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“Market Reforms” Sharpen Contradictions in China Defend, Extend the Gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!

The following article is based on presentations given at Spartacist forums in Sydney and Melbourne on 19 and 21 April respectively. The Melbourne forum drew individuals from the Trades Hall-based Australia Asia Worker Links, the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group, the Communist Party of Australia and Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP). The lively extended discussion that followed the presentation included political combat against DSP cadre Chris Slee, who argued that China today is capitalist. This social-democratic line was formally adopted by the DSP in 1999.

Slee asserted in the forum, “the extent to which the privatisation has gone on is such that you can’t really say that the Chinese state defends the collective ownership of the means of production any more and therefore, according to Trotsky’s criteria, you can’t really say that it’s a workers state.” Here he echoes arguments in his February letter to *Workers Vanguard*, the International Communist League’s (ICL) flagship newspaper published by the Spartacist League/U.S. (see page 7). Later Slee also pointed to “decisions of the Chinese bureaucracy to go on a policy of full-out capitalist restoration.”

While pontificating about putting “too much credence on the Stalinist bureaucracy,” Slee and the DSP in fact falsely invest the Chinese bureaucracy with the capacity to carry out a gradual cold restoration of capitalism from above and transform itself into a new possessing class. This anti-communist line is counterposed to the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defence of China and runs counter to Trotsky’s analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a brittle, parasitic caste dependent for its existence on the proletarian property forms of the workers state, while acting as a transmission belt for the pressures of world imperialism in undermining the workers state.

As one comrade put it in the discussion, for the DSP, “what happens to China is not looked at...from the point of view of the international working class’ fight.” Slee and the DSP share the outlook of the nationalist, protectionist, pro-capitalist Laborite union misleaders they tail, who, in the service of their anti-communist China bashing, depict the powerful Chinese working class as hapless victims. The DSP (previously known as the Socialist Workers Party) have long been active agents for capitalist counterrevolution. In the 1980s and early 1990s, they lined up behind their “own” imperialists’ anti-Soviet war drive, championing the anti-Semitic, Catholic-reactionary Solidarność



Xinhua



China Labour Bulletin

movement in Poland and cheering on Boris Yeltsin and capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-2. On China, they have sided with counterrevolutionary causes from “free Tibet” to “independence for Taiwan.”

Several comrades, including some who participated directly in the ICL’s fight against capitalist counterrevolutions in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, pointed to the disastrous consequences of these counterrevolutions, historic defeats for the world’s working class. In the former USSR, working people have been hit by all-sided devastation, including an enormous destruction of living standards, diminished life expectancy and social degradation. One SL supporter contrasted this devastation to the massive economic growth in China over decades to illustrate that China today is not capitalist. This is the only conclusion to draw, unless, as our supporter noted, “you want to believe that capitalist counterrevolution actually leads to economic growth and

‘democracy,’ which is of course the lie that is promoted by the imperialists.”

The DSP’s position on China today is a cover for capitulating to the Australian ruling class and its drive to smash this deformed workers state. The same supporter angrily put it to Slee: “Your party supported the Australian imperialist military takeover of East Timor. One can only assume [with] your argument that there’s nothing to defend in China, you’re preparing the ground for Australian imperialism to get their cut in China.”

The DSP is a “made-in-Australia” social-chauvinist formation lacking even the most rudimentary loyalty to the cause of the international working class. In late April, only months after the occupying Australian imperialist military murderously gunned down two men in an East Timorese refugee camp, the DSP National Committee passed a resolution reaffirming their tepid criticisms of the 2006 imperialist intervention and vowing “we will not be raising the ‘troops out’ demand

at this stage”! Posted on the Green Left discussion site by DSP honcho Peter Boyle, the resolution enthusiastically upheld their treacherous 1999 campaign for Australian imperialist military to be sent to East Timor.

The DSP’s record contrasts sharply with the ICL’s proletarian internationalist fight to oppose the racist Australian rulers at home and defend the gains of the international working class. Standing on the ICL’s powerful interventions into the incipient workers political revolution in East Germany and against counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, and in the tradition of Trotsky’s unwavering defence of the gains of the Russian October Revolution, today we fight for the military defence of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution.

In 1933, warning of the “tragic possibility” of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, Trotsky wrote:

“But in the event of this worst possible variant, a tremendous significance for the subsequent course of the revolutionary struggle will be borne by the question: *where* are those guilty for the catastrophe? Not the slightest taint of guilt must fall upon the revolutionary internationalists. In the hour of mortal danger, they must remain on the last barricade.”

—“The Class Nature of the Soviet State” (October 1933)

This is the Trotskyist banner that the ICL intervenes with and the DSP vehemently opposes.

The open and democratic debate over political differences at the Melbourne Spartacist forum stands in stark contrast to the DSP’s vicious thug attack against us last year. Then, the faction-riven DSP lashed out with violence and big lies against the SL in an attempt to censor our Marxist politics—in particular our on-going exposure of the DSP’s social-chauvinism over the Australian imperialist military occupation of East Timor (see “We Will Not Be Silenced!” *ASp* No. 196, Spring 2006). We repeat now, what we said then: “we will continue to argue program and principle against pseudo-socialists like the DSP in order to openly and clearly expose and defeat their sellout politics.”

In 1949, China experienced a profound social revolution as the peasant-based People’s Liberation Army (PLA) led by Mao Zedong’s Communist Party (CCP) overthrew the imperialist-backed, bourgeois-nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek’s Guomindang. The victory of Mao’s PLA destroyed the Chinese

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For Workers Political Revolution to Oust the Stalinist Bureaucracy!

Subscription Drive Success

Comrades of the Spartacist League/Australia (SL) and Spartacus Youth Club (SYC) spent six weeks from late February to early April participating in our annual subscription drive. This campaign is crucial to maintaining an ongoing readership and reaching new people with our revolutionary propaganda. We are pleased to report that we achieved 217 points, exceeding our modest quota by 20 percent. The points represent subscriptions to *Australasian Spartacist* (ASp) as well as the press of other sections of the International Communist League, especially *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S. The success of our campaign is a tribute to the hard work of our comrades and sympathisers. Congratulations go to comrade Glenn who sold the most subscriptions.

We welcome our new readers and welcome back those who resubscribed. During our campaign a number of long-time readers expressed how much they appreciate our press, which offers a Marxist compass in today's reactionary climate. For our part, we take this opportunity to thank those who made contributions toward the ongoing production of ASp.

The SL is a fighting Marxist propaganda group. Our new readers will find our newspaper to be hard-hitting and polemical against the liberal-reformist program of other groups claiming to be socialist. Our press is a vehicle for introducing youth and workers, along with immigrants and other oppressed layers, to a revolutionary Marxist program. The role of the communist press was outlined in the 1921 Organisational Guidelines adopted at the Third Congress of the Communist International, which codified the experience of Lenin's Bolshevik Party that led the working class to power in October 1917.

Emphasising the importance of subscriptions, the Guidelines observed: "Use must be made of every situation in which there is increased motion among the workers and where political or social life is further inflamed by any sort of political and economic events." During the sub drive, our newspaper served our interventions into expressions of social discontent and class struggle. Our comrades, in Melbourne and Sydney, and on a regional trip to Brisbane, intervened in rallies and meetings, at university campuses, and on street sales with our principled revolutionary line.

Break with Laborism: We Need a Revolutionary Party!

Today, workers and the oppressed face draconian anti-union laws, worsening education, health and social services, and increased racist and anti-working-class state repression under the ruling class's bogus "war on terror." In this context, our press gained a hearing amongst those looking for an alternative to the Laborite reformists whose ultimate answer to the

brutalities of White Australian capitalism is to return the union-busting, pro-capitalist ALP to the government benches as a supposed "lesser evil" to the Liberal/National coalition. As opposed to the Laborite left, we seek to build a revolutionary vanguard party on the Bolshevik model, forged in the struggle to win the working-class base of the ALP away from the pro-capitalist tops who promote nationalism and loyalty to the capitalist state. Such a party is necessary to lead the proletariat in the fight for international socialist revolution.

At the 10 March International Women's Day rally in Sydney, our slogans stood in marked contrast to the bourgeois-liberal rally demands. For example, while the organisers pleaded for "non-biased pregnancy counseling for all women," we forthrightly called for "Free Abortion on Demand!" Similarly our call "For Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution!" cut against the wretched pro-capitalist ALP politics that predominated at the rally on the eve of the NSW state elections. We especially drew attention to our powerful article on "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women" in the current issue of the ICL's international theoretical journal *Spartacist*. This article details the enormous impact this social revolution had for women and concretises the revolutionary program that working people need to fight for to end capitalist exploitation and oppression through victorious workers revolution.

Down With Australian Imperialism!

On 17 March, we attended rallies in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane opposing the imperialist occupation of Iraq. Our comrades fought for the understanding that opposition to imperialist war cannot be separated from the struggle to get rid of the capitalist system that breeds such wars. We highlighted our call for Australian imperialist troops to get out of not only Iraq, but also Afghanistan, East Timor and the South Pacific, and posed the need for *independent* working-class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. In the tradition of our anti-militarist communist forebears, we declared "not one person, not one cent" for the Australian imperialist military!

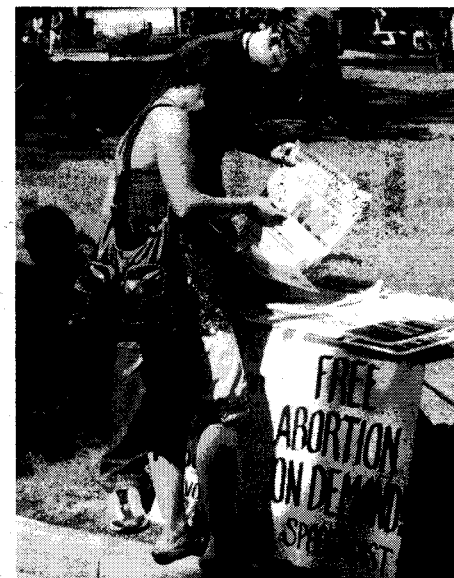
This program is counterposed to the liberal pressure politics pushed by reformist left groups, many of whom inhabit the popular-frontist Stop the War Coalition. They serve to *chain* the working class to its capitalist exploiters at home. In raising the call to "Bring the troops home" at these and other rallies, the left echo the program of the ALP and bourgeois Greens, who want Australian troops deployed closer to home to enforce Australian imperialist exploitation in the region and to target the bureaucratically deformed workers states

in Asia, particularly North Korea and China. Our ASp front-page article calling to "Defend North Korea! Down with UN Sanctions!" ruffled the feathers of many small 'l' liberals and reformists at the 17 March demonstrations. At these rallies and throughout the sub drive comrades also built our successful April public forums defending the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution (see article page 1).

Our defence of the remaining deformed workers states, especially China and North Korea, and our unswerving opposition to the Australian imperialist state, drew a sharp political line wherever we intervened, including at an 18 March Brisbane meeting titled "No Guantanamo in Australia." The meeting was called to oppose the new draconian high-tech detention facility being built at Christmas Island similar to the notorious U.S.-run concentration camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Opposing Australian imperialism and increased state repression, our speaker also called to "Free David Hicks and all the detainees, from Guantánamo to Iraq! U.S. out of Guantánamo Bay—it belongs to the Cuban deformed workers state!"

Caged for more than five years at Guantánamo, Hicks was brought before a U.S. military tribunal in late March where he copped a plea of guilty to having provided "material support" to a terrorist organisation. The deal included having to repudiate his own accounts of being tortured and a year-long gag order. In exchange, he is to serve nine months in jail in Australia. Over the previous months the Hicks case had ignited an outpouring of opposition in Australia against the U.S. Bush government, with large sections of the population justly horrified by conditions at Guantánamo and outraged at Hicks' ongoing detention.

In seeking to build on popular support for Hicks, the Laborite left, for example in the Stop the War Coalition, promoted the slogan "Bring David Home!" in order to appeal to bourgeois-liberal public opinion, that is, to those concerned first and foremost that Hicks receive "due process" in the capitalist, preferably Australian, judicial system. Uncritically raising this slogan, they not only show their social-democratic underbelly but criminally foster illusions within the working class that "justice"



ASp photo

can be served under a benevolent Australian capitalism.

For Class Struggle Against Capitalist State Repression

Promoting illusions in the racist Australian capitalist state is nothing new for Socialist Alliance, who have demanded a Royal Commission into the 2005 cop killing of Palm Island Aborigine Mulrunji Doomadgee. This calls on the state to investigate its own crimes and can only be a whitewash cover-up. The repressive state apparatus, which at its core consists of the army, police, courts and prisons, exists to defend the profits, property and rule of the tiny capitalist class. The fact that the Australian capitalist rulers are building their own Guantánamo on Christmas Island and that Palm Island Aborigines now languish in Queensland dungeons for the "crime" of protesting the cop killing of Mulrunji, speaks loudly to the fact that there is no justice in the capitalist courts! There needs to be a fight to mobilise the power of the multiracial working class to come to the defence of Aboriginal people. We demand: **Drop the charges! Free the Palm Island Aborigine! Free the Palm Island Aborigine! Free the Palm Island Aborigine!**

We seek to build a party that stands as a tribune of the people, mobilising the working class in struggle to defend not only oppressed Aborigines but all those facing capitalist state repression, including vulnerable immigrants targeted by "anti-terrorist" witchhunts. Ramping up its security arsenal, the bourgeoisie's sweeping "anti-terror" laws trample on the democratic rights of all and ultimately target working-class organisations, including the left, as the ruling class seeks to suppress opposition to its pursuit of unbridled

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In Honour of Three Women Leaders of the ICL

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 890, 13 April), newspaper of the *Spartacist League/U.S.*, section of the *International Communist League*.

The Prometheus Research Library is proud to announce the publication of *Prometheus Research Series* No. 6, "Selected Speeches and Writings in Honor of Three Women Leaders of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist): Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, Elizabeth King Robertson." This bulletin in memory of three outstanding comrades is testimony to the highest human endeavor and political purpose: the struggle to forge a revolutionary, internationalist, proletarian vanguard to fight for new October Revolutions, the necessary first step toward liberating humanity through the creation of classless communist society.

The Prometheus Research Library is the central reference archive of the *Spartacist League/U.S.* Somewhat different in scope from previous publications in the *Prometheus Research Series*, which have focused on key historical documents and writings, this new publication adds dimension to the PRL's purpose to collect, preserve and make available the historical record of the international workers movement. In this purpose, there is an unbroken revolutionary continuity reaching back to Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks. The PRL staff and comrades who designed the bulletin were guided by a biographical tribute produced by the Russian Communist Party (Bol-

shevik) Central Committee Department for the Study of the History of the October Revolution and the RKP(b), *In Memoriam to the Fighters of the Proletarian Revolution, Who Died in 1917-1921* (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925). A graphical motif from the volume was recovered and reproduced on the dedication page of *Prometheus Research Series* No. 6.

Our 96-page bulletin, including 15 pages of photographs, may be ordered for [U.S.]\$7.00 from *Spartacist Publishing Company* [A\$7.00—see ad below to order from *Spartacist ANZ Publishing Company*].

We reprint below the Introduction to *PRS* No. 6, by the Prometheus Research Library Staff.

Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth King Robertson were cherished comrades whose lives were tragically cut short when they were in their prime as revolutionary communist leaders. We remember them in this *Prometheus Research Series* bulletin because there is a great deal to be learned from their purposeful lives. Here, memory is a political act. Too often, eulogies tilt toward hagiographies, smoothing out foibles to elevate mortals to mythological stature. Saints don't lead proletarian socialist revolutions. Exceptional people dedicated to a political purpose do: people like Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth King Robertson.

This bulletin includes only a selection from the international outpouring of speeches and letters about Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth Robertson. A guide to further reading about them, and to articles written by them, is included as an appendix.

These three women were top cadre of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), i.e., the ICL. That they awakened to political consciousness through struggles against the American imperialist war in Vietnam, the struggle for black freedom, and for women's rights is not in itself so unusual for women of their generation. What is remarkable and atypical of their generation, however, is that they remained steadfast in their commitment to proletarian revolution, long after most radicals of that era made peace with the capitalist order and wrote off revolutionary politics as indiscretions of youth in heady times.

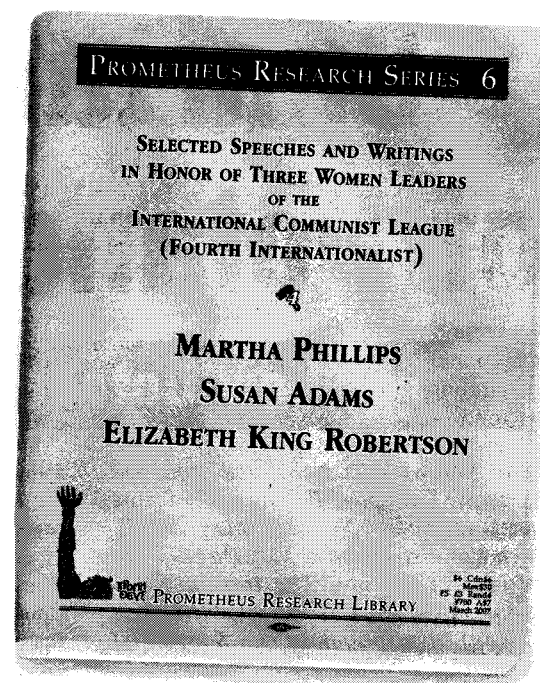
What Friedrich Engels said at the funeral of his comrade Karl Marx ably describes what animated Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth Robertson:

"For Marx was above all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which *he* was the first to make conscious of its own positions and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation. *Fighting was his element.*"

The chronicle presented here of the lives of these women, as told through tributes by their closest comrades, is also a powerful and anecdotal narrative of the political history of the *Spartacist League/ICL* at crucial turning points in world history. All three women gave their utmost to build the Leninist-Trotskyist party necessary to lead the proletariat to victory. Our party's founding of a youth organization, establishment of trade-union fractions, our international extension, codifying Leninist organizational norms, training new cadre, selecting and testing a leadership were in no small measure the work of these three women.

