



Obama/Gillard's Anti-China Provocation—No to U.S. Marines!

Defend China!

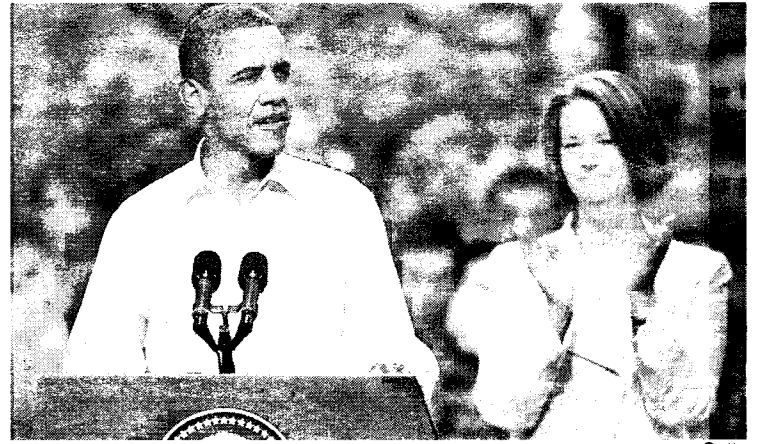
Down With Counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia Alliance!

On 17 November, in an address to the Australian federal parliament, visiting U.S. president, Barack Obama, announced that American imperialism intends to make its "presence and mission in the Asia Pacific a top priority." "The United States is a Pacific power, and we are here to stay," declared the U.S. Commander-in-Chief. The day before, in a direct provocation against the People's Republic of China (PRC), Obama and Labor prime minister, Julia Gillard, jointly announced a deepening of U.S. military ties with Australia. The agreement includes expanded U.S. access to

air and naval bases in the Northern Territory (NT) and Western Australia (WA), and a permanent troop presence in Darwin of 2,500 Marines by 2016-17.

In 2009 the ALP government released a Defence White Paper that outlined a vast program of military spending while hawkishly targeting China. Alongside Canberra's increasing militarisation of the north, this build-up is designed to work in concert with the expansion of U.S. military forces in Australia under the reactionary U.S./Australia

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Prime minister Julia Gillard applauds U.S. president Barack Obama as he addresses Australian troops and U.S. Marines at RAAF Base Darwin, 17 November.

Down With the EU! For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Economic Crisis Rips Europe

This article was written by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, and is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 992 (9 December), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

The economic crisis intensifying in Europe—a particularly severe expression of the world capitalist crisis—was triggered in the spring of 2010 as global financial capitalists, fearing that heavily indebted Greece would default on its loan obligations, began spurning Greek government bonds. These fears have extended not only to Portugal and Ireland but also to the much larger economies of Spain and Italy, which are both having trouble refinancing their state debts. Now France, which along with Germany is central to the European Union (EU), has been threatened with a downgrading of its government debt. Frenzied efforts by the EU to devise new "rescue packages," as well as futile appeals to Brazil and China to step in and help with a bailout, have all proved insufficient. A headline of the financial news service Eurointelligence (22 November) describes "a slow motion train wreck" of the euro, the euro zone (consisting of the 17 countries in the EU that use the euro as a common currency) and probably the EU itself.

Fears over a spreading "credit crunch" in Europe have unsettled international financial markets, threatening to drive the



November 30: Demonstration in London, part of one-day strike across Britain by up to two million state workers protesting budget and service cuts.

world economy into another major downturn. U.S. banks have been reducing their holdings in European government bonds, while American money market funds have been closing the spigot of money they

lend to European banks. This has forced banks in Europe to tighten lending standards, hoard capital to shore up their balance sheets and withdraw financing from long-time customers. Governments are

promising ever more severe budget cuts in the hope of pacifying bond markets. The net effect has been a "credit crunch and a squeeze on aggregate demand that is forcing Europe into recession" (*Economist*, 26 November). Industrial orders in the euro zone fell by 6.8 percent in September, the steepest decline since December 2008.

While initially bourgeois politicians in Germany refused to admit the possibility of a Greek default, fearing that this would destabilize the euro, German chancellor Angela Merkel is now openly threatening to expel Greece from the euro zone. On December 5, Germany and France issued their first joint call for amendments to the EU's treaty to introduce more centralized oversight of the euro zone and additional penalties for countries that violate the rules of "budget discipline."

Over the past several weeks, governments deemed insufficiently zealous in enforcing capitalist austerity have found themselves unceremoniously tossed out of power. In Greece, Prime Minister George Papandreou of the bourgeois Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), whose credibility was waning with a populace infuriated by the cutbacks, was removed in a political coup organized by EU leaders and domestic opponents, including members of his own party, after he suggested that there should be a referendum

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alliance. A second rate jackal imperialist power, Australia looks to the U.S. for protection. As such, Canberra has offered its services in countless dirty murderous operations, including the U.S.-led wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, while pursuing its own predatory interests in the region. The projected Marine air ground taskforce in Darwin will provide Washington with a rapid intervention force to carry out whatever forward imperialist dirty work is required.

Obama's "strategic decision" for U.S. imperialism to play a larger, long-term role in "shaping this region and its future" is ominous for the worker and peasant masses of Asia. Having now withdrawn troops from Iraq and projecting to scale down in Afghanistan, Washington is once again focusing its gun sights on China after being temporarily deflected following September 11, 2001. Obama demands China "play by the rules" of capitalism and, using language straight out of the 1950s Cold War and 1980s Cold War II against the Soviet Union, lectures that "prosperity without freedom is just another form of poverty"! For the imperialists, "freedom" means being at liberty to loot impoverished and subjugated nations, fomenting racism and communalist slaughter as they ensure their continued class rule over the exploited masses.

The proletariat of the U.S., Australia and throughout Asia have a vital interest in vigorously opposing this imperialist militarism. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League (ICL) have long stressed that the future for workers in Australia lies in common struggle with the working masses of Asia against capitalist exploitation. Our fight for a workers republic of Australia is part of our perspective for socialist revolutions throughout Southeast Asia and beyond. Key to this proletarian internationalist perspective is our unconditional military defence of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution.

In 1949, China experienced a profound social revolution as the peasant-based People's Liberation Army (PLA) led by Mao Zedong's Communist Party (CCP) overthrew the imperialist-backed bourgeois-nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang. The victory of Mao's PLA destroyed the Chinese capitalist state, smashing the rule of the Chinese bourgeoisie and landlords, and liberated the Chinese masses from the yoke of imperialist subjugation. It led to the development of a collectivised economy that laid the basis for massive social progress for the worker and peasant masses, particularly women.

However, unlike the 1917 Russian Revolution, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the Bolshevik internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky, the 1949 Chinese Revolution was bureaucratically deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong's Stalinist peasant-based CCP regime. Rest-



May 2006:
Bloody
Australian
imperialist
occupation
forces in East
Timor.

ing atop the workers state, this parasitic nationalist bureaucratic caste modelled itself on the Stalinist regime in Russia that, beginning with a political counterrevolution in 1923-24, usurped political power from the working class. Despite decades of the bureaucracy's "market reforms," China's economy remains dominated by state-controlled banks and the core of its heavy industry remains collectivised, an historic gain for the world's working class that the imperialists have long sought to overthrow.

The imperialists want to return China to the pre-1949 days of unbridled imperialist exploitation. In seeking to restore capitalist rule, they pursue a multi-pronged strategy of economic and political subversion combined with intensifying military pressure against China. In contrast to social-democratic reformists such as Socialist Alliance (SA), who pronounce China capitalist and join with pro-imperialist counterrevolutionary causes from "Free Tibet" to "independence" for the anti-communist bastion of Taiwan, we Marxists declare that it is in the direct interest of the international proletariat to defend China and other countries where capitalism has been overthrown—today, North Korea, Laos, Vietnam and Cuba. This includes supporting North Korea's and China's development and testing of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems as a deterrent against the threat of annihilation by the nuclear-armed imperialists in Washington, backed by their lackeys in Canberra.

At the same time, the ICL fights for proletarian political revolution in the deformed workers states to oust the Stalinist misleaders, whose bureaucratic mismanagement and conciliation of imperialism paves the way for counterrevolution. The Chinese bureaucracy, in its pursuit of "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism, have supported the U.S.-led "war on terror" under which banner the imperialists have occupied Iraq and Afghanistan while threatening one of China's main oil suppliers, Iran. Proletarian political revolution, establishing regimes based on workers democracy and an internationalist perspective, would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world. Ultimately to defend and extend the gains of these social revolutions requires fighting for socialist revolution in the imperialist centres. The fight to defend the deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution is

crucial to bringing to the proletariat in Australia as well as in Japan, Europe and the U.S., the consciousness necessary to overthrow their own exploiters.

Smash ANZUS through Workers Revolution!

Obama's visit to Australia was timed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the blood-drenched ANZUS alliance. The signing of the ANZUS agreement in 1951, just two years after the Chinese Revolution and in the midst of the Korean War, followed the Australian capitalist rulers switching their dependence from Britain to the U.S. at the end of World War II. ANZUS immediately became a Cold War weapon, particularly targeting the Soviet Union and Vietnam. Under this alliance, the U.S. and Australian military have carried out the slaughter of millions of workers and peasants in counterrevolutionary wars from Korea to Vietnam as they acted to "contain" pro-Communist insurgencies roiling across Asia in the wake of the unravelling of British and other colonial rule, and the defeat of Japanese imperialism in the Pacific War.

In Indonesia, Australia's security forces collaborated with the CIA to help orchestrate the 1965-66 military-led anti-Communist massacre, serving to "stabilise" Southeast Asia under the imperialist yoke at the cost of more than a million lives. The subsequent stinging military defeat of U.S. and Australian imperialisms in 1975 by the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants was a great victory for the working people of the world. Not least, it punctured a hole in this country's "culture" of racist white supremacy. The proletariat here owes a special debt to the Vietnamese masses—a debt they will be in the forefront of helping to repay when, under the leadership of a revolutionary party, they sweep away Australian capitalist rule and establish a workers state.

Today, Australian imperialism plays an aggressive role as a counterrevolutionary gendarme under the U.S. umbrella, acting to help shore up U.S. and Australian control and capitalist "stability" in the region. This includes its police/military occupations of East Timor and the Solomon Islands, Butterworth airforce base in Malaysia, training of special forces in Indonesia, and training troops in the southern Philippines.

Under ANZUS, Australia hosts the top secret Pine Gap satellite spy base and provides U.S. access to the Geraldton tracking station and other facilities that were key to the imperialists' counterrevolutionary Cold War II offensive against the former Soviet Union. Pine Gap is part of a string of U.S. military installations from South Korea to central Asia that assist in bloody imperialist interventions while targeting the deformed workers states, particularly China. In 2010, WikiLeaks revelations confirmed that Australian spy agencies target the Chinese military and Canberra's beefing up of Australian naval capabilities is aimed at countering China's influence, including in the Asia-Pacific. Leaked cables also report on former Labor prime minister, now foreign affairs minister, Kevin Rudd advising U.S. secretary of

state, Hillary Clinton, to be prepared to use force against China.

As part of its military encirclement of China, the U.S. is strengthening a web of reactionary alliances, from South Korea, to Japan, to the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and the Indian subcontinent, with Australia as a southern anchor. In the words of Hillary Clinton, America is "expanding our alliance with Australia from a Pacific partnership to an Indo-Pacific one, and indeed a global partnership ("America's Pacific Century," November 2011). This is, in part, about dominating vital sea lanes, including the Strait of Malacca, the narrow channel between Malaysia and Indonesia through which 40 percent of the world's trade passes, including most of China's oil and a significant portion of its iron ore imports. Now the U.S. is using China's dispute with neighbouring regimes over the potentially resource-rich Spratly Islands in the South China Sea to ramp up further military and other pressure against the Chinese deformed workers state. Beijing claims the U.S. is sending ships into these waters to collect intelligence close to China's coastal territories. Indeed, in April 2001 the U.S. was caught out engaging in military/espionage missions off China's coastline (see "U.S. Spy Plane Provocation: Defend China!" *Workers Vanguard* No. 756, 13 April 2001).

