting private property from one generation to the next while serving in general as a mechanism for regimenting the population through the inculcation of conservative social values. Thus, the liberation of women cannot be achieved without the abolition of the system of private property. The expropriation of the bourgeoisie through proletarian revolution and the extension of that revolution to the more advanced industrial countries, establishing the material foundations for a socialist society of material abundance, will lay the basis for the replacement of the family.

In Greece, women did not have the right to vote until 1956, while the dowry was only formally abolished in 1986 and in reality still exists. Although abortion was legalized (with severe restrictions) in 1986, it is difficult to obtain, particularly for teenagers and poor women. We are for free abortion on demand!

Following the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, women workers in Greece, as elsewhere, have been those most affected by the capitalists' attacks on the working masses. Working mothers have faced the closure of public nurseries and kindergartens. We fight for free, quality health care and for free, 24-hour childcare.

Greek society is extremely homophobic, as was demonstrated recently by the case of the Mega Channel TV broadcaster, which was fined €100,000 for showing a gay kiss in its *Close Your Eyes* series. In counterposition to the homophobic Greek left we seek to act as a Leninist tribune of the oppressed and defend

the democratic rights of homosexuals, including their right to marriage and to have children. All consensual forms of sexuality should be private and the state or church must not intervene. We call for "state and church out of the bedroom."

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The Greek Communist Party (KKE) is a mass reformist party with major influence and roots in the working class. Unlike the Stalinophobic Greek fake Trotskyists, we do not ignore the KKE, but seek to win its working-class base to the genuine communism of Lenin and Trotsky. As we wrote in *Workers Vanguard* No. 565 (11 December 1992):

"The KKE is the historic mass party of the Greek working class. Its partisan struggle against the Nazi wartime occupation and in the civil war that broke out in 1944 gave it great authority. That authority was duly abused to block the seizure of power by the working class at the end of the war, when the Communist Party, as in France and Italy, made peace with the bourgeoisie, disarmed the working class and entered into a popular-front capitalist government to rebuild the Greek capitalist state machine. This 1945 betrayal did not prevent the bourgeoisie, aided and abetted by British and U.S. imperialism, from turning on the Communists, renewing the civil war and slaughtering thousands in a campaign designed to break the potential for working-class revolution.

"The defeat of the KKE-led forces in 1949, conforming to Stalin's postwar settlement with Churchill that gave Greece to imperialism, paved the way for a series of rightist regimes culminating in the infamous colonels' dictatorship of 1967-74. Despite this history, the goal of the KKE has remained to find its way back into the corridors of capitalist power."

While the KKE is a mass reformist workers party, the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) is a bourgeois-populist formation and has been so from its foundation. In contrast to elements on the Greek left, such as the Cliffites, we reject on principle any political support to this party of the class enemy.

The Greek comrades worked together with comrades from the ICL long before



Thessaloniki, June 2003: Police rampage against leftist protesters outside European Union meeting.

the section was founded. In this collaboration we produced a number of leaflets, translating key articles—e.g., "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program," "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories," "Women's Liberation and the Struggle Against Imperialist Subjugation" and others. We wrote a statement in defense of the arrested anarchists and other protesters in Thessaloniki in 2003 against state repression. We defend and call for the immediate release of all those jailed in the roundup of the ELA and "17 November" groups [two groups

proletariat conscious that it is the only class with the historic interest and social force to smash capitalist exploitation.

The comrades of the Trotskyist Group of Greece, section of the ICL, are committed to building a party that represents the interests of the multiethnic working class and champions the rights of all the oppressed—women, homosexuals, youth, immigrants and ethnic minorities. It is necessary to fight for the political independence of the proletariat in order to overthrow the capitalist order by successful proletarian revolution.

Agreement for Common Work Between Greek Comrades and the ICL (FI)

1. The current group in Greece originated from a split within a group that had been having discussions with the ICL since 1999. The reason for the split was a months-long fight over the national question—the defense of the rights of national minorities in Greece and opposition to Greek national chauvinism. There were previously fights with others in the original group about the Russian question, the centrality of the woman question in Greece, the general strike question and the party question. As an excuse for breaking with the ICL over these questions, a minority of the group cynically accused the ICL of "centrism" and "chauvinism" when the bombing against Afghanistan began in October 2001 (*International Internal Bulletin* No. 54).

