



**No Vote to ALP "In Our Backyard" Militarists!
For Class Struggle Against the Australian Capitalist Rulers!**

U.S., Australian Imperialism: Torture from Iraq to South Pacific

The following article includes material from Workers Vanguard (No. 826, 14 May), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

JUNE 1—The grotesque photos flashed around the world from Abu Ghraib prison in imperialist-occupied Iraq have totally demolished the official line that the U.S., British and Australian imperialists went in to "liberate" Iraq and institute "democracy." This "liberation" is now identified with a young American woman soldier holding a grovelling, naked Iraqi prisoner tethered to a leash like an animal. The photos only partially expose the terror and atrocities that are meted out to imperialism's victims worldwide.

From racist state killings of Australian Aborigines to the systematic mass murder and torture of Vietnamese liberation fighters in the CIA's "Operation Phoenix" program in Vietnam, to Israel's massacres of Palestinians such as at Rafah on 19 May: an awful network of torture and death, going back in time, spans the world. On 4 December 2002, in East Timor, the combined forces of the UN/Australian police force and the then UN-controlled East Timorese police opened fire on unarmed high school students protesting against cop violence. Eighteen of the demonstrators were shot and up to five were killed. These horrors are not "aberrations." They are the conscious policies of imperialist and neo-colonialist ruling regimes, who routinely and necessarily use terror and degradation as tools to maintain their power.

In the U.S., the Democratic Party is trying to exploit widespread revulsion at the newly exposed sexual abuse and torture by American troops and mercenaries in Iraq to fuel their campaign to take over the White House from Bush. Here, the social-democratic Australian Labor Party (ALP) criticises the right-wing Liberal/National Coalition government for their responsibility in the abuse of Iraqi prisoners in order to curry electoral favour amongst an increasingly sceptical and revolted Australian public. While stating his intention, if elected, to withdraw Australian troops from Iraq by Christmas, ALP leader Mark Latham reiterates at every opportunity his "full support" to the troops and the reactionary U.S./Australian alliance. This includes enthusiastic backing of the U.S. spy base at Pine Gap, an installation that doubtless plays an ongoing role in pinpointing military targets and facilitating the arrest of Iraqis. The murderous Australian SAS special forces have turned over some 100 people to the torture camps in Iraq.

In 1991 and during the recent Iraq war, the International Communist League forthrightly took a side for the military defence of Iraq, without giving any political support to Saddam Hussein, against the imperialists. Under the brutal imperialist military occupation today, every blow against the U.S. and Australian imperialists and their dwindling "coalition of the willing" is objectively in the interests of workers worldwide. At the



Samam/Newsday

Relatives of Iraqi prisoners protest outside Abu Ghraib prison, 5 May, demanding "Occupiers leave our country!"



U.S./Australia Out of Iraq!

same time, we steadfastly oppose the communalist violence carried out by clerical reactionaries and remnants of the Ba'athist regime. The crucial force that must be mobilised politically to strike a blow against the imperialist occupation of Iraq is the multiracial proletariat in the U.S., Australia, Britain and the other imperialist centres. We say: **Down with the U.S./Australia alliance! U.S. bases out! U.S./British/Australian imperialists out of Iraq now! Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home!**

It's no accident the killers and sadists of Abu Ghraib include former U.S. cops and prison guards, domestic enforcers of U.S. state terror against poor, black and working people and immigrants. The American imperialist state, already a prison house for blacks, in the name of its "war on terror" has exported and vastly expanded its own arsenal of terror. In this purpose they are fully backed by their slavish junior partners in Canberra. Even after the recent sickening revelations, Prime Minister Howard declared "the United States is the only nation that actually has the power to change the world for the better.... That is what they are trying to do in Iraq..." (*Australian Financial Review*, 20 May).

Meanwhile it has been exposed that an Australian army major, George O'Kane, working from U.S. headquarters in Baghdad, gave lectures to "interrogators" on their "techniques" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 June). It was O'Kane who "prepared a draft response" to the Red Cross's complaints over Abu Ghraib. Issued last December, the U.S. statement openly justified the torture and chillingly stated

that some Abu Ghraib detainees would not get the protection of the Geneva conventions because they were security risks! Like six other Australian military lawyers, O'Kane made "visits" to Abu Ghraib. Reporting weekly to his Australian superiors, O'Kane was part of the U.S. military legal office that was central to drafting the torture policy at the prison.

The Australian imperialists have applied similar murderous techniques during their occupation of East Timor. Barely months after their occupation began, Australian soldiers were terrorising Timorese women in their homes at night. There have recently been new exposés about torture conducted by the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Captured prisoners had their heads forced down a toilet bowl and their mouths and faces smeared with faeces (*SBS Dateline*). A former SAS soldier revealed how, in October 1999, suspected pro-Indonesian "militiamen" were held by the ADF,

blindfolded and handcuffed, without food or water for 90 hours. Their captors would whip off their blindfolds as they shoved their faces within centimetres of the bodies of those freshly killed.

The Australian/UN military and police have enforced mass unemployment and have intimidated those resisting the Australian imperialist plunder of Timor's considerable oil and gas wealth. Occupation forces have attacked and shot at anti-colonial activists and at opponents of the neocolonial East Timorese government that initially signed on to Australia's oil and gas theft in 2002.