Our American section carries out a particular obligation to oppose the military machinations of its own ruling class, which emerged from World War II on top among the imperialist powers; this top cop of the world is the main military threat to the deformed workers states and chief enemy of the peoples of the world. As proletarian internationalists we fight to smash the ANZUS military alliance through workers revolution! We say: No U.S. Marines to Darwin! All U.S. bases and military installations out now! We stand for class-struggle opposition to the Australian imperialist military. In the tradition of our revolutionary communist forebears—Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and Lenin—we demand not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military! Implacably opposed to Australian imperialism, we demand that U.S./NATO/Australia get out of Afghanistan and Pakistan and that the Australian military get out of Malaysia, the Philippines, East Timor and the Solomons and keeps its bloody hands off the South Pacific!

Today's militarisation of Australia's north not only targets the working masses of the region and particularly the Chinese deformed workers state but has also sharpened deep racist reaction within capitalist Australia. Since 2007, scores of Aboriginal communities in the NT have been occupied by police and military in a land grab serving the bourgeoisie's desire for unhindered access to mineral resources on land previously under some measure of Aboriginal self-government. Meanwhile desperate refugees have been intercepted on the high seas by heavily-armed Australian naval vessels and turned back or redirected to Indonesia. The brutal "White Australia" capitalist order was built on the slaughter and degradation of the indigenous inhabitants and the systematic exclusion of Asian and dark-skinned people. As part of the fight against the whole capitalist-imperialist system, the multiracial Australian working class must champion the cause of the deeply oppressed Aboriginal people and refugees. We say: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No Deportations! Cops and military get out of Aboriginal communities now!

Nationalist Laborite Anti-Communism

Renewed sabre-rattling against China has been met with disquiet by sections of the Australian bourgeoisie who have accrued massive wealth from mineral resource sales to China. In fact, it is only

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Australasian

SPARTACIST



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

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— For Workers Revolution to Expropriate the Capitalist Class! —

Down With Bloody Police Attack on “Occupy” Protesters! Drop the Charges!

We reprint below a Spartacist League leaflet which has been distributed at “Occupy” rallies and protests in Sydney and Melbourne. In Melbourne vicious police attacks, arrests and harassment of protesters continue. In Sydney, 58 protesters have been arrested and 28 face charges since police evicted protesters from Martin Place on 23 October. Thirteen protesters are due to appear in Downing Centre Local Court on 3 February.

NOVEMBER 2—The Spartacist League of Australia protests the state repression meted out against the “Occupy” Melbourne and Sydney protesters on 21 and 23 October respectively. In scenes reminiscent of the vicious crackdown on anti-“globalisation” protesters in Melbourne in 2000 and on anti-APEC demonstrators in Sydney in 2007, cops, mounted police and riot squads bloodily evicted protesters, arresting around 140 across both cities. Outrageously a number of people are now facing charges. In Melbourne, demonstrators were repeatedly pepper-sprayed and beaten by the cops as they were evicted from City Square. Two days later, in the early hours of Sunday morning, riot and Tactical Response Group police violently attacked a small encampment of protesters in Sydney’s Martin Place. We demand: **Drop all the charges now!**

Some “Occupy” supporters who thought the police could be their allies got a close-up view of the arrogant and brutal state forces that target leftists, militant unionists, Aborigines and refugees for repression in capitalist Australia. Even after the attack there are those who push the illusion that police violence is not systemic but primarily the work of a few bad apples. For example, an anonymous poster distributed in Melbourne singles out one cop as particularly violent. However, the cops as a whole are an integral part of the repressive state apparatus. As the hired thugs of the bourgeoisie, they serve to protect the property and profits of the capitalist rulers through breaking workers’ strikes, and intimidating and suppressing the inevitable social struggles that break out against capitalist oppression.

As in other countries around the world, the “Occupy” protesters in Australia have taken to city centres in vague imitation of the ongoing “Occupy Wall Street” protests in New York. The protesters have cause to be angry. In the context of the deepest international economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, capitalist rulers across the globe are enforcing savage measures to bust unions, drive down wages, slash social services and scapegoat minorities, including desperate refugees trying to escape the imperialists’ bloody depredations from Libya to Afghanistan.



October 23: Brutal pre-dawn raid by NSW police evicted protesters from Sydney’s Martin Place. Amber Wallace/Daily Telegraph

In Australia, as elsewhere, the bosses’ attacks and ever more draconian anti-union laws are in the service of ratcheting up the rate of exploitation and expanding profit margins. While the banks and mining giants rake in record profits, and CEOs like Qantas’ Alan Joyce make out like bandits, workers and the poor, from disabled pensioners, to unemployed youth, to single mothers, are getting it in the neck.

Bourgeois Democracy: Veil For Brutal Capitalist Exploitation

Many have embraced the “Occupy” protests seeking a way to act against what is happening to them and what they perceive to be the problems in the world. With organisers claiming “commonality within our diversity,” a 22 October *Occupy Sydney Rally Statement* declared that they are part of a movement that “is creating a new path towards a society based on the needs and the democratic participation of all.” But with slogans like “we are the 99 percent,” “End Corporate Greed” and “Put Bankers on Trial,” the movement’s political perspective amounts to liberal reformist schemas to pressure capitalist governments to act in the interests of the “little man.” As our comrades in the U.S. wrote in *Workers Vanguard* (No. 989, 28 October):

“It is false that ‘99 percent’ of the population share common interests. There is a fundamental *class divide* in society between the capitalists—the tiny group of families that own industry and the banks—and the working class, whose labor is the source of the capitalists’ profits. The working class is not just one more victim of capitalist austerity within the ‘99 percent.’”

Capitalist oppression is rooted in exploitative property relations and no protest movement will convince the capitalist rulers and their government to act in the in-

terests of the working class and oppressed against their own class interests. For the bourgeoisie, “democracy” serves to mask their brutal class dictatorship, which they enforce through their repressive state apparatus in the form of courts, cops, prisons and military. This state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the poor but rather, as leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, V.I. Lenin, explained in his seminal work *State and Revolution*, it must be smashed. To fundamentally alter the lot of the overwhelming majority of humanity requires socialist revolutions to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and abolish private ownership of the means of production. The working class must become the ruling class!

Such a perspective is a far cry from the various fake-socialist groups, such as Socialist Alliance, the Communist Party (CP) and Socialist Alternative (SAlt), who have opportunistically liquidated into the amorphous “Occupy” protests. While these reformist opponents of revolutionary Marxism rightly condemn the vicious cop assault on protesters, with SAlt even announcing “The police are a tool of state repression” (24 October), only a few weeks earlier they were all tailing the Laborite trade-union bureaucracy and sowing illusions in the police by uncritically reporting on the large contingents of cops and prison guards in the 8 September NSW public sector union rally. As Marxist revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote, “The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker” (*What Next?*, January 1932). In *Australasian Spartacist* (No. 214, Spring 2011), we point out: cops, prison screws and their auxiliaries such as security guards have no place in the workers movement and must be ousted from the trade unions!

“Death of communism” ideology has been all-pervasive since capitalist counter-revolution in the former Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. This ideology defines the politics behind the “Occupy” protests. Post-modernist arguments that “grand narratives” (read: victorious world socialist revolution) and “party politics” are dead are common among protesters, as are attacks on the remaining deformed workers states, especially China. For us Trotskyists, it is axiomatic that anyone claiming to stand in

opposition to capitalism must defend those countries where capitalism has been overthrown—today, the deformed workers states of Laos, Vietnam, Cuba, North Korea and China—against capitalist counter-revolution and imperialist attack. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the Stalinist misrulers, whose bureaucratic mismanagement and appeasement of imperialism paves the way for capitalist restoration. Such proletarian internationalism is anathema to the likes of SAlt and Solidarity, who have always lined up with their own “democratic” bourgeoisie against the degenerated and deformed workers states.

Break With Laborism— We Need a Revolutionary Party

Those who seriously want to end the capitalist system of exploitation, racism, sexism and war should look to the social power of the working class. The proletariat, with its hands on the levers of production, has the power to stop the wheels of profit turning. It is the only social class with the potential power and historic interest to take on the capitalist rulers and win. Recent worker struggles, from general strikes in Greece, to the strike in West Papua against the U.S. mining giant Freeport-McMoRan, to the recent mass NSW public sector workers protest, provide a glimpse of the social power of the proletariat. But everywhere workers are shackled by a pro-capitalist leadership. Bowing to the bosses’ courts and pushing nationalist protectionist poison, the Labor-loyal trade-union misleaders in this country have betrayed one struggle after the next. Earlier this week, when the union-busting Qantas management grounded the airline and threatened to lock out the workforce, the ACTU bureaucrats welcomed Fair Work Australia’s termination of all industrial action thus embracing the no-strike and compulsory arbitration provisions of the government’s anti-union laws. If the working class is to further its own class interests it must be mobilised independently against the bosses and their state.

In political struggle against these Laborite misleaders, a class-struggle leadership of the unions, linked to an internationalist revolutionary party, must be built. Such a party would fight to win the working class to the understanding that it is necessary to lead all the oppressed in the overthrow of the capitalist system. Abolishing the private ownership of the banks, factories, mines and industry, the proletariat in power would create a society based on collectivised property and a rational, planned economy. Ultimately it would take the international extension of revolution to pave the way to a classless communist society of abundance, a society free of all exploitation, social and national oppression and war.

The example of the 1917 Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution, when the workers took power, expropriating the bourgeoisie and establishing a workers state and collectivised economy, should serve as a beacon for today’s youth seeking to fight against the ravages of the capitalist system. We fight for new October Revolutions; for world socialist revolution, which will lay the material basis to end the exploitation and misery that the capitalist-imperialist system inflicts on millions around the world. Join us! ■

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Down With Imperialist Sanctions!

U.S./Israel Hands Off Iran!



Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu with Barack Obama at UN, 21 September (left). Tehran, 2007: Iranians lining up for petrol after government announced rationing due to threat of more economic sanctions (right).

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 991 (25 November), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

NOVEMBER 21—Today's announcement by the Obama administration of a sharp escalation of economic sanctions against Iran is the latest in a series of belligerent moves by the U.S. imperialists and their Israeli junior partners. The stated purpose of these moves is to stop Iran's purported attempts to develop nuclear weapons, which the Iranian government has always denied. Taking aim at Iran's central bank and petroleum industry, the sanctions aim at making the country's economy scream, threatening to further pummel working people who are already suffering from rampant inflation, widespread unemployment and mounting shortages.

Last year, the Iranian government responded to prior sanctions, which had cut almost 2 percent off the annual growth of Iran's GDP, by taking an ax to government subsidies of fuel and other essential goods. The price of bread quickly tripled, while gasoline prices shot up fourfold. Now, Washington targets the Iranian Central Bank (ICB) as a "money laundering concern," while Britain announces it will deny Iran access to the financial hub in London. The imperialists aim to further restrict the ability of countries to pay for Iranian oil and gas, the source of 75 percent of that government's revenue.

The latest U.S. sanctions come two weeks after a November 8 report by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Iran. In 2007, the IAEA stated that Iran had dismantled efforts to build an atomic bomb four years earlier. Now, contradicting that conclusion, the same agency coyly speaks of "indications" that "some activities" related to nuclear weapons may have continued after 2003 and "may still be ongoing."

