

## Drop the Charges Against Refugee Protesters!

We reprint below a Partisan Defence Committee (PDC) letter sent to the federal Attorney-General on 26 May protesting the charging of refugees over demonstrations at Villawood on 20 April. Since then, on 9 June, federal police again fired "bean-bag" bullets and used capsicum spray to suppress an angry protest by refugees at the Christmas Island detention centre. The protest reportedly erupted in response to further rejections of asylum claims. Shortly afterwards, federal police charged 18 asylum seekers over the earlier 13 March Christmas Island protest. As with those charged following the Villawood protests, they face being denied a permanent visa if convicted.

Refugees are kept imprisoned for months, and even years, under constant threat of being deported to coun-

### No Deportations!

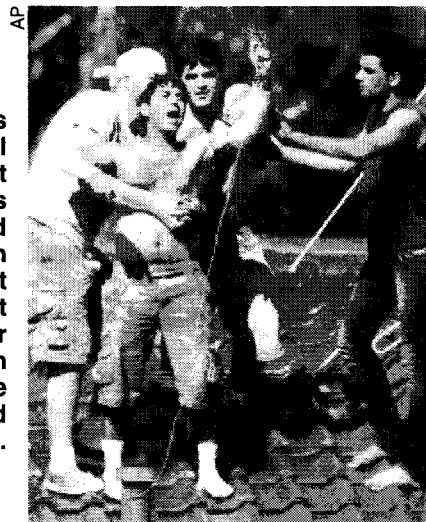
tries where they can face brutal punishment, persecution and death. This torture of desperate people, many seeking asylum from reactionary terror, has led to growing acts of self-harm. There have been numerous deaths in detention. This does not include the hundreds who have died making the treacherous sea voyage, such as the estimated 50 men, women and children who horrifically drowned when their boat crashed on rocks off Christmas Island on 15 December last year.

We say: Drop all the charges against the refugee protesters! No deportations! The trade unions must be mobilised to defend refugees and immigrants, and fight against all the government's racist immigration laws.

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and

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Refugees during April protests at Sydney's Villawood detention centre prevent distraught asylum seeker jumping from roof with wire noose around his neck.



# Federal Budget Pummels the Poor ALP Government's War on Workers and Oppressed

From its draconian anti-union legislation to its brutal treatment of refugees and bloody militarism abroad, the minority federal ALP government, propped up by the Greens and "independents," is an enemy of working people and the oppressed. That this government is thoroughly dedicated to administering in the interests of the Australian capitalist rulers was driven home yet again by the May federal budget. In aiming to slash \$22 billion in spending over the next four years, the budget is framed to make workers and the poor pay for the massive deficit racked up by the government in its attempts to "save capitalism" with the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008.

Pushing mantras such as getting the budget "back in the black," the government is targeting the neediest for cruel welfare cuts. In some cases this will not only threaten the livelihoods but the very lives of recipients. Under punitive new regulations access to the disabilities pension will be sharply curtailed. Disabled people deemed capable of working by the government are threatened with losing their pensions unless they submit to demeaning quarterly Centrelink interviews to prove they have been looking for work. Unemployed youth under 21 years of age will lose \$43 a week from their benefits while poverty-stricken single parents (overwhelmingly women) will have their paltry pensions slashed by \$56 per week when their child turns twelve. Alongside this, the government aims to slash more than 1,200 jobs from Medi-

## We Need a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party!

care, Centrelink and Child Support services. These attacks on the poor take place as the cost of living for basic items such as electricity, water, groceries, education, health and accommodation are escalating. With soaring housing costs, includ-

ing skyrocketing rents, thousands have been thrown onto the streets. As for public transport and hospitals, they sink deeper into disrepair.

Meanwhile the government's punitive and racist welfare "quarantining" that ac-

companied the 2007 police and military occupation of Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory is being extended to more communities in Queensland and Western Australia. This extension of welfare "quarantining," which in NT Aboriginal communities combines with puritanical prohibition on alcohol and pornography, is in the service of an ever-increasing state intervention into the lives of the oppressed and working people.

Prime Minister Gillard openly competes with the Liberal/National opposition leader Tony Abbott over who can put forward the most reactionary social and economic policies. The current budget cuts targeting single parents and unemployed youth are designed to reinforce the grip of the family on women and youth. A key prop for the maintenance of capitalist rule and source of women's oppression, the institution of the family, backed by church and state, is upheld to instil conservative obedience to the "values" of bourgeois morality and to raise the next generation of wage slaves for industry and cannon fodder for future imperialist wars. In Australia, where wife-beating is rife and a woman is killed almost every week by a male partner or ex-partner, the cuts to the single-parent benefit will help drive women and children back to the horror of domestic violence. Meanwhile, as the mining giants and banks rake in record profits, the bourgeois media is aggressively demanding deeper cuts to welfare as the ruling class worries about

*continued on page 6*



Equal pay rally in Melbourne, 8 June. Thousands of mainly women workers demonstrated nationally for equal pay, higher wages in union Day of Action.

# On the Capitalist State

7 February

Dear Comrades,

I was glad to read the article in *Australasian Spartacist* no 211 (Summer 2010/2011) entitled "For A Workers and Peasants Government in Thailand!" It is an important Southeast Asian country with a substantial population and a significant (as you note) working class. Despite the deification of the current monarch, he cannot live forever and the country is probably heading into a period of some kind of instability, so the article is both important and timely.

I wanted to note two points. First, in polemicalising against Giles Ji Ungpakorn on the nature of the capitalist state, you say: "Consisting at its core of armed bodies of men—the police, military and their auxiliaries—this state exists to defend the private property and rule of the bourgeoisie." When Lenin wrote *State and Revolution*, the police, the army and the personnel who ran the prisons and what Engels called "coercive institutions of all kinds" were effectively all male. Today that is no longer the case. One only has to note the composition of the local police forces and military at all levels. Or the fact that about 15% of US Air Force combat pilots are women. And in spite of feminist ravings, if the B-52 pilot who is bombing your village in Afghanistan or the local cop aiming a 9mm Glock at you is a woman, the weaponry is no less lethal.

I just think you should adjust the way you present the concept to reflect reality. *Workers Vanguard* (no 972, 21 January 2011) in the article "Support the Puerto

Rico Student Strike!" has what seems a better formulation when they refer to "a machinery of organized violence."

Second, it was good to see you explicitly characterise Laos as a deformed workers state and call for its defence against the imperialists. Laos was perhaps the most bombed country on earth and is still fighting a low-level counter-revolutionary insurgency inside the country. The long consignment of Laos to oblivion was no credit to the ICL. The fact that the organisation has been able to rectify this is powerful testimony to the strength and viability of the program of revolutionary communism. I look forward to a future article of some depth on the history and character of the Laotian Revolution.

Fraternal Regards,  
John S

**ASp replies:** We thank John for his letter and agree with his point on the need to reflect current reality when presenting a Marxist understanding of the capitalist state. As John suggests, the fact that today women serve in the state apparatus in no way changes its repressive bourgeois class character. We take this opportunity to also make a few broader points, particularly about the Australian imperialist military.

As has been evident by recent grotesque incidents reported in the bourgeois media, the misogyny and racist piggery so typical of Australian capitalist society is replicated in concentrated form within the armed forces. The recent disciplining of a young female defence force trainee by the Australian Defence Force Academy brass because she complained that a sexual

encounter she had with a fellow student had been broadcast, without her knowledge, to his friends over Skype, triggered an avalanche of other reports of sexist and homophobic abuse within the military. This included death threats against an openly gay army officer.

Allegations by former army men and women of rape and bashing were recently aired on ABC's *Four Corners* program. Such "hazing" or "bastardisation" serves to inculcate complete subservience to the "chain of command." The state's armed forces are also shot through at all levels with racist scum and fascists. In September 2000, white soldiers of the 1RAR regiment in Townsville dressed as Ku Klux Klan and humiliated Aboriginal and other non-white soldiers on the eve of that regiment's deployment to East Timor to participate in Australian imperialism's subjugation of the East Timorese masses. The military is a microcosm of capitalist society as a whole. Just as we fight against homophobic, racist and sexist discrimination and atrocities in "civilian" society, so we oppose it in the military. At the same time, we carry on the tradition of Marxist opposition to imperialist militarism and say: Not a person, not a cent to the Australian imperialist military! This is part of our struggle to shatter the capitalist state through workers revolution and sweep away the system of capitalist exploitation.

The minority Labor government, which today administers the capitalist state, responded to the "Skype" scandal by declaring that women will no longer be barred from frontline combat positions. Promoting women's "equal right to fight and die for their country," the prime minister, Julia Gillard, is addressing, in part, the capitalist rulers' long-standing con-

cern that the army needs more personnel. At the same time she is whipping up patriotism while attempting to generate support for the military as a supposedly egalitarian-minded institution. Meanwhile bourgeois feminists who promote women joining the armed forces may want a kinder, gentler military but at bottom, loyal to their class, they support the military, whose purpose includes savagely enforcing imperialist oppression, not least that of women in subjugated countries. From terrorising the brothel precinct in Cairo in 1915 to their occupation of East Timor in 1999, Australian troops are notorious for brutality toward women. Australian, U.S. and NATO troops get out of Afghanistan, the Middle East, North Africa, East Timor and the Pacific!

The genocidal wars and dispossession of the Aboriginal population laid the foundations of White Australia capitalism. Australia acted as an adjunct to the British in numerous military adventures from the Anglo-Maori Wars and the Sudan in the 19th century, to the Boer War at the turn of the 20th century, and participated in both imperialist world wars. Subsequently the Australian imperialists became local military agents for, and lackeys of, the U.S. imperialists. As a key regional cop for the U.S. during Cold War I, directed against the Soviet degenerated workers state, and following the 1949 Chinese Revolution, they rushed troops to fight against social revolutions in Asia, beginning with Korea. They perpetrated anti-Communist butchery in Malaya, and, in the 1960s, as a jackal ally of U.S. imperialism, sought to crush Soviet-backed North Vietnam and prevent the spread of social revolution to the whole of Vietnam. The

*continued on page 4*

**Partisan Defence  
Committee**

## Salute Heroic Japanese Nuclear Workers

*The Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S. sent the following statement of solidarity to the Federation of Electric Power Related Industry Workers Unions of Japan (Denryoku Soren) on 19 March.*

The Partisan Defense Committee salutes the heroic members of your union who are risking their lives in an effort to control the dangerous situation at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant following the earthquake and tsunami. The PDC is a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League/U.S., which, along with the Spartacist Group Japan, are sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The valor and dedication of the Fuku-

shima Daiichi workers stand in sharp contrast to the parasitism and greed of the owners and managers of TEPCO [Tokyo Electric Power Company] and their unofficial spokesmen in the government. They have endangered the population with their obfuscation and mismanagement. For the capitalists in every country and every industry, the overriding concern is their profits and not the safety of the workers or the interests of society as a whole.

All of this underlines the urgent need for trade-union control over safety and all working conditions at every level. If the labor of those who toil is to serve the interests of society and not the bottom line of the bosses, it is necessary for the working class to take power and rule on the basis of a collectivized planned economy.

We intend to circulate this message to organizations within the workers movement internationally and encourage them to likewise extend their support.