The interrelation of the individual with objective forces in history is highlighted in the role these women played in the ICL's fight to defend and extend the October Revolution. Martha Phillips was a leader in the ICL's fight to reimplant the authentic history and program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party in the Soviet Union. Martha was murdered at her post in Moscow in February 1992. The ICL waged an international campaign to press for an investigation into this heinous crime, but it remains unsolved.

Susan Adams, who played a leading role in the ICL's American section and then the French section, picked up the banner and continued the fight to build the nucleus of a Trotskyist party in Russia, after the capitalist counter-revolution had rolled back the gains of the October 1917 Russian Revolution. Trotsky described the Soviet Union under Stalinist rule as a degenerated workers state—



despite the usurpation of political power by a bureaucracy, the economic benefits of collectivization of industry remained. The destruction of the Soviet Union was a huge blow to the international working class. Political consciousness was hurled back, while triumphant capitalist rulers push the lie that "communism is dead." Susan Adams' work is an affirmation that communism lives in the proletarian struggle against racist, capitalist exploitation around the world.

Our own party was not immune to the reactionary pressures of the political period. Elizabeth Robertson played a leading role in our struggle to reconstruct a badly damaged party, including through extraordinary, unsparing examination of her own role—a capacity rarely seen in any walk of life. In pushing herself, when she was already very ill, Lizzy set an example for political accountability of every party cadre. Her careful, thoughtful, well-researched work, codified in the ICL's international organizational rules and guidelines, is vital in the continual struggle to build a democratic-centralist international that Lenin and Trotsky would recognize as their own.

An examination of the lives and work of Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth Robertson is rich in political lessons for all our comrades, and especially the youth, who carry a special responsibility in the party-wide struggle for revolutionary continuity. Trotsky addressed his remarks to the youth when assessing the meaning of the loss of his comrade Kote Tsintsadze:

"The Communist parties in the West have not yet brought up fighters of Tsintsadze's type. This is their besetting weakness, determined by historical reasons but nonetheless a weakness. The Left Opposition in the Western countries is not an exception in this respect and it must well take note of it.

"Especially for the Opposition youth, the example of Tsintsadze can and should serve as a lesson. Tsintsadze was the living negation of any kind of political careerism, that is, the inclination to sacrifice principles, ideas, and tasks of the cause for personal ends. This does not in the least rule out justified revolutionary ambition. No, political ambition plays a very important part in the struggle. But the revolutionary begins where personal ambition is fully and wholly subordinated to the service of a great idea, voluntarily submitting to and merging with it. Flirtation with ideas or dilettante dabbling with them for personal advantage is what Tsintsadze pitilessly condemned both through his life and his death. His was the ambition of unshakable revolutionary loyalty. It should serve as a lesson to the proletarian youth."

—"At the Fresh Grave of Kote Tsintsadze,"
7 January 1931

We believe Trotsky would have recognized these three women as comrades of the caliber of Kote Tsintsadze. ■



Martha Phillips

Susan Adams

Elizabeth King Robertson

shevik) Central Committee Department for the Study of the History of the October Revolution and the RKP(b), *In Memoriam to the Fighters of the Proletarian Revolution, Who Died in 1917-1921* (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925). A graphical motif from the volume was recovered and reproduced on the dedication page of *Prometheus Research Series* No. 6.

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Spartacist Group of Poland Refounded



For New October Revolutions! Reforge the Fourth International!

The following is translated from the Spartacist Group of Poland's *Platforma Spartakusowców No. 23 (May 2007)*, which was distributed at May Day demonstrations in Warsaw. The translation is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard (No. 892, 11 May)*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

We are proud to announce the refounding of the Spartacist Group of Poland as a sympathizing section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The SGP will be part of our disciplined democratic-centralist international. We are committed to the fight for new October Revolutions worldwide, the fight for an international socialist society that will put the entire world's wealth at the disposal of humanity. The decision to refound the SGP was made earlier this year by the delegates of the Fifth International Conference of the ICL.

The SGP was first founded in October 1990 as a result of the fusion between the Young Left Movement (RML) of Poland and the ICL, following on the heels of the capitalist reunification of Germany and the ICL's fight against counterrevolution. The RML was a group of subjectively communist militants that originated in the late 1980s from the Stalinist youth movement in the Polish deformed workers state. The comrades of the RML started to come to an understanding that what existed in the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) was not socialism, but rather that Poland was a deformed workers state. While the Polish bourgeoisie was expropriated in the mid-late 1940s following Poland's liberation from German occupation by the Soviet Red Army, Poland was ruled not by democratically elected workers councils but by a parasitic bureaucratic caste—much as in Stalin's Soviet Union—deriving its privileges from the collectivized property forms. The Stalinists of the Polish United Workers Party lied to the working class that it was committed to building socialism. In reality they carried out a program that was directly counterposed to the interests of international proletarian revolution.

The RML came to understand that socialism is a classless egalitarian society that can only be achieved on the basis of a qualitatively higher level of economic development and an international division of labor, requiring a series of workers revolutions around the world. Building "socialism in one country" was a Stalinist lie that pandered to nationalism and went hand in hand with promoting "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. Thus the Stalinists vehemently opposed the struggle for socialist revolutions in the West. Within Poland the Stalinists granted enormous rights to the Catholic church and accommodated the politically and socially backward peasantry. Throughout the 1970s the Stalinists mortgaged Poland's wealth to the Western bankers and massively subsidized the landowning peasants, ruining the Polish economy.

The aspirations of the working class were frustrated time and again by the Stalinists, so that by 1980 the majority of the historically pro-socialist Polish proletariat was driven into the arms of the Catholic church. Workers flocked to *Solidarność*, whose leader Lech Wałęsa wasted no opportunity to declare himself to be a true son of the Polish church. By September

1981, *Solidarność* had consolidated itself around a program for capitalist counterrevolution, as demonstrated by its calls for "free trade unions"—a war cry of Cold War anti-Sovietism—and for "free elections," which would have meant capitalist restoration under the guise of parliamentary government. It received active support from a wide range of reactionary forces, such as the Vatican under Polish Pope Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II), the union-busting U.S. president Ronald Reagan, Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain and the anti-communist Social Democratic Party of Germany. The ICL's predecessor, the international Spartacist tendency, described *Solidarność*

Platforma Spartakusowców No. 23 (May 2007) and back issues can be ordered for 50c each from Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co., GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001.

nationally that fought against the capitalist reunification of Germany. A May 1990 "Letter to Polish Workers" issued by the Spartacist Workers Party of Germany (SpAD), German section of the ICL, made clear the ICL's unflinching opposition to *Solidarność* counterrevolution. The RML shared this understanding and embraced the ICL's Trotskyist program. In July 1990 the RML noted in a letter to our German section: "In the Trotskyist movement in Poland, we often meet with activists who have a '*Solidarność*' pedigree, or in any

workers parties like the SLD (a party with a working-class base and a pro-capitalist leadership) and bourgeois parties are "popular fronts"—political blocs based on the program of administering capitalism, thus subordinating the working class directly to the parties of the bourgeoisie. PS also published ICL articles on broad international issues.

In 2001, the International Executive Committee of the ICL decided to dissolve the SGP. The objective political situation in Poland was mistakenly viewed as bleak for the ICL in contrast to workers' and social struggles occurring in West Europe at the time. However, the Fourth ICL Conference in 2003 undertook a critical review of internal problems stemming from the impact of capitalist counterrevolution on our organization. The document of this conference noted soberly:

"Failure to recognize the period we are in and the necessary relationship of our small revolutionary vanguard to the proletariat, and the absence of the Soviet Union as an active and defining factor in politics, have led to disorientation. Frustration and impatience over the disparity between our small size and slender roots in the working class and our proletarian internationalist purpose have led both to opportunist lunges and sectarian moralism."
—Spartacist (English-language edition) No. 58, Spring 2004

The conference concluded that an inability to deal with the world created by the fall of the USSR, and the consequent retrogression in consciousness, lay at the root of the ICL's crisis in 2003. The weight of the defeats and the ensuing social catastrophes of capitalist counterrevolution flattened the understanding of our cadre that the ICL was, and is, the party of the Russian Revolution, of new Octobers, leading the way to the coming transformation of the world. At bottom, what was posed was whether "we will fight to maintain our revolutionary continuity or buy into and ultimately surrender to the worldview of our opponents. To these opponents, the issue of revolution, the Russian question, is an 'old' question that does not fit into their 'new world reality.'" Following our 2003 conference

Spartacists at 1992 May Day march in Warsaw protested anti-Semitism and attacks on abortion rights.



Platforma Spartakusowców

at the time as a company union for the CIA and bankers, raising the call "Stop *Solidarność* counterrevolution!" and stressing that the Polish working class needs a Trotskyist party.

When in December 1981 General Wojciech Jaruzelski suppressed *Solidarność*'s bid for power, the iSt supported this measure. At the same time, it warned that the Stalinists were capable of selling out the Polish workers state to capitalism, which they eventually did in 1989-90. The iSt's position was a direct application of the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the bureaucratically deformed workers states against internal and external counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucratic castes and replace their rule with that of democratically elected workers councils based on the defense of collectivized property forms, the planned economy and an internationalist perspective.

The RML started to break from Stalinism under the impact of the events in Poland. They rediscovered and upheld a fine tradition of the early Communist International that had almost been forgotten in Poland by the late 1980s: to honor in the month of January the "Three L's," Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, outstanding leaders of Russian, Polish and German communism. In honoring the Three L's, the RML effectively broke from the Polish nationalism promoted by the Stalinist bureaucracy and set itself apart from other left organizations which at the time actively promoted *Solidarność* counterrevolution.

What particularly attracted the RML to the ICL was the ICL's fight for a Red Germany of workers councils in a socialist Europe in the unfolding proletarian political revolution in the German Democratic Republic [East Germany] in 1989-90. The ICL was the only organization inter-

nationally that put all their hopes in '*Solidarność*.' ... It is increasingly more difficult for us to have a common language with them."

Counterrevolutionary Heritage of *Solidarność*

In 1990, the SGP was founded on the basis of the Agreement for Common Work between the RML and the ICL. The Agreement rejected the idea of a "family of Trotskyism." It noted that Trotskyism has nothing in common with such purveyors of anti-Sovietism as the followers of Nahuel Moreno or the United Secretariat of Ernest Mandel, who in 1983 hailed the *Solidarność* leadership as "the best socialists in the world." To this day our pseudo-Trotskyist opponents defend their support to counterrevolutionary *Solidarność*. In striking contrast to the pro-*Solidarność* left which capitulates to poisonous Polish nationalism, we declared that "Polish communists must fight relentlessly against Pilsudskiite nationalism, which subjects the workers to the dictates of the IMF while spewing out anti-Russian and anti-German chauvinism. Only proletarian internationalism offers a way forward—For the revolutionary unity of Russian, Polish and German workers! For a socialist united states of Europe!" (see *Platforma Spartakusowców No. 1*, October 1990 and *WV No. 513*, 2 November 1990).

In the following years the SGP published *Platforma Spartakusowców* and actively intervened in class and social struggles, such as the 1992 coal miners strike and in defense of Roma immigrants against racist deportations in 1996. Uniquely on the left, we opposed both the bourgeois parties that came out of *Solidarność* and the ex-Stalinist, social-democratic SLD [Democratic Left Alliance], which led alliances with capitalist parties. Such formations on the basis of an agreement between bourgeois



Revolutionary Marxist leader Rosa Luxemburg denounces German imperialism at 1907 rally.

Ullstein

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

we undertook a further re-examination of past practices and political questions.

One of the questions that came under review was our propaganda on Solidarność in the 1990s. After the destruction of the Polish deformed workers state in 1989-90, Solidarność had served its purpose as the spearhead for capitalist counterrevolution. Its peasant sector and many intellectuals decamped and founded their own bourgeois parties. Thus, Solidarność (and its offshoots like Solidarność 80 and Sierpień 80) became more akin to a trade union in social composition. During the first tenure of the SLD-led government in post-counterrevolution Poland we observed that the "official Solidarność union now poses as a champion of working-class interests while revving up its anti-Communist demagoguery and making overtures to openly fascist forces" (WV No. 614, 13 January 1995; PS No. 5, Spring 1995).

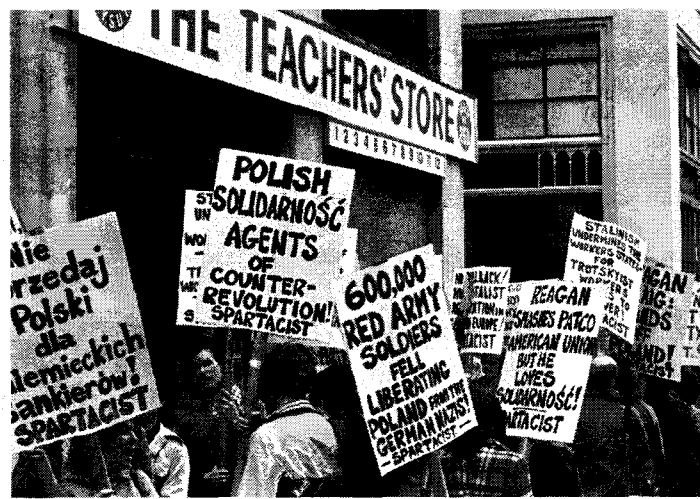
However, taking into account only the latter, we argued one-sidedly in a 1998 article in PS that "the function of Solidarność has nothing to do with 'trade unionism' of any kind, 'militant' or otherwise." Following internal discussion within the ICL, we corrected this formulation in our 2005 article "Right Wing Wins Polish Elections" (WV No. 857, 28 October 2005 and PS No. 13, December 2005), noting that it wrongly denied the fact that Solidarność is both a trade union and a reactionary clericalist organization: "It organizes workers at the point of production, sometimes leading defensive economic struggles; at the same time it functions as a political movement closely allied to the Catholic hierarchy and explicitly right-wing nationalist parties." This article, which summarized the ICL's proud record of fighting against counterrevolution against the backdrop of the obscene 25th anniversary festivities for Solidarność, was written in close collaboration between the ICL and its sympathizers and supporters in Poland.

Despite the SGP's dissolution, the ICL, especially through the SpAD, continued to intervene in leftist events and class struggles in Poland, and pursued discussions with militants who were interested in our program and repelled by the Polish left's embrace of anti-Communism and Polish nationalism. This work was facilitated in large part by a founding cadre of the SGP who continued to closely collaborate with the ICL. We consolidated another ICL sympathizer and won new ones.

For a Leninist Vanguard Party!

The organizational disappearance of the ICL in Poland in 2001 created a vacuum that was filled with various counterfeits—albeit limited to the Internet, as many such leftists share an illusion that posting texts and chatting on the Internet can substitute for the hard work of forging a Trotskyist party through polemical struggle against all varieties of opportunism and through active intervention in class and social struggles. Our principled fight [in 2005] against one of these counterfeits, *Platforma Proletariacka (PP)*, paved the way for the refounding of the SGP.

PP was a creation of a former SGP member who for a period of time postured as a Spartacist. The extent to which he broke with the ICL program was seen in his declaration of critical electoral support to a liberal-bourgeois candidate for president of Poland, Maria Szyszkowska, in 2005. PP falsely portrayed her as an opponent of Solidarność counterrevolution and SLD social democracy (then in government). That position was counterposed to the Marxist principle of working-class independence, which necessarily includes not voting for bourgeois candidates. It effectively meant abandoning the ICL's hard struggle against capitalist counterrevolution. We responded to this unprincipled maneuver in our 4 September 2005 "Statement of Sympathizers and Supporters of the ICL in Poland," pointing out: "The fact that PP provided critical support



Spartacists expose Solidarność as company union for CIA and Vatican outside its New York City office, September 1981.

to Szyszkowska in the elections testifies, at best, to an attempt to improve her image under the influence of her left-sounding demands or, at worst, to a desperate desire to exist on a 'political scene' saturated with the reactionary climate of post-counterrevolutionary Poland." PP eventually accepted the criticism, acknowledged the violation of Marxist principle and went out of business.

The group that is refounded faces by and large the very same questions that were posed at the time of the founding of the SGP in 1990. The capitalist counterrevolution, spearheaded by Solidarność and embraced by the disintegrating Stalinist gravediggers of revolution, meant attacks on the living conditions of the working class, intensified national chauvinism, anti-Semitic attacks and persecution of Roma people and immigrants. As we had warned, women were hit particularly hard—they were the first to be sacked, they receive lower wages than men for the same work, and they are confronted with a reactionary ban on abortion. Catholic and Polish-nationalist values are being imposed on youth in schools. The ex-Stalinist social democrats of the SLD demonstrated their loyalty to the bourgeoisie during two terms of administering the capitalist state. Their attacks on the gains of the working class paved the way for electoral victories of right-wing reactionary parties in 1997 and 2005. Today the SLD is attempting to cohere yet another alliance with liberal-bourgeois democrats with the aim of administering Polish capitalism again after the next elections.