2. Comrades of the Greek group came to the politics of the ICL through fights and subsequent splits centered on the Russian question. Two members had split from the [ex-Morenoite] Communist League/Workers Power group over the defense of the Chinese deformed workers state, while another comrade of the original group wrote a document supporting the intervention of the ICL into the DDR in 1989-90. Another comrade of the current group came from the Greek Communist Party. Given the influence that the CP has in the Greek working class, it is the main obstacle, so it is very important for the future of the group that an ex-member of the CP is one of the Greek comrades. The group stands for the unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—and for proletarian political revolution against the bureaucracy. We came to agree with the ICL's analysis of the collapse of Stalinism in East Europe through studying the "Documents and Discussion on the Collapse of Stalinism" by Seymour and St. John in *Spartacist* No. 45-46 (Winter 1990-91), on which a comrade of the ICL gave a presentation. The Greek group agrees with the position of the ICL on Afghanistan. "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan." There is initial



More than 200,000 rally outside heavily guarded U.S. embassy in Athens during four-hour nationwide strike against U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, March 2003.

agreement with the ICL's position on Poland, although it has not been discussed in the current group. We reject the Stalinophobia of the anti-communist Greek pseudo-Trotskyists who refuse to intervene into the Greek Communist Party—a mass pro-Soviet Stalinist party that has the support of the most advanced sections of the Greek working class and youth.

3. Greece is a Balkan country, and it is the only Balkan country to which the October Revolution did not extend. And the Greek capitalist state is the only one in the Balkans that does not recognize any national minority. A Trotskyist group in Greece must fight against Greek chauvinism and defend the rights of national minorities—which are forcibly Hellenized—the Macedonians, Vlachs, Pomaks, Turks, Cham (Muslim)

Albanians and the Arvanites, etc., including the right of self-determination, especially for the Macedonian and Albanian minorities. It is also important to defend the rights of the persecuted Roma people. The comrades fight against Greek chauvinist poison inside the working class. The resolution of the myriad national questions in the Balkans requires a socialist federation of the Balkans.

4. A Trotskyist group must be a Leninist "tribune of the people." And for Greece, where the ultra-reactionary Orthodox church has enormous influence, the oppression of women is extreme. The Greek "holy trinity" of "homeland-religion-family" which the capitalist state promotes is strongly connected with the national and the woman questions. A central issue for Trotskyists must be the fight for the liberation of

women through socialist revolution and opposition to women's oppression. We fight for full democratic rights for homosexuals, in opposition to the male-chauvinist, homophobic Greek society and the Greek left. We are for the separation of church and state.

5. The Greek comrades stand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. They have already carried out many interventions, both in common work with comrades of the ICL and by themselves, into immigrant demonstrations. Immigrants—Albanian, Kurd, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Russian, Iraqi, Palestinian, etc.—have become a key component of the proletariat in Greece and the Greek group has to fight for the unity of the proletariat against any kind of racism.

6. The group agrees with the position of the ICL on the recent war on Iraq and the Afghanistan war in 2001. The Greek group fought under the slogans: Defend Iraq against the imperialist attack of the U.S. and its allies! Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! All American and allied troops out of the Near East now! We called for class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home in counterposition to the Greek left, which had a very parochial position: "No Greek participation in the Iraq war" and also against the pacifism of the antiwar movement "Stop the War." We supported the blockade of the American Souda base and we intervened in the workers strikes against the war. We called for Greek troops out of Cyprus.

7. A key question confronting Trotskyists in Greece is the question of Cyprus and our internationalist, class-struggle opposition to the anti-Turkish chauvinism of the Greek bourgeoisie. We call for the immediate withdrawal of all Greek troops from the island. We also demand the withdrawal of the Turkish army, the UN contingent and the British troops and bases. Our fight is for a proletarian solution to the national question, which of necessity requires the revolutionary overthrow of the nationalist bourgeoisies in Nicosia/Lefkosa, Athens and Ankara.

Iraq...

(continued from page 12)

administration, which considers the Iranian Shi'ite Islamic regime at the pinnacle of the world "axis of evil," maneuver the elections in Iraq to bring the Shi'ites to power, thus strengthening Iranian influence in the region? Answer: the Bush administration doesn't know where it is, much less where it is going. Attempting to disprove new revelations by Seymour Hersh (*New Yorker*, 24 January) that U.S. commandos have already been dropped into Iran, Cheney told MSNBC's Don Imus, "We don't want a war in the Middle East if we can avoid it." Where do these lunatics think Iraq is, Greater Texas?