\* \* \*

The PDC urges trade unions and other organizations to send their own letters to the union in solidarity with the nuclear power workers at the Fukushima plant—known as the "Fukushima 50"—some of whom have already been hospitalized. Messages can be e-mailed to: icemjaf@

blue.ocn.ne.jp. The PDC has contributed \$500 to the union and urges others to make their own contributions. The information for wiring funds is as follows. Bank Name: Mizuho Bank, Ltd.; Swift Code: MHBKJPJT; Branch Name: Shiba Branch; Branch Address: 5-34-7, Shiba, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 108-0014, Japan; Account Name: Nihon Kagaku Enerugi-Kouzan Roudoukumiai Kyougikai; Account Number: 054-3316103. Please state "Earthquake" on the wire transfer form. ■



Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency  
Workers in control room at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, 23 March.

**Australasian**

**SPARTACIST**



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# Hong Kong: Fake Trotskyists Hail Imperialist Running Dog Liu Xiaobo

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 981 (27 May), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

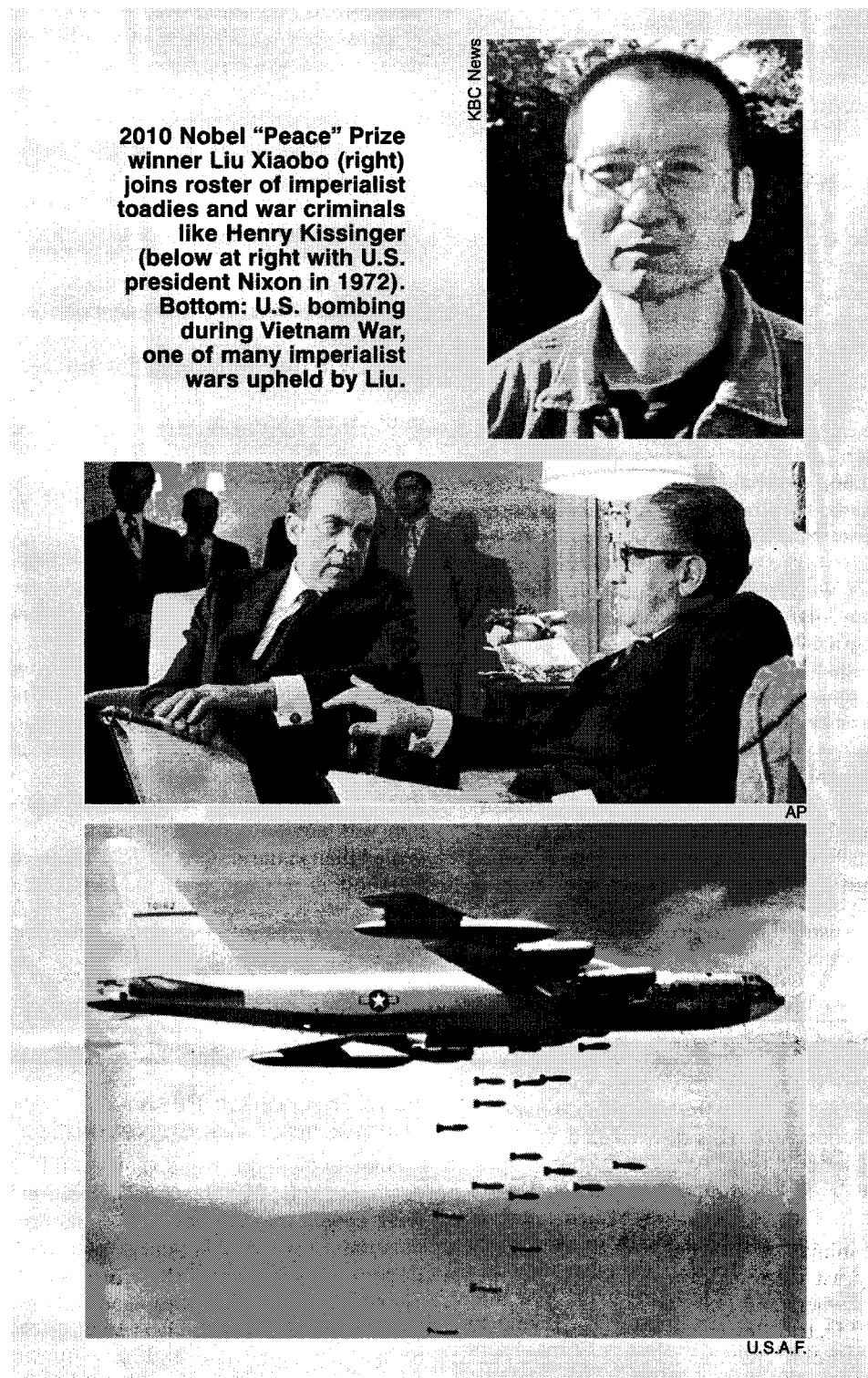
It always seems that the more flagrant and bloody the depredations that the imperialists are engaged in, the louder they beat the drums over “human rights” wherever capitalism has been overthrown. In this vein, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton lashed out during high-level talks with Chinese representatives in Washington a few weeks ago. Referring to a renewed crackdown on dissidents, Clinton blustered that China’s leaders are “trying to stop history, which is a fool’s errand.” Liberal editorial writers and columnists have done their assigned part by bashing China over “human rights.” This at a time when the U.S. ruling class is carrying out murderous occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and bombing Libya, and the use of torture in the “war on terror” evokes only mild debate about just how effective it is.

A major focus of the recent clamor over “human rights” in China has been the imprisoned anti-Communist intellectual Liu Xiaobo. Especially after Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year, the Western bourgeois media glorified him as a stalwart champion of “democracy” and “human rights.” A noteworthy exception was a piece in the liberal London *Guardian* (15 December 2010), which exposed him as a rabid supporter of U.S. imperialist militarism, past and present. Under the headline “Do Supporters of Nobel Winner Liu Xiaobo Really Know What He Stands For?” Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong commented:

“If Liu’s politics were well-known, most people would not favour him for a prize, because he is a champion of war, not peace. He has endorsed the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and he applauded the Vietnam and Korean wars retrospectively in a 2001 essay. All these conflicts have entailed massive violations of human rights. Yet in his article ‘Lessons from the Cold War,’ Liu argues that ‘The free world led by the US fought almost all regimes that trampled on human rights.... The major wars that the US became involved in are all ethically defensible.’ During the 2004 US presidential election, Liu warmly praised George Bush for his war effort against Iraq and condemned Democratic party candidate John Kerry for not sufficiently supporting the US’s wars.”

It is practically a requirement for those awarded the Nobel Peace Prize that they be imperialist war criminals (e.g., Henry Kissinger and Barack Obama) or toadies of the imperialists (e.g., the Dalai Lama).

Joining the imperialists in praising Liu are the pseudo-Trotskyists who publish *October Review* out of capitalist Hong Kong, the one part of the People’s Republic of China (besides the tiny enclave of Macao) where the CCP does not exercise a monopoly of political organization. Describing this vocal apologist for American imperialist militarism as someone who “fought for democracy through peaceful means,” *October Review* (31 December 2010) ran an article, headlined “Liu Xiaobo Must Be Released Now! Human Rights Must Be Restored in China!” that was suffused with the anti-Communist code words “human rights” and (classless) “democracy.” “Liu being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize is also a criticism of Chinese authorities,” we are informed, “hence it can be an encouragement for the development of the democratic movement in China.” With the same language, the *Washington Post* (30 January 2009)—a major mouthpiece for American imperi-



2010 Nobel “Peace” Prize winner Liu Xiaobo (right) joins roster of imperialist toadies and war criminals like Henry Kissinger (below at right with U.S. president Nixon in 1972). Bottom: U.S. bombing during Vietnam War, one of many imperialist wars upheld by Liu.

alism—hailed Liu’s Charter 08 movement as China’s “new democracy movement.”

## “Human Rights” Imperialism Against China

Liu emerged as Washington’s most favored Chinese anti-Communist “dissident” a little over two years ago as the primary author of the Charter 08 manifesto which, as we wrote at the time, was “an explicit program for capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese deformed workers state, wrapped in the envelope of ‘democracy’” (WV No. 933, 27 March 2009). Charter 08 demanded the privatization of state-owned enterprises—the collectivized core of the Chinese economy—as well as agricultural land. This was a program to reverse the social gains of the 1949 Revolution, which, if realized, would plunge China back into imperialist subjugation and untrammelled exploitation. Not surprisingly, the organizations Liu has been involved in have been funded by the National Endowment for Democracy, a notorious CIA front.

While we recognized that Charter 08 represented a counterrevolutionary program, we did not support the repression of its initiators and signers by the Stalinist bureaucracy, which defends its privileged position through fierce, all-sided political repression. Liu and the other right-wing

intellectuals were not and are not presently leading a movement threatening the existence of the Chinese workers state, as was the case, for example, with Solidarność in Poland in 1981. As revolutionary Marxists (Trotskyists), we called to

“smash Solidarność counterrevolution” and fought to win Polish workers to a program of defense of the Polish and Soviet workers states against capitalist counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies.

In China today, that program is essential to politically defeat the Charter 08 movement and its apologists on the left, such as *October Review*. Charter 08 retrospectively supported the imperialist-backed Guomindang (Nationalist Party) regime of Chiang Kai-shek against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the civil war of the late 1940s. The 1949 Chinese Revolution was a progressive social revolution of world-historic significance. Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been exploited from time immemorial. The creation of a centrally planned, collectivized economy laid the basis for enormous social progress.

However, the revolution was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong’s CCP regime, a nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the workers state. Unlike the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the Bolshevik internationalism of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the Chinese Revolution was the result of peasant-guerrilla war led by Mao’s Stalinist-nationalist forces. Patterned after the Stalinist bureaucracy that had usurped power in the USSR, Mao and his successors, including today’s Hu Jintao regime, have maintained the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country. In practice, “socialism in one country” has meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution, which is essential for the advance to socialism.

At some point, the explosive social tensions within China will shatter the political structure of the ruling bureaucratic caste. And when that happens, the fate of the most populous country in the world will be starkly posed: proletarian political revolution to establish a government based on elected workers and peasants councils and open the road to socialism, or capitalist enslavement and imperialist subjugation.

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# On Laos

The following letters and reply are reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 977 (1 April), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

24 January

The latest issue of *Workers Vanguard* (No. 972) reprints an article ["Thailand: For a Workers and Peasants Government!"] from *Australasian Spartacist* (No. 211) that inexplicably characterizes Laos as a "deformed workers state". It is my understanding that Laos, like Cambodia, never became a deformed workers state due to its extreme economic backwardness, almost nonexistent proletariat, devastation under US imperialist bombing, and anti-working class Stalinist leadership.

Joel

27 January

To the editors,

I think you owe the readers an explanation why you never before (to my knowledge) considered Laos a workers state.

H. F.

28 January

I read a WV article last nite on the situation in Thailand. In the article, it states that there is some sort of deformed workers state in Laos. I have never read anything about this in the past, including in the WV, which I have been reading closely for decades. Could the WV elaborate on this, as I think that readers would be interested in learning about this. By the way, the article was very good.

N. B.

## Workers Vanguard replies:

After internal discussion, a recent gathering of the International Communist League codified that Laos is, and has been since the victory of the Indochinese Revolution, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The Pathet Lao guerrilla insurgents gained state power in Laos several weeks after the 30 April 1975 seizure of Saigon, capital of South Vietnam, by the forces of the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front. The liberation of Saigon marked the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution against U.S. imperialism and its South Vietnamese puppet regime.