The Polish bourgeoisie continues its military alliance with U.S. imperialism. In 1999 Poland joined NATO, and since 2003 it has participated in the colonial occupation of Iraq. Poland has recently sent more troops to Afghanistan. In 2004 Poland joined the European Union (EU), a consortium of imperialist states formed on the basis of anti-Sovietism and maintained to facilitate competition with its American and Japanese imperialist rivals.

The recent extensions of the EU to East Europe are aimed at exploiting the poorly paid and well-trained labor there and expanding the markets and spheres of influence of the European imperialist bourgeoisies. At the same time, the EU pursues austerity measures against the working class aimed at destroying "welfare state" measures in West European countries. It unleashes cop terror against the minority populations of Turkish, Asian, Arab, African or Roma origin and has drastically increased measures to seal the EU off from further immigration. While Germany is its strongest element, the EU is lacking a cohesive political or economic center. The EU is riven with rivalries among its bourgeoisies. The British have lined up with the American bourgeoisie against German and French imperialist interests. The newer East European members, including Poland, often ally themselves politically with U.S. imperialism. We counterpose to the imperialist EU our struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe!

The present government of the arch-reactionary Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński

twins has been viciously attacking gay rights activists while presiding over the current attempts to restrict abortion even more severely, including in cases of rape and health problems. They have strengthened the power of the capitalist state by introducing a more severe penal code and fast-track courts. As dissatisfaction with the government grows among the older generations of the working class and their children—who still remember the social gains destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution, such as employment for all, free quality medical care and education systems accessible to all—the Kaczyński unleash *lustracja*, a McCarthy-style anti-Communist witchhunt.

Lustracja threatens large numbers of the older generation with being purged from their jobs for their recorded cooperation or contacts with the Stalinist secret services—a crime in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie persecutes members of the Security Office for suppressing the anti-Communist Home Army (AK) and has put Jaruzelski on trial for his successful spiking of Solidarność's counterrevolutionary bid for power in December 1981. Jaruzelski and other representatives of the former PRL are being tried by the wrong class for the wrong crimes! The witchhunt against them is ultimately aimed at criminalizing anyone fighting today for a socialist future. **Down with the anti-Communist witchhunt! Hands off Jaruzelski!**

Our new members were recruited mainly on the proud record of the ICL's fight against capitalist counterrevolution and for Trotskyism in Poland. One of our comrades encountered the ICL at a march for women's rights on International Women's Day and was attracted to the ICL because of our fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution and for full democratic rights for homosexuals. Our left opponents talk to striking workers only about economic demands and refuse to combat reactionary prejudices like anti-Semitism, male chauvinism or anti-gay bigotry; when these opportunists go to demonstrations for women's rights, they promote bourgeois feminist ideas. In contrast, we intervene in all struggles and among all layers of society with the revolutionary program. We tell striking workers that for the proletariat to

advance, it must actively champion the rights of the oppressed; and we tell women's rights activists that they must turn to the proletariat, which is the only class in society with the social power and the objective interest to overthrow the capitalist system to which the oppression of women is inherent. We fight to build a revolutionary party that must be, in Lenin's words, a tribune of the people.

Trotskyism and the Second World War

On the way to re-establishing a Polish section of the ICL we discussed the Trotskyist position on World War II. The cynical propagandists of the capitalist class portray World War II as a war between democracy and fascism. Nothing could be further from the truth! In fact, World War II was a war between competing gangs of imperialist robbers. Our revolutionary predecessors, Trotsky's Fourth International, took no side in the war between the imperialist Axis powers of Nazi Germany, Italy and Japan and the Allied imperialists of Britain, France and the U.S., who disguised their desires for world hegemony and unbridled imperialist exploitation of colonies with "democratic" rhetoric. During the Second World War, the Polish bourgeoisie was a lackey of French and British imperialism. It is for this reason that the Trotskyists did not take a side in the 1939 war between imperialist Germany and Poland, which was merely, to use Trotsky's words, a "crippled" gangster of imperialism." In clarifying this question, we referred back to Trotsky's powerful 1938 article "A Fresh Lesson," written at the time of the Munich accords upon which Hitler's troops dismembered and annexed the Czech parts of Czechoslovakia:

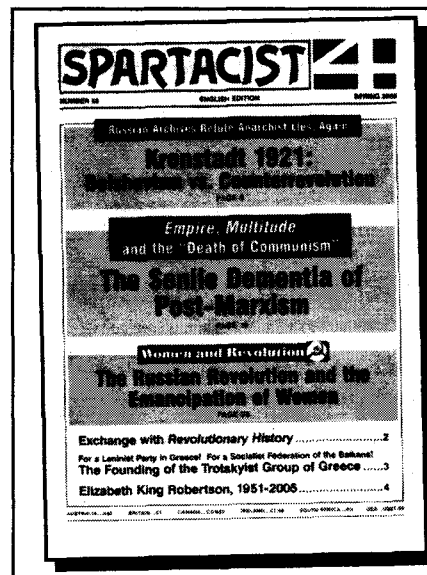
"Even irrespective of its international ties, Czechoslovakia is an absolutely imperialist state.... A war, even on the part of isolated Czechoslovakia, would thus have been waged not for national independence but for the preservation and, if possible, the extension of the borders of imperialist exploitation....

"An imperialist war, no matter in what corner it begins, will be waged not for 'national independence' but for a redivision of the world in the interests of separate cliques of finance capital."

In the war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, *we did have a side*. We stand in the tradition of the brave Trotskyists in the Jewish ghetto of Warsaw, who declared, "We defend the workers state, notwithstanding the Stalinist regime, like we defend every workers organization from blows of the class enemy, notwithstanding the reformist regime ruling it.... LONG LIVE THE RED ARMY! LONG LIVE THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION! LONG LIVE THE INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTION!" (*Czerwony Sztandar* [Red Flag] No. 6, July 1941).

While Polish patriotism has constantly been whipped up by the capitalist regimes after counterrevolution, the rule of the Kaczyński twins is particularly pernicious in combining virulent anti-Russian and

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China...

(continued from page 1)

capitalist state, smashing the rule of the Chinese bourgeoisie and landlords, and ripped the country out of the clutches of the imperialist powers. This world historic event encouraged anti-colonial and revolutionary ferment among the oppressed Asian masses from Vietnam to Malaya to Indonesia and the Philippines while provoking hysteria amongst the imperialist powers. For Australia's bourgeoisie, anti-communism and anti-Asian racism fused in the spectre of revolutions throughout Asia. Today, the imperialists aim to return China to the untrammelled imperialist exploitation and misery that existed prior to 1949. We say: Defend, extend the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!

Led by the butcher Chiang Kai-shek and the remnants of his nationalist army, most of the Chinese capitalist class fled to Taiwan, where the Guomindang established a brutal regime under the protection of American imperialism. Others fled to British-ruled Hong Kong. In China, the power of the warlords, landowners and bourgeoisie had finally been destroyed. And a nation that had for a century been ravaged and divided by the imperialist powers was unified and liberated from their yoke.

The creation of a centrally planned, collectivised economy laid the basis for tremendous social progress for the worker and peasant masses. The new state redistributed land to the peasants and began expropriating key industries as it developed the state-owned industrial sector, initially with aid from the Soviet Union. By the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, the bulk of private industry in China was nationalised and a state monopoly of foreign trade was imposed. The impact of these changes can be seen most graphically by the social gains for women, who made enormous advances over their previous miserable status, historically symbolised by the barbaric practice of foot binding. Free universal education brought literacy to the younger generation of Chinese women, allowing for their integration into economic and social life, while a 1950 marriage law banned concubinage and arranged marriages.

However, unlike the 1917 Russian Revolution, which was made by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik party, the 1949 Chinese Revolution was bureaucratically deformed from its inception. The CCP established a regime modeled on the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, which had usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in a political counterrevolution beginning in 1923-24 under Joseph Stalin. Decisive in shaping this outcome was the absence of the Chinese proletariat struggling in its own right for power.

Having suffered two decades of deadly repression, under both the Guomindang and the brutal Japanese occupation, the Chinese proletariat was politically atomised. Moreover, Stalinism had repeatedly betrayed this working class, most notably during the 1925-27 revolutionary upheaval when the leadership of the CCP was directed by Stalin and his henchmen to subordinate itself to the Guomindang.

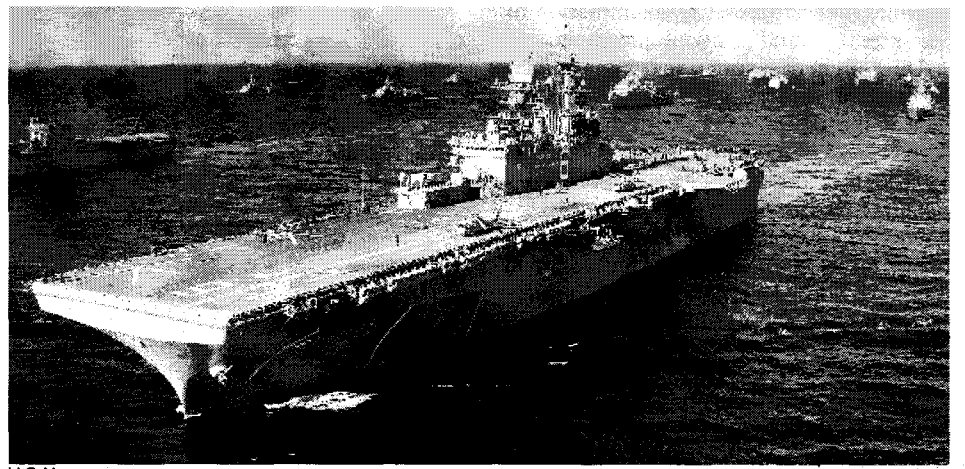
This resulted in the second Chinese Revolution being drowned in blood as Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist forces massacred the Communists with an estimated 25,000 CCP members killed in 1927 alone. This bloodbath was followed by a reign of counterrevolutionary terror. All working-class organisations were decapitated; those that survived were forced underground. Only the supporters of Leon Trotsky sought to maintain their roots among the urban working class after this catastrophic defeat. Abandoning the cities for the countryside, the Stalinists effectively transformed themselves into a peasant-based party (see "The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism" *Spartacist* No. 53, Summer 1997).

Like the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, the Maoist regime of the People's Republic of China (PRC) preached the anti-Marxist idea that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single, very backward country. In China, as in the Soviet Union of Stalin and his heirs, "socialism in one country" in practice means betraying the struggles of the international proletariat in the service of "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism.

Following the Sino-Soviet split beginning in the late 1950s, the Maoist bureaucracy developed a treacherous alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union. This alliance was consummated in 1972 with the visit of U.S. president Nixon to China while imperialist bombs rained on Vietnam. Carried on by Mao's successor, Deng Xiaoping, it contributed to the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, an historic defeat for the world's proletariat and oppressed. The post-Soviet period has resulted in increased economic, political and military pressure on China by the world's imperialists as they push for capitalist counterrevolution. This can be seen by their relentless striving for China to revalue the yuan upwards and make it fully convertible, further "open up" banking, and privatise the core state-owned enterprises. It can also be seen in the concerted military pressures being exerted against China.

Down With Counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia Alliance!

Today U.S. imperialism, fully backed by Australia, is encircling China with military installations—from South Korea to Central Asia. In 2005, the U.S. con-



U.S. Navy

Above: U.S. amphibious assault ship on Pacific naval exercise, 2006. Right: Australian occupation forces terrorise East Timorese civilians. U.S./Australian military build-up in the region targets China.



Adrees Latif/Reuters

cluded a treaty with Japan to prop up the brutal capitalist bastion of Taiwan. In protest against this anti-China provocation, our comrades in Japan and the U.S. produced a joint statement demanding, "Down With U.S./Japan Counterrevolutionary Alliance! Defend the Chinese and North Korean Deformed Workers States!" (*Workers Vanguard*, No. 844, 18 March 2005). This alliance has been bolstered by the recent "Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation," which also transparently targets the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states. **We say: Down with the counterrevolutionary Japan/Australia military pact!**

Alongside unequivocal support for the bloody U.S.-led occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Australian imperialists have also stepped up their militarism closer to home, signing new military agreements with Indonesia and the Philippines while carrying out their own brutal colonial-style occupations in the Solomons and East Timor. **Down with Australia's regional military agreements! U.S./Australia get out of Iraq, Afghanistan and the Philippines! Australia get out of East Timor, the Solomons! Hands off the South Pacific!**

The Australian military occupation of East Timor not only enforces imperialist plunder of lucrative oil and gas fields but, along with escalating imperialist militarism in the Pacific, is also designed to shore up U.S./Australian military control in the region. The so-called "arc of instability" stretching from Fiji through to Aceh has long been a region of great power rivalries and anti-communist machinations in which Australia has claimed a special "responsibility." Enforcing neo-colonial domination, the Australian imperialists have historically pursued their own interests in the region while playing the role of loyal anti-communist deputy sheriff to the U.S.

In June this year, a massive U.S./Australia joint military exercise, Operation Talisman Saber 2007, mobilising tens of thousands of U.S. and Australian troops, is scheduled to take place off the coast of Queensland. There are new military training grounds being developed for use by the U.S. and other allied military at Bradshaw and Yampi Sound in northern Australia. A new U.S. satellite tracking device, complementing other U.S. spy bases such as Pine Gap, is being established at Geraldton in Australia's north west. A recently developed Joint Combined Training Centre allows high-tech communications between Australian mili-

tary facilities and the U.S. Pacific War Fighting Center in Hawaii, facilitating imperialist military machinations in East Asia and the Pacific such as the Pentagon's plans to neutralise China's small nuclear arsenal in the event of an American nuclear first strike.

The growing imperialist military encirclement of China highlights the reactionary U.S./Australia alliance which has historically been based on "yellow peril" racism and vicious anti-communism. Switching their dependence for protection—as a wealthy, Christian, white imperialist enclave in Asia—from Britain to the U.S. following WWII, the racist Australian capitalist rulers clamoured for an alliance with the U.S., mainly as a guarantee against Japanese rearmament. This culminated in the signing of the ANZUS agreement in 1951, just two years after the Chinese Revolution and in the midst of the Korean War. ANZUS immediately became a Cold War weapon, particularly targeting the Soviet Union and Vietnam. Today it is a dagger aimed at the Chinese, North Korean and Vietnamese deformed workers states. As part of our proletarian internationalist defence of these deformed workers states and opposition to jackal Australian imperialism we demand: **U.S. bases out! Down with the counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia alliance!**

We Trotskyists of the International Communist League stand for the unconditional military defence of China and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states—North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution. This includes supporting China and North Korea's testing and possession of nuclear arms as a necessary deterrent against imperialist nuclear blackmail. Central to defence of the deformed workers states is the struggle for socialist revolution in the imperialist centres and proletarian political revolution within the deformed workers states to oust the nationalist Stalinist misleaders, whose policies of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and "market reforms" pave the way for capitalist counterrevolutionary forces.

Explosion Brewing in China

It would be easy to view the "market reforms" that Deng Xiaoping initiated at the beginning of the 1980s either as a total betrayal of the PRC or as the reason for its current growth level. Both of these views would be false. The "market reforms" were initially an attempt to respond,

continued on page 8

斯巴达克派 SPARTACIST
2007年11月

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Why China Is Not Capitalist: An Exchange

We reprint below an exchange between Democratic Socialist Perspective cadre, Chris Slee, and Workers Vanguard, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). Slee's letter and WV's reply were first published in WV No. 890, 13 April.

18 February 2007

Dear Workers Vanguard

In your article "Anti-China Protectionism: Poison for Workers" (WV no. 885) you claim that the imperialist powers are "aiming to restore capitalist rule in order to turn the Chinese mainland into a gigantic sweatshop".

The reality is that China is already "a gigantic sweatshop". Hundreds of millions of Chinese workers are ruthlessly exploited by local and foreign capital. Extremely long hours, physical punishment, fines and non-payment of wages are amongst the abuses suffered by many Chinese workers. (See the book "China's Workers Under Assault: the Exploitation of Labor in a Globalizing Economy", by Anita Chan.)

China has become the world's biggest recipient of foreign investment. The transnational corporations (and the South Korean and Taiwanese contractors who do much of their dirty work) are attracted by the huge reserve army of labor created by the displacement of peasants from the land, and of workers from state-owned factories that have cut their workforce or closed down altogether. They are also attracted by the total absence of unions in many enterprises, and the tameness of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions where it exists.

Privatisation has proceeded very rapidly in recent years. The state sector's share of industrial production has declined from 100 percent in 1978 to 31.6 percent in 2004. The private sector has risen from zero to 62.1 percent in the same period.

If you accept that Russia is now capitalist, despite the continued existence of some state-owned enterprises, why do you not recognise that China is now capitalist too?