On November 18, just hours after the IAEA in Vienna adopted a resolution condemning Iran for its alleged nuclear program, the UN General Assembly in New York voted overwhelmingly to demand that Iran cooperate with an investigation into the crackpot story that Tehran had plotted to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. The bizarre accusation peddled by Washington is that Iran, using a flaky Iranian American used-car sales-

man as its agent, tried to hire hitmen from a Mexican drug cartel. (His "contact" turned out to be an informant for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.) The Iranian government cogently compared this fiction to the George W. Bush administration's concoction of Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction" as a pretext to launch the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The UN resolution exemplifies the role of that body as a fig leaf for the pursuit by the imperialists—centrally the U.S.—of their great-power interests, including through naked aggression against semi-colonial countries.

The escalating sanctions come as Israeli officials have been whipping up war hysteria and threatening to launch air strikes against suspected nuclear research sites in Iran. Determined to maintain its monopoly on nukes in the Near East, Israel conducted air strikes against Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007. The stakes are much higher in any attack on Iran, which is a significant and historic power in the region.

The news that the government of Benjamin Netanyahu had discussed striking Iran was broken earlier this year by Meir Dagan, the former head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency. In May, Dagan had told the press that a military strike aimed at taking out Iran's nuclear facilities was "the stupidest thing I ever heard," and would threaten to push Israel into a "regional war that it would not know how to get out of" (*Haaretz*, 1 June). Under Dagan, who has plenty of blood on his own hands, Israel tried to thwart Iran's nuclear program by injecting the Stuxnet computer virus into Iran's centrifuge system, which enriches uranium, and by carrying out assassinations of scientists as well as a senior commander of Iran's missile development program.

U.S. president Barack Obama, for his part, has repeatedly rattled his saber at Iran, declaring that he would keep "all options," including the threat of military attack, "on the table." Washington recently announced that next year U.S. and Israeli military forces will carry out their largest-ever joint exercises, "simulating the ballistic missile defense of Israel." Imperialist sanctions and military "options" go hand in hand. Recall that the 2003 war against Iraq, which led to the death of

upward of a million Iraqis and unleashed communalist slaughter on a mass scale, was prepared by UN sanctions imposed 13 years earlier that killed 1.5 million people.

The misinformation offensive over Iran's nuclear program was powerfully exposed by journalist Seymour Hersh in "Iran and the Bomb: How Real Is the Nuclear Threat?" (*New Yorker* Web site, 6 June). Hersh recalled that the 2007

W.M.D. arsenal."

Iran has repeatedly stated that its nuclear program is intended solely for peaceful purposes. In fact, in the face of imperialist nuclear blackmail and with continuing military threats, it is entirely rational and necessary for Iran to pursue getting nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. As the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a

Mourners carry the body of Iranian scientist Darioush Rezaie (inset), assassinated in Tehran on 24 July.



Reuters photos

National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), a summary of the views of senior officers from all major U.S. intelligence agencies, concluded "with high confidence" that Iran had stopped working toward a nuclear weapon in 2003. Hersh wrote that the original draft of this year's NIE update, later changed under pressure from the Obama White House, stated that Iran's supposed earlier nuclear weapons research targeted not Israel or West Europe but Iran's longtime nemesis Iraq, which Iranian leaders thought at the time was trying to develop nukes. Hersh explained: "The Iranian nuclear-weapons program evidently came to an end following the American-led invasion of Iraq, in early 2003, and the futile hunt for the Iraqi

major think tank for the U.S. ruling class, admits, nuclear weapons "offer a deterrent capability: unlike Saddam's Iraq, a nuclear Iran would not be invaded, and its leaders would not be deposed" ("After Iran Gets the Bomb: Containment and Its Complications," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2010).

U.S. Imperialist Terrorists

In the event of any military attack by the U.S. or by Israel on Iran, working people and the oppressed internationally must not be neutral but must take a clear side *with Iran*. As Marxists, we do not give an iota of political support to the reactionary Islamic regime in Iran. But it is the nuclear-armed U.S. imperialists who are

the main enemy of the world's working people and oppressed.

It was the U.S. that incinerated some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The U.S. ruling class that is today threatening Iran is the same obscenely rich capitalist class that gorges itself on profits while busting unions, throwing millions out of work, slashing social services, destroying health care and stealing pensions—attacks that hit particularly hard at the black masses segregated at the bottom of society. In opposing the U.S. occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and other imperialist adventures, we raise the call for class struggle at home, promoting the understanding of the need to mobilize the proletariat to sweep away the murderous imperialist order through socialist revolution.

Although the Obama administration is seeking—at least for now—to rein in Israel and head off an immediate military attack on Iran, support for such an action has been growing within U.S. ruling circles, and not only in *Wall Street Journal* editorials and the speeches of Zionist necons. A sign of the broader “bomb Iran”



April 2004: Mordechai Vanunu leaves prison after serving 18 years for disclosing Israel's massive nuclear stockpile.

sentiment was an exchange between strategists for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), which includes former officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations, and others from the Council on Foreign Relations.

CFR spokesmen argued in *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2010) that, in the event Iran succeeded in developing nukes, the U.S. should threaten to attack with any means, “including nuclear weapons,” if Tehran crossed certain “redlines,” such as “initiation of conventional warfare against other countries” or “stepped-up support for terrorist or subversive activities.” Initially, the CSBA authors argued a more restrained line of keeping up the current policy of sanctions and military pressure (*Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2011). Yet one day after the November 8 IAEA report, the same CSBA authors posted a statement online titled: “Why Obama Should Take Out Iran's Nuclear Program: The Case for Striking Before It's Too Late.”

It takes some chutzpah for the U.S. rulers, echoed by imperialist Britain and France, to rail against Iran possibly acquiring nuclear weapons. The U.S. capitalists possess enough nuclear firepower to destroy humanity many times over. The atomic bombing of Japan, which was ultimately meant as a warning to the Soviet Union, epitomized the role of the U.S. rulers as the greatest menace to the workers and oppressed the world has known. That act of imperialist barbarism has been followed by a long line of wars and military operations, from Korea and Vietnam—where the U.S. failed to reverse social revolutions—to Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya more recently. The destruction

of the Soviet degenerated workers state by capitalist counterrevolution two decades ago removed what had been the chief military and diplomatic obstacle to the imperialists' pursuit of their global ambitions.

The U.S. funnels billions in aid every year to Zionist Israel, whose existence is predicated on the displacement and brutal oppression of the Palestinian people. The Zionist rulers have transformed Gaza into a concentration camp for Palestinians, surrounded by an electric fence, a wall and the Mediterranean, while forcibly ghettoizing the West Bank Palestinians as well. Surrounded by Arab populations, Israel's rulers consider themselves to be in a permanent state of war and have repeatedly shown their willingness to use military force.

Israel got its start as a nuclear-armed power with the aid of France, which in 1958 built the reactor for the Dimona nuclear facility in the Negev desert. The U.S. subsequently provided support for Israel's nuclear program while shielding it from international scrutiny, helping to maintain a veil over the extent of Israel's stockpile of nukes. In 1986, Mordechai Vanunu, a former technician at Dimona, pulled back the veil, revealing that Israel had acquired an arsenal of some 200 nuclear warheads. For his heroic exposure of the scope and scale of Tel Aviv's doomsday machine, which targeted the USSR as well as nations in the Near East, Vanunu was convicted of treason and sentenced to 18 years in prison, eleven of those spent in solitary confinement. Forbidden to leave Israel since his release in 2004, Vanunu was twice again arrested and imprisoned. The vindictive Zionist rulers want him forever silenced, but the working class internationally will be forever in Vanunu's debt.

Mounting Pressure Against China

Increasing belligerence toward Iran comes as the U.S. is preparing to withdraw almost all of its troops from Iraq and draw down its forces in Afghanistan, while strengthening its position elsewhere in the region. The U.S. is reportedly planning to beef up its military contingent in Kuwait, while reinforcing its naval presence in the Persian Gulf. The Obama administration is also looking to negotiate a stronger military alliance with the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, dominated by Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the U.S. and Turkey have announced the placement of an American anti-missile radar system on Turkish territory, 435 miles from Iran, by the end of the year.

Chief among U.S. rulers' concerns in redirecting their forces is pursuing the military encirclement of China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states. In the name of fighting “terrorism,” the U.S. has in the past decade enhanced its military presence in the Philippines and



Meyer/Dallas Morning News

U.S. soldiers terrorise unarmed man during imperialist occupation of Iraq, 2003.

resumed open military relations with Indonesia, in addition to establishing bases in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Washington has also strengthened military ties with the Japanese imperialists and continues to buttress capitalist Taiwan. Last week, Commander-in-Chief Obama announced plans to deploy 2,500 marines to Darwin in northern Australia as a move to counter China.

Capitalism was overthrown in China by the 1949 Revolution. Today, despite major inroads by both foreign and indigenous capitalists, the core elements of China's economy remain collectivized. Ultimately, the U.S. imperialists aim to restore capitalist rule in China, and for this they have a multipronged strategy: capitalist economic penetration combined with military pressure and support to domestic counterrevolutionaries, such as the “Free Tibet” movement. It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of China and the other deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. Thus, we support the testing and development of nukes and delivery systems by North Korea and China.

China is highly dependent on the flow of Iranian oil—in 2009, Iran ranked as China's second largest oil provider. Despite this fact, the Stalinist regime in Beijing supported all four previous rounds of UN sanctions directed against Iran, a measure of the Stalinist bureaucracy's futile strivings for “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialists. In the interest of its economic relationship with the U.S., the Beijing bureaucracy has also embraced the imperialists' “war on terror.” Through its appeasement of imperialism and opposition to the program of world socialist revolution, the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy undermines the defense of the workers state. It is necessary for the Chinese proletariat to carry out a political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers and establish a regime based on

workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Anti-Imperialism Abroad Means Class Struggle at Home

The working people of Iran have a long history of subjugation by the imperialists and bloody suppression by their “own” rulers. In 1953, after the modernizing nationalist regime of Mohammad Mossadeq tried to nationalize Iran's oil fields, the CIA staged a coup, installing Shah Pahlevi and propping up his savage rule for 25 years. In 1979, in a “revolution” hailed by almost the entire left internationally, the Islamic hierarchy under Ayatollah Khomeini seized power, going on to crush struggles by workers, women and oppressed national minorities. Women were segregated from society under *sharia* law and forced to don the sweltering head-to-toe veil; workers organizations were smashed; leftists were jailed and executed. Uniquely, our organization, then known as the international Spartacist tendency, championed the proletariat's class interests against the forces of Islamic reaction. Our battle cry was: “Down With the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!”

Today, Iran is again a cauldron of discontent, with the working people, youth and women suffering privation and chafing under the mullahs' rule. The multinational Iranian working class, leading all the oppressed behind it, must overthrow the Persian-chauvinist, clericalist regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist workers party in Iran. Such parties must be built throughout the Near East in struggle against all forms of fundamentalism and nationalism. In Egypt, where there has been a new outburst of mass opposition to military rule, the working class must emerge as a contender for power in its own right, against both the army and the powerful, reactionary forces of political Islam. In Israel, where recent popular struggles against economic privation have helped reveal the class divisions that define that society, Zionism continues to chain the overwhelmingly Jewish proletariat to its class enemy (see “U.S./Israel Tighten Screws on Palestinians,” *WV* No. 988, 14 October).

The International Communist League fights for a socialist federation of the Near East, necessarily linked to the struggle to sweep away the rapacious imperialist rulers in the U.S. and elsewhere through workers revolutions. Imperialist subjugation, military occupations and war are endemic to capitalism in its death agony, and can only be fought through a struggle against the entire system of exploitation and oppression. The Spartacist League/U.S. is committed to building a multiracial workers party that breaks the political chains tying the working class to its “own” exploiters, particularly the labor bureaucracy's support to the Democrats. Such a party is the necessary instrument to lead the struggle for workers power to victory in the heartland of world imperialism. ■



Workers Vanguard

New York, March 2007: Spartacist banner at antiwar demo.