After the Pathet Lao took power, the Spartacus Youth League, then the youth organization of the Spartacist League/U.S., wrote: "With its predominantly feudal and even pre-feudal tribal relations of production, a Laotian state established by the Stalinists would tend to lean on and take on the social character of the neighboring more advanced Vietnamese and Chinese deformed workers states" (*Young Spartacus* No. 33, June 1975). In power, the Laotian Stalinists went on to establish a regime based on proletarian property forms, in conjunction with Vietnam. We explained two years later in "Cambodia: Peasant Stalinism Run Amok" (WV No. 180, 4 November 1977) that what happened in Laos was akin to Soviet Central Asia and Mongolia in the decade following the October Revolution, where peasant and nomadic societies were absorbed into the Russian economy. However, in

subsequent years we failed to codify this understanding.

Laos is based on a collectivized economy but ruled by a nationalist bureaucratic caste under the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. While in recent years the Stalinist regime has enacted a series of "market reforms" following the examples of China and Vietnam, the class character of the state remains the same.

Trotskyists unconditionally militarily defend such workers states—which also include China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We also fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the parasitic, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose program of "socialism in one country" undermines the defense of the workers states and means conciliating the imperialist powers that are intent on their destruction. In the case of Laos, which has only a tiny proletariat, this perspective is integrally tied to the fight for political revolution in Vietnam as well as China. In all cases, development toward socialism is dependent on proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers, such as Japan and the U.S.

Under Pol Pot's Stalinist Khmer Rouge, Cambodia fared differently than Laos. As the U.S. imperialists were being routed in Vietnam, Pol Pot, at the head of a peasant army, seized control of neighboring Cambodia, which had also suffered years of U.S. carpet bombing and destruction. We initially characterized Cambodia as a deformed workers state while noting that "the contradictory character of Stalinism was nowhere more graphically revealed than in the actions of the victorious Cambodian peasant army marching into

Phnom Penh not to liberate the poor and working people but rather to brutally impose an immediate and total depopulation of the city" (WV No. 72, 4 July 1975).

Indeed, Pol Pot's murderous horror brought Cambodia to the brink of extinction, razing the cities, destroying the tiny proletariat and forcing virtually the entire population into barely disguised labor camps at the most primitive subsistence level. As we later wrote: "Pol Pot's Cambodia was never a workers state, even deformed.... The ideology of Pol Pot & Co. was the antithesis of the program of communists for whom industrialization and technological progress lay the material basis for the free and full development of human potential in a socialist society of plenty for all" (WV No. 692, 5 June 1998).

In the winter of 1978-79, Vietnam, seeking to end Khmer Rouge border attacks, invaded Cambodia, liberating the Cambodian people from the death grip of Pol Pot's forces. Washington, in its vindictive drive to punish Vietnam for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Indochina, seized on this invasion to side with the Khmer Rouge. For more than 10 years, Vietnamese troops defended the People's Republic of Kampuchea against the CIA's murderous Cambodian allies. However, in 1989 Soviet leader Gorbachev, in his treacherous and futile drive to appease imperialism, joined the imperialists in pressuring his Vietnamese ally to cut a deal with the Khmer Rouge. In September 1989, the last detachment of Vietnamese troops left Cambodia, opening the way for the return of the imperialists and the king. Cambodia is a bourgeois state under a constitutional monarchy. ■

# Liu Xiaobo...

(continued from page 3)

In their own way, China's Stalinist rulers sense that they are sitting atop a social volcano. This is clearly evident in their response to the mass protests that toppled Egyptian despot Hosni Mubarak. The state-directed television news showed pictures of protests from afar in which not a single demonstrator was visible. Instead they focused on broken windows at banks, trucks in flames and looting, accompanied by commentary about how the government was striving to restore order. In the wake of the political turbulence in North Africa, there has been increased suppression of dissent (arrests and detentions of activists, artists and lawyers as well as more Internet censorship).

For their part, elements in American ruling circles evidently saw an opportunity to encourage some Chinese intellectuals and other members of the educated (and materially privileged) petty bourgeoisie to take to the streets in the name of "democracy." This was labeled "the Jasmine revolution." Anti-Communist émigrés in the U.S., grouped around the Democratic Party of China, took to their computer keyboards and issued calls in cyberspace for actions in Beijing, Shanghai and other Chinese cities. A headline in the *New York Times* (29 April) captured it: "Trying to Stir Up a Popular Protest in China, From a Bedroom in Manhattan." The "Jasmine revolution" turned out to be a bust. Only a handful heeded the call, including the U.S. ambassador, who just "happened to be passing by" one of the announced locations at the time. The very places chosen for these "democracy" protests spoke to

their upper-class character: Starbucks, McDonald's and Wangfujing, a fancy shopping district in Beijing patronized by foreign tourists and China's newly rich.

## Fake Trotskyists Push "Democratic" Counterrevolution

Someone might argue that would-be participants in the "Jasmine revolution" were cowed by effective police-state repression. However, this same period saw a three-day strike and angry protests in Shanghai by truckers, most of whom own their own rigs, directed at soaring prices for gasoline and also high government fees. There is no lack of seething discontent among large sections of the Chinese populace—workers in both state-owned and private enterprises, peasant leaseholders and also members of the urban petty bourgeoisie. The question is what political direction will opposition to the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy take. A decisive factor will be the character and aims of the leadership of such opposition.

When the political situation in China opens up, revolutionary Marxists will confront tendencies that advocate classless "democracy" while also claiming to stand for the interests of the working class and even for socialism. These will include groups that falsely claim the mantle of Trotskyism, such as *October Review*. This

outfit is aligned internationally with the United Secretariat (USec), which has a long history of serving "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution by prostituting Trotsky's revolutionary opposition to Stalinism. During the last phase of the Cold War in the 1980s-early '90s, the USec, led by the late Ernest Mandel, supported every imperialist-backed, anti-Communist force in the Soviet sphere, from Solidarność in Poland to the "democrats" around Boris Yeltsin in Russia. The *October Review* crowd is, if anything, even more strident in expressing anti-Communist hostility toward China than were the Mandelites toward the Soviet Union. But this is simply a matter of degree.

Genuine Trotskyism means carrying forward the revolutionary proletarian-internationalist banner of the October Revolution of 1917. As we concluded our article on Charter 08:

"A proletarian political revolution producing a China of worker and peasant councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world, dealing a deathblow to the bourgeoisie's 'death of communism' propaganda, lifting up the downtrodden masses of the former Soviet Union and East Europe and inspiring the workers in the imperialist heartlands. This, ultimately, is the only perspective that can defeat the siren call of 'democracy' pushed by imperialist-backed outfits as well as fake 'socialists' who are enemies of the gains of the Chinese Revolution." ■

斯巴达克派 SPARTACIST

**托洛茨基主义关于中国“市场改革”的分析**



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# Letter...

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victory of the Vietnamese Revolution in 1975 resulted in the formation of deformed workers states in Vietnam and Laos. The Australian working class owes a special debt to the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants, including women, who at great sacrifice defeated U.S./Australian imperialism on the battlefield. Their struggle inspired important acts of working-class solidarity against the Aus-

tralian military, and their victory punctured a hole in this country's "culture" of racist white supremacy. When the multi-racial proletariat, under the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist party, has swept away capitalist rule and established a workers state, our proletarian army will be in the forefront of eliminating bigotry and oppression.

Regarding John's comments on Laos, we refer our readers to the new "Preface to ICL Declaration of Principles" (*Spartacist* [English edition] No. 62, Spring 2011), and the exchange reprinted above. ■

## U.S. Murders Its Frankenstein's Monster Bin Laden

# "War on Terror": Marauding Abroad, Repression at Home

The article below is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 980 (13 May), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

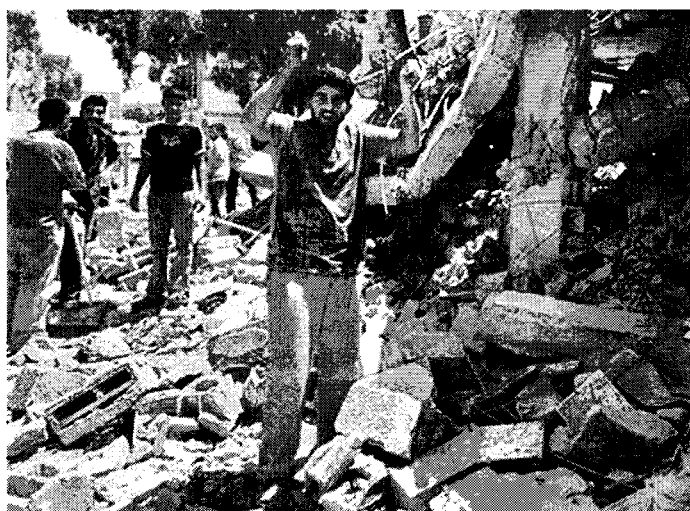
The May 1 assassination of Osama bin Laden in his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, was an act of imperialist arrogance typical of the U.S. "cops of the world." The day before, the NATO imperialists had bombed the house of Libyan leader Muammar el-Qaddafi's son, missing Qaddafi, their intended target, but killing his son and three grandchildren. A few days later, a U.S. drone attack in Yemen killed two people in an unsuccessful attempt to take out Anwar al-Awlaki, one of at least four American citizens officially targeted for assassination by Washington.

The Obama administration did not even inform its Pakistani "allies" in advance of the incursion into their country by a military death squad. The raid was carried out by Navy SEAL commandos, a gang of specially selected and trained hitmen who shot and wounded bin Laden's youngest wife and killed his son and three others. In murdering the Al Qaeda leader and dumping his body in the Arabian Sea, Washington destroyed its own Frankenstein's monster. The U.S. had sponsored bin Laden and other Islamic reactionaries against the Red Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s as part of the decades-long imperialist drive to strangle the Soviet Union and foment capitalist counterrevolution.

Barack Obama, who came into office with broad support from the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy and the reformist left, is simply carrying out his duties as Commander-in-Chief. In escalating the bloody occupation of Afghanistan, he is doing what he promised to do if elected. Obama was more than willing to ignore other campaign promises in the interests of continuing the imperialist "war on terror." His decision to maintain the U.S. concentration camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, as well as the system of kangaroo-court military commissions for accused terrorists, underlines the continuity of Obama's policies with those of his Republican predecessor. Politicians and the bourgeois media are now engaged in a sick debate over how "effective" torture was in extracting information that helped track down bin Laden. Our position on those who have been tortured and brutalized—from Afghanistan and Iraq to Guantánamo—is simple: Free the detainees!

Seizing on the bin Laden kill, Obama appealed to "the sense of unity that prevailed on 9/11," waving yet again the bloody shirt of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Obama got a quick spike in the polls. But the "spontaneous" rallies of jubilation outside the White House and World Trade Center site, replete with bloodthirsty chauvinism, quickly dissipated and got little traction among working people. It is not so easy this time to whip up a spirit of shared "national interest" among workers, who have been thrown out of their jobs and homes by the millions and have seen their hard-won medical and pension benefits slashed by the capitalist class represented by the Democrats and Republicans. A common response even among workers who bought into the mission to "get" bin Laden was: OK, you got him, now when can we get out of Afghanistan? Obama

## Imperialists Out of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Libya!



Left: Aftermath of murderous U.S. drone attack in northwestern Pakistan, November 2010. Right: 30 April NATO bombing of Tripoli residence of Libyan leader Gaddafi's son, killing the son and three grandchildren.

made clear on May 1 that he had no intention of changing course in Afghanistan or relaxing the "anti-terror" crackdown on the home front.