Is it because the ruling party still calls itself "communist"? If so, you are judging on the basis of words, not social reality. You are also showing illusions in the party of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a defender of the workers state.

Trotsky had no such illusions in the Soviet bureaucracy. He said that if the bureaucracy was not overthrown by the working class it would eventually restore capitalism and convert itself into "a new possessing class" (he meant a newly-created capitalist class, not some hitherto-unknown type of possessing class).

Trotsky has been proven correct, not only by the experience of Russia, but also by that of China.

Chris Slee
Melbourne, Australia

WV replies:

Taken together, Chris Slee's arguments amount to this: workers are mistreated in China, there has been significant privatization of formerly state-owned enterprises, international capital has penetrated the economy and, *voilà*, China is capitalist. Politically bankrupt from a Marxist standpoint, this is a convenient "theory" for those who seek to join their "own" bourgeoisies, the protectionist, anti-Communist labor lieutenants of capital in the trade-union bureaucracy and the leaders of mass reformist parties, such as the Australian Labor Party, in targeting China for internal counterrevolutionary machi-

nations and external military threats.

Slee's letter provides an opportunity to again underline our unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state in opposition to prevailing petty-bourgeois and pseudo-left public opinion. Few are better suited to bashing China while embellishing "democratic" imperialism than the Australian Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP—formerly Democratic Socialist Party), of which Slee is a longtime member, a fact he omits in his letter.

Slee fails to even mention the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which overthrew capitalist/landlord rule and ripped China from the clutches of the imperialist powers that had long held that country in servitude. That revolution laid the basis

Behind his account of the extent of privatizations in China lies the hoary Laborite notion that "socialism" can be achieved by reaching a certain level of nationalization of the economy, presumably under such a "democratic" government as that of Clement Attlee's Labour Party, which managed the affairs of declining British imperialism following World War II. In regard to China, Slee is running the film of reformism in reverse.

The 1949 Revolution smashed bourgeois rule in China, and that remains the case today. At some point, likely when bourgeois elements in and around the bureaucracy move to eliminate Communist Party (CCP) political power, the explosive social tensions of Chinese society will shatter the political structure of

Stalinist bureaucracy was a parasitic caste that simultaneously is dependent on the collectivized property forms of the workers state and acts as the transmitting mechanism for the pressures of imperialism in undermining the workers state.

Here's one clue to reality: during the incipient proletarian political revolution in China in 1989, the People's Liberation Army initially refused to move against the workers of Beijing and the military leadership itself began to split, before new units were brought in to crush the rebellion. Such splits are hardly characteristic of the armed forces of capitalist class rule. But they do reflect the contradictions inherent in a workers state under bureaucratic rule. Such contradictions are also apparent in the economy. As we wrote in Part Two of "China's 'Market Reforms': A Trotskyist Analysis" (WV No. 875, 1 September 2006):

"The People's Republic of China today exhibits both the tremendous advantages that are a consequence of the overthrow of the capitalist system—centrally, a level of economic growth far outstripping that of capitalist neocolonies like India—as well as the profoundly negative fruits of Stalinist bureaucratic rule. The latter include sharply increased inequality, the growth of new bourgeois forces intertwined with the parasitic bureaucracy, and the looming threat of a capitalist counterrevolution that would destroy the gains made by China's worker and peasant masses. A Leninist-Trotskyist party must be forged to lead China's huge and powerful working class, at the head of the peasants and urban poor, in a proletarian political revolution."

Slee simply equates the Chinese workers state with the CCP bureaucracy, whose rule undermines the defense of that state and the social gains embodied in it. With its program of "socialism in one country" and its corollary—"peaceful coexistence" with imperialism—the Mao Zedong regime forged an alliance with the U.S. against the former Soviet Union, a betrayal of the world working class. Within China, a very backward society, Mao pursued policies of economic autarky and supposed egalitarianism (exempting, of course, the bureaucrats). Following Mao's death in 1976, the regime of Deng Xiaoping moved to decollectivize agriculture and opened China to direct capital investment from the offshore bourgeoisie in Taiwan and Hong Kong and from Western and Japanese corporations. Sworn enemies of workers democracy, which is necessary for the healthy operation of a planned economy, Stalinist regimes turn to "market reforms" as a whip to increase productivity, attempting to correct the imbalances of the command-planned economy.

As for the investment by "transnational corporations" to which Slee refers, revolutionary Marxists do not oppose China's extensive economic relations with the capitalist world through trade and joint ventures. The key question is the political program of the regime that administers the workers state. In 1921, the Bolsheviks introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), which made significant concessions to small traders and invited foreign investment. They undertook this program as a temporary measure to spur production in a backward, largely peasant country that had been devastated by World War I and by the Civil War following the October Revolution, during which 14 capitalist countries invaded the workers state.

At the same time, the Bolsheviks fought for the extension of socialist revolution to the advanced capitalist countries, an essential prerequisite for development toward socialism. Under the

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People's Liberation Army enters Beijing, January 1949.



for collectivizing the economy, resulting in enormous social progress for the workers and peasants. However, the workers state that emerged was deformed from its inception by the rule of a nationalist bureaucracy fundamentally similar to that which came to power in the Soviet Union through a political counterrevolution led by Stalin & Co. beginning in 1924. The Stalinist dogma of "building socialism in one country" meant accommodation to world imperialism, selling out revolutionary opportunities throughout the capitalist world.

Trotsky and his followers unflinchingly defended the Soviet Union against the forces of the class enemy while calling for proletarian political revolution to sweep away Stalin's bureaucratic regime and return the Soviet Union to the revolutionary, internationalist principles that animated the October Revolution. Likewise, we in the International Communist League fought tooth and nail against capitalist counterrevolution in the former East Germany and USSR and for workers political revolution. Today we raise the same program in regard to China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining deformed workers states. The DSP stands on the *other side* of the barricades.

Among other political atrocities, in the 1980s the DSP (then called the Socialist Workers Party) embraced counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność, the only "union" beloved by the CIA, Vatican and Western bankers. In 1991, DSP leader Renfrey Clarke literally manned Yeltsin's barricades during the imperialist-backed counter-coup in Moscow, which signaled the ascendancy of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. At home, the DSP played a leading role in mobilizing support for Australian imperialist troops to be sent to East Timor in 1999 and to this day refuses to call for their withdrawal (see "What Is the Democratic Socialist Party?" *Australasian Spartacist* No. 167, Autumn 1999).

Slee treats the key question of the state in classic social-democratic fashion.

the ruling bureaucracy. And when that happens, the question will be starkly posed: either proletarian political revolution to open the road to socialism or a return to capitalist enslavement and imperialist subjugation.

Slee's arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, state-owned enterprises remain dominant in strategic industrial sectors such as steel, nonferrous metals, heavy machinery, shipbuilding, telecommunications, electric power, oil extraction and refining. The nationalization of land has prevented the emergence of a class of large-scale agrarian capitalists socially dominating the countryside. The state's effective control over the financial system has enabled the Beijing regime to insulate China from the volatile movements of speculative money-capital that periodically wreak havoc with neocolonial countries from East Asia to Latin America.

To the extent that the CCP regime has opened up sections of the country to capitalist investment, it acts as labor contractors for the imperialists and offshore Chinese bourgeoisie. But such does not equate to the rule of capital. The world's bourgeois rulers understand this much, which explains their push for China to "open up" banking and privatize the core state-owned enterprises, as well as the military pressures exerted by the imperialists against China. A U.S.-Japan military pact signed two years ago that embraced capitalist Taiwan as "a mutual security concern"—a brazen provocation against China—has now been followed up by a pact sealed last month by Japan and Australia that aims to "contain" China and targets as well the North Korean deformed workers state.

Slee's dragging the name of revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky into his arguments demonstrates utter cynicism, not least since his party explicitly repudiated Trotskyism back in 1984. Slee implies that Trotsky saw the Stalinist bureaucracy as simply a counterrevolutionary force. Not so. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937) and other works, Trotsky explained that the

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within the framework of Stalinist bonapartism, to the economic inefficiencies engendered by bureaucratic "commandism" (poor productivity, mediocre quality, scarcity etc). As we wrote in the 1980s:

"Within the framework of Stalinism, there is thus an inherent tendency to replace centralized planning and management with market mechanisms. Since managers and workers cannot be subject to the discipline of soviet democracy (workers councils), increasingly the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of market competition as the only answer to economic inefficiency."

—"For Central Planning Through Soviet Democracy," *Workers Vanguard* No. 454, 3 June 1988; reprinted in "Market Socialism" in *Eastern Europe* (July 1988)

When Mao died in 1976, China was still a predominantly rural peasant country, albeit having constructed a substantial, relatively modern, heavy industrial sector. Over three-quarters of the labour force were engaged in farming and over 80 percent of the population lived in the countryside. Agricultural output had failed to keep pace with industrial growth and low agricultural productivity was a barrier to industrialisation. Foreign investment in China, particularly since Mao's death, has allowed certain areas of rapid growth that would not otherwise have been possible in an isolated and largely undeveloped workers state.

Economic expansion has had the effect of proletarianising millions of former peasants. Today, over 50 percent of the labour force is employed in manufacturing, construction, transport and the service sector, while 40 percent of the population is urbanised. From a Marxist standpoint, this is a *progressive* development. So too is the expansion of China's industrial capacity and the growth of the world's largest proletarian concentration.

But "market reforms" have also massively widened the gap in living conditions and are creating a wealthy new class of capitalists who have links to the CCP officialdom as well as to offshore Chinese capitalists. One of the results of the "reforms" has been that tens of millions—disproportionately women—have lost their jobs from the state-owned sector. The "reform" era has also seen a widening of inequalities, both within the cities and between the urban and rural areas. While in important respects there has been a substantial improvement in the conditions of the poorest peasantry—for example, an almost eightfold increase in the consumption of electricity between 1978 and 1997—the rural communes of the Mao era, which provided rudimentary medical care, primary and secondary schooling, old-age pensions and other social programs, have been disbanded. Now peasant families have to pay for medical care and schooling for their children. As a consequence rural areas lag far behind the cities in literacy and health services provision.

With the break-up of the rural communes a significant fraction of China's peasantry has been transformed into proletarians. There are now tens of millions of migrant workers, many of whom are women, concentrated in manufacturing, textiles and consumer electronics—areas in which China is now a world leader. These migrant workers, subject to the restrictions of the *hukou*, or household registration system, established by Mao in the 1950s, have at best only a temporary urban status and are treated as second-class citizens. Millions have no formal rights, no job security and little or nothing in the way of social benefits. The bureaucracy's deepening free market measures breed ever-sharpening contradictions, setting the stage for a social explosion in China.

Confronting stark and increasing social

inequalities, the enormous and powerful industrial proletariat, including migrant workers, have engaged in continuous and widespread protests. In 2004-2005 women migrant workers struck a major Japanese electronics firm, Uniden, which employed 12,000 workers in Shenzhen. Their basic demands were for higher wages, improved conditions and better benefits (e.g., one month maternity leave for women workers). One of their main demands was to form their own trade union. We recognise that the formation of unions independent of the CCP bureaucracy is an important aspect of the more fundamental struggle for a proletarian political revolution. Precisely for that reason, it is necessary to define the *political program*, as distinct from the immediate economic demands, of union-type organisations in China today.

The imperialists, aided by the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats in their own countries, want to channel the just struggles of workers in China for increased wages and benefits and better conditions in an anti-Communist political direction. This aim is clearly represented by the Hong Kong-based *China Labour Bulletin*, whose leading figure, Han Dong-fang, has his own program on the CIA-funded



Peter Turnley

May 1989: Contingent from Beijing Autonomous Workers Federation arriving in Tiananmen Square. Entry of workers into mass student protests heralded incipient political revolution.

Radio Free Asia. Han and his supporters are lauded in the West as harbingers of a Chinese version of the 1980s counter-revolutionary, clerical-nationalist movement, Polish Solidarność. This self-styled "free trade union," supported by Washington, Canberra and the Vatican, spear-headed capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet sphere. Han and his ilk, championed by the reformist left, from Socialist Alternative (SAIt) to the DSP, are in reality *enemies* of the Chinese proletariat, serving the interests of the imperialists' drive for capitalist counterrevolution. We stand for the formation of trade unions independent of the CCP bureaucracy and programmatically based on defence of the Chinese workers state against capitalist counterrevolution.

For Workers Political Revolution!

The Stalinist bureaucracy, which has ruled the PRC since its inception, is not a possessing class but a parasitic, brittle and contradictory *caste*. It rests atop the collectivised proletarian property forms, from which it derives its privileges, while acting as a transmission belt for the pressures of imperialism on the Chinese deformed workers state. The bureaucracy is forced to defend the gains embodied in the Chinese deformed workers state to the extent it fears the proletariat. Earlier this year, the rubber-stamp National People's Congress formally enacted a law protecting private property that is set to take effect in October. At the same time, faced with seething

anger at the base of society, the CCP regime has imprisoned some officials for corruption and is delaying some of the regime's "free market" measures in the name of building a "harmonious society."

The policies of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy, which are paving the way for capitalist counterrevolution, are simultaneously preparing the ground for a new revolutionary proletarian explosion—not a *social* revolution which would overturn the economic foundations of society as in the 1949 Chinese Revolution but a proletarian *political* revolution to oust the parasitic ruling oligarchy and place political power in the hands of the workers, soldiers and peasants councils (soviets). The tens of thousands of actions by workers and peasants every year for more than a decade indicate the raw material for proletarian political revolution in China. Indeed, the Chinese proletariat has already shown its potential to win over entire sections of the army of the deformed workers state in struggle against the Stalinist regime.

When working people entered into the student demonstrations centred on Tiananmen Square in May-June 1989, marking an incipient proletarian political revolu-

tion, both officers and ranks of numerous People's Liberation Army (PLA) regiments refused orders to suppress the protests, forcing the regime to bring in other units to crush the workers uprising. None of the social contradictions that caused this implosion have gone away, nor has the class nature of the Chinese state changed to become capitalist. The huge and powerful Chinese proletariat standing at the head of the peasants and urban poor needs a Leninist-Trotskyist party to direct the spontaneous and localised workers' struggles toward the seizure of political power.

A workers political revolution in China, establishing a government based on workers and peasants councils—premised on the defence of the collectivised property, which is the social foundation of the workers state—would struggle to unify all sectors of the working class in alliance with the rural toilers and the poor. Such a government would take up the fight against Han chauvinist discrimination against China's minority peoples and fight to ensure migrant workers all the rights of legal urban residents, including access to employment in state-owned enterprises, healthcare, housing and public education and equal pay for equal work.

A proletarian political revolution would implement a centrally planned and managed economy to eliminate unemployment and provide basic economic security for all workers. But even the most farsighted revolutionary-international leadership would not be able to overcome the severe limits facing China in a world dominated by more powerful capitalist-imperialist states. Key to the future of the Chinese workers state would be the extension of revolution to the imperialist centres.

Raising the banner of proletarian internationalism, a revolutionary government in China would truly shake the world. It would spark a fight for the revolutionary reunification of Korea—through proletarian political revolution in the beleaguered North and socialist revolution in the capitalist South. It would shatter the "death of communism" ideological climate pushed by the imperialist rulers and reverberate among the workers and oppressed of Asia from South Korea to Japan—the industrial powerhouse of Asia—to the Indian sub-continent, the Philippines, Indonesia and Australia.

China Is Not Capitalist

Across the political spectrum today groups and academics maintain that during the quarter century of the post-Mao "reform" era, capitalism has been restored or is being irreversibly restored in China. Those pushing this view include fake-socialist groups in Australia, such as the DSP and the Socialist Party (SP). However the reality of the present day Chinese economy is both different, and far more complex.

Promoting the nationalist Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" and its corollary "peaceful coexistence," the CCP regime from Mao through to the present day has conciliated imperialism, not least through selling out revolutions in other countries. It has also set the stage for imperialist exploitation *within* China. From the early 1980s Mao's successors have opened China to, and subsequently attracted, an enormous volume of direct capital investment from Western and Japanese corporations and the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie in Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, concentrated in manufacturing. Conditions in these "Special Economic Zones" and elsewhere are brutal. However this does not constitute the rule of capital.

State-owned enterprises remain dominant in the strategic industrial sectors such as steel, non-ferrous metals, heavy machinery, telecommunications, electric power and oil extraction and refining. The nationalisation of land has prevented the emergence of a class of large-scale agrarian capitalists socially dominating the countryside. The mass of economic surplus generated outside the foreign-owned sector is channeled into state-owned banks as well as the government treasury. Effective control over the financial system has to date enabled the Beijing regime to insulate China from speculative money-capital that periodically wreaks havoc with neocolonial capitalist countries from East Asia to Latin America.

For decades, China's economy has been growing at a rate unmatched by the imperialist powers—despite Stalinist economic mismanagement. This is not just in private enterprise. Between 1998-2001 government spending in China increased to between 12 and 20 percent of gross domestic product. Today, in arguing that China is capitalist, reformist groups such as the DSP counterpose themselves to the fundamental Marxist understanding that capitalism arrests the development of the productive forces and therefore must be superseded by an internationally planned, collectivised economic system, which will lay the basis for eradicating the want and misery inherent in capitalist society. If China were capitalist, as the DSP contends, and its economy has been growing without the cyclical contractions inherent to capitalism, then this would negate the fundamental Leninist understanding that we are living in the epoch of capitalist decay and call into question the necessity

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and progressive character of proletarian revolution in capitalist countries.