France, Germany and Britain are worried about Bush waging another war in the Near East. They have substantial economic investments and trade deals with Iran and are urgently negotiating to get the Ayatollahs to forswear development of nuclear weapons. Cheney's disavowal of war plans against Iran was anything but. Stating that "Iran is right at the top of the list" of world trouble spots, Cheney dropped that "the Israelis might well decide to act first and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterwards." The Zionist necons in the Bush administration have long had their sights on "regime change" in Iran as part of their overall plan to redraw the map in the interests of Israeli security and American imperialist interests. As we reported in "Mullahs, Monarchists, Neocons and Zionists" (*WV* No. 820, 20 February 2004), Pentagon planners Richard Perle and Douglas Feith first schemed a new Near East plan many years ago in a position paper they drafted in 1996 for incoming Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In 2002, Perle prepared a slideshow for Pentagon chiefs

that explained U.S. goals for bringing "democracy" to the region as follows: "Iraq—a tactical goal, Saudi Arabia—a strategic goal, and Egypt—the great prize."

No wonder then that the entire Arab world and "old Europe" are on edge. Growing discontent within the American military and a real shortage of troops will not necessarily stop a zealously ideological Christian fundamentalist White House, no doubt anxious to hasten Armageddon, from widening the war in the region—and certainly not from launching murderously destructive bombing raids on Iran. *U.S. keep your bloody hands off Iran!*

Democratic rights for *all* the peoples of Iraq, and across the Near East more broadly, cannot be achieved under capitalism, but require the overthrow of bourgeois rule in the region and the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East. This is the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. This means combining the struggle against the occupation with a struggle against all manner of bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism, and poses the urgent need to forge Marxist parties to lead the struggles for workers rule. International extension of the revolution to the rich centers of imperialism—chiefly the United States, Germany and Japan—is not only essential for worldwide egalitarian socialist economic planning, but taking power out of the hands of the war-crazed U.S. imperialist rulers is essential for the future of life on the planet!

Imperialist War and Workers Revolution

The imperial ambitions so blatantly displayed in Bush's second inaugural speech were couched in bizarre Christian fundamentalist rhetoric. They were also inspired by Zionist neocon ravings, as

A polling station in the northern city of Samarra blown to rubble in lead-up to 30 January "elections."



former Soviet dissident and right-wing Israeli minister Natan Sharansky is now being touted by both the born-again president and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. A London *Guardian* (22 January) writer quipped that Bush's speechwriter suffered a heart attack while working on the inaugural address, "and its fire-and-brimstone rhetoric seems to have been aimed at having the same effect on some of the world's leaders."

The template for the U.S. imperial presidency was set a long time ago. And though this ruling class may currently have a Christian wacko at the helm, nonetheless the power behind the ship of state is the relentless U.S. capitalist drive for profits, which in a world economy necessarily results in imperialism, the inevitably bloody expression of capitalism at its highest stage. Imperialist aggression and war are not "policies" that can be ended within the framework of capitalism—the entire system must be overturned.

Rejecting this Leninist understanding of imperialism, the reformist organizers of the antiwar movement, like Workers World and the International Socialist Organization, peddled the lie that the capitalist system can be reformed to work

in the interest of human needs. They built antiwar demonstrations designed to appeal to liberal Democratic politicians who argue that the Iraq war is damaging to the interests of the U.S. On January 12, 16 Congressional Democrats issued an open letter to Bush calling for "immediate steps to begin the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq." These Democrats are getting themselves in position to play the same role they did before the war: to corral antiwar sentiment into the safe fold of the capitalist Democratic Party.

The fight against imperialist war must become a fight against the entire capitalist system which breeds it, and against both U.S. capitalist parties, Democrats as well as Republicans, who take turns presiding over an increasingly cruel and divided society. Largely because of its pro-capitalist misleadership, the working class, which alone has the ability to overthrow capitalism and open the road to human progress again, has been absent far too long as a contender for political and social power. Our task, as a small Marxist international organization, is to fight to reestablish the understanding that the road to human freedom lies through working-class socialist revolution. ■

8. The group agrees on the ICL's analysis and thesis on Pabloism. We want to fight to forge a Greek section of the ICL. We have been contributing our monthly payment since May 2002. We accept the discipline of a democratic-centralist international. The International, according to Lenin and Trotsky, is the necessary tool for the fight against capitalism, for new October Revolutions and for the protection of national sections from alien class pressures. We fight against the pretenders to Trotskyism—the SWP, Taaffeites, etc.—who are an obstacle to the reforging of a Trotskyist party. We seek to build the party through splits and fusions, including from among the CP youth and the anarchist milieu.