The September 11 attack on the World Trade Center was a heinous crime, with nearly 3,000 people from all walks of life wantonly killed. Unlike the World Trade Center, the Pentagon was and is the command and administrative center of the U.S. imperialist military and, being a military installation, the possibility of getting hit comes with the territory. That fact did not make the attack an "anti-imperialist" act. In any case, terrorism almost always gets innocent people, including the passengers and crews on the hijacked airliners and the maintenance staff and secretaries at the Pentagon.

A Spartacist League/U.S. Political Bureau statement on the World Trade Center attack issued the day after (printed in WV No. 764, 14 September 2001) declared that those who perpetrated this act "embrace the same mentality as the racist rulers of America—identifying the working masses with their capitalist exploiters and oppressors!" The statement went on to warn:

"It's an opportunity for the exploiters to peddle 'one nation indivisible' patriotism to try to direct the burgeoning anger at the bottom of this society away from themselves and toward an indefinable foreign 'enemy,' as well as immigrants in the U.S., and to reinforce their arsenal of domestic state repression against all the working people."

This is precisely what happened. Beginning with rounding up immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries for imprisonment and deportation, the U.S. government has shredded civil liberties and vastly expanded police powers, a particular danger to black people and to the labor movement as well. In December 2001, striking teachers in Middletown, New Jersey, were compared to the Taliban by the school board after they defied a back-to-work order. The following year, as West Coast longshoremen organized by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) were engaged in tough

contract talks, the head of Homeland Security warned that strike action could be treated as a threat to "national security." The government later imposed the Transportation Workers Identification Credential, making longshoremen, rail workers and truckers undergo immigration review and criminal background checks—an invitation to purge blacks and other minorities as well as union militants. The FBI has also extended the "anti-terror" dragnet to include antiwar activists and reformist leftists, many of whom had supported Obama's election.

When U.S. imperialism launched its wars in Afghanistan in 2001 and in Iraq in 2003, we, as revolutionary Marxists, stood for the military defense of those neocolonial countries without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Taliban or to Saddam Hussein's blood-soaked capitalist regime. We stressed that every victory for the imperialists encourages

more predatory wars, while every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and oppressed the world over.

We called for *class struggle against the imperialist rulers at home*, in counterposition to the labor bureaucracy, which treacherously signed on to the "war on terror" while sometimes complaining about how it was applied. It is the historic task of the proletariat, led by a revolutionary party, to sweep away the system of capitalist imperialism. As Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin explained in a May 1917 speech titled "War and Revolution," this will lay the basis for the "socialist system of society, which, by eliminating the division of mankind into classes, by eliminating all exploitation of man by man and nation by nation, will inevitably eliminate the very possibility of war."

### Bin Laden: Product of Anti-Soviet Cold War

The post-September 11 "global war on terror" is but one of the many facets of capitalist reaction that followed the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. Proclaiming themselves the "world's only superpower," the U.S. rulers have launched one bloody military action after another. Even as it remains embroiled in the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. is stepping up murderous drone attacks in Pakistan while NATO escalates its bombing campaign on behalf of the pro-imperialist opposition in Libya.

Pakistani military leaders are fuming over the brazen disregard for their country's national sovereignty manifested in the raid against bin Laden. U.S. officials, in turn, are demanding to know how bin Laden could have resided for years in a garrison town dominated by military installations without the protection of powerful figures in the Pakistani military or security forces.

The fact is that bin Laden and his ilk were promoted not only by the Pakistani

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Bin Laden in 1989 directing CIA-backed mujahedin forces near Jalalabad, following Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.



# Budget...

(continued from page 1)

the effects of a future bust of the resources boom on the budget bottom line.

In representing the interests of the bourgeoisie, Gillard has long been a crusader against welfare. In 2007, speaking at a meeting of the Sydney Institute, she announced, "The old days of passive welfare for those able to contribute are gone." Today this threat comes under the guise of what she now calls "The Dignity of Work." This is the modern version of the cruder "dole bludgers" moniker used to single out, blame and victimise the unemployed and all welfare recipients for the failings of the capitalist system to provide decent education, training and jobs. Thus the budget also targeted the estimated 230,000 long-term unemployed, who will be required to do 11 months of work-for-the-dole or lose their payments from July next year.

By forcing people off welfare the government aims to create an even larger pool of desperate people for the bosses to ruthlessly exploit and to use as a wedge to drive down the conditions of all workers. With workers shackled at every turn by the union tops' kow-towing to Labor's anti-union legislation, for many the "dignity of work" means being exploited in a casual and/or part-time job for barely subsistence wages under a dictatorial boss, usually backed by vicious supervisors who enforce unsafe working conditions. Hundreds of workers are killed every year at work. Amidst this increasing denigration and brutalisation of the working class, slashing of welfare and blaming the victims of this irrational profit-gouging system, the budget assured a new round of company tax cuts.

All over the capitalist world, workers have been suffering the impact of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. With unemployment and house foreclosures threatening the lives of millions, capitalist governments have ramped up union-busting attacks and vicious austerity measures. In response, workers across Europe, from Britain, to Spain, France and Greece, have mobilised in massive defensive struggles, including strikes and protests, against these attacks. But, simultaneously, the misleaders of the working class have pushed parliamentary reformist illusions and virulent protectionism. This serves to tie the proletariat and their unions to "their" own capitalist rulers while whipping up racist reaction and dividing workers along national lines.

## Resources Boom Masks Rotting Capitalist System

In Australia, the effects of the global economic crisis have been masked by the ongoing massive demand for resources,



no credit

**Police attack protesters in Athens, Greece, during 11 May one-day general strike against government austerity measures.**

above all by the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, which has pushed the terms of trade to the highest level in 140 years. But the economy that exists outside the resources sector is stagnant or going backwards. And it is being made sicker by the resources boom, which has sent the dollar soaring, creating inflationary pressures and driving up the cost of exports. Together these factors have contributed to downturns in retail, construction and manufacturing.

Exacerbated by recent natural disasters, the Australian economy just experienced its biggest quarterly contraction in 20 years. And it is the workers who are being made to pay. The official unemployment rate of 4.9 percent hides the real level of joblessness, estimated at around 6.9 percent and growing daily. Hardly a week goes by where a manufacturing plant or retail store doesn't close and/or hundreds don't lose their jobs. In June, the clothing chain Colorado announced that it would close 140 stores across the country, shedding more than 1,000 jobs. More than 100,000 jobs have disappeared in manufacturing in the last three years.

The ALP government, with help from the pro-capitalist trade-union tops, has held the economic crisis up as a club against workers' struggles, arguing that any proletarian struggle would sabotage the national economy. Such nationalist

class-collaborationist poison serves to derail class struggle by instilling in the proletariat the *lie* that workers, who are forced to sell their labour power to survive, and the capitalists, who grow fat profiting from the wealth produced by the workers, have fundamental interests in common.

There is a burning need for class-struggle opposition to the bourgeoisie's onslaughts. With its hands on the levers of production the proletariat uniquely has the potential social power and interest to sweep away this irrational exploitative system. What's needed is a revolutionary workers party that fights to unleash the proletariat's social power in a struggle not just for its own class interests but for all the oppressed. Based on the understanding that the interests of the working class and the capitalist rulers are irreconcilably counterposed, such a leadership would not only seek to defend and improve the present conditions of the proletariat but fight to lead the working class in sweeping away the entire system of capitalist wage slavery.

The only way out of the endless cycle of capitalist economic crises and imperialist wars was shown by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, when the workers took power in their own hands, seizing the banks, the factories, mines, mills and other means of production from the hands of the capitalists, and



AFP: Torsten Blackwood

**Older women in low-paying jobs, living alone in rental housing, are most at risk of homelessness.**

established a proletarian state based on workers soviets (councils) and an internationalist program. It will take world socialist revolution, leading to the collectivisation of the means of production and economic planning on an international scale, to provide a future for humanity.

## For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Racist Capitalism

While slashing welfare, Labor's federal budget also showered in excess of one billion dollars on "border security," including the vile campaign to demonise and punish the small numbers of refugees arriving by boat. The mandatory and long-term incarceration of refugees in inhumane detention centres, often ending in deportation, has driven many detainees to repeated desperate protests (see article, page 1). The May budget coincided with the Labor government announcing its despicable proposed deal with the Malaysian government to barter 800 asylum seekers currently in detention in Australia for "resettling" 1,000 refugees per year from Malaysia for the next four years. The bourgeoisie's hysterical campaign against refugees is being used to promote xenophobic nationalism and inflame racial hostilities in order to keep the working class divided and to deflect it from the much needed struggle against the capitalist rulers who are driving down the conditions of all. Sharp opposition to racism and chauvinism is vital to the unity and integrity of the working class and to combat the bosses' divide-and-rule schemes. We say: Down with the bi-partisan war on refugees! No deportations! Close the detention camps! Full citizenship rights for all who have made it here!

There is deep-seated worker hostility to the capitalist rulers' all-sided attacks. On 8 June, thousands of women community sector workers, who assist the disabled and downtrodden, marched for equal pay in major cities across the country. A week later, angry New South Wales public sector workers rallied in their thousands against the Liberal state government's legislation effectively imposing pay cuts. Pilots, engineers and transport workers are seething at Qantas management's union-busting attempts to outsource jobs and drive down working conditions. And waterside workers, fed up with unsafe work conditions, have struck against the vicious union-busters at Patrick Stevedores.

To carry out the needed class-struggle fight against the government's and bosses' anti-worker attacks requires a political struggle against the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats who channel workers' anger into support for the ALP and the bosses' courts while sowing nationalism and protectionist poison. In May, when Patrick Stevedores provocatively closed down its container terminals and refused to pay wharflies in response to union bans in

# Refugees...

(continued from page 1)

social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League.

\* \* \*

We protest the federal Labor government's brutal crackdown following a wave of desperate protests by refugees including at the remote Christmas Island and Sydney Villawood detention centres.

On 13 March up to 300 protesting detainees at Christmas Island were tear-gassed and fired upon by federal police using "bean-bag" bullets, reportedly breaking the leg of one detainee. On 20 April up to 100 protested at the Villawood detention centre, culminating in an eleven-day rooftop protest. Following the Villawood protests, 22 men were taken to

Silverwater jail and held in solitary confinement. Seven have been charged with offences including affray and destroying or damaging property by fire. Outrageously some of those charged could face up to twelve years imprisonment. Two refugees from Christmas Island are also threatened with charges from separate alleged incidents. Meanwhile the government has vindictively put in place measures that deny permanent visas to those it deems to have committed an offence while in custody. But the real crime is that the government incarcerates and denies basic rights to desperate people who have already risked their lives fleeing poverty, oppression and war.

Under the Labor government's grotesque regime of mandatory detention some 7,000 men, women and children languish in the many refugee detention

centres across the country. There have been at least six deaths in these hellholes in the last eight months. It is a measure of the racist barbarism of the Australian capitalist state that it incarcerates and seeks to deport Iraqi, Afghan and Tamil refugees back to countries that the Australian imperialist military has directly taken part in the destruction of, in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, or, in the case of Sri Lanka, where the Australian government backed the Sinhala-chauvinist government in its murderous war against the Tamil population.