AFP



Left: Health workers march in Athens against austerity cuts during two-day general strike, 19 October. Above: German chancellor Angela Merkel and French president Nicolas Sarkozy at recent G20 meeting in Cannes.

Europe...

(continued from page 1)

on economic policies. The new government, which now incorporates the main opposition party, New Democracy, as well as PASOK and a small, fascist-infested organization (LAOS), has pledged to continue the austerity program. Similar methods were used to get rid of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy. In Spain, fury over the austerity policies of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) government led to the election of Mariano Rajoy's right-wing Popular Party.

The concern of all wings of the bourgeoisie in the major EU countries is not at all to rescue countries like Greece but to bail out their own banks. The bottom line is that the workers and poor must pay for the capitalist crisis. Underlining that Germany is the pre-eminent power in the EU and calls the shots, Merkel has dictated hardline austerity budgets for debtor countries seeking financial assistance. Governments have engaged in an orgy of spending cuts, with layoffs of public employees, pay cuts, reductions in welfare expenditures, privatizations, etc. In Greece, wages have decreased by 15.4 percent, while the official unemployment rate now exceeds 18 percent. In Spain it is close to 23 percent.

We Trotskyist internationalists are opposed on principle to the EU and any other imperialist alliance. Recognizing that the euro would be an instrument of the EU imperialists, we opposed its introduction. We also opposed the Eastern extension of the EU because it was clear that it meant increased exploitation of the workers of East Europe. At the same time, we have fought against the chauvinist discrimination against East European workers in West Europe.

As Marxists, we understand that an imperialist alliance or bloc can hold together for some time, but since capitalism

is based on the nation-state, these alliances must break up under their own internal contradictions. Our opposition comes from the basic standpoint of opposing capitalism and imperialism. We fight for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through socialist revolution and for an internationally planned economy that will overcome the limits of the nation-state. Our call is for a *Socialist United States of Europe!*

To date, the Greek working class has carried out 14 one- or two-day general strikes, trying to fight back against the joint offensive of the European imperialists and its own bourgeoisie. While these strikes have made it more difficult for the government to enforce austerity measures, the attacks on jobs and living standards are unrelenting. In the Italian capital of Rome on October 15, hundreds of thousands of workers and youth demonstrated against the much-discredited Berlusconi government and the measures it was trying to introduce, such as privatizations and raising the pension age. After Berlusconi fell, the leaders of the liberal opposition supported the new government in the name of national unity in order to enforce the very same measures against which the masses had demonstrated a month earlier. In Portugal, a one-day general strike on November 24 stopped nearly everything in the country. But the "Communist" opposition undermines workers struggle with its appeal to the national interest, complaining about "relinquishing the sovereignty of the country" (*Junge Welt*, 25 November).

The reformist labor leaders cannot lead effective class struggle against capitalist austerity because they politically support the EU and more broadly are wedded to the bourgeois order. The leaders of the main body of Spanish trade unions are allied to the PSOE, while in Greece the main union federations are run by PASOK supporters—i.e., the very parties that until very recently were spearheading the austerity drive in those countries. The reformists accept the class-collaborationist lie that the workers and their exploiters have a common "national interest" and therefore the workers must make their "fair share" of sacrifices when the economy goes bust. But workers and capitalists have *counterposed class interests*. The boom-bust cycle is endemic to the capitalist system and will be eliminated only when the proletariat takes power and seizes the productive property of the bourgeoisie.

Class struggle in Germany as well as France in solidarity with Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese workers would not only broaden their struggles against austerity but also would help workers throughout Europe to free themselves from nationalism and break from their own bourgeoisies. In Germany, the class-collaborationist policies of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) have played a significant role in enabling the German bourgeoisie to increase its competitive-

ness against its rivals. The coalition of the SPD and the bourgeois Greens, in power from 1998 to 2005, was instrumental in increasing German competitiveness by slashing wages and working conditions and carrying out attacks on the "welfare state," centrally through a series of measures known as the "Hartz" reforms that greatly reduced unemployment and social welfare benefits. The use of temporary labor increased dramatically and a huge low-wage sector was created. With the median figure for real wages declining 7.4 percent between 2000 and 2010, now 1.4 million people with full-time jobs need additional welfare in order to survive.

While Germany already had the largest economy in Europe, its increased competitiveness explains why it can run the



Spartakist

show on the continent. It is clear that German capitalism's increased profitability comes directly out of the pockets of the German working class. This points to the connection between the struggle against imperialism abroad and the fight against capitalist rule at home. Above all, what is necessary is forging revolutionary internationalist parties in Germany and elsewhere that can lead the working masses in their struggles for life's necessities as part of the fight for workers rule.

EU: From Anti-Soviet Alliance to Imperialist Consortium

Dominated by Germany and France, the EU exists centrally to advance the interests of these imperialist powers and their junior partners in exploiting their own working class and to use the more dependent states, such as Greece and many East European countries, as their summer holiday resorts or low-wage manufacturing backyards. We have been consistent in our political opposition to the EU and its predecessors. Thus, we wrote in "Labor and the Common Market" (WV No. 15, January 1973): "In the imperialist era, alliances between capitalist states, including their economic aspects, are directed against other states, advanced as well as backward

states. The Common Market is essentially an unstable alliance between French and German capitalism on the basis of the most reactionary economic policies."

The EU is a fragile formation exposed to continuous tensions stemming from the disparate national interests of the European imperialists, which are constantly threatening to tear it apart. Nor can it be otherwise. Although the productive forces have long since outgrown a national framework, capitalism is a system that rests essentially on nation-states: each of the various national capitalist classes needs its own state to push through and defend its interests at home and abroad. Hence under capitalism, the goal of political union or a European superstate is necessarily reactionary and an empty utopia.

As V. I. Lenin, the leader of the proletarian October Revolution in Russia in 1917, wrote:

"Of course, *temporary* agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists...but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America."

— "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" (August 1915)

Lenin emphasized that the division of profits among imperialist rivals is ultimately determined by *force*. This understanding was counterposed to the claims of German social democrat Karl Kautsky, whose fantasy of "ultra-imperialism" posited the peaceful resolution of such conflicts, obviating the need for proletarian revolution. Lenin stressed: "Under capitalism there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises



ICL has consistently opposed EU imperialist trade bloc. German Trotskyists raise call "For a Socialist United States of Europe!" at 1982 demonstration in Bonn.

in industry and wars in politics."

The origins of the European Union go back to the 1950s, when the West European imperialists under U.S. leadership attempted to stabilize their alliance against the Soviet Union through closer economic cooperation. Issuing out of the October Revolution, Soviet Russia remained a workers state—based on the expropriation of the capitalists and the collectivization of the means of production—despite its degeneration under J.V. Stalin. With a planned economy, the USSR provided jobs, housing, medical care and education for all, in sharp distinction to the ravages of capitalism that are all too obvious today. We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet Union militarily against the imperialists, who always desired to destroy it.

Our opposition on principle to both NATO—the post-World War II military alliance against the Soviet Union—and the EU and its predecessors was linked to our defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of the DDR (East Germany) and East Europe. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the EU/NATO's anti-Soviet function disappeared. The EU remained an imperialist trade

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bloc. The U.S. retains military hegemony, although not the same economic clout it once had.

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, French president François Mitterrand made France's acquiescence to German reunification, achieved when capitalist West Germany swallowed up the DDR, dependent on the two countries' agreement on a common currency. This was supposed to restrain a newly strengthened Germany from running roughshod over other European states, principally France. Additionally, the currency would be a weapon against the international hegemony of the U.S. dollar. But the unity between these two imperialist powers is itself fraught with conflict, as the disputes over how to deal with the current crisis in the euro zone demonstrate.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 authorized the introduction of the euro, which was first traded in 1999 before being introduced as actual money for consumers in 2002. The French Communist Party (PCF) originally opposed the treaty, fearing that it would lead to the dominance of German imperialism over French imperialism, i.e., they opposed it from the reactionary perspective of French nationalism. Later, the PCF made its peace with the euro. So has pretty much the entire European reformist left, which either explicitly supports the EU or claims that it is a framework that can be utilized to better the situation of working people (a "social Europe").

The forerunner of the League for the Fifth International and its British group Workers Power took an abstentionist position on the 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. They were enthusiastic over the EU "social charter," with its empty promises of guaranteeing workers rights, sexual equality and such, as was the British Labour Party. *Workers Power* (June 1992) argued that "the terms of the Maastricht Treaty can also be a basis for extending rights and gains from states where the working class never won those gains, or where it has lost them," and they continued that "to some extent European workers will be better armed to fight back on a continental scale after the implementation of the terms of Maastricht." The French group Lutte Ouvrière (LO) similarly wrote in 2005, "Even as is, on a capitalist basis, with all the accompanying injustices and insufficiencies, the European Union represents progress in a certain number of areas." *Workers Power* and LO are latter-day Kautskyites, flunkies for capital, with touching faith in "democratic" imperialism and its various alliances.

Opposition to the EU and the euro does come from some bourgeois quarters, however. A section of the German bourgeoisie has always been very skeptical about the euro, thinking that German imperialism could function better with the deutschmark. There are strong anti-EU sentiments among the British Tories, while various fascist and right-wing populist groups oppose the EU from the standpoint of national chauvinism. In effect, the reformist left has conceded opposition to the EU—correctly seen by many workers as an instrument of capitalist austerity—to the reactionary right wing.

German Imperialism's Third Try to Rule Europe

In a 1997 statement, the International Communist League stressed that a common currency without a common state is not viable:

"Control over the quantity of money within its boundaries is a basic economic prerogative of a bourgeois state, one necessarily closely linked to other instruments of economic policy. A stable monetary system based on the 'euro' would require tight and permanent restrictions over taxation and government expenditure in all the EU member states.... But since capitalism is organized on the basis of particular national states, itself the cause of repeated imperialist wars to redivide the world, it is



German steel workers in Krefeld during warning strike to demand higher wages, 9 November.

impossible to cohere a stable pan-European bourgeois state. A European imperialist 'superstate' can be achieved only by the methods of Adolf Hitler.... Should the Maastricht project for a common European currency come into being, it would amount to only a brief, conflict-ridden episode."

— "For a Workers Europe—For Socialist Revolution!"

WV No. 670, 13 June 1997

We now have the first really serious world economic crisis since that statement was written, and the conflicts that have arisen in Europe threaten to bring the EU rapidly to the point of implosion. Behind this open fragmentation is the built-in instability in the monetary system of the EU and the fact that it is formed of competing national states with different levels of labor productivity. These differences, exacerbated by the crisis, have been reflected through the differentials in public borrowing and interest rates on state bonds.

German imperialism made huge profits through driving down wages at home and through the introduction of the euro, and they would like to keep things that way. For years, Germany has run a trade surplus, which was financed through massive private and public debt in other euro zone states and spurred by the fact that the common currency helps keep German industrial exports cheap throughout the euro zone. The German bourgeoisie is not about to reduce the surplus, arguing that this is the problem of the countries with a trade deficit.

Ordinarily, each country has its own currency, and a debtor country can get some relief and regain competitiveness by devaluing its currency. But this is not possible in a currency union. The German bourgeoisie demands that debtor countries slash wages, pensions and welfare. Another proposal is for German capital to lend more funds to the poorer countries in the euro zone—but this is vehemently opposed by the German bourgeoisie. In a *Financial Times* online (13 September) column on the breakdown in the euro zone, Martin Wolf wrote: "This is what I heard from an Italian policymaker: 'We gave up the old safety valves of inflation and devaluation in return for lower interest rates, but now we do not even have the low interest rates.... And, not least: 'It would be better to leave than endure 30 years of pain.' These remarks speak of a loss of faith in both the project and the partners."