In fact the argument pushed by the DSP, that China gradually became capitalist as a result of the level of privatisations that have taken place, is based on a fundamental revision of the Marxist view of the state. The proposition that China has become capitalist through incremental privatisations and juridical measures by the bureaucracy neatly complements the reformist myth that the capitalist state, such as exists in Australia, could transform itself into a workers state by gradual nationalisations and parliamentary acts. Such "analysis" not only vitiates the necessity for a workers revolution to smash the capitalist state apparatus but also the need for a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to lead that struggle.

A clear indication of the gains possible under a collectivised economy can be seen by comparing the Chinese deformed workers state with capitalist India, which before 1949 was on a par with China both economically and in terms of human misery. By the last years of the Mao era in the early 1970s, China had already surpassed India in all major indices of social-economic progress (per capita output, poverty ratios, infant mortality, life expectancy, literacy). And that gap has *continued to widen* during the subsequent decades.

It would however be wrong to assume that China will continue to experience double-digit economic growth under a stable CCP regime for the next several decades. China's increasing integration into the world market makes it subject to the fundamental contradictions and instabilities of the global capitalist system. Furthermore such an outlook ignores the *internal* instability of Chinese society wracked by social protest against the consequences of the CCP's bureaucratic misrule and the intransigent hostility of the imperialist bourgeoisies to the People's Republic of China.

The Beijing bureaucracy has abandoned the strict state monopoly of foreign trade and also begun to open its banks to partial foreign ownership. These moves serve to facilitate imperialist plans for capitalist restoration. If the bankers of Wall Street, Frankfurt and Tokyo acquire a substantial degree of control over China's financial sector, the economic effects are likely to be dire, creating the real danger of a sudden, massive outflow of money-capital, such as triggered the East Asian financial/economic crisis of 1997 which devastated whole countries such as Indonesia and Thailand.

However, the future of the PRC will not be decisively determined by quantitative shifts in its economic relations with world commodity and financial markets. As was the case in the former Soviet Union, the decisive arena in which a capitalist counterrevolution would have to triumph is at the *political* level, in the conquest of *state power*, not simply through a quantitative extension of the private sector, whether domestic or foreign. This in particular explains the U.S. and Australian rulers' endless harping on the need for "political liberalisation" in China. The imperialists' aim is to promote an anti-Communist political opposition primarily based on the new class of capitalist entrepreneurs and those elements of the CCP officialdom and the managerial/professional/technocratic stratum closely tied to domestic and foreign capital.

Marxists do not oppose China's trade with the capitalist world or its joint ventures with Western and Japanese corporations. A government based on workers and peasants councils would seek to utilise the world market to maximise economic development. But it would also reestablish a state monopoly of foreign trade. More fundamentally a revolutionary government in China would actively promote international proletarian revolution.

Mao greets then-U.S. president Nixon in China in 1972 as U.S. rains bombs on Vietnam.



The real crime of the Chinese bureaucracy is that it has helped to perpetuate and strengthen the capitalist and imperialist system on a global scale. Following counterrevolution in the Soviet Union the CCP regime has continued to accommodate U.S. imperialism. The government of Hu Jintao endorsed Bush's global "war on terror," the political rationale for the bloody invasion and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the current military threats against Iran. Beijing has collaborated with Washington, Tokyo and Canberra in brokering negotiations aimed at stopping nuclear weapons development by North Korea. But any weakening of the North Korean deformed workers state against imperialist militarism will quickly redound on China.

Laborite Frontmen for Australian Imperialism

Unlike fake-socialist traitors, our aim is to forge revolutionary workers parties internationally to lead the proletariat to power. In this country such a party will be built in political struggle against the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and Laborite trade-union misleaders of the working class. The post-World War II Chifley Labor government sent troops to smash the powerful 1949 coalminers strike and in the same year despatched warships to take supplies up the Yangtze River to aid the butcher Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang then stationed in Nanjing. One of the ALP's greatest crimes was that, with Hawke as PM, it fervently ran Australia's participation in the imperialists' drive to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union. Today its leadership is equally committed to the restoration of capitalism in China.

When ALP leader, Kevin Rudd, recently opposed a formal military treaty between Australia and Japan, he was reflecting the interests of a section of the Australian capitalist rulers concerned not to jeopardise their booming trade with China. It in no way signaled the ALP was backing away from support to the imperialists' strategic targeting of the Chinese deformed workers state. Thus he gave a nod of support to the recent anti-China joint declaration between Japan and Australia, while at the same time dipping his hat to deep-seated anti-Japanese racism. He commented, "Australians will never forget the war with Japan but the time has come to formalise how we can work with Japan into the future to build the peace" (www.alp.org.au, 15 March). What the ALP mean by "building the peace" is the enforcement of Australian imperialist exploitation and plunder in the region. Labor has historically been the party of racism, depression and war. It was the ALP which the capitalist rulers entrusted to run the country during World War I and World War II, which they did on particularly vicious union-busting, racist lines.

Just as Rudd railed against North Korea's successful nuclear weapons test last October, in January he joined foreign affairs minister Downer in berating China for "destabilising" the "strategic order" following China's successful ballistic missile strike on one of their own satellites. We Trotskyists welcomed this action, just

as we did China's reported development of a new multi-role jet fighter, the Jian-10.

While the ALP is busy reassuring the imperialists, the Laborite union misleaders continue to push their years-long campaign of anti-China protectionism. None better exemplifies anti-Communist China bashing than manufacturing union National Secretary, and aspiring Labor MP, Doug Cameron. Denouncing a proposed free trade agreement between Australia and China, Cameron railed that China has "no human rights" and "represents a threat to living standards and jobs security around the world" (Workers Online, 22 April 2005).

We communists oppose the protectionism of imperialist countries like Australia. But neither are we partisans of "free trade," under the banner of which companies from the imperialist countries demand free access to foreign markets in order to maximise profits. The superexploitation of cheap, largely unorganised labour abroad and the search for access to increased markets for goods is intrinsic to capitalism. Promoting nationalist protectionism, the trade-union misleaders line workers up behind their bosses while poisoning the possibility for international working-class solidarity. We stand on the important, but all too rare, examples of internationalist solidarity by the organised labour movement, such as Waterside Workers Federation bans in the 1960s on loading Australian war materiel bound for the imperialist war against the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. Just as workers must defend their unions at home, we say it is the duty of the international working class to defend China against imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution.

Serving to scapegoat foreign workers, protectionism also directly fuels the capitalist rulers' racist war on immigrants and refugees at home. We fight for full citizenship rights for all! While pro-capitalist union misleaders like Cameron rail against China over "human rights," they do next to nothing to mobilise their multi-racial worker base in industrial action against the government's vicious "Work Choices" anti-union attacks and against the racist terror perpetrated by the Australian capitalist rulers against Aborigines, Muslims and refugees at home. Rather Cameron and his fellow "labour lieutenants of capital" chain the working class to their exploiters, lining them up behind the capitalist rulers' counterrevolutionary anti-China crusade. In contrast to the treacherous trap of "defending Australian jobs" against foreign competition, our watchwords are those which Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels famously inscribed on their banner 150 years ago: "Workers of the world unite!" We stand for international class-struggle solidarity including in the fight to defend jobs: **Down with anti-China protectionist poison! Break with Laborism—we need an internationalist revolutionary workers party!**

ISO, SAIt: Anti-Communists to the Core

Two groups in Australia who don't claim capitalism has recently been

restored in China are the International Socialists (ISO) and Socialist Alternative. These Laborite reformists consider the 1949 Chinese Revolution merely a step sideways to "state capitalism," with the Chinese bureaucracy a new ruling class. This anti-Marxist "state capitalist" "theory" serves as a justification for their abiding hostility to the workers states and siding with "democratic" capitalism. Here they stand in the traditions of their British parent group, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the late Tony Cliff.

In 1948, bowing to the pressures of the Cold War, Tony Cliff latched onto the "theory" of "state capitalism" promoted by earlier social democrats. Two years later he acted on the real purpose of this bogus theory by refusing to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialism during the Korean War. This was a cowardly capitulation to the British bourgeoisie and its social-democratic lackeys, the British Labour Party government. Cliff and his followers were correctly expelled from the Trotskyist Fourth International for this treachery.

From Afghanistan and Poland to East Germany and the Soviet Union, tailing the anti-Soviet union-busting Hawke/Keating Labor governments, the Cliffites in Australia have embraced every imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary force. To this day they uphold the reactionary Solidarność movement of the 1980s. They swooned over the 1991 ascendancy of the imperialist-backed Yeltsin in the Soviet Union, vilely declaring: "Communism is dead' It's a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist*, September 1991).

In contrast to these renegades, we of the ICL fought against capitalist counterrevolution. When the anti-Semitic, woman-hating Solidarność made its bid for power in Poland in 1981, we forthrightly said: "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!" In late 1989, the ICL intervened into the incipient workers political revolution in the former East German (DDR) deformed workers state fighting for the revolutionary reunification of Germany and against the capitalist *anschluss* that eventually swallowed up the DDR. In Moscow in 1991-92, we fought to mobilise worker opposition to the impending catastrophe of capitalist counterrevolution, distributing over 100,000 Russian-language leaflets calling for "Soviet Workers! Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

In early April of this year, the Refugee Action Coalition, led by Ian Rintoul, a long-time Laborite state-capitalist and leader of yet another Cliffite fragment called Solidarity, organised what essentially became an anti-China protest in Sydney. Calling a demonstration ostensibly to defend refugees, Rintoul & Co. provided a platform for the bourgeois Greens and the counterrevolutionary Falun Gong and "Free China" crowd to vituperate against China. Demanding "Howard it's time to go" the demonstration provided a glorification of White Australia capitalist "democracy" and was a thinly veiled call to elect a federal ALP government. This Laborite anti-communism can only undermine the interests of refugees currently interned in the concentration camps that were "upgraded" by the very same ALP that the likes of Rintoul doubtless want to see restored to the federal government benches.

As for the ISO, in 1996 when the U.S. Democratic Party Clinton administration sent a carrier battle group to waters around Taiwan, their British parent group, the SWP, stated: "We would oppose any Chinese invasion of Taiwan as an act of imperialist aggression" (*Socialist Review*, April 1996). Also embracing this counterrevolutionary cause were the reformist DSP who declared "the Taiwanese people are a distinct nationality," supporting

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Exchange...

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regime of proletarian democracy, the Soviet workers were guaranteed trade-union rights and other protections in any capitalist-financed plant. And Lenin and Trotsky insisted on maintaining a state monopoly of foreign trade as a means to protect the Soviet economy from imperialist pressures.

In contrast to the Bolsheviks, the Chinese Stalinists from Mao's time on have excluded the working class from political power and opposed the perspective of international proletarian revolution. Conditions are indeed brutal in capitalist plants in the "Special Economic Zones" and elsewhere. There is indeed rising social inequality. On the other hand, economic expansion has had the effect of proletarianizing millions of former peasants, and the country has seen massive struggles by both peasants and workers in defense of their livelihoods. Last month, 20,000 peasants in Hunan province confronted the police in protest against a sharp rise in bus fares. The government eventually reinstated the original fares and suspended the bus company while arresting protest leaders—actions characteristic not of a possessing class but of a brittle and parasitic caste that deeply fears social protest. The thousands of struggles by workers and peasants that occur yearly in China indicate the raw material for proletarian political revolution, which requires the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party.

Slee claims a direct identity between now-capitalist Russia and today's China. This is utterly false. When capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the former Soviet Union, all the "new class theories" propounded by social-democratic fake Trotskyists could not explain the devasta-

tion that resulted. Life expectancy in Russia has plummeted, women have been thrown back, murderous nationalism runs rampant. U.S. imperialism, unfettered by what had been the industrial-military powerhouse of the non-capitalist world, feels free to launch military adventures abroad, while capitalist governments the world over accelerate their attacks on workers and the oppressed at home.

Should China succumb to counterrevolution, the results would be catastrophic: the return of imperialist subjugation, the dismantling of the gains of the 1949 Revolution, the deepening of "death of communism" ideology internationally. This is an outcome we seek to combat. And in such a showdown, the DSP will stand on the side of counterrevolution, as it has done and is doing. Thus, even before its formal January 1999 declaration that China was a capitalist state, the DSP embraced such counterrevolutionary causes as independence for capitalist Taiwan and "Free Tibet!" while promoting pro-imperialist "trade-union activist" Han Dongfang, editor of the *China Labour Bulletin*, Christian convert and darling of anti-Communist circles in Washington.

The DSP last year attempted to draw a blood line against our communist political criticisms, which we exposed throughout the left and labor movement (see "Condemn DSP Thug Attack on Spartacist Woman at Union Rally," WV No. 876, 15 September 2006). Does the timing of Slee's letter, only some months later, have anything to do with this? We don't know. What we do know is that Chris Slee, and the DSP, are "little Aussie" nationalist social democrats, bashing China in lock-step with their jackal imperialist rulers, the chauvinists at the helm of the Australian Labor Party and the petty-bourgeois swamp in which they swim. ■

Poland...

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anti-German chauvinism with anti-Communism. This may well be motivated by holding up their family "honor," as their father was a fighter in the Home Army, an outfit notorious for mostly engaging in battle with Communist forces, killing Jews and standing by idly when the Nazis crushed the heroic 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Upon the advance of the Soviet Red Army on Warsaw in 1944, the AK staged an uprising in Warsaw to prevent Poland from falling under the influence of the Soviet Union (see "The Warsaw Uprising of 1944" in WV No. 294, 4 December 1981; PS No. 9, Spring-Summer 1999). When this uprising ended in complete failure, the AK cynically accused the Red Army of refusing to liberate Warsaw. This old anti-Communist myth has become official history in Poland's schools and universities today.

We are inspired by the Trotskyists, who during World War II upheld the banner of proletarian revolutionary internationalism. They stood for the fraternization of the soldiers fighting in the imperialist armies, including organizing Trotskyist cells among Wehrmacht soldiers in France and the Netherlands. They saw in the German proletariat the instrument to overthrow the

Nazi regime, to expropriate the bourgeoisie that brought Hitler to power and to build a socialist Germany. They solidarized with defense of the German proletariat against retributions and opposed the mass expulsions of the German population from the areas east of the Oder and Neisse rivers, Poland's new border with Germany. They exposed the lie of "collective guilt" of all Germans. As a statement of the European sections of the Fourth International declared in 1945:

"The treatment of the German people on the principle of collective guilt provides the fascists precisely with new possibilities to fish in the murky waters of nationalism. The danger is all the greater since if the German people are collectively guilty then the Nazis who are the real guilty ones can logically hope to escape punishment...."

"Fascism and imperialism can only be ended with the downfall of capitalism and the victory of international socialism. Long live the German proletarian revolution! Long live the Socialist United States of the World!"

—"International Solidarity With the German Proletariat," 1945

By re-establishing the SGP, the ICL is provided with an important window into East Europe. This is an important step toward reorganizing the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. *Workers of the world unite! For new October Revolutions! Join us!* ■

Sub Drive...

(continued from page 2)

capitalist exploitation. However, as our comrade emphasised at the 18 March Brisbane meeting, what the capitalist rulers can get away with is not a foregone conclusion but will be determined by the outcome of class and social struggle. We fight to mobilise the working class in an independent class-struggle fight against state Labor and federal Liberal "war on terror" state repression. **It is in their immediate and direct interest to do so.**

Armed with this understanding, our Melbourne comrades intervened early in the sub drive at a two-day "Socialism" confab held by the Taaffeite Socialist Party (SP). Here we exposed the SP and their British co-thinkers, who made common cause with the bourgeoisie's "war on terror" following the criminal 2005 London Tube bombing by screaming "No to Terrorism. No to war!" Our speaker noted how this call mobilises workers *behind* the bosses' "anti-terror" hysteria. He powerfully made the link between the British SP supporters' abject service to the British capitalist rulers and their Australian counterparts joining and hailing the chauvinist 1999 "Troops In" marches that demanded the racist Australian imperialist military occupy tiny East Timor. Following the intervention, two subscriptions were sold.

Down With Anti-Communist Censorship!

Distributing our Marxist literature and participating in the political life of university campuses is an important component of any sub drive. However, our right to do so is not to be taken for granted. Often it has to be fought for and defended. Thus, at Sydney University, our youth comrades have confronted anti-communist political censorship with Security repeatedly acting to shut down distribution of our press. In response to these and other attempts to silence leftists on campus, the SYC produced a leaflet entitled "Down with Campus Censorship! Hands Off the Left!" (see page 11).

Insisting that "an injury to one is an injury to all," the leaflet takes up defence of the SYC/SL and all the left, including four youth (three of them students at Sydney University) arrested in pre-dawn raids on 14 March for their alleged involvement in anti-G20 protests in Melbourne late last year. In the same spirit, Spartacist

comrades joined a 5 April courthouse rally in Sydney in defence of those charged over protests against visiting U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney in late February. At the courthouse, we raised a placard which demanded: "Drop Charges Against Anti-G20, Anti-Cheney Protesters Now!"

Defend China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam!