We condemn the federal government's persecution and repression of defiant refugees and demand: Drop the charges against the detention centre detainees! No deportations! Release the refugees! Close the detention centres! Full citizenship rights for all who have made it here! ■

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defence of job safety and a wage rise, the hidebound MUA bureaucrats quickly took a dive. Faced with Patrick's provocation, they called off the bans and appealed to the "national" interest, seeking to appease the exporters who were baying for union blood. MUA national secretary, Paddy Crumlin, grovelled "We've listened to the concerns of the rural community and responded accordingly," while his deputy, Mick Doleman, played the nationalist card railing that Patrick was "unAustralian" and "owns the decision to shut down the ports..." ("MUA Saves Patrick from itself," MUA web site, 27 May). The MUA tops' response is a far cry from the militant class-struggle actions—including solid strikes with mass pickets to shut down the ports—that helped build the waterfront unions. As the bosses' labour lieutenants, union bureaucrats throughout the country have increasingly sacrificed class-struggle weapons. As a result, the union movement has shrunk to only 18 percent of the workforce as the bosses escalate their attacks.

Rather than mobilising their worker base in a fight against the capitalist rulers, the union tops invest great energy and

that workers allowed into the secure sections of airports were subject to background checks and held an Aviation Security Identity Card." Pro-capitalist to the core, Sheldon told the *AFR* that he was "of the strong view, to put to our delegates and our members, that we should take industrial action over that matter because it's fundamental to frontline security of the aviation industry and it's one that Qantas has avoided for a very long time."

Helping to enforce the "security" of fortress "White Australia" is the kiss of death for the trade unions. It buys into the government's reactionary "war on terror," which has not only served to divide the working class by whipping up anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim hatred, but has shredded civil liberties while greatly expanding the repressive powers of the state, targeting all working people. The draconian powers of the witchhunting Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), which targets militant construction unionists for persecution and fines, are modelled on "anti-terror" laws introduced under the former



Novosti

**Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 abolished capitalism and created the world's first workers state, an historic victory for international proletariat. Above: Revolutionary soldiers march in Moscow under banner reading "Communism."**

purpose into promoting the bosses' reactionary defence of state and nation. In the face of Qantas management's open union-busting threats, Transport Workers Union honcho Tony Sheldon recently linked his opposition to Qantas' attempts to cut costs by outsourcing labour, to "security" and "border protection" at Australian airports. As reported in the *Weekend Australian Financial Review* (7-8 May), Sheldon despicably ranted at a recent union-sponsored aviation forum that "there were 'gaping holes' in the system for ensuring

Liberal/Coalition government of John Howard with the avid backing of the ALP Opposition.

In seeking to endear themselves to the bourgeoisie by trumpeting their defence of national borders and "protecting" Australian industry, class-collaborationist union misleaders poison potential for working-class solidarity at home and with workers' struggles abroad. Understanding that it is not overseas workers but the irrational capitalist system that causes unemployment and exploitation, a class-struggle leadership of the unions would take up the fight to defend jobs at the bosses' expense and seek to unite the employed and unemployed in common struggles around common demands. In opposition to sackings it would fight for jobs for all through a shorter work week at no loss in pay and for a massive program of public works to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure of decaying capitalist society. It would fight to organise non-unionised workers and for union hiring and training, with *all* workers (women, youth and immigrants) on union wages and conditions.

A revolutionary leadership would be first and foremost internationalist. In fighting for solidarity actions between workers across national boundaries, it would draw on immigrant workers' experience of class struggle abroad and their living links to workers overseas. It would stand sharply opposed to the union tops' nationalist bile and cringing loyalty to the capitalist state. Consisting at its core of the military, police, prisons and courts, the bourgeois state is an instrument of organised violence that exists to defend the capitalist exploiters against the striv-

**Spartacists at 2007 Sydney anti-APEC protest in revolutionary opposition to Australian imperialism at "home" and abroad.**



ASp photo

ings of the proletariat and oppressed. As Russian revolutionary leader V. I. Lenin explained in his powerful 1917 treatise, *The State and Revolution*, the capitalist state cannot be reformed or wielded in the interests of the working class and oppressed; it must be shattered through workers revolution.

### Not Laborite Reformism But a Communist Perspective

Following the release of the budget, the reformist opponents of revolutionary Marxism brayed in unison about the attacks by Labor. "Federal Budget 2011-12 Lies and deception" wrote the Communist Party's *The Guardian*. "Budget 2011: A budget for billionaires" declared *Green Left Weekly*. In their article "Desperately seeking surplus," Socialist Alternative (SAI) sagely warned "By embracing the rhetoric about public debt and the importance of budget surplus, the Gillard government has signalled the likelihood of more savage cuts in the future..." True enough. But who do the cynical hacks who lead these organisations think they are kidding? For all their moaning about the federal ALP government's attacks, these reformist groups gave back-handed support to the ALP in last October's federal elections through the preferential voting system or, in the case of SAI, simply advocated "giving a first preference vote to either Labor, the Greens or others who are genuinely left-wing..." (SAI election statement, 9 July 2010).

The CPA, Socialist Alliance and SAI, each with their own particular brand of liberal-reformist program, all push the lie that, with enough pressure from the masses, the capitalist state, particularly when administered by Labor, can serve the interests of the working class. But whichever party is in power under capitalism it serves to administer capitalism on behalf of the capitalist class. In contrast, fighting for an independent proletarian-centred program, we in the Spartacist League forthrightly called for "No Vote to Labor! No Vote to Bourgeois Greens!" in

the 2010 elections. Noting that both the Liberal/National Coalition and Labor were in a reactionary race to sell themselves to the capitalist rulers we wrote, "For the working class and oppressed, the only thing on offer in the upcoming Australian federal election is more capitalist austerity and reaction" (see "White Australia' Elections: Racism, Austerity, Repression," *ASp* No. 210, Spring 2010).

We fight to win militant workers, revolutionary-minded youth and anti-racist fighters to the perspective of building a revolutionary workers party. Such a party can only be built in opposition to, and in struggle against, the politics of the ALP and Laborite trade-union bureaucrats who sap and derail the fighting power of the working class by pushing the lie that there can be a partnership between labour and capital. The ALP is what Marxists term a *bourgeois workers party*, historically based on the trade unions but thoroughly committed to maintaining the capitalist order. It is necessary to replace the misleaders in the unions with a class-struggle leadership, linked to a multiracial revolutionary workers party that is committed to smashing capitalist rule and establishing a new social order run by those who produce the wealth: the working class.

The drive to extract ever greater profit from workers' labour, the racist oppression of Aboriginal people and refugees, the blood-drenched imperialist carnage from Iraq to Afghanistan, the all-sided social bigotry targeting women and gays—all these are part of the *system* of capitalist rule. That system must be destroyed root and branch by workers revolution. Proletarian seizure of state power would abolish private ownership of the means of production, collectivise industry and establish a planned socialist economy. Only then will the wealth and productive capacity of society serve the needs of the majority and not the profits of a tiny layer. Ultimately only international working-class rule based on the fight for communism can eliminate the poverty, oppression and misery endemic to this decaying and barbaric capitalist order. ■

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# War on Terror...

(continued from page 5)

authorities but, in the first instance, by the U.S. For decades, the U.S. fostered the growth of Islamic fundamentalism as a bulwark against "godless Communism" and even secular nationalism. In 1950, John Foster Dulles, who would become Secretary of State in the Eisenhower presidency, wrote: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it."

The origins of bin Laden's Al Qaeda stem from the U.S.-backed war against the Soviet Union's 1979 intervention in Afghanistan. In the biggest CIA covert operation in history, money and arms were funneled to the *mujahedin* (holy warriors) based in western Pakistan. The main conduit was Pakistan's top intelligence agency, the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate), led by fervent Islamist Hameed Gul. By the CIA's own

price, educating women and freeing them from the prison of the head-to-toe covering called the *burqa*. As the Islamic hierarchy launched a fierce insurgency, the Soviet Union intervened at the PDPA's request to prevent the collapse of its client regime. Beginning with Democrat Jimmy Carter and continuing under Republican Ronald Reagan, the U.S. seized on the Red Army intervention to launch a renewed anti-Soviet offensive across the globe, in particular waging a proxy war aimed at killing Soviet soldiers and officers in Afghanistan.

For Marxists, there was no question which side working people and the oppressed the world over had in this conflict. The threat of a CIA-backed Islamic takeover on the USSR's southern flank posed pointblank the need for unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. Moreover, the Soviet intervention and the possibility of a prolonged integration of Afghanistan into the Soviet system opened the perspective of social liberation for the Afghan masses, particularly women. This was, as we wrote at the time, the first war in modern history

October 2001:  
Trenton, New Jersey,  
cops threaten  
passengers dragged  
off bus as "terrorist  
suspects" because  
they spoke "little  
English."



Jane Therese

millionaire Osama bin Laden, the son of a construction magnate who had been a close friend of the former Saudi king, Faisal. In Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (2000), bin Laden recounts that his "volunteers were trained by Pakistani and American officers. The weapons were supplied by the Americans, the money by the Saudis."

The *New York Times* took note of this history in its obituary of bin Laden. But what really caught our eye was the following editorial gem from the International Socialist Organization (ISO):

"One inconvenient truth you won't hear much about in the media's celebration of bin Laden's death is the fact that the U.S. government helped him form al-Qaeda. "When the former USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the U.S. saw an opportunity to turn the country into a battlefield in the Cold War....

"The U.S. ignored progressive and secular forces in Afghanistan, instead funneling support to fundamentalist groups that were not only anticommunist, but notorious for their brutality.... These were the rebels who Ronald Reagan praised as 'freedom fighters'."

—*Socialist Worker* online, 3 May

An inconvenient truth that you are definitely unlikely to hear from the ISO is that these anti-communist social democrats were themselves firmly in the camp of Washington's "freedom fighters," howling along with the imperialists that the Soviets should get out of Afghanistan. When the Kremlin bureaucracy announced in 1988 that it was pulling out the Soviet troops, the ISO wrote that "we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker*, May 1988). For Trotskyists, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan was a *historic betrayal* that paved the way to the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union itself, which the ISO, true to form, hailed as well.

As for bin Laden, after having joined hands with the U.S. in the "holy war" against Communism, he became incensed by the deployment of U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia during the 1991 "Operation Desert Storm" against Iraq. Al Qaeda went on to launch a series of attacks on U.S. facilities overseas, setting the stage for 11 September 2001.

## Defeat U.S. Imperialism Through Socialist Revolution!

In a starry-eyed response to the killing of bin Laden, Phyllis Bennis of the liberal Institute for Policy Studies wrote in a May 2 article titled "Justice or Vengeance?":

"The president's speech last night could have aimed to put an end to the triumphalism of the 'global war on terror' that George W. Bush began and Barack Obama claimed as his own. It could have announced a new U.S. foreign policy based on justice, equality, and respect for other nations. But it did not....

"It's ineffably sad that President Obama, in his claim that bin Laden's death means justice, didn't use the opportunity to announce the end of the deadly U.S.

Wars that answered the attacks of 9/11. This could have been a moment to replace vengeance with cooperation, replace war with justice."