There is no way out for debtor countries like Greece under the setup dictated by the German bourgeoisie. The sharp cuts in public spending have had a predictable deflationary effect—the Greek economy has contracted by 7.5 percent over the past year. A smaller economy means less tax revenue, thereby increasing the deficit and prompting demands for more austerity. At the same time, many bourgeois pundits across the board have issued hysterical

warnings on how bad things will be if Greece leaves the euro zone. But that depends on the conditions imposed. After Argentina pegged its currency to the U.S. dollar, its economy went into a deep recession and the country went bankrupt in 2001. Investors in Argentinean bonds lost 70 percent of their money, outraging international banking interests. Following the bankruptcy, Argentina stopped pegging its currency to the dollar and the economy recovered, albeit not until average wages had dropped 30 percent.

The example of Argentina shows graphically that Greece might be much better off if it defaulted and left the euro zone, reinstating its own currency. However, while this might provide relief from the downward spiral, leaving the euro zone will not insulate the Greek proletariat from the world economic downturn and capitalist devastation. In Britain (which is in the EU but not in the euro zone), the Tory government of David Cameron is just as intent on slashing spending as his counterparts on the continent. On November 30, British public sector workers staged a massive one-day strike against austerity measures, including threatened layoffs and an extension of the wage freeze. Socialist revolution is the only solution to unemployment, wage cuts, imperialist war and the other deprivations of decaying capitalism.

German-French Axis Rattles Along Until It Breaks

Concerned about the stability of the euro zone (and the French economy), President Nicolas Sarkozy earlier supported the introduction of euro bonds—a scheme whereby the euro zone states would issue common bonds—or alternatively that the European Central Bank buy government bonds directly to bail out countries in trouble. But Merkel has not gone along, knowing that ultimately the money in these schemes will come from Germany. The Obama administration has also pleaded with Merkel to ante up more money. The bottom line is that nothing happens unless it is acceptable to Berlin. As a creditor nation, the Germans stress the need for a balanced budget and a strong euro (the deutschmark in drag), with inflation considered the worst thing in the world. This is justified by reference to two periods of German inflation in 1923 and after WWII, ignoring the equally disastrous deflationary policy during the depression of the early 1930s.

When EU Commission president José Manuel Barroso proposed introducing euro bonds under the name "stability bonds," the German right-wing tabloid *Bild* (23 November) ran the headline: "Britain, America, and the Whole EU. They All Want Our Money." Meanwhile in France, Jacques Attali, a former adviser to Mitterrand, charged that Germany twice led Europe into suicidal wars in the past

century and said: "Today, it is again Germany's turn to hold in its hand the weapon for the continent's collective suicide." The PCF chimed in by denouncing Sarkozy for giving in to Merkel over the crisis and accusing him of a "financial Munich," a reference to the 1938 decision by France and Britain to refrain from going to war against Hitler's Germany over its occupation of the Sudetenland.

At the EU summit at the end of October, the heads of state of the ten non-euro zone countries were excluded from a discussion on the euro crisis. This elicited a complaint from British prime minister Cameron, who noted that the crisis in the euro zone impacted elsewhere, including London, a world financial center. Sarkozy snorted at Cameron, who not too long ago was his brother-in-arms in the bombing of Libya: "You have lost a good opportunity to shut up. We are sick of you criticizing us and telling us what to do. You say you hate the euro and now you want to interfere in our meetings."

The EU is falling apart under the tensions of conflicting national interests. These tensions can also be seen in the imposition of restrictions on the right of passage within the EU, supposedly guaranteed by the Schengen agreement. In 2010, about 400,000 people who wanted to migrate to the EU were stopped on its borders. In the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark and other countries in Northern Europe, populist anti-immigrant parties are gaining support, nurtured by chauvinist government campaigns carried out under the guise of the "war on terror" that largely targets Muslims. It is in the interest of the working class in each country to fight for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants and refugees! Down with the EU and racist "Fortress Europe"!*

SPD and Left Party: To Capitalism's Rescue

In response to the capitalist attacks stemming from the crisis in the EU, the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany recognized the urgent necessity for the working class of Europe, and especially the powerful German proletariat, to take class-struggle action. On May Day 2010, the SpAD intervened for "Solidarity with the Greek workers!" and for "Class struggle against the German capitalists!" (*Spartakist* No. 183, May 2010). The chief obstacles to such struggle are the reformist workers parties, SPD and Left Party, together with the trade-union bureaucracy, and the left groups that orient toward them.

In the summer, the SPD came out in favor of euro bonds. Peer Steinbrück, a former SPD finance minister, gave the reasons in an interview with *Spiegel* (12 September):

"One has to explain to people that the EU in this form is the answer both to 1945

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and to the 21st century, in a dramatically altered world with new heavyweights, and that Germany benefits from the continued integration of Europe in political, economic and societal ways. And, of course, that means the Germans will have to pay. But the money is well invested in both our future and Europe's, in peace and prosperity."

Steinbrück and the SPD are playing here with the fear of war, which is prevalent in many parts of Europe as a result of the two world wars. This takes real *chutzpah*: during the Balkans war in 1999 the SPD-led government was the first since WWII to introduce German troops outside the country. The SPD's differences with Merkel are strictly tactical, amounting to a debate over what's best for German imperialism. Its support to the euro bonds scheme reflects the fear that Merkel's hardline policies could destroy the EU, thereby possibly killing the goose that has laid a golden egg for German capitalism and enabled the Social Democrats to continue supping at the table of German capital. The SPD exemplifies what V. I. Lenin called bourgeois workers parties: parties with a working-class base, especially through the unions, but with a thoroughly pro-capitalist program and leadership. The SPD besmirched the banner of workers internationalism by voting for war credits for German imperialism in 1914. Ever since, the SPD has been a vehement enemy of revolution.

The Left Party—a fusion of the former Stalinist ruling party of the DDR and a split from the SPD, including a section of

the trade-union bureaucracy—is seen by many leftist and working-class militants as an alternative to the SPD. The Left Party might talk a bit more about solidarity with Greece, but like the SPD it accepts the framework of the EU and the common currency while arguing that this alliance of imperialist robbers should carry out more progressive policies. Thus, the Left Party also advocates euro bonds. But since when does workers solidarity with the embattled Greek masses consist of pleading with the government to offer bank loans at a fractionally reduced interest rate?

The left face of the Left Party is its vice chairwoman, Sahra Wagenknecht of the misnamed "Communist Platform." Wagenknecht absurdly argues that government budgets must "be freed from their dependency on the capital markets." To this end, she wants a public European bank to be set up, which would offer favorable interest rates. Only a dyed-in-the-wool social democrat could imagine that the budget of a capitalist government could be independent of the capitalist market! And there are already hundreds of publicly owned banks in Europe; all of them play by the rules of the capitalist profit system. Wagenknecht's reformist schemes are whitewash to obscure the Left Party's role in supporting capitalist exploitation. They ought to know about government budgets, since they have entered into governments in Berlin and other regions that have laid off workers and cut public spending.

The German trade-union federation DGB has spent lots of membership dues money to run ads in newspapers campaigning for "Yes to Europe! Yes to the euro!" Meanwhile, the DGB bureaucrats'

"solidarity" with the Greek working class fighting against the crisis has been limited to a few speeches on May Day and maybe a letter of support. No struggle has been waged against the German government and the German capitalists, who are the most outspoken proponents of the austerity measures that are hitting the Greek, Portuguese and other working classes so hard.

The same social-democratic union bureaucracy has contributed to advancing German imperialism and its dominant role in the EU by presiding over a massive slashing of real wages. The union misleadership propounds the class-collaborationist lie that what is good for the company and Germany is good for the workers. Most recently, the labor tops agreed to a 20 percent wage cut for all new employees of Lufthansa at the new Berlin airport. In a short space of time, this sell-out deal will serve to lower wages at Lufthansa generally. It is urgently necessary to defend wages and working conditions through class struggle: Organize the unorganized! Equal pay for equal work! For an end to the division between permanent employees, contracted workers and workers on short-term contracts! One company, one union, one wage scale! Forge a class-struggle trade-union leadership, linked to the building of a revolutionary party!

For the Socialist United States of Europe!

In 1929, Leon Trotsky, then the leader of the Left Opposition fighting for authentic Bolshevism against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the

Communist International, wrote:

"In the person of the Opposition the vanguard of the European proletariat tells its present rulers: In order to unify Europe it is first of all necessary to wrest power out of your hands. We will do it. We will unite Europe. We will unite it against the hostile capitalist world. We will turn it into a mighty drill-ground of militant socialism. We will make it the cornerstone of the world socialist federation."

— "Disarmament and the United States of Europe" (October 1929)

The Socialist United States of Europe, in conjunction with the conquest of proletarian power in the U.S., Japan and throughout the world, would lay the basis for a real international division of labor in a planned economy, thus enormously increasing the productivity of society. Establishing the genuine equality of the peoples of Europe, it would eradicate the source of the imperialist wars that have brought Europe so many times near extinction.

The multiethnic German working class, with its various components from Mediterranean lands, the Balkans and East Europe—who often bring with them more militant class-struggle traditions—possesses the living links to the struggles of Greek workers, of Turkish and Kurdish workers in Turkey and of workers elsewhere. Class struggle by German workers would resonate powerfully with the French proletariat and would be a beacon to the working class worldwide. Central to our perspective as Trotskyists is the reorganizing of the Fourth International as the world party of proletarian revolution, the task the International Communist League, and its German section, the SpAD, has set for itself. ■

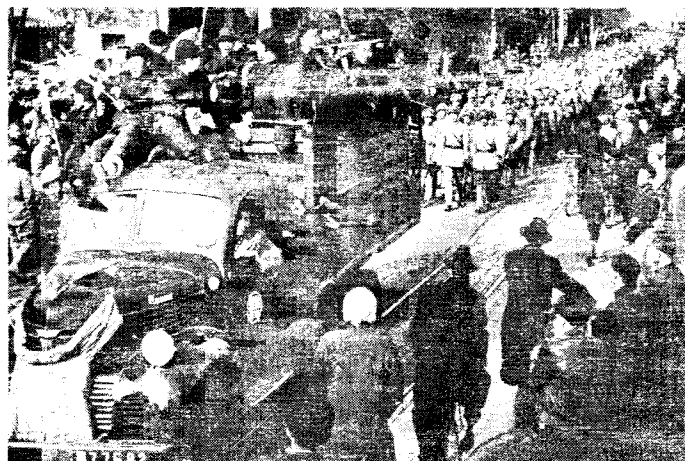
China...

(continued from page 2)

due to China's booming resource markets that Australia's economy has not been plunged into recession like most of the capitalist world—across the U.S., Japan and Europe, millions have been thrown out of work and/or made homeless. While China cannot avoid the pressures of the world economy in which it now plays a significant part, it is not subject to the wild swings of those market-driven economies which are based on private ownership of the banks, mines and factories. Its economy continues to grow at a rate unmatched by any capitalist country.

With China now Australia's largest two-way trading partner, companies were reportedly lining up for a meeting with the Chinese vice-president when he visited here in 2010. In contrast, the *Australian Financial Review* (AFR) reported that the state dinner with President Obama was largely ignored by CEOs, with the heads of BHP, the major banks and airline companies all declining invitations. One company director remarked, "Corporate Australia recognises our economy is fundamentally tied to China, not America." However, whatever conjunctural concern that sections of Australia's capitalist class may have about Obama's recent visit, they deeply share U.S. and Australian imperialisms' strategic aim to restore capitalist rule in China.