9. Unlike the Stalinist Communist Party, which is a reformist party based on the industrial proletariat, PASOK is a bourgeois-populist political formation. While it has influence in the main trade-union federations in Greece (which are generally craft unions), PASOK's existence is not dependent on the labor movement. PASOK's origins are in the bourgeois Centre Party of George Papandreou—the father of PASOK founder Andreas—whose social base the party inherited. PASOK's ideological underpinnings are illustrated by the party's seminal 3 September [1974] founding Declaration, which combined hawkish Greek nationalism over the Cyprus issue with characteristic populist claims to represent all "dispossessed" Greek people, defined to include peasants, small businessmen, managers, etc. The 3 September Declaration is moreover one of the more leftist expressions of PASOK's

politics, as it is liberally spiced with some quasi-Marxist verbiage. This "left" face was, however, jettisoned within a few years of the party's founding and any would-be "leftists" were soon expelled from the party. In contrast to elements of the Greek left, such as the Cliffites, we reject on principle any political support—including electoral support—to this party of the class enemy.

10. An important task is the reading of *Workers Vanguard* and other ICL propaganda, and continuing the reading of Marxist classics for cadre development. We should study and learn from the long and complex history of the Greek Trotskyist movement (e.g., the Greek Archio-Marxists and the Communist League of America's Greek newspaper) and make it available to the rest of the ICL. As Trotskyists in Greece we have to study about the Greek Civil War/national question/Cyprus, as well as the Trotskyist movement and its split during World War II on the Nazi occupation. The comrades need to study the ICL's statement on the imperialist bombing of Serbia and the Balkan slaughter and, with the help of the ICL, the national minorities in Greece as a part of the Balkans.

11. In order to accommodate this common work it is necessary to study the English language. It's also necessary for comrades of the ICL to study Greek.

12. As a task we have to project some modest public work in interventions through regular sales to the student milieu. In opponent meetings and in demonstrations we have already participated in common work with the ICL in Greece and in London.

13. Until it is realistic for a comrade to be able to transfer to Greece, it would be helpful for the Greek group to get more frequent visits, of longer duration. As soon as possible we need a comrade to transfer to help in the building of the section and the organizing of our political work.

14. We look forward to producing propaganda related to the class struggle in Greek society in order to intervene to give flesh to the ICL program. ■

Chechnya...

(continued from page 4)

neoconservatives like Pentagon advisor Richard Perle and former CIA head James Woolsey. The ACPC calls for a "direct international presence" (i.e., Western imperialist troops) in Chechnya.

Calls for foreign intervention in Chechnya feed into moves by U.S. imperialism to increase its military presence in the region. The Pentagon already has a network of military bases in Central Asia and the Caucasus. This includes U.S. Marines in Georgia, which is also occupied by a garrison of Russian troops. *U.S. out of Central Asia and the Caucasus! Russia out of Chechnya and Georgia!*

Down With Great Russian Chauvinism!

The most disgusting response to the Beslan massacre among leftist groups comes from the dubious Socialist Equality Party (SEP) of David North, which declared that the demand for an independent Chechnya is "a reactionary project, whose realization would benefit only aspiring bourgeois elements and their communalist and Islamic fundamentalist allies" (World Socialist Web Site, statement by the Editorial Board, 4 September 2004).

National rights for the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia were won as part of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which destroyed what Lenin called the tsarist "prison house of peoples." Under the Soviet Union, autonomous regions were established for formerly oppressed peoples such as the Chechens, Ossetians, Tartars and Bashkirs in the Urals. Under Stalin's rule, national rights of non-Russian peoples were savagely trampled on in the Caucasus and elsewhere. During World War II, Stalin dissolved the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, falsely claiming it had supported the invasion by Nazi Germany. The entire population was deported to Central Asia, and a large per-

centage died en route. Stalin also forcibly resettled the Volga Germans and a number of other peoples from the Crimea and Caucasus.

In the late 1950s, the liberal Stalinist regime of Nikita Khrushchev restored the Chechen-Ingush Republic and large numbers returned to their homeland. They enjoyed a substantial degree of national autonomy, preserving and developing their language and cultural identity, despite the fact that the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers state dominated by Russian nationalism.

As Georgi M. Derluguian notes in his insightful essay "Che Guevaras in Turbans" (*New Left Review*, September-October 1999), "In the 1960s Soviet Central Asia and the Caucasus were commonly described as a showcase of modernization, and this was not mere propaganda." By all indicators, Soviet citizens from this region were centuries ahead in development compared to neighboring Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, especially when one considers the condition of women.