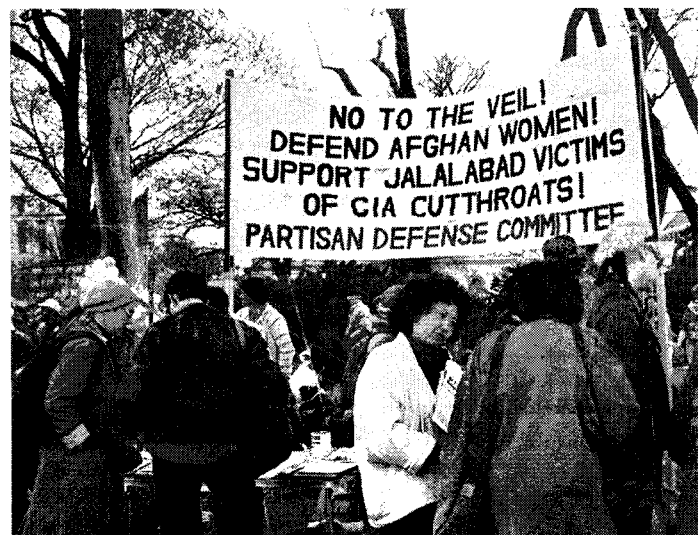
It is not surprising that the ISO reproduced this piece on its Web site without comment. For years, the ISO, the Workers World Party (WWP), the Party for Socialism and Liberation and others tried to build an "antiwar movement" whose basic premise was "Anybody but Bush" in the White House. The plain fact is that the Obama White House has, as promised, carried on and escalated the "war on terror" initiated under George W. Bush, causing some consternation among the ISO, WWP and other opportunist groups that had celebrated Obama's election.

Writing in the *New York Times* (8 May), conservative columnist Ross Douthat observed that the killing of bin Laden "operationalized Bush's famous 'dead or alive' dictum" and highlighted the continuity in foreign policy under both Republicans and Democrats. Citing the war in Libya, the escalating drone strikes in Pakistan and the "policy of targeted assassination" of U.S. citizens, Douthat wrote:

"Imagine, for a moment, that these were George W. Bush's policies at work.... Imagine the outrage, the protests, the furious op-eds about right-wing tyranny and neoconservative overreach. Imagine all that, and then look at the reality. For most Democrats, what was considered creeping fascism under Bush is just good old-fashioned common sense when the president has a 'D' beside his name."

In truth, Democratic politicians barely worked up a whimper in protest against the foreign adventures of the Bush gang, while the reformists' "antiwar" movement dissipated more and more the closer it got to the 2008 elections. Sowing the illusion that the Democrats in office could be pressured to carry out a humanitarian foreign policy and to meet the needs of working people at home, the reformists serve, to the extent their forces allow, to reinforce the ties binding workers, minorities and youth to the other party of U.S. imperialism.

For the working class to take the offensive against the depredations of its rulers—at home and abroad—will require a new leadership, a workers party of the Bolshevik type that fights for a workers government. Our task is to build such a party in the "belly of the beast" of U.S. imperialism, to fight for the only answer to exploitation, repression and imperialist war: international socialist revolution. ■



Workers Vanguard

April 1989:  
At Washington, D.C.,  
abortion rights  
demonstration,  
PDC raised funds  
for victims of  
U.S.-backed Islamic  
reactionaries.

estimate, as many as 70,000 Islamic fundamentalists recruited from more than 50 countries by the CIA and ISI were trained at Islamist schools, which still flourish in Pakistan.

Washington started funneling arms to the *mujahedin* soon after the Soviet-allied People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came to power in April 1978. As modernizing left nationalists, the PDPA attempted to implement a program for redistributing land, lowering the bride

in which a central issue was the rights of women. While most professed leftists around the world echoed the imperialists in condemning the Soviet intervention, the international Spartacist tendency (now the International Communist League) uniquely raised the slogans: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!"

Among those who flocked to enlist in the *jihad* against Communism was Saudi

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AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST



# Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt)

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 982 (10 June), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Geronimo ji Jaga, a former leader of the Black Panther Party (BPP) in Los Angeles, died at his home in Tanzania on June 3 at the age of 63. The cause of death is not known at this time. From 1970 to 1997, Geronimo was America's foremost class-war prisoner, trapped in prison hell after being framed up by the LAPD and FBI for a murder they knew he did not commit. Eight of his 27 years in prison were spent in solitary confinement. Throughout his imprisonment, Geronimo remained unbroken and committed to the cause of freedom for the oppressed.

Born Elmer Gerard Pratt, Geronimo grew up in KKK-infested southern Louisiana. He told *WV*: "The Klan killed a friend of mine. I think we were about nine or ten, swimming in the Atchafalaya River" ("Geronimo Pratt Speaks from San Quentin," *WV* No. 382, 28 June 1985). His first jailing came at age 11 or 12, "for speaking to a white woman," which "I didn't even do because I grew up down there. I knew the rules." With few job opportunities, at age 17 Geronimo joined the Army, serving two tours of duty in Vietnam, where he became a highly decorated paratrooper. After his first tour, Geronimo was sent to Detroit to help put down the 1967 ghetto rebellion. He recalled that his

unit, 60-70 percent black, was supportive of the besieged ghetto, so "immediately they pulled us out of there." He was then sent back to Vietnam.

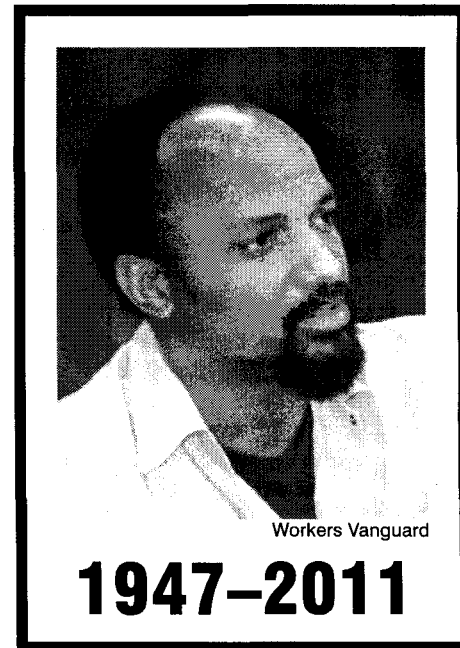
Like many veterans, Geronimo was radicalized by the Vietnam War. After returning to racist America, he sought in the Panthers the vehicle to place his military experience at the service of the black freedom struggle. Along with Robert F. Williams and the Deacons for Defense, the Panthers rejected the turn-the-other-cheek pacifism of Martin Luther King Jr. and advocated armed self-defense. Geronimo immediately became a prime target of the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO), in which 38 Panthers were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on trumped-up charges. One FBI memo spelled out, "Operation Number One is designed to challenge the legitimacy of the authority exercised by ELMER GERARD PRATT, BPP Deputy Minister of Defense." On 8 December 1969, over 140 LAPD cops attacked the Panther headquarters where Geronimo lived. He survived the five-hour barrage but was later convicted on a minor weapons charge.

Geronimo was subsequently charged with the 1968 murder of Caroline Olsen in Santa Monica. He was convicted in 1972 on the perjured testimony of Julius Butler, an informant for the LAPD, FBI and District Attorney's office, and sentenced to

life in prison. Geronimo was nowhere near the scene of the killing. As early as 1985, former FBI agent Wesley Swearingen revealed the existence of wiretaps showing that when Olsen was killed, Geronimo was 400 miles away in Oakland, attending a heavily surveilled and wiretapped BPP leadership meeting. But because of bloody factional division fueled by COINTELPRO, no Panther leader except for Kathleen Cleaver testified on his behalf.

For refusing to confess guilt to a crime he did not commit, Geronimo was denied parole 16 times. To justify one such rejection, L.A. prosecutor Diane Vezzani declared that Geronimo was "still a revolutionary." In the late 1980s, Geronimo played a pivotal role in enlisting the support of other former Panthers in the fight for freedom for death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, which helped publicize Mumia's case more broadly. In 1999, Geronimo endorsed the Partisan Defense Committee-initiated anti-KKK mobilization in New York City. In 2002, he endorsed an Oakland united-front protest against the USA Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act that was initiated by the PDC and Labor Black League for Social Defense.

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee long fought for Geronimo's freedom. Geronimo epitomized our characterization of the Black Panther Party as the best of a generation



of black militants who sought a revolutionary road to black equality. But the Panthers' black nationalist perspective and program doomed them to isolation in the ghetto, cut off from the only road out of the nightmare of racist American capitalism: integrated working-class struggle led to victory by a revolutionary vanguard party.

Geronimo was able to find some years of contentment after settling in Tanzania. But we are bitter that over half his adult life was stolen from him, spent in prison under conditions that undoubtedly exacerbated his health problems and likely contributed to his untimely death. He will be missed! ■

## Libya...

(continued from page 12)

as in the 1986 U.S. bombing under Ronald Reagan. For the U.S. and Australian Cold Warriors, chief among Gaddafi's "crimes" at the time was that he was a military client of the Soviet Union. With their current attack on Libya, the imperialists are jettisoning the rapprochement they reached with Gaddafi over the last decade, when his regime closely collaborated with Washington in the reactionary "global war on terror" and helped police the Mediterranean to keep African migrants out of Europe.

For its part, the Libyan opposition is angling to gain control of the country's oil and natural gas wealth. Rebel forces have rounded up, tortured and killed anyone suspected of being a Gaddafi supporter, especially black Africans alleged to be his mercenaries. Peter Bouckaert of Human Rights Watch reports that fleeing Africans have been pushed off ships sent by European governments to evacuate their nationals ("The Battle for Libya," *New York Review of Books*, 7 April). In this, the opposition takes its cue, and then some, from the oppression of African migrants under Gaddafi. As for the "humanitarian" imperialists, European governments are ramping up efforts to prevent refugees from making it to their countries. The

International Communist League says: Down with racist "Fortress Europe"! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Even before the bombing began, our comrades in the U.S. noted in "Imperialists Hands Off Libya!" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 976, 18 March) that the proletariat in Libya had been devastated as a result of the civil war, with migrant workers fleeing the violence and racist attacks. The article continued:

"The future of the Libyan masses will be decided by working-class struggle that extends beyond the national terrain to include the proletariats of Algeria, Tunisia and, especially, Egypt. That requires the forging of revolutionary working-class parties as part of a genuine Trotskyist Fourth International, which would link the fight for socialist federations of North Africa and of the Near East to the struggle for proletarian revolution in the imperialist centers."

### Imperialism's Social-Democratic Drummer Boys

Defence of Libya against imperialist bombardment should be elementary, not only for proletarian opponents of capitalist rule but for anyone repulsed by capitalist powers imposing their diktat on Third World countries through overwhelming military might. Yet the bulk of the "socialist" left internationally has worked to line up workers and youth behind the imperialist murderers by cham-



Ships carrying over 800 Libyan refugees arrive on island of Lampedusa, Italy, 7 May.

panioning the opposition that is acting as their ground troops.

Treachery well describes the role of a whole gamut of reformist groups in this country. Despite a pacifist veneer of opposition to the NATO bombing, from the beginning groups such as the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), Socialist Alliance (SA), Socialist Alternative (SAlt) and Solidarity rushed to back the pro-imperialist Libyan rebels in the name of the so-called "Libyan revolution." But what kind of "revolutionaries" appeal to the imperialists to impose a "no-fly zone," launch air strikes or otherwise intervene militarily in their country, as opposition leaders have done?

Most gushing in support of the reactionary Libyan opposition have been the Clifflite groups Solidarity and SAlt. An 11 March screed, "Libya and the left," by SAlt cadre Corey Oakley proves yet again that the anti-communist SAlt leaders are never so comfortable as when they sit

squarely in the imperialist camp. Writing of the so-called "Libyan Revolution," Oakley lectures, "While a clear majority of left wing organisations and groups voiced support for the Libyan uprising, a number either explicitly backed Gaddafi or surreptitiously undermined the revolution and attempted to depict it as a reactionary movement in alliance with US imperialism."