When the Chinese state-run *Global Times* responded to Obama's visit by warning that "Australia surely cannot play China for a fool" and that it could "be caught in the crossfire," Kevin Rudd sharply responded, "Our national security orientation is a matter of Australian national sovereignty and we believe in a strong Australia" (AFR, 17 November). In the ALP, with its thoroughly pro-capitalist and staunchly anti-communist leadership and program, the bosses have a government deeply committed to the imperialists' counterrevolutionary goals. In 1949,



Storia Illustrata

Mao's People's Liberation Army enters Beijing, January 1949. Chinese Revolution smashed landlord/capitalist rule and threw off imperialist yoke.

the same year the Chifley Labor government sent troops to smash the powerful coalminers' strike, it also dispatched warships to take supplies up China's Yangtze River to Chiang Kai-shek's counterrevolutionary forces. Backed by virtually the entire reformist left in this country, one of the ALP's greatest crimes against the working class was its loyal service to the imperialists' drive to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union, leading to the counterrevolutionary destruction of the world's first workers state in 1991-92.

Today, while the ALP government marches in lockstep with the U.S.-led militarism against China, the pro-capitalist Laborite union misleaders continue to push anti-China protectionism. Last August, just prior to BlueScope Steel announcing more than 1,000 job cuts, pro-ALP union tops, including Paul Howes from the Australian Workers Union, sought to pressure the Gillard government to back the U.S. campaign for China to revalue the yuan in order to protect Australian manufacturers. Fostering the lie that the workers and the bosses share common interests, they called for a joint campaign with the manufacturing bosses to demand the government "muscle up to China." The union tops work overtime to tie workers to Australian capitalism by portraying Chinese manufacturing as a threat to jobs. With slogans like "Make it here, or jobs disappear"

these nationalist union misleaders demand government subsidies for Australian capitalists and do next to nothing to mobilise their base in industrial action against the bosses' attacks and government's anti-union laws (see article page 12).

In opposition to this poisonous Laborite nationalism and class collaboration, we fight to build an internationalist revolutionary workers party that mobilises the working class in struggle in complete political independence from the capitalist exploiters. Such a party will stand on the important but all too rare examples of international class-struggle action by the organised labour movement, especially maritime, including solidarity with the Indonesian independence struggle in the 1940s and with the Vietnamese Revolution in the 1960s. Such traditions and practices must be revived and put into practice around an internationalist class-struggle program. A Leninist-Trotskyist party will be built by splitting the working-class base of the ALP from the pro-capitalist leadership, centrally through the political fight to replace the social-democratic union misleaders with a class-struggle, revolutionary leadership.

Reforge the Fourth International!

In a 23 November *Lateline* interview on the ABC, former Labor prime minister

Paul Keating criticised the fact that Obama delivered his anti-China speech in federal parliament, complaining that the Australian government should not have allowed itself to be "verballed" and "part of that particular kabuki show. Not to be fingerprints all over it." While strongly backing the U.S./Australia alliance, Keating opined that "the whole notion of Australia as a middle power trying to project an independent foreign policy was hugely inhibited by what happen[ed] this week." Such nationalist views are widely imbibed by the Laborite reformist left in this country, including the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and SA.

The CPA welcomed the U.S. presidential election of Democratic Party candidate Obama, and the election of the Rudd/Gillard federal ALP governments here, in both instances betraying the class interests of workers. Now they complain that Rudd, Gillard and Obama have "not delivered on the promise for change" and moan that "Australia's sovereignty was torn to shreds last week in Canberra" by Obama's visit. Similarly peddling nationalist bourgeois pacifism, SA declare "US bases in Australia a setback for peace" (30 November) and call for "a foreign policy that serves the 99% in Australia." Opposed to independent class opposition to imperialist militarism and worried that Australian imperialism's interests are being overlooked for those of its U.S. big brother, these "little Australia" nationalist opponents of revolutionary Marxism echo and regularly call for a vote to the anti-Communist, anti-China Greens, who have long demanded to bring Australian "troops home" from Afghanistan in order to defend bloody Australian imperialist interests in the region. This in fact dovetails with the militarisation of the Asia-Pacific sought by Obama and Gillard.

The imperialist build-up comes at a time when sharp economic crisis grips the capitalist world and underlines how capitalism in its epoch of imperialist decay leads inexorably to war, unless the

Qantas...

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mining and maritime unions, not least due to the treachery of the Laborite union tops (see "Hunter Valley Miners' Strike Knifed by Union Tops," *Australasian Spartacist* No. 161, Spring 1997). This defeat ultimately paved the way for the broader decimation of jobs and conditions in the mining industry and the assault on the MUA in 1998.

Far from the necessary hard fought class-struggle defence of jobs, including strikes and pickets to shut down Qantas, the pro-capitalist union tops have pushed nationalist protectionist poison while acceding to the federal Labor government's draconian anti-union laws all along the line. In late June, ALAEA federal secretary, Steve Purvinas, offered to mobilise rostered-off ALAEA members as strike-breakers if the union carried out rolling stoppages! Purvinas explained, "we think it important that it is clear that the Australian national interest would be catered for with our campaign by making options available for Qantas to avoid disruptions" (www.aviationbusiness.com.au, 28 June). This outrageous proposal for union scabherding was never put into practice, not least because the union tops called off stoppages planned for July.

Indeed, following the Qantas shutdown, the union misleaders boasted how little industrial action had been taken. In a 30 October statement, newly-elected federal ALP vice-president and TWU national secretary, Tony Sheldon, bragged that "TWU members have taken a total of



Alan Pryke



Roslan Rahman/AFP/Getty Images

Left: Profit-gouging Qantas bosses Alan Joyce (standing) and Leigh Clifford grounded all Qantas flights in attempt to bust the unions. Right: Passengers stranded at international airport in Singapore.

eight hours industrial action throughout the course of this dispute over eight months of negotiations." A day later AIPA president, Barry Jackson, declared on the ABC *Lateline* program that pilots "were taking very low-range industrial action, wearing red ties and making positive PAs [public announcements]...." Such abject grovelling only serves to embolden the bosses to step up their attacks.

Labor's "Fair Work" Arbitration Death Grip

Within an hour of Joyce stranding some 70,000 passengers worldwide on 29 October, the government applied for an emergency meeting of Fair Work Australia (FWA), the national workplace relations tribunal established to enforce the government's draconian anti-union laws. By early Monday morning FWA had done exactly

what Qantas knew they would and banned all industrial action while directing both parties into a 21-day negotiating period. Obeisant to the government and the bosses' courts, Unions NSW immediately cancelled a rally in support of Qantas workers called for later that day. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) misleaders "welcomed" the termination of all industrial action. With typical class-collaborationist and nationalist zeal, ACTU secretary Jeff Lawrence declared:

"Our immediate priority now is to work with management to get the planes back in the air, but then we will approach negotiations in a genuine spirit of conciliation and expect Qantas management to do the same.

"The key issue for negotiation is the future of Qantas jobs in Australia, and there must be a continuing role for the government during these talks to ensure job security."

—ACTU website, 31 October

As expected, talks between the unions and management collapsed and the dispute was directed to compulsory arbitration, a graveyard for union struggles. The arbitration courts are no "independent umpire" but a part of the capitalist state apparatus, which straitjackets union struggles in almost every sphere. The meaning of the unions' acceptance of forced arbitration was captured by Murdoch's *Australian*, which gleefully trumpeted on 25 November that Qantas would now be "strike-free for four years." Down with compulsory arbitration! For a class-struggle fight to defend the unions against the ALP government and bosses' FWA union busting!

The bourgeoisie have seized on the Qantas dispute to increase pressure on the minority ALP government to tighten its anti-union legislation and enforce earlier state intervention against unions in industrial disputes. Meanwhile bosses throughout the country aim to emulate Qantas. As an article in the 30 October Melbourne *Age* pointed out, "For the many Australian companies that have been wanting to destroy unions for years, it will be an exciting ride."

In early November it was revealed that the Victorian Liberal/National Coalition government, currently in dispute with the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) over wages and staff-patient ratios, were planning to lock out nurses "Qantas-style" if they took part in industrial action. In contrast to the Qantas unions, nurses twice defied FWA rulings and continued industrial action that closed hospital beds. After the third FWA ruling, the ANF tops capitulated to the anti-strike judgment and recommended instead a series of impotent lunch-time "community pickets" outside hospitals.

In a further escalation of the anti-union attacks, on 13 December stevedoring company POAGS locked out hundreds of wharfies at Fremantle and Bunbury in Western Australia and Port Kembla in New South Wales, in response to MUA bans and stoppages over wages and safety conditions. Chaired by union-buster Chris Corrigan, POAGS helicoptered in management scabs over the pickets of striking workers at Port Kembla, and has report-

edly used management scabs at Bunbury and contracted out work at Fremantle to Patrick Stevedores, Corrigan's former company. Almost immediately upon being sworn in as Labor's new federal workplace relations minister, Bill Shorten intervened and brokered a deal for the MUA and POAGS to enter four weeks conciliation before FWA. Bowing to arbitration and FWA, the MUA tops immediately agreed to drop all industrial action. Once again, due to the union tops' treacherous reliance on the courts, the bosses got exactly what they wanted. Commenting that the company would be able to resume normal operations, POAGS managing director declared "We are very grateful for the intervention of the minister and Fair Work Australia..." (*Australian*, 15 December).

What the capitalists can get away with depends on the outcome of class struggle. Last month workers at the Baiada Poultry plant in the Melbourne suburb of Laverton struck against the company's employment of casual labour for as little as \$8 an hour. The heavily immigrant workforce, organised by the National Union of Workers, shut down production with a militant picket line that repelled police and scab attempts to break it. This enabled the workers to win site rates for all. From Qantas to the waterfront, from the New South Wales public sector to Victorian nurses, workers are eager to fight back against the escalating anti-union attacks. The chief obstacle to bringing proletarian power to bear is the current misleadership of the unions. Committed to preserving capitalist rule, the union tops peddle nationalist poison and divert working-class struggles into parliamentary and legalistic channels. To repel the bosses' growing attacks it is necessary to mobilise independently of the capitalist state and intransigently take up the fight against capitalist oppression.

It is necessary to forge a leadership that will not bow to the bosses' anti-union laws and arbitration courts, which serve only to keep workers' struggles firmly within the bounds of what is acceptable to the capitalist ruling class. In stark contrast to the existing Laborite union misleaders, a class-struggle leadership would fight to win workers to the understanding that the capitalist state—consisting at its core of police, prisons, courts and military—exists to enforce the rule of the bourgeoisie who grow fat from the profits generated by the exploitation of workers labour power. As Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin spelled out in his 1917 pamphlet, *State and Revolution*, the state cannot be reformed or pressured into acting on behalf of workers and the oppressed. It must be *shattered* by workers revolution and replaced by a workers state that expropriates the capitalist class.

The ALP-loyal union bureaucracy works hand-in-glove with their Labor parliamentary brethren. The ALP is a *bourgeois workers party*. While it has a pro-capitalist leadership and program, it is based on and organically tied to the trade unions. When in power the ALP rules for the capitalists. It was entrusted by the

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no credit

Workers and supporters on picket line at Baiada Poultry plant in Laverton, Melbourne, in November. Militant 13-day strike won site rates for all workers.

problem is destroyed at its roots by socialist revolution. Under the system of capitalist imperialism, the ruling classes of the richest capitalist countries are compelled, through their very inner workings and thirst for profits, into an unrelenting drive for new markets, ever-greater supplies of natural resources and sources of cheap labour in the neocolonial countries. The various imperialist bourgeoisies enforce their neocolonial looting and protect their spheres of exploitation through the expansion of their military might. As Karl Marx made clear, the workers of all countries must unite, rejecting the divide-and-rule capitalist machinations parroted by the current misleaders of the working class, to throw out their exploiters and take the future in their own hands.