Today, these regions have been thrown back centuries in time. The deepening hold of nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism on the consciousness of the peoples of the former Soviet Union is a reflection of capitalist counterrevolution. What is needed to galvanize proletarian opposition to the capitalist rulers of Russia and the other former Soviet Republics is the forging of a revolutionary workers party steered in Leninist internationalism. As we wrote at the beginning of the first Chechen war a decade ago (*WV* No. 614, 13 January 1995):

"An internationalist, revolutionary workers movement fighting for a democratically planned, egalitarian economy and true equality between the peoples of this region could rally the working masses of all the Caucasian peoples to overcome the raging fratricidal national conflicts. An authentically communist, Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party must be forged in sharp struggle against all variants of nationalism, and in particular against the chauvinism of the Great Russian oppressor." ■

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Iraq: Sham Elections, Savage Occupation

The following article on the sham elections and continuing brutal occupation in Iraq is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 841, 4 February), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S. Only days before Iraq's 30 January "elections" Australian soldiers showed the meaning of "democracy" under the U.S.-led imperialist occupation when they shot an Iraqi man outside the Australian embassy, simply because he allegedly refused their orders to "hit the ground." This follows on the heels of an incident late last year in which Australian soldiers riddled a car with bullets, hitting one of the Iraqi occupants.

In late February, John Howard announced that 450 more Australian troops would be sent to Iraq. Also supporting the occupation, ALP leader Kim Beazley responded, "we need to be differently engaged, not more deeply engaged."

Yet the ferocity of the resistance in Iraq has meant that imperialist armies find themselves increasingly, save for large-scale missions, confined to their bases, unable to even travel the 20-kilometre road linking Baghdad's airport to the capital's Green Zone. When Iraqi forces on the ground aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we revolutionary Marxists take their side against the U.S., its Australian and other allies, and their Iraqi lackeys. Every blow struck against the imperialist occupiers is a blow for the international working class.

Iraq is of course not the first country to feel the savagery of colonial occupation forces that include the Australian military. Shortly after occupying East Timor in 1999 under the guise of protecting "human rights," Australian troops were torturing captured prisoners and terrorising Timorese women in their homes at night. The Australian-led UN forces have created, and violently backed, a neocolonial state apparatus in East Timor that has ensured Australian imperialism's massive theft of oil and gas from this impoverished country. On 4 December 2002 in the East Timor capital, Dili, the combined forces of the UN/Australian police force and the UN-controlled East Timorese police opened fire on unarmed high school students protesting against cop violence. Eighteen of the demonstrators were shot and up to five were killed. We demand: **Australian military get out of Iraq, East Timor, Aceh and the Solomon Islands! Not one person, not one cent for the racist Australian imperialist military!**

FEBRUARY 1—While U.S. jets screamed overhead, U.S. soldiers surrounded Iraqi polling places to make sure Bush's fake "election" on January 30 came off. The "election" was designed purely as a legitimizing cover for the continuing savage U.S. occupation. It was a despicable and cynical fraud, in which at least 44 Iraqis died in widely predicted violence. While we denounce criminal terror against innocent civilians, including those who came out to vote behind the American barbed wire, we recognize that every military blow struck against the U.S. and British occupiers, their allies and mercenaries is a blow against imperialist aggression. U.S. out of Iraq now!

It was grotesque to watch U.S. puppet



Mosul, 8 January: U.S. troops brutalise a man accused of supporting insurgents in Iraq. He later died.

**Defend the Iraqi Peoples!
U.S./Australia Out Now!**

and strutting thug Ayad Allawi, the former Ba'athist goon called "Saddam lite" by his own American handlers, mouth pieties about "free elections" in the midst of overwhelming U.S. military terror. Curfews were imposed and car traffic was banned anywhere near polls, whose locations were kept secret until the last minute, as were the names of most of the candidates for a meaningless "national assembly" to draft a meaningless "constitution" under the boot of the U.S. occupiers. But a few plastic ballot boxes and cardboard booths, with a compliant American press to burble about the "joy" of the day, were all Bush really wanted for his cynical photo-op, as supposed independent election observers "observed" safely far away in Jordan.

Meanwhile, the horror of war continues. New revelations of Iraq torture and Pentagon spy units burrowing into Iran have come out. Veteran investigative journalist Seymour Hersh points out that in Iraq "the number of tonnage dropped has grown exponentially each month. We are systematically bombing that country.... It's simply a turkey shoot" (*CounterPunch* online, 27 January).