Contrary to Oakley's delusion, there has never been any doubt that from the beginning this rag-tag band included such reactionary pro-imperialist elements as the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, founded in the early 1980s with funds from the CIA and Saudi royal family. The former Gaddafi loyalists in the leadership of the opposition forces in Benghazi include the former "justice" minister, his former interior minister and head of the special forces. Among the unsavoury bedfellows of SAlt's "revolutionaries" is U.S.

continued on page 10

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# Libya...

(continued from page 9)

Republican senator John McCain. McCain, who called for imperialist military intervention in Libya in February, described the rebels as his “heroes” before greeting them in Benghazi in late April.

Backing “the heroes” of U.S. and Australian imperialism is hardly new for SALT cadre. Throughout the 1980s, as then-members of the Cliffite International Socialist Organisation, SALT and Solidarity cadre sided with the woman-hating, CIA-funded *mujahedin* cutthroats against the liberating forces of the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan and championed the anti-semitic, anti-abortion and reactionary Solidarność—the chosen instrument of the Vatican, Wall Street and Western social democracy for capitalist counterrevolution in Poland. They cheered the Yeltsin/Bush capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, which ushered in mass unemployment, starvation and nationalist fratricide.

The destruction of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state in 1991-92 emboldened the imperialists, centrally the U.S., to carry out a series of bombings, wars and occupations against weaker countries. Capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union removed what had been the main impediment to imperialist depredations, today exemplified by the slaughter of Afghans and Iraqis

by U.S.-led occupation forces. The social-democratic “left” helped pave the way for these atrocities by hailing the capitalist counterrevolutionary forces.

## Stop the Bombing, Pass the Ammunition

If SALT has been the most brazen in its support to John McCain’s “heroic” Libyan opposition, it has by no means been alone in soft-soaping these pro-NATO reactionaries. In an 18 March statement Socialist Alliance (SA) brags that it “helped organised actions in solidarity with this uprising” and chides the blood-drenched imperialist powers for not acting fast enough: “If these powerful governments were serious in helping the Libyan people’s uprisings, they would have found ways a lot earlier to enable the freedom fighters to obtain the anti-aircraft and other weapon [sic] that would have helped them fight off the warplanes, helicopters and tanks of the pro-Gaddafi forces.” These social imperialists go on to advise the capitalist rulers on more effective tactics, declaring: “We support a campaign of international isolation of the Gaddafi regime, through the breaking of diplomatic ties with the Gaddafi regime and recognition of the rebel Interim Transitional National Council, and financial sanctions on leaders of the Gaddafi regime and its assets. We also support immediate international aid (including military supplies without conditions) to the Libyan uprising.”



ASp photo

Sydney, 1 May: Spartacists at May Day rally.

Taking a slightly different but no less treacherous tack is the Stalinist Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In the 9 March issue of *The Guardian*, the CPA argues “While supporting the democratic demands of the Libyan people, the Communist Party of Australia opposes imperialist interference in Libya.” But those who read to the end of this statement will find that the CPA’s “opposition” to “interference” amounts to “support for Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez’s proposal to send a mission, including former US President Jimmy Carter, to mediate in Libya and seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict!” Under the guise of “human rights,” it was the Carter administration in the late 1970s that launched U.S. imperialism’s anti-Soviet “Cold War II” offensive.

It came as no surprise to us Trotskyists that both SA and the CPA endorsed a 3 April Sydney protest, “Libya, End the foreign military intervention,” appealing to the Australian imperialists to adopt a policy of “diplomacy, negotiations and international pressure, not war.” These reformists promote the liberal lie that imperialism is a policy that can be changed if enough pressure is exerted on the blood-soaked and profit-bloated capitalist ruling class. Opposed to a proletarian revolutionary and internationalist perspective and rejecting the need to rouse the working class in principled opposition to all imperialist depredations, these groups act to obscure that the oppressed have a side, in defence of Libya and for the defeat of the imperialists and their Libyan foot soldiers.

Having discarded even the pretence of

advocating proletarian socialism, the reformist opponents of revolutionary Marxism increasingly and all the more openly march under the banner of “human rights” imperialism and bourgeois “democracy.” This was demonstrated in 1999 when virtually every ostensibly socialist group in Australia leapt into hailing, attending and in some cases leading the chauvinist “troops in” rallies for the Australian military occupation of East Timor. Soon after, with the 2003 imperialist bombardment of Iraq, they refused to take a side in military defence of that neocolonial country as bombs were being rained on Baghdad. Instead, showing touching faith in the capitalist rulers, they worked overtime to build popular-frontist “anti-war” coalitions with “peace lovers” from all classes to appeal to the bourgeoisie to “stop the war.” A key demand of these coalitions at the time, and repeated *ad nauseam* since, was to “bring the troops home.” This dovetails with the ALP and bourgeois Greens, who push for a more aggressive role for the Australian imperialist military in the Asia-Pacific region. In contrast Marxists demand: *Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military! Australian troops/cops get out of East Timor, the Pacific, Afghanistan and the Middle East!*

## “Trotskyist Platform”: Fawning Conciliator of Social-Imperialist Left

One outfit that now postures as a defender of Libya is the misnamed Trotskyist Platform (TP) led by P. Balasubramaniam, a renegade from the International

## the battler

26 January 1980

Support the Afghan rebels

21 February 1980

A victory to the Afghan rebels will be a blow against Russian imperialism. It will inspire further revolts by the oppressed national minorities throughout Russia’s central Asian empire.



DPA

Afghanistan: U.S.-backed reactionaries shot schoolteachers for teaching girls to read. Anti-Communist Cliffite International Socialists sided with Islamic fundamentalists’ holy war to re-enslave Afghan women. ICL hailed Red Army intervention defending left-nationalist regime, called for extending gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples.

# Socialist Equality Party: Political Bandits

The following is excerpted and adapted from Spartacist Canada No. 169 (Summer 2011), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP), best known as the “World Socialist Web Site,” today writes critically of Gaddafi and states opposition to the imperialist military intervention in Libya. We urge anyone who takes the SEP’s “Marxism” for good coin to take a closer look at these political bandits, who comprise a special category of renegades from Trotskyism.

The SEP self-servingly disappears its history as participants in the squalid pro-Gaddafi machinations carried out by the then-dominant party in its “International Committee of the Fourth International” (IC), the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in Britain led by one Gerry Healy. After years of hailing the mythical

“Arab Revolution,” Healy’s IC openly championed blood-drenched bourgeois regimes like Gaddafi’s in its press. The mercenary nature of this is a matter of public record.

By their own later admission, Healy’s IC received *at least* well over £1 million from a variety of Near East sheiks and bonapartist butchers over a period of years beginning in the mid 1970s, including over £500,000 from Libya (see “Northite Blood Money,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 523, 29 March 1991). And this was really for *services rendered*. In “Healyites, Messengers of Qaddafi” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 158, 20 May 1977), we noted of Gaddafi’s Libya, “where communists are to be jailed and butchered and their books burned, ostensible leftists would have to do some pretty peculiar things to survive—and [Healy’s] *News Line* has made it clear the WRP would be more than willing to do them.” The Healyites went on

to hail the murder of Iraqi Communist Party members by Saddam Hussein’s regime in 1979, the small American and Australian IC sections reprinting *News Line*’s laudatory articles.

The current leader of the Australian SEP, Nick Beams, was censured in 1986 by the Central Committee of the Socialist Labour League (SLL)—as they were then known in this country—for failing to report receipt of money from Arab regimes to the IC. A former SLL cadre noted that the SLL’s relations with the Gaddafi regime “were more productive financially thanks to an even more slavish public relations job in the pages of *Workers News* and such things as the memorable, Libyan-financed brochure entitled *Libya—the true story*” (*Socialist Press*, December 1986). As part of their turn to “commercial enterprise,” the SLL in Australia also took money to print *The Bell of Saigon*, mouthpiece for the fascist Vietnamese thugs who were

then attacking left and labour meetings celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Vietnamese Revolution. During the 1980’s Cold War II they supported every counterrevolutionary force that sought to destroy the then Soviet degenerated workers state. Today they refuse to defend the Chinese deformed workers state against capitalist counterrevolution. They also declare that the trade unions, the basic defence organisations of the working class, “have been transformed ...[in]to instruments for the outright disciplining and suppression of the working class” (www.wsws.org, 16 October 2007) an open apologia for strike-breaking.

As we wrote in “Healyism Implodes” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 36-37, Winter 1985-86): “Once you discard the struggle for the building of Leninist parties to lead the working class in the liberation of mankind, and take off in search of get-rich-quick schemes, you will end up in a despicable place—if not a Healy, perhaps the more ordinary kind of scoundrel voting war credits for his own ruling class.” ■



Communist League, i.e., genuine Trotskyism (see "Trotskyist Platform: Opportunism in Action" *Australasian Spartacist* No. 192, Spring 2005). TP initiated a 27 March "Emergency Rally to Oppose all U.S. and Australian Government Intervention in the Middle East! NATO War Criminals—Hands Off Libya!" that was also endorsed by the Iranian People's Fadaee Guerillas and the RSP. Not once in the rally call and eleven lengthy demands, posted on the internet some four days after the imperialist bombing began, did the opportunist TP make the elementary Marxist call for the military defence of neocolonial Libya against imperialism! Far from being an oversight, such an omission was a conscious conciliation of those liberal reformist forces TP seeks to manoeuvre amongst, such as the RSP and other elements around the "Stop the War" coalition.

With its RSP bloc partners supporting the Libyan rebels, TP, unprincipled to the core, disappeared not only military defence of Libya from the rally demands but also any statement opposing the pro-imperialist opposition. Instead, the demands covered for the Libyan opposition by fatuously demanding: "Stop imperialist 'support' for opposition groups too—Don't let them co-opt these movements" and "Stop the imperialist exploiters from meddling in the Middle East—Give a chance for anti-government rebellions there to develop in a pro-working class, anti-imperialist and pro-women's rights direction." These demands imbibe in and promote the fairytale, pushed by reformists the world over, that the Libyan opposition were initially some sort of "revolutionary" movement that subsequently got hijacked. A similar fantasy is promoted by reformists to justify their support to the Iranian mullahs' ascension to power in 1979.

To be sure, at its rally TP had one small sign in defence of Libya and has since produced an "expanded and edited" version of the TP speech at the rally, calling for the defence of the Libyan forces under attack by imperialism. Reprinted in a leaflet, "Support Libya Against the NATO Imperialists!", the speech is pre-



French president Sarkozy meeting with Libyan opposition emissaries at Elysée Palace in Paris on 10 March, more than a week before French planes began imperialist bombardment of Libya. Right: French flag at 19 March Toronto demonstration built by International Socialists.



Spartacist Canada

ceded by a lengthy introduction that fails to mention the working class once, let alone a class-struggle perspective. TP crows that its call for the rally compelled broader left forces into action, citing the 3 April Sydney protest. That this demonstration "promotes other [non-military] forms of intervention by the capitalist powers" is simply characterised as a "weakness in the rally call."

TP politely counsels the social-imperialist left: "One of the reasons there is confusion [!] here over the NATO intervention in Libya is the political impact of the Australian left's campaign to support the intervention of Australian troops into East Timor in 1999." With such withering criticisms of these reformists, it is no surprise that the 27 March rally was a non-aggression pact between TP and its bloc partners. RSP honcho, John Percy, was able to drone on about his supposed opposition to the bombing of Libya unchallenged. This is the same John Percy who in 1999, as a leading cadre of the Democratic Socialist Party, helped organise, lead and celebrate marches calling for Australian troops to occupy East Timor—actions that the RSP proudly upholds today! Underscoring the RSP's tepid opposition to the NATO attack, it has published nothing in response to a grotesque statement of support to the im-

perialist bombing by Iggy Kim and Marce Cameron, two longtime cadre who reportedly recently left the RSP.