Since the 1991-92 collapse of the Soviet Union, a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat, the working class has been taking a beating with few workers today identifying their struggles with the ideals of socialism. However, contrary to the wishes of the capitalist-imperialist rulers, class struggle cannot be

legislated or repressed out of existence but is a product of class-divided society. As long as capitalist exploitation and oppression exists new struggles will inevitably break out, including against imperialist militarism.

In the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks we understand that only through implacable opposition to one's "own" imperialist bourgeoisie can we build the national sections of a reborn Fourth International needed to lead the proletariat in revolutionary struggle to smash the capitalist-imperialist system. Like our comrades in the U.S., Japan, and other sections of the ICL, comrades of the Spartacist League of Australia fight to build such a revolutionary vanguard party to lead the multiracial working people in this country in sweeping away the capitalist rulers and establishing their own class rule. This requires an intransigently proletarian internationalist perspective. **Down with Australian imperialism! Defend the Chinese deformed workers state! For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!** ■

Qantas...

(continued from page 9)

bourgeoisie to run Australia during both imperialist world wars last century. In 1949 Labor prime minister Ben Chifley sent troops into the mines to break the coal strike. Following in Chifley's footsteps, in 1989 the Hawke Labor government embarked on a scabberding operation by using the military against the pilots' union. In political struggle against the Laborite union tops, who time and again sell out workers' interests for the bosses' profits, the SL/A fights to win the working-class base of the ALP away from its pro-capitalist leadership in the struggle to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party.

For Class Struggle Against Union-Busting "Outsourcing"!

As part of its attempts to drive down labour costs and extract various concessions from its unionised workforce, over the last decade Qantas has been establishing new airline subsidiaries where workers are paid less and have worse conditions than at Qantas. Such is the case at Jetstar, Qantas' low-fare domestic carrier, and at international subsidiaries including Jetstar Asia and Jetstar Pacific, based in Singapore and Vietnam respectively, and at Jet-

proportionately women, immigrants and the most oppressed layers of the class. Such a struggle would not only reverse the decline in union membership but draw into the unions new and powerful sources of fighting strength. Recruiting new layers of immigrant workers would provide a bridge to proletarian struggles overseas, not least in the international airline industry.

It is also vital that Qantas workers, organised in multiple unions, overcome craftist divisions and fight for "One out! All out!", backed by mass pickets that no one dares cross. Against the Qantas bosses' attempts at scabberding, the airline unions must mobilise jointly and fight in defence of casual workers and the unemployed, bringing them onto picket lines and into the unions. This is how the vitally necessary industrial unions will be forged. In Australia there should be an industrial union of airline workers—from cleaners to pilots—who are organised and fight together in the one union.

Capitalist Attacks on Workers Jettison Safety

There are few industries in which the relationship between working conditions, passenger service and safety is as direct as it is in air transport. The savage competition inherent to capitalism drives

fight for union safety committees with the power to shut down unsafe aircraft and airlines.

Responding to Qantas' push to "off-shore" maintenance tasks, ALAEA's Steve Purvinas declared, "We know that the dramatic increase in the number of safety incidents involving Qantas jets coincides with an increase in the amount of work that is no longer carried out in-house." The capitalists will exploit cheaper sources of labour, under worse conditions, when and wherever they can get it. However rather than aiding in the organisation of engineers in other countries and helping them enforce union-run training and safety regulations, the union bureaucrats here have lined up to promote Qantas as a "national icon." Thus they appeal to parliament to strengthen the 1992 Qantas Sale Act to compel both Qantas and its subsidiaries to retain their "main operational base" in Australia.

This parliamentarist belly-crawling and "Australia-first" protectionism was summed up by one ALAEA spokesman who declared more than a week before the Qantas shutdown, "If the Prime Minister were to look at intervening they should look at the Qantas sale act and should be making sure the Qantas board do the right thing and protect Australian jobs" (*Herald Sun*, 20 October). More recently, in the gross traditions of "White Australia," TWUer Tony Sheldon despicably railed against the "Asianisation" of Qantas. Such xenophobic, chauvinist poison, which lines workers up behind their own exploiters, is an obstacle to organising the multiracial proletariat in defence of jobs and conditions. It divides the international working class and is thus utterly suicidal in an industry that is international in scope.

On 19 December it was reported that ALAEA had agreed to a deal with Qantas management that gives engineers a piddling three percent pay rise over the next three years—effectively a reduction in real wages—while allowing the airline to cut costs and weaken conditions. "Hand-in-hand" with Qantas management on the agreement, the union tops claim the deal will "secure the jobs of our members on shore" and retain the practice of licensed engineers inspecting every aircraft before take off. In reality, however, this deal opens the way for the introduction of lower paid and less qualified A-licence workers to perform basic maintenance tasks, which at present must be done by licensed engineers. The union also abandoned its claim for the construction of a hangar to service Qantas' fleet of A380s. It is little wonder that an ebullient Alan Joyce declared the agreement "does not contain any of the restrictive demands that would have handed control of parts of the airline to the union," and renewed calls for adopting new practices, i.e., lower maintenance, for modern aircraft.

Airline workers have enormous social power—the world economy could not function without them. But instead of airline unions wielding that power by standing united at home and mobilising for international class solidarity abroad, internationally they have been picked off one by one by ruthless national-based carriers. On 1 October, 2,600 Filipino workers organised by the Philippine Airlines Employees Association (PALEA) were locked out and sacked by Philippine Airlines (PAL) after they protested the airline's attempt to slash wages, destroy job security and bust the union through "outsourcing" jobs. If PAL gets its way more than 60 percent of the PALEA unionists will be thrown out of work.

Against the drive of airline bosses to force workers into a "race to the bottom" in order to keep their jobs, airline workers must strive to find allies among unionised labour overseas, including among those workers in struggle at foreign carriers. As the PALEA declared in an October state-



Manila, 30 September: Angry ground crew workers at Philippine Airlines protest job cuts.

ment of solidarity with Qantas workers:

"...only industrial action can force employers to heed the demands of workers...."

"PALEA is not alone. And Qantas workers are not alone. Our supporters in the Philippines say 'We are all PALEANS.' To you, we say 'We are all Qantas workers.'"

While there have been numerous protests in solidarity with Qantas workers by International Transport Workers Federation affiliates across the globe, and a delegation from Doro-Chiba (Japan Railway workers) picketed the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo in solidarity with PALEA workers, such actions need to be turned into a campaign of labour struggles. For Qantas and PAL workers, victory may well depend on international working-class solidarity actions to prevent these union-busting airlines from moving their aircraft, thus affecting profit margins. Marxists declare: the workers have no country. Workers of the world unite!

For a Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Party!

The contradiction between the inherently international character of the airline industry and how it is operated by nationally-based rival carriers provides a crystalline example of the generalised anarchy of capitalist production for profit. With the crazed capitalist rulers the world over seeking to bust unions and destroy workers' livelihoods in order to pay for their global economic crisis, class struggle is the only road to defending workers against this assault. To prepare for the battles ahead, there needs to be a political fight to replace the union bureaucrats with a leadership committed to mobilising the proletariat's power independently of the capitalist state and politicians, in the interests of all the exploited and oppressed. This fight is part of forging a multiracial revolutionary workers party capable of leading struggles to not only improve present conditions but to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery.

In Australia, the ALP remains the main obstacle on the road to workers power. As we stated in 1989 when the Hawke government mobilised the military as scabs against the pilots' union:

"From its parliamentary wing, which today administers the capitalist state, to its trade union leaders who police the working class for the bosses, it's a party whose sole purpose is to save the capitalist system. Workers need their own, revolutionary party, built in struggle against the ALP through splitting its working class base from the scabberding pro-capitalist tops. Only such a revolutionary party can lead all the oppressed in the conquest of state power, expropriating the capitalists who have looted the country and run its plants into the ground, and through planned socialist reconstruction build a society with justice, decency and freedom for all: a workers republic of Australia as part of a socialist Asia."

—"All Out to Shut Down the Airports!" (ASp Supplement, 8 September 1989) ■



Manila, 25 July 2008: Qantas pilot inspects damage after oxygen tank exploded mid-flight. Airline attacks on unions compromise safety.

connect, which carries passengers between New Zealand and Australia. Hoping to gain greater access to the booming intra-Asian passenger traffic, Qantas has also declared its intention to establish a low-cost premium subsidiary airline operation out of Singapore, or a code-share alliance with Malaysian Airlines operating out of Kuala Lumpur.

In Australia, Qantas is increasingly using cheap contract labour to work overtime. This is a wedge against the pay and conditions of the already lowly-paid permanent staff organised by the TWU, which represents baggage handlers and ramp services staff, including caterers. Recognising that their jobs, wages and conditions are increasingly on the line, AIPA pilots and TWU workers have correctly demanded those employed by Qantas subsidiaries, and those contracted by labour-hire companies to do ground service work, must get the same wages as the currently unionised workers.

A class-struggle leadership of the unions would fight to organise the unorganised into the unions, with full union rates, conditions and responsibilities. In doing so it would stand opposed to the parasitic labour-hire companies and fight for trade-union control of hiring and training. This is the only way to undercut the bosses' attempts to manipulate hiring as a tool to divide the working class along racial, national and religious lines, or as a means of screening out pro-union militants. It is crucial to the unity and integrity of the working class that unionised permanent full-time workers champion the rights of those forced into contract and casual employment—dis-

airline companies to compromise on comfort and safety in order to boost their bottom line. Passengers are crowded into planes while the workers handling their luggage, the flight attendants serving them and the maintenance workers and pilots are overworked and driven to exhaustion. As Qantas has ramped up its attacks against the unions it has been beset by a series of frightening and potentially deadly incidents.

In July 2008, a Qantas Boeing 747 carrying almost 350 passengers was forced to make an emergency landing in Manila after an oxygen tank exploded on board and ripped a gaping hole in the fuselage the "size of a mini-van." In October of the same year, the flight computer system on a Qantas A330-300 Airbus carrying more than 300 passengers went haywire and the plane "dropped like a brick" plunging toward the earth. More than 100 people were injured, 14 seriously. Reportedly, pilots have taken to calling Qantas' new A380 Airbuses, "scarebuses." A little more than a year ago, an engine on a Qantas A380 Airbus exploded on a flight out of Singapore, forcing Qantas to ground its entire fleet of these superjumbo jets. Then, last April, an A380 suffered two tyre blow-outs on landing in Sydney, due to a problem with its brakes. During the dispute Qantas has opposed ALAEA's demand for maintenance checks on new aircraft between arrival and departure, declaring these unnecessary because new planes have an electronic system that alerts the airline when there is a problem. One might ask who checks the electronic systems? It is in the direct and immediate interests of passengers and airline workers that unions

West Papua...

(continued from page 12)

September 26 statement by the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) calls for "solidarity and support of all miners and all trade unions in mining and other industrial sectors," including messages of support to the PT Freeport Indonesian Workers Union. But it will take more than paper messages of support for the Grasberg miners to win this battle. It is in the interests of workers internationally to come to the defense of the Grasberg strikers, including by refusing to handle scab product.