Our defence of all leftists against state repression does not disappear the deep dividing line between revolutionaries and reformists, sharply expressed, for example, over the question of defence of the deformed workers states. While revolutionaries understand that these states must be defended against capitalist counter-revolution, the reformists, in thrall to capitalist "democracy," line up behind "their" bourgeoisie as hostile opponents. A prime example is the "state-capitalist" groups such as Socialist Alternative (SALT).

At a 15 March Sydney University meeting organised by the SALT-dominated Students Against War, the SALT chair assiduously refused to call on our SYC speaker during the discussion. Only after non-aligned people began to challenge this censorship did she finally give in. This prompted another SALT supporter to shriek an hysterical warning that the Spartacists defend North Korea's development of nuclear weapons! Pleased to get this free advertising, our comrade expanded on the point: "The imperialists seek to return these countries [North Korea and China] to unbridled imperialist exploitation. Because these countries have seen an overturn of capitalist property relations, a gain for the international working class, we stand for their unconditional military defence and say that what is also needed is a workers political revolution to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracies." He concluded, "We Trotskyists seek the building of a revolutionary, internationalist party of the working class on the road to socialist revolution. We fight for a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!"

Once again we welcome our readers, both new and longstanding. We hope you will become active supporters and join in the struggle of the working people and oppressed. We encourage you to contact us to discuss the content of our press and to introduce our newspaper to friends and workmates. If you agree with our purpose and principles, join us in the fight for a communist future. ■

China...

(continued from page 9)

"The struggle for national self-determination in Taiwan" (*Green Left Weekly*, 5 June 1996).

Ever since the counterrevolutionary Nationalist army and the Chinese bourgeoisie fled to Taiwan after the revolution, Taiwan has been an outpost for imperialists' counterrevolutionary schemes, military threats and interference in Chinese internal affairs. Taiwan has since ancient times been a part of China—it is ethnically, linguistically and historically Chinese. We Trotskyists have stood and will continue to stand with China in the event of any military conflict with imperialism over Taiwan. We are also opposed to the Chinese Stalinists' proposals for reunification embodied in the slogan of "one country, two systems." We call for the revolutionary reunification of China: that means a workers socialist revolution in Taiwan to overthrow and expropriate the bourgeoisie and a proletarian political revolution on the mainland, as well as the expropriation of the Hong Kong capitalists.

For Proletarian Internationalism

A revolutionary China of workers and peasants councils, issuing out of a proletarian political revolution, would face virulent imperialist reaction. It would have to undertake necessary economic and military measures to defend itself while doing everything it could to aid the fight for socialist revolution internationally.

Based on the widest possible Soviet democracy, a proletarian, internationalist leadership would re-establish a centrally planned and managed economy, expropriating the newly fledged class of Chinese capitalist entrepreneurs. It would renego-

tiate the terms of foreign investment in the interests of Chinese working people, insisting, for example, that wages, benefits and working conditions are at least at the same level as in the state sector. Such a government would promote the voluntary collectivisation of agriculture on the basis of large-scale mechanised and scientific farming, recognising that this requires substantial material aid from successful workers revolutions in the more economically advanced capitalist countries.

Karl Marx wrote that with scarcity "want is generalised and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means all the old crap must revive." The material basis for bureaucratism is scarcity—the bureaucracy acts as the arbiter of how scarce resources are used and distributed. Without a socialist America, Japan, Australia and Europe the working people of China will not be able to eliminate scarcity and want. Ultimately international proletarian revolution is the only path to the social and economic modernisation of China and the impoverished semicolonial capitalist countries.

To defend and extend the gains of social revolutions in China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba requires fighting for socialist revolution in the imperialist centres. The fight to defend the deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution is crucial to bringing to the proletariat in Australia, as well as in the U.S., Europe and Japan the consciousness necessary to overthrow their own exploiters. Only when workers revolutions put the industrial capacity and technologies of the developed countries to use in an international planned economy under workers rule will the basis be laid for a socialist society of material abundance. To this end, the ICL struggles to build revolutionary Trotskyist parties as part of a reformed Fourth International. ■

Spartacists Targeted at Sydney University Down With Campus Censorship! Hands Off the Left!

We reprint below a leaflet produced by the Spartacus Youth Club and first distributed at a rally outside Sydney University's Fisher Library on 2 April. That demonstration was attended by approximately 150 people and was called in response to the establishment of the pro-imperialist U.S. Studies Centre on campus as well as the slashing of third year history subjects. The U.S. Studies Centre is controlled by the American Australian Association: the organisation that sponsored the visit of U.S. vice-president Dick Cheney in February. Among the more prominent of the slogans raised in building the demonstration was "Money for education not for war." In counterposition to such pipe-dream illusions in a "benevolent" capitalist class behaving in a more "progressive" manner, we of the SYC argue that the fights against imperialist war and for free quality education for all require students rallying behind the social power of the working class, mobilised independently of all wings of the bourgeoisie, as part of the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

Outrageous censorship is being carried out against the Spartacist League of Australia (SL) and the Spartacus Youth Club (SYC) at Sydney University. Campus security guards have repeatedly evicted from campus supporters of the SL and SYC when selling our communist newspapers. This comes alongside a general pattern of harassment of leftists on campus.

On Thursday 1 March during Sydney University O-week, supporters of the Spartacist League were forced to remove our literature table from campus on the grounds that we hadn't paid for a stall. The SL has been active in campus politics at Sydney University for over thirty years and we were selling during O-week to bring to students our Trotskyist politics. This includes our calls for Australian imperialist troops/cops to get out of Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor and the South Pacific in addition to standing for the unconditional military defence of the deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. Our perspective also includes fighting to weld together the freedom struggles of oppressed minorities, women, immigrants and Aborigines behind the social power of the working class in the fight to overthrow the capitalist system through workers revolution.

On the Wednesday of the next week we had to once again remove our literature table from campus ostensibly because it didn't have "university approval" and

again on the following Thursday supporters of the SYC, without a table, were escorted off campus on the grounds that one seller was from another university and therefore had no good reason to be on campus! This comes on top of campus security's attempts to censor the SL during student elections late last year (see *Australasian Spartacist* No. 196).

Such attacks on the SL and SYC constitute blatant censorship of leftist politics at Sydney University. The campus administration's attempt to keep students from exposure to communist politics is part of

(NTEU) had been ordered to remove their campaigning stall by a representative of Arc" (*GLW*, 28 February). Arc is the capitalist UNSW's new student organisation formed this year as an amalgamation of the previously separate services and representative student organisations. In a separate article *GLW* also reported that four Queensland University of Technology students, members of the Students for Social Justice (SSJ) collective, were arrested on 1 March when student union bureaucrats from the National Labor Students disgustingly called on campus



ASp photo

indymedia.org.uk
Sydney, 22 February: Cops attack protesters during visit of U.S. vice-president Dick Cheney (above). May 2: Sydney University students march against federal government (left).

the attempt to regiment youth to be ignorant and compliant servants of the brutal, racist capitalist system and cannon fodder for future military adventures on behalf of imperialism. Leftists, workers and students on campus should demand: **Security: Hands off leftists! Down with campus censorship!**

These attacks are occurring in the context of the government's racist "war on terror" and their recent victory against student organising through the imposition of VSU. The "war on terror" is lifting the usual veneer of capitalist "democracy," revealing the state—the cops, courts, prisons and army—for what it is: the instrument of organised violence to protect the class rule of the filthy-rich capitalists against the workers who produce society's wealth. In this context university administrations generally are ramping up their attacks against those students and non-students alike who would speak out against the racist capitalist system in defence of minorities, particularly the beleaguered Muslim community that is currently in the government's crosshairs. **We say: Down with racist "war on terror" government repression! For full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

That this repression also serves to target campus workers' unions was graphically shown recently at UNSW. *Green Left Weekly* (*GLW*), mouthpiece for the reformist left organisation Democratic Socialist Perspective reported that on 19 February at UNSW "...activists from the National Tertiary Education Union

security officers to remove the SSJ stall demanding freedom for David Hicks as they didn't have a permit!

On Wednesday 14 March, four leftists, three of whom are students at Sydney University, were dragged from their homes during pre-dawn raids by "anti-terror" police for their alleged involvement in Melbourne's anti-G20 protests late last year. This comes in the midst of reports of ASIO spying on Sydney University students. Just as we defend leftists targeted on campus, we defend all arrested anti-G20 protesters, regardless of our political differences with them, under the class-conscious understanding that an injury to one is an injury to all! **Defend all anti-G20 protesters! Drop the charges! Down with Bracks/Iemma state Labor government repression!**

Echoing the bourgeois media's baiting of "outsiders," Socialist Alternative (SAlt) pointed the finger at autonomous types who came to Melbourne from interstate and overseas and grotesquely wrote that "The left should offer no comfort to these crazies. We should do whatever we can to isolate them." SAlt's targeting of these anti-G20 protesters showed in sharp relief their reformist loyalty to the Victorian capitalist government of Steve Bracks. Is it any wonder therefore that SAlt took no action at all as they witnessed campus security escorting supporters of the SL off Sydney University on Thursday 8 March? But SAlt are so deeply immersed in the Labor-dominated sandpit that is campus politics, that the

defence of our revolutionary organisation is anathema to them.

As capitalist institutions, universities have never been class-neutral places of learning; rather they are elitist, class-biased institutions that supply capitalist society with managers and bosses as well as socially useful skilled workers and specialists. The surge in anti-leftist censorship on campus is directly tied to the capitalists' victory in passing VSU—student services and organisations are now being funded by the capitalist universities and leftist politics are being purged. The *raison d'être* of VSU always was to curtail student opposition such as was seen in 2003 against the U.S.-led and Australian backed, imperialist invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq, seeking instead politically-censored, sterile universities. With communists being thrown off campus and leftists harassed on a daily basis, this explodes the myth that there can be the "vigorous political comment" which Sydney University Vice-Chancellor Gavin Brown purportedly permits (*Honi Soit*, week 6, semester 2, 2006). **Down with the Administration! For staff-student-worker control of the universities with open admissions made economically meaningful by providing all students with a full living allowance! For free quality education for all!**

We call on all students opposed to this grotesque political censorship to defend our organisation's legitimate right to talk to students and sell our Marxist newspaper on campus as an elementary democratic right. But the reality is that the cosy relationship that most of the left has built with the campus administration renders them impotent in the face of the increasing capitalist attacks. The Education Action Group, which many leftists on campus are a part of, as part of a collective within the SRC, calls for a university-funded, politically independent SRC. But isn't it obvious that the type of political "independence" acceptable to the university Senate, can go only so far as allowing student bureaucrats and up-and-coming bourgeois politicians freedom to play their pretend parliament games, duping students into "mass movements" that keep political debate within the safe confines of the Labor v. Liberal electoral charade that comes around every three or four years. As the old saying goes: he who pays the piper calls the tune.

We're against placing any faith in the capitalist vice-chancellor, who, enforcing the government's austerity measures, is trying to force his workforce onto union-busting AWAs. The threatened mass sackings at Newcastle University in 2005 and UNSW last year are chilling examples of the role that the vice-chancellors play in capitalist Australia and given the chance Gavin Brown would do the same.

The Trotskyist Spartacus Youth Club will continue the struggle to give students a fighting Marxist perspective. As opposed to impotent hurrahs for "student power," we realise that students must ally themselves with the social power of the working class in order to push back the attacks of the campus administration, rejecting the theory that students are a revolutionary social group and that campuses can be turned into revolutionary institutions under capitalism. Against the ALP hacks and their left tails we fight to win the working-class base of the ALP away from the chains of Laborite nationalism and loyalty to the state. As such we seek to rally youth behind a revolutionary perspective to build an internationalist multiracial revolutionary workers party modelled on Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin's Bolsheviks. Such a party would fight all manifestations of capitalist oppression on the road to overthrowing this system of racist capitalism. **Hands off leftists! For workers revolution against racist Australian imperialism!** ■

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Mumia...

(continued from page 16)

unionists, academics, authors and other notables who had signed a PDC-initiated statement titled, "We Demand the Immediate Freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an Innocent Man." Reprinted in *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S. (No. 880, 10 November 2006), the statement clearly notes, "Both the Pennsylvania state courts and the federal courts have refused to consider the reams of documented evidence that prove Mumia's innocence. Foremost is the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed the police officer."

Among the signatories from organized labour in the U.S. are the New York chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and Amalgamated Transit Union and International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) locals. A recent article from *The Shopsteward* (January-February 2007), newsletter of the powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) states: "Mumia's freedom will not be won through relying on the capitalist rigged justice system. What can really turn the tide is the power of united millions across the world—working people united in struggle to free an innocent man." In April, the annual conference of the Scottish Trades Union Congress passed a motion, which forthrightly stated that Mumia "...should be freed immediately from prison, as he is innocent, and the inherently racist death penalty should be abolished." Last July in Australia, Len Cooper, Branch Secretary of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union (Communications Division) in Victoria, issued a statement on behalf of the CEPU demanding "...the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal without delay" noting that "the authorities in the United States are involved in an attempt to frame this man, for racist and political reasons."

As the PDC's brochure, *Mumia is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!* proclaims:

"The time is now to make Mumia's case a rallying cry against the racist death penalty, against black oppression, against government repression. Raise your voice and organize now in your union, on your campus, in your community to demand: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!"

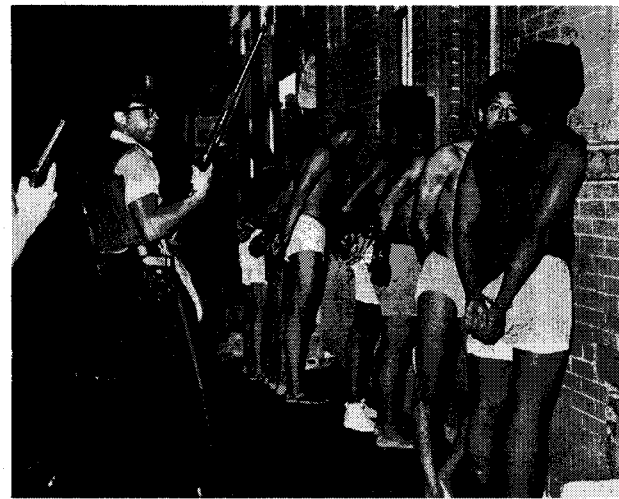
We reprint below an edited version of a presentation by PDC counsel Rachel Wolkenstein at an annual PDC Holiday Appeal fund-raiser for class-war prisoners held in New York City on 17 December 2006. It first appeared in *Workers Vanguard* No. 886, 16 February.

We cannot be lulled into thinking that because Mumia has an appeal pending before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, which is hearing three (and only three) of his more than two dozen legal



James/Philadelphia Inquirer

Left: Mumia in 1969 as Minister of Information for Philadelphia Black Panthers. Right: Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo's cops stripped Panthers during 1970 raid on their Philadelphia office.



Ligato/Philadelphia Bulletin

claims, that this is a great opportunity for Mumia. It is good that the court is hearing these claims. But it is also likely that they are just greasing the skids toward a final conclusion that Mumia should be executed.

Prior to my meeting Mumia for the first time almost 20 years ago with Paul Cooperstein, also from the Partisan Defense Committee, in August 1987, Mumia passed along a quote from *Henry VI* about how the first thing we'll do after taking power is kill all the lawyers. We sent back to him a quote from V.I. Lenin that had similar negative sentiments about lawyers.

The work that I have done along with other comrades of the Partisan Defense Committee has been, simultaneous with legal assistance, to push propaganda, publicity and protest, concentrated on mobilizing the social power of the labor movement, of the working class, which has the only real power to change anything. We base our work on the understanding that the only way to get rid of the injustice that exists in this society is through socialist revolution, and in the process we must fight tooth and nail for Mumia's freedom, and for democratic rights of all sorts. The abuses of the capitalist system will not stop, the capitalist system will not be reformed in any way that will be long-lasting. The only fundamental change that's possible is a change in the social system, which means socialism.

Mumia is not a Marxist. Mumia is not a socialist. But he has been absolutely steadfast in his opposition to racist oppression, to the extremes of capitalism, to injustices, to American imperialism. That is the reason that he is a target of the rulers of this country, who see in him the spectre of black revolution. They have seen that in him from his early days as a Black Panther Party member and from his becoming an advocate for the MOVE organization, for his continued statements in defense of blacks and others against the capitalist state. And for all of these reasons, the capitalist state—the courts, the prosecution, the bourgeois politi-

cians—are committed to seeing Mumia executed or locked up in the living hell of life imprisonment.

We are up against enormous odds. So this gathering, in which we are having fun, dancing and listening to wonderful music, has to be sort of a respite and a way to reorganize ourselves for the very critical fight to prevent Mumia's execution and to see him freed. I want to make the point that millions around the globe took up Mumia's case over the years. They took it up based on the work of the Partisan Defense Committee, affiliated with the Spartacist League, as is the Labor Black League, as well as many, many other organizations that did not at all have the PDC's politics. These included the MOVE organization, the various Free Mumia coalitions, Equal Justice and Noelle Hanrahan from the Prison Radio Project and many organizations internationally. But we are unique in understanding that the capitalist state cannot be reformed and that Mumia's case, for all the reasons that we have said, represents the epitome of the race question, the class question and the fight for freedom for us all.

People around the world identified with Mumia and his cause out of a visceral rejection of all of the injustices inherent in capitalism—poverty, war, racial and ethnic bias. In all of these ways they saw in him a symbol. Though being in lockdown 23 hours a day, seven days a week, in solitary, Mumia nonetheless has never given up his own convictions and his own fight against the injustices of the system.