Rejecting the struggle to build a revolutionary Trotskyist party, TP's rally served as a centrist obstacle to mobilising the proletariat for military defence of neocolonial Libya. TP exists as a left adviser to the social-chauvinist reformists, who in turn seek to pressure the capitalist rulers to adopt a more humane imperialist policy. Highlighting that the reformists' proclaimed opposition to the imperialist attack on Libya is a cover for support to imperialism's agents on the ground was a 27 March Melbourne rally on North Africa built by Australia Asia Worker Links. When a Libyan speaker grotesquely thanked the imperialists for their bombing campaign, our supporters were alone in denouncing the speaker. Shouting "Defend Libya against imperialist attack!" and making clear our opposition to the UN, a den of imperialist thieves, their lackeys and victims, we left the rally in disgust.

In contrast to the reformist opponents of Marxism, we in the International Communist League look to the lessons of the Russian Revolution. Led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, in October 1917 the working class was able to overthrow the capitalist system and establish a

workers state. This occurred precisely because the Bolsheviks built a revolutionary internationalist party that was rooted in the working class and stood implacably opposed to their "own" Russian imperialism amid the patriotic fury and carnage of World War I, breaking with the social-chauvinists of the Second International. The Bolsheviks fought to extend the revolution internationally, understanding that without the destruction of capitalism on a global scale there could be no possibility of ending imperialist war.

Imperialist wars, occupations and terror-bombing campaigns are inherent to the system of capitalism in its decay. The quest for cheap labour, raw materials and exclusive markets that compels the imperialist rulers to wage military adventures abroad is accompanied by incessant attacks on the wages and conditions of workers on the home front. Globally, the current capitalist economic crisis has brought massive unemployment accompanied by wage slashing, elimination of social services and a full-bore assault on trade unions. The only way out is through a fight for proletarian revolutions against the decaying capitalist order. This requires building revolutionary workers parties like Lenin's Bolsheviks—in the U.S., Europe, Japan, Australia, North Africa and around the world. ■

## ICL Statement...

(continued from page 12)

giving no political support to Qaddafi's capitalist regime." The civil war in Libya has now been subordinated to the fight of a neocolonial country against imperialism. Every step taken by the workers of the imperialist countries to halt the depredations and military adventures of their rulers is a step toward their own liberation from capitalist exploitation, impoverishment and oppression. *Defend Libya against imperialist attack! U.S. Fifth Fleet and all imperialist military bases and troops out of North Africa and the Near East!*

Recall that the slaughter of well over a million people in Iraq began with the imposition of a UN-sponsored starvation embargo and a "no fly zone" in the 1990s. The latest action by the Security Council, including the neo-apartheid South African regime led by the African National Congress, underscores yet again the character of the United Nations as a den of imperialist thieves and their lackeys and semi-colonial victims. The abstention by the representative of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state, gave tacit approval to imperialist depredation, emboldening the very forces which seek to overturn the 1949 Chinese Revolution.

The crocodile tears shed by the imperialist rulers and their media mouthpieces over the Libyans killed by the Qaddafi

regime during the recent wave of protests stands in sharp contrast to their muted response to the continuing massacre of protesters in Yemen—whose dictatorship is a key component of Washington's "war on terror"—and their ongoing support to the Bahraini kingdom, which hosts the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet. To aid in crushing mass protests, Bahrain last week invited in troops from the medievalist and theocratic Saudi monarchy, a key bulwark of U.S. imperialist interests in the region. In the eyes of the imperialist rulers, Bahrain's Shi'ite majority and the Yemeni masses are less than human, with no rights they are bound to respect.

Numerous social-democratic leftists, typified by the United Secretariat (USec) and the British Cliffite Socialist Workers Party, have done their part to prepare the ground for imperialist massacres in Libya by cheering on the so-called "Libyan Revolution." Having urged support for the cabal of pro-imperialist "democrats," CIA stooges, monarchists and Islamists that comprise the Benghazi-based opposition, these reformists now feign to balk at imperialist military intervention in support of the opposition. The New Anti-Capitalist Party, constituted in 2009 by the USec's French section, signed a call for a demonstration yesterday demanding that the Benghazi outfit be recognized as "the only legitimate representative of the Libyan people"—which French ruler Sarkozy had already done! At the same time, those left groups that have promoted illusions in Qaddafi's "anti-imperialist" pre-

tensions—such as the Workers World Party in the U.S.—seek everywhere and at all times to chain the working class to a mythical "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie.

We pledge today, as we did at the time of the U.S. Reagan administration's bombing of Libya in 1986, to "undertake every effort to propagandize the need for the world working class to take the side of Libya" against its imperialist enemies ("Under Reagan's Guns in Libya," *WV* No. 401, 11 April 1986). In the pursuit of profit and domination, the same capitalist ruling classes that brutally exploit the working class "at home," only to throw workers on the scrap heap during periods

of economic crisis, as today, carry out murderous imperialist attacks abroad. The struggle against imperialist war cannot be conducted separately and apart from the class struggle. Only socialist revolution can overthrow the system of capitalist imperialism which breeds war. Our path is that of the October Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which was a beacon of revolutionary internationalism for the proletariat everywhere. We struggle to reforge the Fourth International as an instrument that can lead the working masses, from the Near East to the imperialist centers, forward to the imperialist centers, forward to new October Revolutions and a world socialist society. ■

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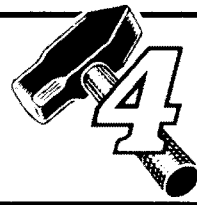
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# Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!

The following statement was issued by the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) on 20 March.

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) calls on workers around the world to take a stand for military defense of semicolonial Libya against the attack begun yesterday by a coalition of rapacious imperialist governments. The French, British and U.S. rulers, in league with other imperialist governments and with the blessings of the sheiks, kings and military bonapartists of the Arab League, wasted not a moment in acting on the green light given by the United Nations Security Council on Thursday to slaughter countless innocent people in the name of “protecting

civilians” and ensuring “democracy.” French air strikes were quickly followed by U.S. and British missile attacks, while Egypt’s military regime is providing arms to the Benghazi opposition forces. From Indochina and the Korean peninsula to the U.S.-led occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan today, the “democratic” imperialist rulers wade in the blood of millions upon millions of their victims. Recall that Britain and France historically carried out untold massacres in the Near East, Africa and the Indian subcontinent in order to pursue their colonial subjugation of those areas. Recall that Italy, now providing the use of its air bases for the attack, is responsible for the deaths of up to half the population of Cyrenaica in eastern Libya during its

colonial rule prior to World War II.

Prior to the current attack, the conflict in Libya had taken the form of a low-intensity civil war, heavily overlaid by tribal and regional divisions, between the Tripoli-centered government of strongman Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi and imperialist-backed opposition forces concentrated in the country’s eastern areas. *Workers Vanguard* No. 976 (18 March), newspaper of the U.S. section of the ICL, noted that “Marxists presently have no side in this conflict.” But as the article continued: “In the event of imperialist attack against neocolonial Libya, the proletariat internationally must stand for the military defense of that country while

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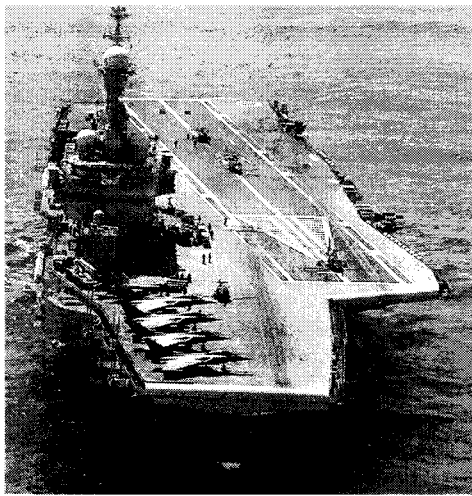
## Social-Imperialist Left Back NATO’s Libyan Opposition

# Imperialists Escalate War on Libya

The following article, first distributed as a 10 May leaflet titled “Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!”, is based on an article from *Workers Vanguard* No. 977 (1 April), newspaper of the *Spartacist League/U.S.*

MAY 1: For more than a month, U.S., British and French imperialist forces have pounded the semicolonial country of Libya with a brutal air bombardment and sea-based missile attacks. From the beginning, the federal Labor government, supported by the Liberal/National Coalition and the bourgeois Greens, has given its full backing to the imperialist attack on Libya, with foreign minister, Kevin Rudd, in the vanguard of those that pushed for a “no-fly zone.”

Barack Obama and his French and British allies self-righteously proclaim that their military intervention into Libya is for the purpose of “protecting civilians” from the bourgeois strongman Muammar Gaddafi’s regime—the cover provided by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council. But the value that the imperialists place on Libya has mainly to do with its enormous reserves of high-grade oil and natural gas. The imperialist powers did not get where they are by protecting civilians, but by slaughtering those standing in the way of their quest for profit and world domination—and by providing money, arms and “advisers” for their colonial and neocolonial lackeys. With obscene hypocrisy the imperialists castigate Gaddafi for deploying the military against civilians challenging his rule. Of course, there are no such crocodile tears for those civilians, including women and children, now being butchered by NATO bombs, nor for the hundreds of civilians who are routinely slaughtered in the ongoing imperialist



Bomb attack on Libya, 20 March. Inset: French aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* off coast of Libya, 12 April.

occupations and bombardments in Iraq, Afghanistan and western Pakistan. *All imperialist military, bases out of North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia now!*

In attacking the military defences of Gaddafi’s bourgeois regime, the imperialist coalition has sought to clear the way for the Libyan opposition—a motley

bunch that includes monarchists, tribal leaders, Islamists, CIA assets, defecting military officers and former regime officials—to advance toward territory held by Gaddafi. With the bombing campaign failing to bring about the toppling of the Gaddafi regime by this pro-imperialist cabal, in mid-April Britain, France and Italy in swift succession dispatched mili-

tary officers to shore up the opposition forces and help whip them into shape. For its part, the U.S. has offered more than \$25 million in equipment and, on 22 April, announced they would be launching remotely piloted Predator drones armed with Hellfire missiles against ground targets in Libya. This on top of the arms already funneled through the Egyptian military.

As noted in the 20 March International Communist League statement “Defend Libya Against Imperialist Attack!” (distributed here by the Spartacist League of Australia), what had essentially been a civil war between Gaddafi’s Tripoli-centred bourgeois regime and an imperialist-backed opposition based in the east of the country—a conflict in which the proletariat had no side—became subordinated to imperialist military intervention with the start of the bombing on 19 March. In the present conflict, the workers of the world have a side: military defence of semicolonial Libya against imperialism and the opposition forces, which are acting on the imperialists’ behalf. As leader of the Russian Revolution, V. I. Lenin, explained in *Socialism and War* (1915): “If tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be ‘just,’ and ‘defensive’ wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory against the oppressor, slave-holding and predatory ‘Great’ Powers.”

As Marxists, we have always politically opposed Gaddafi’s regime, a capitalist dictatorship that has brutally suppressed anyone suspected of opposing his rule. At the same time, we have consistently defended Libya against imperialist attacks,

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