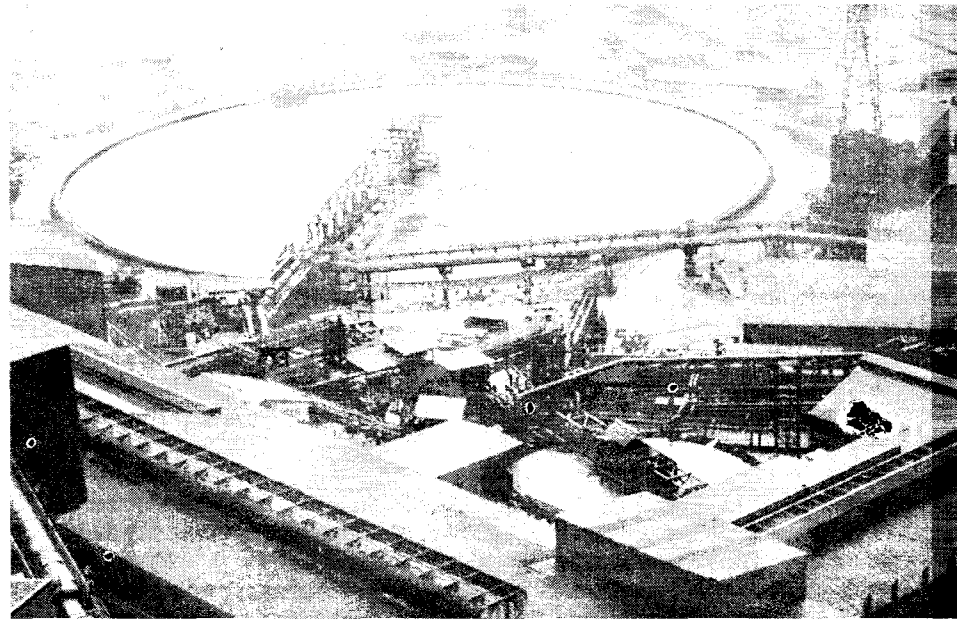
Freeport-McMoRan is one of the largest mining companies in the world, raking in a profit of \$1.37 billion in the second quarter of 2011. On September 29, more than 1,200 workers at the Freeport-McMoRan Cerro Verde copper and molybdenum mine in Peru also launched a strike for wage increases. U.S. workers have their own history of battling against this mining conglomerate. Freeport's West Papuan mine is a joint venture with Rio Tinto, which last year locked out International Longshore and Warehouse Union members at its U.S. Borax mine in Boron, California, in a failed attempt to bust the union (see "ILWU: Don't Handle Scab Borax!" WV No. 956, 9 April 2010). In 2007, Freeport merged with Phelps Dodge, which from 1983 to 1986 waged a vicious war at its Morenci, Arizona, copper mine to drive out the United Steelworkers union, whose membership was mainly Latino and Native American.

The Freeport miners are seeking not just a wage increase but also conditions and facilities for local workers equal to those of foreign workers at Grasberg, including housing, health care, education and pension funds. The Freeport bosses arrogantly dismissed strikers' demands for a wage increase of \$12 to \$37.50 an hour as "unrealistic" and began running the Grasberg mine with scabs. The union has since pared back the pay demand to a five-fold increase. At the same time, Freeport was forced to stop production this week after a pipe carrying gold and copper concentrate from the mine to the company's port facility was severed. With a workers' blockade cutting off access to the mine, the company has been ramping up its intimidation and repression, with 500 to 600 cops mobilized against the strikers.

Over the years, Freeport has paid tens of millions of dollars to the military and police to ensure its continued ability to exploit West Papuan labor. "There is no alternative to our reliance on the Indonesian military and police," the company told the *New York Times* (27 December 2005). "The need for this security, the support provided for such security, and the procedures governing such support, as well as decisions regarding our relationships with the Indonesian government and its security institutions, are ordinary business activities." The company has also

engaged the security firm G4S (formerly Securicor) to help break the strike. This outfit, which operates prisons and detention centers around the world, is known in Australia for its viciously brutal treatment of Aborigines and refugees.

Striking Grasberg miners have been threatened with dismissal, and the company has been "isolating union leaders from workers by posting security guards around them," according to an ICEM report. On September 11, the chief negotiator of the All Indonesia Workers Union Freeport Division was shot at by "persons unknown." In West Papua, this is often code for the Indonesian military (TNI)



Freeport-McMoRan's giant Grasberg gold and copper mine.

and its Kopassus special forces, which are notorious for their torture and murder of perceived opponents of Indonesia's capitalist rulers.

With its enormous gold, copper and oil reserves, West Papua is a place of brutal superexploitation, where largely tribal subsistence farmers have been driven off their land without compensation. Freeport Indonesia is the largest single taxpayer to the Indonesian government, contributing billions of dollars a year. While the comprador Indonesian capitalists, corrupt government bodies and TNI all take their cut of the profits, mining conglomerates like Freeport take the lion's share, exploiting cheap labor and ripping out resources under the protection of the imperialist-funded military. Along with its Australian junior imperialist partner, the U.S. has been rebuilding its military alliance with the Indonesian regime. This is not just to secure the flow of profits from Indonesia. For the U.S., the Indonesian armed forces serve as part of the military encirclement of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, which the imperialists seek to destroy by one means or another.

Not surprisingly, the Freeport strike has galvanized support from long-suffering West Papuan independence fighters. For decades, the Indonesian bourgeoisie, centered on the island of Java, has ruled over myriad oppressed nationalities through

military terror with the backing of their imperialist masters. This is the case not least in West Papua, the western half of the island of New Guinea, where abuses include forced removal of villages and massacres by military and police personnel. Just three days ago, military and police forces dispersed several thousand delegates to the Third Papuan People's Congress after they declared independence from Jakarta. Up to six people were killed. Activists were savagely beaten and 800 were arrested. While many were subsequently released, those still in detention face charges including treason and rebellion, which can carry sentences of up to

tacist [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). Suharto quickly moved to open up the Indonesian economy to greater Western imperialist investment. It was in this context of blood-drenched repression that Freeport's first contract with the Indonesian government was signed in 1967.

Two years later came the farcical referendum on West Papua's independence, conducted under the title "Act of Free Choice." Some 1,000 hand-picked tribal leaders were told by the military to vote for Indonesian rule or have their tongues cut out, guaranteeing the outcome: 100 percent "support" to West Papua's incorporation into Indonesia. Australia's rulers, worried about instability spreading across the border to what was then their Papua New Guinea colony, played a leading role in having the "Act of Free Choice" accepted without debate at the United Nations in November 1969.

As with the mines and plantations in Papua New Guinea, the Freeport mine operations combine savage exploitation with racial subjugation. While Freeport reaps fabulous profits, the West Papuan people remain in dire poverty, with AIDS rapidly spreading and the mortality rate for women and children the highest in Indonesia. Schools are empty much of the time, as teachers are subjected to wretched living conditions and children are too poor to travel long distances or purchase the books they need.

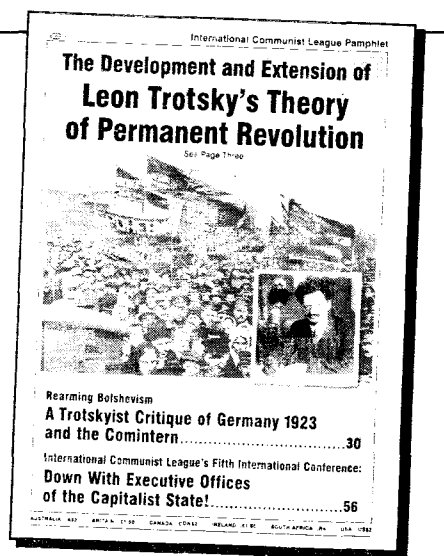
In the Indonesian prison house of peoples, the fight to emancipate the deeply exploited working class is bound up with the struggles of the oppressed minority peoples, from West Papua in the east to Aceh in the far northwest of Sumatra, and of women and the rural poor. In dependent countries such as Indonesia, where the capitalist rulers are thoroughly tied to the imperialists, only a socialist revolution establishing the dictatorship of the workers, leaning on the poor peasantry, can satisfy the basic needs of the masses: freedom from imperialist subjugation, agrarian revolution, liberation for oppressed national minorities, social equality for women, alleviation of poverty. To prevent its strangulation by imperialism, overcome the backwardness of the society and lay the basis for developing toward socialism, a proletarian revolution in Indonesia must be extended internationally to the advanced capitalist countries in Europe, Australia, Japan and the United States.

This is the perspective of permanent revolution, as developed by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia. To successfully lead the workers in this fight requires the building of a revolutionary workers party, an Indonesian section of a reformed Fourth International. ■

International Communist League pamphlet comprising three articles from ICL press: "The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution," "A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern" and "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!" These articles together constitute an introduction to the historically founded principles and program of Trotskyism (i.e., genuine Marxism).

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Qantas Union Tops Bow to Arbitration Down With ALP Government's "Fair Work" Union Busting!

DECEMBER 20—After months of bitter negotiations with the Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers Association (ALAEA), Australian and International Pilots Association (AIPA) and the Transport Workers Union (TWU), at 5 p.m. on 29 October Qantas CEO Alan Joyce grounded the airline's entire domestic and international fleet while threatening a lockout if unions did not accede to management's push to slash at least 1,000 jobs and drive down labour costs. Not

satisfied with an increase in pre-tax profits of more than \$550 million last financial year, and having just received a hefty \$2 million pay increase, Joyce carried out this union-busting act as a deliberate ploy to bring about the intervention of the federal ALP government and a ban on all industrial action at Qantas.

Qantas management's actions in shutting down the airline have been compared to media mogul Rupert Murdoch's attack on the British print unions in

1986, and the attack on the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) in 1998, when Patrick Stevedores boss, Chris Corrigan, sacked the unionised workforce and replaced them with scabs. Reminiscent of the tactics employed in the Patrick dispute, Qantas has been training an Australian-based strike-breaking force of baggage handlers and ground staff in Los Angeles and locally. In their insatiable thirst for ever-greater profits, the Qantas bosses' goal is to break this historically

highly unionised workforce, if not smash the unions outright. And in Qantas chairman Leigh Clifford, they have their perfect anti-union crusader.

For years, the execrable Clifford directed Rio Tinto's campaign to destroy union power in the mining sector and impose individual contracts on workers. This included the 1997 battle at the New South Wales Hunter Valley No. 1 Coalmine, which resulted in a defeat for the

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Not Protectionist Poison But International Class Struggle!

West Papua, Indonesia



October 10: On day that workers on strike at Freeport-McMoRan's Grasberg mine demonstrated in Timika (left), Indonesian riot cops fired on strikers, killing one and injuring more than a dozen (right).

Strikers in Bloody Clash With Freeport-McMoRan Mining Giant

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 989 (28 October), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S. Following a three month battle for improved wages and conditions the striking West Papuan workers at the giant Freeport-McMoRan gold and copper mine struck a deal with the company in mid-December. The workers won a 37 percent pay increase over two years, and benefits including allowances for housing, education and pensions. While this

falls far short of initial demands, the union remains unbowed and unbroken. Union spokesman, Juli Parorrongan, said after the deal had been signed, "This is the first page of the struggle, and not the end." Reportedly a proposed return to work on 3 January has stalled with workers demanding pay for the time they were on strike.

OCTOBER 22—For more than a month, some 10,000 workers at the giant Freeport-McMoRan Grasberg gold and copper mine

in West Papua have been engaged in a hard-fought and increasingly bitter strike for higher wages and better conditions against the company's local subsidiary, PT Freeport Indonesia. On October 10, when more than 1,000 angry workers marched toward buses carrying scab labor, Indonesian police opened fire, killing one worker and injuring others, including one striker who reportedly died five days later. Working in dangerous conditions, with some miners toiling up to two and a half miles

underground, the mostly indigenous Melanesian workforce is paid as little as \$1.50 to \$3 an hour, the lowest pay at any Freeport mining facility in the world. Leaders of the Trade Union of Chemical, Energy and Mine Workers have extended the strike until November 15.

West Papua is a literal gold mine for the likes of the U.S.-based Freeport-McMoRan and a living hell for the populace, not least the Grasberg miners. A

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