What needs to be underscored here is what happens when you are on the streets demanding a new trial on the basis that the courts can be pressured to be fair. Other political organizations that say that they are socialists, like Socialist Action, the International Socialist Organization and Workers World, know full well that such demands are in contradiction with the understanding that capitalism must be overturned. These reformist groups spread illusions that the courts can be reformed, that we can count on the courts

to provide some justice. Well, the courts will respond, but only from the fear of mass action, particularly the action of the organized working class, with its power to strike. It is such social unrest that drives them to make some amelioration in the system.

Early Evidence of Innocence

I worked on Mumia's legal team from about 1995 through June 1999. Before that, we in the PDC tried our best to help Mumia get good legal counsel. We also campaigned to make it clear who Mumia was—a Black Panther Party member, a MOVE supporter, a black militant and journalist. The Partisan Defense Committee believes that Mumia is innocent. And basically the evidence of Mumia's innocence that was uncovered during the period from 1995 through 2001 is due to the work that we did. Not because we are great lawyers, or the most experienced, but because we understood that the state had framed Mumia up and that he was an innocent man.

The evidence was simply there to be seen: In 1995, a man named William Singletary testified at a hearing for Mumia. Singletary is a black man who was not a leftist but a Vietnam vet who had a tow-truck company that required a lot of cooperation from the cops, and he happened to be on the street corner in the Center City area when Daniel Faulkner was shot. He tried to tell the cops that he saw somebody wearing a green Army jacket get out of a car and shoot the cop, and Mumia came along after the fact. They would not hear anything of this. They threatened him, coerced him and falsified his witness statements. He left town and was not there for the 1982 trial. We got Singletary to testify at Mumia's 1995 Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA) appeal hearing.

We also located Veronica Jones, and she testified in court the following year. She was a prostitute who had testified at the 1982 trial that she was on the scene but really didn't see very much of what happened. This contradicted her initial witness statement that she saw the shooter running from the scene. When she testified in 1996, she admitted that she had lied at the trial. She said that her original statement was true, that she saw the shooter run from the scene, but that she had been coerced by cops, who had threatened that she would be sent away for a long time on a robbery charge and not see her young children, to say something different. As she was testifying in '96, the prosecution pulled her off the witness stand and arrested her in court on a two-year-old petty larceny warrant from New Jersey.

And then we had another PCRA hearing in 1997, where another former prostitute named Pamela Jenkins, who was a prostitute-lover of a cop who had been prosecuted and convicted on federal corruption charges, testified that various police officers knew that Mumia was not



Left: Nearly 600 Philly cops besieged MOVE's Powelton Village commune in 1978. Below: At August 1978 press conference, Mayor Rizzo justifies siege and lashes out at "new breed" of journalists such as Mumia (far left).

Owens/Philadelphia Bulletin



the shooter. She testified that Cynthia White, another prostitute who was the key prosecution witness, had lied when she said that she saw Mumia shoot Faulkner. She lied due to threats from and fear of the cops.

These are some of the things that happened in the early period before the late Judge Sabo, the racist judge who ran the courtroom without even the pretense of what's supposed to be a fair hearing. In 1982, before Mumia's trial, Judge Sabo stated in the presence of a court stenographer and another judge, "I'm going to help them fry the n----r." That was Judge Sabo.

The Significance of the Beverly Confession

I want to say a bit about Arnold Beverly, who confessed to killing Faulkner. Arnold Beverly was a hitman for the mob. He was hired, according to his statement, by the mob and the cops—working with a cop liaison—to shoot and kill Faulkner on that night in December 1981. He had heard—and this was all he was told—that Faulkner was a problem for the cops and the mob. Center City

ton Village siege, when in fact the cop was killed in police crossfire. MOVE members were sent away to prison for 30 to 100 years. That trial took place in August 1981. Faulkner was shot, and Mumia was shot and almost killed, in December 1981. The police knew exactly who Mumia was and they were really happy to get him.

Now there are a lot of stories going around about Arnold Beverly, that he is all about the money and the fame, and that he has told many different stories. There is an affidavit by Beverly in the PDC pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal*, that you should read. I first talked to Arnold Beverly in 1989. He said a lot of things to me that never changed, except for one thing. In 1989 he didn't admit that he killed Faulkner. In 1999 he did admit this. The fundamentals of what he said, including the particular cops who were involved in setting this up, remain the same. Arnold Beverly confessed and is willing to testify for Mumia not because he is a good guy and is altruistic, nor for money. Rather, the cops tried to kill Beverly that night, too, because they wanted to make it look as if there was



Susan Schary

Artist's depiction of attorney Rachel Wolkenstein being ordered to jail by Judge Sabo at 1995 PCRA hearing seeking overturn of Mumia's conviction.

was rife with corruption. The cops got payoffs for the clubs, the gambling, the prostitution.

Later we learned that at the time Faulkner was killed, there were three ongoing federal investigations into cop corruption, which disclosed the fact that the cops and the mob were like one. We have an affidavit from a witness who testified in several different federal prosecutions that he had heard from cops that they were afraid that there was a cop informant working for the FBI. We believe that informant was Faulkner, that the killing of Faulkner was a hit, and that Beverly was one of the people hired to do that. When Mumia showed up on the scene, quite accidentally, the cops who were there knew exactly who he was. Some of the cops involved in corruption were the very same cops who had earlier attacked the Panthers and who had attacked MOVE.

The chief police officer on the scene on December 9, 1981, was Inspector Alfonzo Giordano. He also happened to have been the right-hand man for Frank Rizzo, the former head cop and mayor of Philadelphia. He also happened to have been the head of the Stakeout squad, the SWAT team in Philadelphia that went after the Panthers in 1969 and 1970. He also was the cop who was in charge of the barricades thrown up around the MOVE Powelton Village compound in 1977-78.

When the cops saw Mumia on the scene in December 1981, they all knew him as the one who was the 16-year-old spokesman for the Panthers back in 1970, the one who spoke out after the FBI killing of Panthers. Less than ten years later, Mumia became a reporter and exposed the lies that the cops and the city were saying about the MOVE organization. Mumia covered the trial of the MOVE 9, who were falsely convicted of killing a cop during the Powel-

ton Village siege, when in fact the cop was killed in police crossfire. MOVE members were sent away to prison for 30 to 100 years. That trial took place in August 1981. Faulkner was shot, and Mumia was shot and almost killed, in December 1981. The police knew exactly who Mumia was and they were really happy to get him.

just a shootout on the street between various blacks, and Faulkner was shot in the middle of it. And Beverly was shot that night. I also want to address the rumor that Mumia doesn't want anything to do with the Beverly evidence. Mumia knows what the PDC is doing about his case, as he has for the 20 years we've worked with him. That doesn't mean that Mumia agrees with everything the PDC says, but there is nothing we have done about his case that he has not known about, that he has not been able to say yea or nay to. He knows about the PDC-initiated newspaper ads titled "Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!" that have been published which protest the state frame-up and cite

South African workers at June 1995 protest by COSATU union federation hold up flyers demanding "Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" as part of worldwide campaign.

Workers Vanguard



evidence of his innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly. Mumia has approved of all the work that we are doing.

Why is there so much hullabaloo over this? I want to make it clear that the Beverly evidence did not come to the fore until 2001. His evidence presented an entire picture of what happened. The very contradictory evidence presented by the prosecution at Mumia's trial is explainable only with the benefit of the information that Beverly provided. This has to do with the number of shooters and where the shooters were. It has to do with the type of gun that was used.

Very importantly, the Beverly evidence has to do with how Mumia was shot—not by Faulkner but by another cop. And there was something that had always plagued us. We had gone through the record, and there were all these references in police reports that said that the shooter wore a green Army jacket. Somebody said that the guy in the car that was stopped by Faulkner at the site wore a green Army jacket, and somebody else said that Mumia wore a green Army jacket. Six or seven people said that there was somebody on the scene with a green Army jacket.

I've seen the evidence that the prosecution has, and I've talked to Mumia and his brother, Billy Cook. And I'll tell you that Mumia did not wear a green Army jacket that night. He wore a quilted sort of ski jacket, red with big blue stripes in the front. Billy Cook wore a blue Nehru-style jacket with brass buttons. And Faulkner wasn't wearing a green Army jacket; he wore a police uniform. Singletary said the shooter wore a green Army jacket. Two cops said there was a green Army jacket there, including one who said the shooter

had a green Army jacket. Arnold Beverly said he wore a green Army jacket.

Frame-Up and Cover-Up

In addition to that, the evidence of the shots fired does not fit with the prosecution's case. Also, the cops and prosecutors invented a confession that Mumia supposedly made. And on this confession question, let me go back. Giordano, who was on the scene when Mumia was arrested, invented a witness to whom, it turns out, promises were made and who wasn't in the place that the prosecution said he was. Giordano also invented the story that Mumia—after he was shot, beaten up, thrown into a police van—confessed and that his gun was simply lying at the scene.

Giordano never testified at the trial. In fact, Giordano was removed from regular duty and put on desk duty during Mumia's trial. He resigned from the police the day after the death sentence came in. It wasn't until 1986 that he was actually charged with and pled guilty to corruption and tax evasion charges based on his receipt of tens of thousands of dollars in illegal payoffs during the 1979-1980 period. 1981 isn't included in there. But we have a witness who says that Giordano was a target of the federal investigations going on that year.

Nothing in the prosecution's case holds up under examination. You look at the ballistics evidence, and the witnesses and what they said they saw and what the prosecution says, and it does not hold up. There is proof over and over again that Mumia is innocent, that his conviction was a police and prosecution frame-up, that the FBI knows perfectly well who was involved in the case. They know that Faulkner was an informant or otherwise

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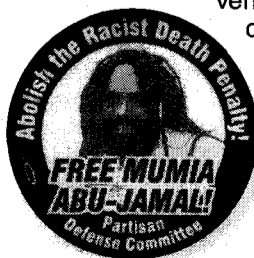
Join the Campaign!

Funds are urgently needed for legal defence!

Make a contribution today, payable to Partisan Defence Committee, write "Mumia legal defence" on the back of the cheque and mail to the address below. Every cent of such contributions is transmitted to Mumia's legal defence team via Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York.

Organise protest! Pass motions in your unions, campus, community and religious organisations demanding Mumia's freedom. Get your union or organisation to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Mumia. Publicise Mumia's case in your union or organisation's newsletter.

Spread the word! Contact the PDC for copies of *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!* This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for \$1. Get the PDC badge: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"—\$1 each. Order the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$10 for DVD. Bundles of the 4-page brochure, *Mumia Is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!*—\$2 for 25 copies. **Order from/make cheques payable to Partisan Defence Committee, PO Box Q217, QVB, Sydney NSW 1230. Contact us on (02) 9281 2181 or (03) 9654 4315.**



**Mumia Is an Innocent Man
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!**

Mumia's death sentence is a gross violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to a fair trial. Mumia's conviction is based on a confession that was never made and a witness who was never present. Mumia is innocent and must be freed.

Partisan Defence Committee

The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Is Innocent!

Anatomy of a Frame-Up

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Iran...

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McClelland, cautioned that Australian support to "unilateral action" against Iran is "not in the national interest" (www.aj.com.au, 6 March). This recalls then-Labor leader Simon Crean's opposition in 2003 to Australian military involvement in a U.S.-led war against Iraq without the fig-leaf cover of the UN.

The Labor Party's current call for a staged withdrawal of combat troops from Iraq reflects the views of a section of the Australian ruling class who want to maintain focus on defence of their imperialist interests in the Asia-Pacific region. Echoing the bourgeois Democratic Party in the U.S., the Labor Party also argues that Afghanistan is the "real front in the war on terror." Howard's April commitment of hundreds of additional troops, including elite commando and SAS forces, to Afghanistan was met with full support by Rudd, who labels the country "a breeding ground for terrorists" and the imperialist occupation "a military campaign which we need to prosecute to the end" (*Australian Financial Review*, 11 April). What this means is an escalation of the wanton slaughter of Afghan civilians. In May 2002, Australian SAS forces were involved in the killing of 11 civilians and the wounding of 16 others. Thousands more have been slain by imperialist troops during the occupation.

When the U.S., British and Australian imperialists began their military attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, reformist groups such as the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) and the International Socialist Organisation refused to raise the elementary call for the military defence of those countries, while Socialist Alternative (SAIt) quickly dropped any pretence of doing so. In fact, SAIt and a host of other reformist groups were ensconced in the cross-class Victorian Peace Network, which called for the disarmament of Iraq on the eve of the imperialist onslaught! (See *ASP* No. 183, Winter 2003.) Unsurprisingly, our basic statement today that, in the context of threats by the nuclear-armed imperialists, Iran needs nuclear weapons to defend itself, is anathema to these pseudo-socialists. Instead groups like SAIt plead "No more blood for oil: Don't attack Iran" counseling that "even if Iran is out to develop nuclear

weapons, they are years away from actually doing so" (*Socialist Alternative*, March/April 2006).

The Laborite "lefts" do not oppose Australian imperialism as a system, but absurdly demand the capitalist rulers serve the interests of those they exploit and oppress. For example, the DSP appeals to the venal Australian ruling class to adopt "a progressive foreign policy." In a recent article, "The 'war on terror' is a sham," SAIt wrote "Unlike the ALP we oppose *all* military interventions by our government, or any other, under this banner" (*Socialist Alternative*, March-April 2007). This posturing has nothing to do with a principled Marxist opposition to Australian imperialism. In 1999, SAIt joined the protests that demanded "their" capitalist government send its imperialist troops to East Timor, screaming "East Timor: Blood on Howard's hands." It took nearly seven years before they could bring themselves to print the words "Australian troops out." In contrast the SL forthrightly opposed Australian imperialist intervention in 1999 and has consistently called for *Australian and all imperialist forces out of East Timor now!*

Underscoring Labor's commitment to Australian imperialism and the reactionary U.S./Australia alliance, Rudd declared recently that the Australia-U.S. alliance "has served us well over the last half-century" continuing "I believe it will serve our nation well for the next half-century" (www.thewest.com.au, 18 April).

Now, I don't agree with Serpico that it is possible to have a police force without corrupt cops. I want to make that clear. But this is a man who spent his life trying to find some honesty in the police force and risked his life to do that. So one has to respect that, within its own terms. These police forces are very powerful, and they are given aid and comfort and support by the Democrats and Republicans. And falling in behind are the fake socialists who promote the lie that the capitalist state can be reformed.

I want to end with the following point. We have a huge, huge battle ahead of us. It will not do us any good to think that maybe because the Court of Appeals may be hearing oral argument in Mumia's case and will be rendering a decision sometime in the next few months, that this is the answer for Mumia. Every single stage of Mumia's case has shown that the courts are committed to seeing Mumia executed or making him spend his life entombed in prison. It will take not only us here tonight but mass mobilizations, primarily focused on the power of labor with its allies—youth, the unemployed, etc.—to show that we will not permit the state to execute Mumia or entomb him in prison for life, to show that we are committed to fighting to free Mumia now. Free Mumia now! ■

U.S. Navy



**March 28:
Aircraft carrier
USS Stennis in
Persian Gulf
during massive
military exercise,
part of imperialist
provocations
against Iran.**

The ALP has endorsed the proposed U.S.-Australia communications base at Geraldton in Western Australia. Like Pine Gap, such bases gather intelligence vital to imperialist military strikes and interventions from East Asia, to Afghanistan, to North Korea and across the Pacific. No doubt they also target Iran. As proletarian internationalists, we demand: *U.S. bases, military out now! Down with the U.S./Australia alliance! U.S./British/Australian military out of Iraq, Afghanistan now! Hands off Iran!*

Iran's seizure of 15 British army and naval personnel on 23 March brought forth a barrage of patriotic chauvinism against Iran, a country which has recently been subject to repeated provocations by the imperialists. With consummate hypocrisy, spokesmen for the Blair government shrieked that Iran was lying when it said the marines and sailors were apprehended inside Iranian territorial waters and howled about "coercion" and "humiliation" of the prisoners, some of whom were shown on Iranian television making statements supporting the Iranian government's claim. Almost two weeks after they were captured by Iranian forces, the British sailors and marines were released by the Tehran regime.

We do not know what the British forces were up to at the time of their capture, but we do know that the imperialists are the aggressors and this semi-colonial country is in their crosshairs. The monstrous hue and cry over the captured British crew members can only serve to heighten the danger of an imperialist attack on Iran. Moreover, Britain's defence of its marines and sailors—that they were not in Iranian but Iraqi waters—was premised on their role as overlords in Iraq, which has been subjugated by the murderous imperialist occupation. Irrespective of where the British forces were when they were apprehended, we say: *British, U.S. and all imperialist troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan! Down with imperialist war provocations against Iran!*

Even while screaming about Iranian "lies," the British capitalist press could barely bring itself to report that there is no agreed boundary between Iraq and Iran for most of the Shatt al-Arab waterway. The fact that an imperialist search party patrols the area at all times—sometimes led by the British and sometimes by the U.S.—is a consequence of the occupation of Iraq. The stretch of Iraqi coast that lies at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab waterway runs close to two strategic Iraqi oil terminals—Basra and Chaur al-Amaja—which are regarded by the Iraqi capitalist rulers as the country's "crown jewels." The boundary that is proclaimed today by the British was arbitrarily drawn—like the border of Iraq—by the British imperialists themselves!