The supposed "sanctity of the vote" means less than nothing to the U.S. president, who stole his first presidential election through disenfranchising black people. In terms of fake elections, he might have taken a lesson from the Nazis. Today, in the midst of all the imperialist crocodile tears over the Nazi death camp Auschwitz, let's recall that Hitler made concentration camp inmates vote. In the 12 November 1933 Reichstag elections, prisoners at Osthofen, Brandenburg and Oranienburg were given ballots. Hitler

won. The Americans don't seem prepared to go door-to-door to check on who voted, as the Nazis did—though staining the forefingers of those Iraqis who did venture out to vote does give new meaning to the term "marked man."

The Americans' cynical use of fake elections under battlefield conditions is not new. Resurrecting Reagan's gory 1982 electoral sham in El Salvador, Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld said last December, "I mean, my goodness, El Salvador had elections when people were being shot at and there was a civil war going on, and it worked fine" (*Wall Street Journal Online*, 10 January). The only "choice" allowed was either junta chief José Napoleón Duarte or death-squad torturer "Blowtorch Bob" D'Aubuisson. Meanwhile, a leftist military insurgency was raging, whose military victory, we said, "is an absolute necessity on the road to workers power in El Salvador." We wrote, in "Reagan's Junta Holds 'Elections by Death': "To talk of any kind of elections while the junta's army is intact...is preparing a gigantic *defeat* for the Salvadoran masses. The heroic worker and peasant fighters are not shedding their blood to get more electoral farces but to break the chains of oppression that bind them" (*WV* No. 300, 5 March 1982).

During the Vietnam War in the 1960s, in South Vietnam the U.S. broke the monotony of regular military/CIA coups with occasionally letting its puppets stage "elections." One such typical foray in 1967 (when the U.S. had half a million troops on the ground) was "won" by former generals Thieu and Ky, as Buddhists and peace candidates were

banned, newspapers were suppressed and voting took place only in areas under the Saigon government's control. Sound familiar? The next year a rather more significant event for the liberation of the Vietnamese people occurred: the Tet Offensive, beginning the night of January 30, 1968, which shattered the myth of U.S. military "progress."

In Vietnam and El Salvador, military victory for the opponents of U.S. imperialism directly posed the possibility of lifting the yoke of imperialist subjugation and opening the road to social revolution, as occurred in Vietnam. Such is not the case in Iraq today. The clerical reactionary forces and Ba'athists now dominant in the "resistance" to U.S. imperialism are also enemies of the working class, women and minorities.

Wider War Threatened

The stage is set now for civil war within Iraq's borders and significant destabilization beyond. Iraq is not a nation but a patchwork of different peoples and ethnicities carved by the British imperialists out of the old Turkish Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War. The Sunni Arab minority has historically dominated the Arab Shi'ite majority as well as a portion of the Kurdish nation (which also spans parts of Iran, Turkey and Syria). We warned: "Absent the working class emerging as an independent political force in a struggle against neo-colonial rule, each of these populations can only come to power by oppressing the others and in alliance with U.S. imperialism" (*WV* No. 830, 6 August 2004).

The Sunni Arab minority is the big loser under the American occupation, and so will continue the insurgency against the foreign imperialist occupiers—as well as the criminal sectarian violence against the Shi'ites, the Kurds, and other peoples and tribes. Meanwhile, the Kurds want control of the oil wealth in their region and many Kurds have illusions that the American occupation will protect them against Arab reconquest. The fight for Kurdish self-determination is a just struggle, requiring the overthrow of four capitalist states. We call for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan. But in Iraq today—and only in Iraq—the Kurdish question has become decisively subordinated to the American imperialist occupation, of which Kurdish political and military forces have become an integral part. The struggle for Kurdish independence can only go forward through intransigent opposition to the occupation and the Kurdish nationalists who collaborate with U.S. imperialism.

For the first time in centuries, Shi'ites will rule an Arab country, which is a reason al-Sistani and many other Shi'ite leaders pushed for the elections. This has Sunni Arab rulers apoplectic that a Shia "Crescent" will run from Iran through Iraq to Lebanon, via Syria. Notably, the oil wealth of Saudi Arabia is concentrated in Shi'ite areas, as is the largest concentration of oil wealth in Iraq (apart from Mosul), not to mention the oil wealth controlled by Iran's Shi'ite theocracy. Now, why would the Bush

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