Imperialist lies about "weapons of mass destruction" served as a pretext for

the invasion of Iraq in 2003 which has led to the deaths of countless thousands of Iraqis, including through hideous imperialist massacres such as at Fallujah and Haditha, in addition to unleashing communalist slaughter on a mass scale. Today it is an open secret that the U.S. and British imperialists have staged numerous provocations in the hope that Iranian retaliation would serve as a pretext for an attack on Iran. They have been steadily beefing up military forces in and around the Persian Gulf: two U.S. aircraft carriers have been positioned near the Iranian coast and *BBC News* online (20 February) reported that the U.S. has readied plans for attacks on Iran, to be triggered either by "confirmation that Iran was developing a nuclear weapon" or "a high-casualty attack on US forces in neighbouring Iraq...if it were traced directly back to Tehran." And it's not just the Americans. Liberal journalist Robert Fisk reported that: "The Iranian security services are convinced that the British security services are trying to provoke the Arabs of Iran's Khuzestan province to rise up against the Islamic Republic" (*Independent*, 2 April).

On 11 January, American troops seized five Iranians who even Iraqi officials maintained were diplomats. According to Patrick Cockburn in the *Independent* (3 April), this raid was in fact a botched attempt to abduct two senior Iranian officials—the deputy head of the Iranian National Security Council, Mohammed Jafari, and General Minojahar Frouzanda, the intelligence chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard—during an official visit to Iraqi Kurdistan. Cockburn says the operation was "somewhat as if Iran had tried to kidnap the heads of the CIA and MI6 while they were on an official visit," and that Britain should have expected Iran to retaliate. A *New Yorker* online article (25 February) by Seymour Hersh quoted a former senior intelligence official saying that "the word went out last August for the military to snatch as many Iranians in Iraq as they can," and a former National Security Council official told Hersh: "This is all part of the campaign of provocative steps to increase the pressure on Iran. The idea is that at some point the Iranians will respond and then the Administration will have an open door to strike at them."

Iran Needs Nuclear Weapons to Defend Itself

As revolutionary opponents of British imperialism, we unequivocally condemn all imperialist war provocations against Iran. The biggest threat to the working people and oppressed of the entire world is U.S. imperialism and its slavish toady, blood-soaked British imperialism. War moves against Iran to date include the UN Security Council's demand in December, at the behest of Washington, that Tehran halt its uranium enrichment programme and the imposition of a first round of sanctions on Iran. This came after almost three years of inspections in which the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) found no evidence of a nuclear weapons programme. We vehemently oppose the imperialist sanctions against Iran, which are the opening shots in a war, as the case of Iraq demonstrates. One and a half million people were killed and the country devastated by the United Nations sanctions against Iraq which preceded the U.S./British invasion and occupation. Since its inception at the end of WWI—when it was called the League of Nations—the purpose of the UN has always been to serve as a fig leaf for naked imperialist aggression against semi-colonial countries.

We insist that in the context of threats by the nuclear-armed imperialists, Iran desperately needs nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to defend itself. In today's world, possession of

Mumia...

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involved in this. And they know that cops like Giordano who were involved in the prosecution of Mumia were being investigated. None of that came out during Mumia's trial. And the court refused Mumia's defense any and all information during the PCRA hearings from 1995 to 1998.

What the Beverly evidence does is to make it impossible for anyone to argue that Mumia's case is about one rogue cop, or one not-so-honest prosecutor and one racist judge. Mumia's case proves the nature of the capitalist state, the nature of the courts, the cops and the prosecution.

I got a call from Frank Serpico about a week ago. People may know him as the New York cop who spilled the beans on police corruption in 1971. What he said to me about the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) is very interesting. He said: I know about those guys. I know that the fact that the Fraternal Order of Police targets every person who has gone on record for Mumia is proof that they are covering up for something, that this is proof that Mumia is innocent, and proof of the corruption of these cops. Because the F.O.P. has protected cops all over.



Vandali/SNA

Tehran, 6 March: Teachers demonstrate in front of Iran's legislature during strike for better wages and other demands.

nuclear arms has become the only real measure of national sovereignty. In the event of military attack against Iran by U.S./British imperialism, or by Israel—the only nuclear-armed country in the Near East—or by any other force operating as proxy for the imperialists, our stand as Marxists is one of revolutionary defensism: for the military defence of Iran against imperialist attack without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime.

With breathtaking hypocrisy, British government spokesmen shrieked in high dudgeon about Iran's "coercion" of the 15 prisoners (often described as "hostages"), who for their part admitted being in Iranian waters and apologised. The images shown on Iranian TV, including of Leading Seaman Faye Turney wearing an Islamic headscarf, while smoking a cigarette, bore no comparison to the pictures of brutal torture and abject humiliation suffered by prisoners of the British and U.S. imperialist forces in Iraq, who have sacks over their heads, duct tape over their mouths and are routinely beaten, forced into "stress positions," and the rest. British complaints about treatment of prisoners are particularly obscene in view of the case of Iraqi hotel worker Baha Mousa, who was arrested in 2003 and died at the hands of his British captors. Mousa was "attacked over a 36-hour period while handcuffed and hooded and suffered 93 separate injuries" (*Guardian*, 15 February), while the soldiers involved were exonerated of his murder.

Indeed the Iranian treatment of the British military captives, as seen on TV, looked positively humane in comparison with the treatment of those in Britain who find themselves on the receiving end of the racist "war on terror." None of the British naval personnel suffered the fate of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes, who was not even taken prisoner but gunned down in cold blood on the London Underground in July 2005; nor of Abdul Kahar who was shot and injured during a police "anti-terrorism" raid on his home in East London in June 2006. One Muslim of Algerian origin who was detained under anti-terrorism legislation in December 2001, languished in jail for years without any charges and is now subject to a form of house arrest known as a "control order," recently told the *Guardian* (28 March) that in Blair's Britain, "I have fewer rights than an animal."

While liberals and reformists plead with Blair not to attack Iran and call for troops out of Iraq, their bottom line is to support "our boys." Thus the Stop the War Coalition (StWC), dominated by the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), posted a web statement (undated) headlined "Don't attack Iran" which opened with: "We urge the speedy release and return to this country of the detained sailors and marines." While it is appropriate to call for the release of the Iranian diplomats seized by U.S. forces in Iraq, it is quite another thing for purported leftists to call for the release of their "own" imperialist forces in the Near East. These captives are not civilian hostages, but military personnel for whom being captured goes with the territory. For the StWC, however, such displays of flagrant social-chauvinism are par for the course. The purpose of this "anti-war movement" was not to wage class struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist system which breeds war, but to unite the maximum forces possible on a programme of bourgeois pacifism, lulling anti-war protesters with the absurd lie that capitalist "democracy" is the road to peace. The political perspective of the StWC is to pressure Blair to "break with Bush"; in other words it simply advocates an alternative foreign policy for British imperialism—one more independent of the U.S.

The Bloody Legacy of British Imperialism

The British press bemoans the fact that all layers of Iranian society loathe and despise British imperialism which is widely dubbed "little Satan" to the "great Satan" in the U.S. This hatred stems not only from the Blair government's role in the brutal occupation of Iraq, but from British imperialism's historic role in Iran when it was the world's leading power. Today, all the bellyaching in the capitalist press cannot disguise the fact that Britain is now a senile imperialist power that is totally dependent on U.S. imperialism to police its own interests abroad.

The fact that British imperialism is hated in Iran *in its own right* gives the lie to the reformists' claim that the main problem with British imperialism is its "special relationship" with the U.S. The present bloody mess in the Near East is the legacy of the carnage, savagery and "divide-and-rule" machinations of British imperialism when it was the dominant world power. For over a hundred years

British imperialism has sought to appropriate for itself access to Iran's oil wealth. The modern oil giant BP began as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, in which the British government bought a 50 per cent stake in 1913. Over the ensuing decades Britain engineered a number of "regime changes" and in 1941 invaded the country and occupied the oil region in the south. (Meanwhile the Soviet Army entered the north and helped establish the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan.)

When the nationalist government of Mohammad Mossadeq, elected in 1951, proposed to nationalise Iran's oil, the Labour government of Clement Attlee imposed a naval blockade in the Gulf and asked the UN to condemn Iran (which it refused to do). The British hatched a plot to overthrow Mossadeq but lacked the wherewithal to carry it out, until they could persuade the CIA to take it over. Mossadeq was toppled and replaced by the brutal rule of the Shah. This history illustrates that the bloody carnage wrought by the U.S. and British rulers in Iraq today is not some aberration from the "democratic" norm, but the everyday workings of imperialism which in the pursuit of profits is driven to strive for domination of markets and spheres of influence. This, and not a misguided foreign policy, is what drives the imperialist powers to wage war.

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

The reactionary 1979 Iranian "Islamic Revolution" that overthrew the CIA-backed Shah was supported by the bulk of the left internationally in the name of "anti-imperialism." This included the pro-Moscow Tudeh (Masses) party in Iran, which had a base among the country's strategic, heavily Arab oil workers. Uniquely on the left, the International Communist League (then the international Spartacist tendency) gave no political support to Ayatollah Khomeini's forces. We said: "Down with the Shah! Don't bow to Khomeini! For workers revolution in Iran!" After taking power, the mullahs enslaved women in the veil, slaughtered thousands of leftists and trade unionists and intensified repression against Kurds and other minorities, as we said they would.

While the bulk of the "left" howled along with the imperialists against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, we said, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" In a 1982 article, "Iran and Permanent Revolution" we wrote:

"Afghanistan embodies all of the backward wretchedness of Iran—the tyranny of the landlords, khans, money lenders and mullahs—but without the internal social resources (i.e., a modern industrial proletariat) for its own emancipation. The Red Army intervention not only poses the military defense of the social gains of the October Revolution against an imperialist-backed counter-revolution on the southern border of the USSR. It also poses the extension of those gains to the oppressed Afghan peoples. The crime of the Kremlin bureaucrats would be to capitulate to world imperialism (as Stalin did in Azerbaijan in 1946) and withdraw the Red Army, thereby turning Afghanistan over to the tribal chiefs, the CIA and Khomeini and his ilk."

—*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 33, Spring 1982

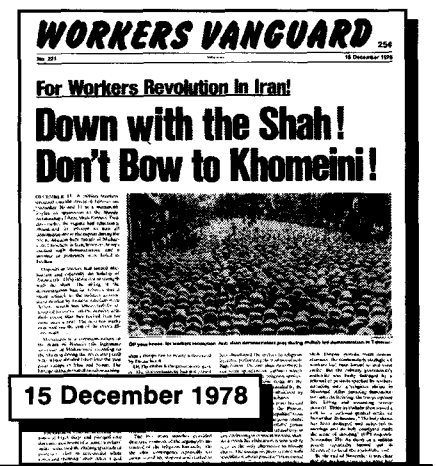
The Kremlin did treacherously withdraw Soviet forces in 1988-89, which was the opening for the victory of imperialist-backed counterrevolution throughout Eastern Europe and within the Soviet Union itself. This historic defeat for the world proletariat has brought devastation to the working people of those societies and emboldened the imperialists in their attacks globally while fuelling the resurgence of religious reaction throughout the world.

Iran today is a cauldron of discontent, among students, women, trade unionists

and national minorities. Its reactionary president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is an anti-Semite who has grotesquely referred to the slaughter of six million Jews in the Nazi Holocaust as a "myth." It is the task of the working class in Iran, leading women, national and ethnic minorities and all the oppressed behind it, to overthrow the Persian-chauvinist Islamic capitalist regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist workers party. Such parties must be built throughout the Near East to unite the proletariat—Arab, Persian, Kurdish and Hebrew, Sunni and Shi'ite, Muslim and Christian—in struggle against imperialism and against the Zionists, mullahs, colonels, sheiks and all the other capitalist rulers. The fight for workers rule in the Near East crucially includes shattering the Zionist garrison state from within through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution.

This is the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution, which vitally includes the fight to extend working-class rule to the imperialist centres, not least through the struggle for socialist revolution in Britain and the U.S. In the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East, Leninist workers parties are essential to break the proletariat of the region from fundamentalism, nationalism and illusions in imperialist "democracy." The Stalinised Communist parties of the Near East, which made a virtue of supporting various bourgeois forces, such as Mossadeq, betraying revolutionary opportunities, share responsibility for the growth of Islamic fundamentalism among the working and oppressed masses.

The British capitalist rulers are unrelenting allies of U.S. imperialism, the deadliest force on the face of this planet. The task of revolutionaries in the imperialist centres is to fight for proletarian revolution against our "own" ruling class. The only solution to imperialist depredation is the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order by the proletariat and its replacement with a rationally planned economy under the rule of the workers. When Bush and Blair launched their wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, both the Spartacist League/Britain and our comrades in the Spartacist League/U.S. called for military defence of those countries,



In contrast to our opponents on the left, Spartacists gave no political support to reactionary 1979 "Islamic revolution."

without giving an iota of political support to the regimes there. At the same time we call on the proletariat in Britain and in the U.S. to wage class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. As sections of the International Communist League, the Spartacist League/U.S. is committed to the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead the multiracial proletariat in the struggle to sweep away U.S. imperialism while the Spartacist League/Britain is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party to lead the multi-ethnic proletariat to likewise put an end to British imperialism through socialist revolution. ■

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Spartacist League/Britain Statement

Imperialist Hands Off Iran!

U.S./British/Australian Occupiers Out of Iraq Now!

We reprint below a 7 April statement issued by the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), following the imperialist outcry over Iran's seizure of British naval personnel in the Shatt al-Arab waterway. As our comrades forthrightly stated, "We do not know what the British forces were up to at the time of their capture, but we do

know that the imperialists are the aggressors and this semi-colonial country is in their crosshairs." Only days after the British personnel were detained, the U.S. conducted its largest war manoeuvres in the Persian Gulf since 2003, involving some 12 ships, 100 aircraft and 12,000 personnel.

On 24 March, amid ongoing hysteria over Iranian nukes, the UN imposed a

second round of sanctions against Iran, demanding an end to its uranium enrichment program. This was welcomed with full support by the Howard government in Australia. The previous month, commenting on bellicose statements against Iran by visiting U.S. vice president, Dick Cheney, Howard stated, "if you are dealing with a difficult country like Iran you leave every option on

the table" (www.pm.gov.au, 25 February). Last year, federal ALP leader, Kevin Rudd, targeted Iran as "a major problem" because of its continued defiance of UN diktats and called for a "tough and hardline" approach from the imperialists (ALP media statement, 22 September 2006). More recently, ALP shadow foreign affairs minister, Robert
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The Frame-Up of an Innocent Man

**Mobilise
Union Power!
Free Mumia
Abu-Jamal!**

COC Productions



The urgent fight to free death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has reached another critical stage. Oral argument on his habeas corpus appeal will be heard by the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals on 17 May in Philadelphia.

In a letter to supporters announcing the hearing, Mumia's attorney Robert Bryan pointed out that Mumia "remains in great danger. If all is lost, he will be executed." Those fighting for Mumia's freedom must recognise the depth of the hatred the capitalist rulers have for a man known as "the voice of the voiceless." That Mumia is the U.S. state's foremost target was seen in a Congressional resolution passed with overwhelming support last December that condemned the decision by the Parisian suburb of Saint-Denis to name a street after him.

The Partisan Defense Committee (PDC) in the U.S. is building contingents

at rallies to be held in Philadelphia and San Francisco on the date of the hearing. The contingents are based on the following slogans: "For Class-Struggle Defense to Free Mumia Now! There is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" Fraternal defence organisations of the International Communist League have called rallies for Mumia in London and Berlin.

Particularly in the U.S., liberals, self-proclaimed socialist organisations like the Workers World Party (WWP), black nationalists and others have been calling for a new trial for Mumia. While they sometimes add the call for his freedom, the attempt to limit the struggle to a call for a new trial represents a *political program* premised on reliance on the capitalist state. Such illusions demobilised a movement of millions around the world in Mumia's defence in the 1990s. It is

directly counterposed to the urgently required mass struggle—in the U.S. and internationally—centred on the social power of the unions. The whole history of Mumia's case shows that there is no justice in the capitalist courts. Thus, while the PDC stands for pursuing every legal avenue on Mumia's behalf, we place no faith in the capitalist "justice" system.

A spokesman for the Black Panther Party in his youth, subsequently an award-winning journalist and a supporter of the interracial MOVE commune, Mumia was framed up on false charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981, tried in a racist courtroom and sentenced to death explicitly on the basis of his political views and activities. He has spent over 24 years on death row during which time he has courageously continued as a working journalist.

The PDC, which first took up his case in 1987, is a class-struggle legal and social defence organisation that champions cases and causes in the interests of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Leading up to and after rallies called by the PDC and Labor Black Leagues last October in the U.S., full-page advertisements were placed in the *Nation*, the Harlem-based *Amsterdam News*, the *Chicago Defender* and the *San Francisco Bay View* and subsequently in the French Communist Party's newspaper *l'Humanité*, the *Morning Star* in Britain as well as papers in Germany and Canada.

The advertisements listed labour organisations around the world, including the Maritime Union of Australia, West Melbourne, as well as hundreds of trade
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