Founded on the massacres and dispossession of Aboriginal people and acting as an ambitious but insecure white gendarme in Asia for first the British and then the U.S., Australian imperialism has always had a white colonial pig mentality and lust for greater military clout. Australian colonial control of Papua New Guinea was one of unmitigated racist terror, including tortures such as forcing Papuan men to support the Australian army during WWII under threat of being flayed while strapped over a 44-gallon drum fresh from a fire. Now, the Australian capitalist rulers are gearing up to send up to 300 police and numerous judges and administrators to take back direct control of parts of the PNG state apparatus. Pumped up by the ever more aggressive behaviour of its head cowboys in Washington, the Australian rulers openly espouse more unabashed colonial overlordship in the South Pacific.

But things are not going well for the U.S. and its allies in Iraq. The savage occupation has sparked widespread resistance and now, following the deaths of over 800 U.S. troops, a welter of U.S. politicians, Republicans and Democrats alike, howl about who is "losing Iraq," as the dread words "swamp" and "quagmire" are resurrected in *New York Times* editorials. As such moods within U.S. ruling circles grow, defeatist sentiments are being expressed in Australia by the ALP and bourgeois Greens. Concerned that possible military reversals may harm Australian capitalism, Latham increasingly speaks of the need for an "exit strategy" and the return of Australian troops. In this there is not a skerrick of opposition to Australian imperialist militarism. Latham's motivation for

continued on page 9



East Timor, January 2000: Australian soldiers bully local population. Imperialist occupation forces have brutally attacked anti-colonial activists and protesters against police violence and unemployment.

Rob MacColl

Trades Hall Ban on Spartacist Meeting Lifted

Sinister Police Association Manoeuvres Spiked—Forum Defending Redfern Aborigines Goes Ahead

We reprint below a Spartacist League leaflet issued on 15 April.

In a small but important victory for all those fighting against the intense racist oppression of the Aboriginal peoples, and for the entire left, the Police Association was recently defeated in its reported manoeuvres to stop a Spartacist League (SL) 31 March public meeting in Melbourne opposing racist cop terror. We successfully held our forum, "Defend Redfern Aborigines—Mobilise Union Power!", at Trades Hall, after the Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC), which had apparently been acting at the behest of the VTHC-affiliated Police Association, retreated from attempts to have our room bookings cancelled. Earlier we were told that the Police Association's diktat was in response to our position on recent events in Redfern where we called for solidarity with militant Aboriginal youth against racist state terror. The Police Association allegedly smeared meetings at Trades Hall on the Redfern events as promoting illegal activities.

We were also told that it was Laborite VTHC Secretary, Leigh Hubbard, brandishing a letter from the Police Association, who had originally demanded our room bookings be cancelled. However, in response to a campaign of exposure initiated by the SL, angered unionists and leftists pressured Trades Hall to reverse its ban. The rebuff of the Police Association's manoeuvres is a blow against the increasing and suffocating intrusion of the bosses' state into the workers movement.

On 15 February, the seething anger of the Redfern Aboriginal community at unrelenting racist state terror erupted after police chased popular 17-year-old Kamilaroi Murri youth Thomas "TJ" Hickey to his death. Following a series of cop provocations, Aboriginal youth organised to effectively defend themselves and courageously fought back against phalanxes of police "stormtroops" in a nine-hour pitched battle. Since then, the NSW Carr Labor regime—encouraged by the NSW Police Association—has been hunting down and prosecuting the Redfern militants. In this context, we understood that the Police Association's moves against our 31 March forum were not only a sinister anti-communist attack aimed at silencing the SL but were aimed at further isolating the besieged Aboriginal population in Redfern.

For Union/Black/Minority Action Against Racist State Terror!

We immediately alerted the left and workers movement to this outrageous attempt at censorship and called for protest letters to be sent to the VTHC demanding that it rescind the attempted ban on the SL's hiring of rooms. At the recent rallies against the occupation of Iraq, while selling our newspaper featuring the article "Australian Troops/Cops Out of East Timor, PNG, Solomons! U.S./Australian Imperialists Get Out of Iraq!", we distributed our 20 March statement to unionists, leftists and Aborigines. Our statement argued:

"The smearing of leftist organisations by the police is a sinister pretext for censorship, disruption and repression against all those that would oppose the racist capitalist status quo and constitutes a threat against the multiracial working people.... As part of the armed fist of the capitalist state, which exists to defend the rule of the capitalist exploiters, the police are the deadly class enemies of the workers movement and oppressed minorities.... For the leader of the peak union body in Victoria to bow to the diktats of this police body against an organisation in the workers movement is a gross travesty."

We noted that the "interests of Aborigines, immigrant minorities and those of the working people will go forward together or fall back separately" and concluded with the basic working-class principle "An injury to one is an injury to all!"

This point was not lost on many unionists who know that the same police force that terrorises Aboriginal people is viciously targeting former AMWU manufacturing union leader Craig Johnston and going after CFMEU construction union militants. Doubtless, some workers also saw a common thread between Hubbard's attempt to silence solidarity with militant Aboriginal youth and an earlier servile VTHC motion which condemned any trade-union support for "criminal or violent behaviour." If that ACTU-inspired motion was adhered to it would make effective union organising, like solid picket lines, *verboten*. When

that motion was raised at a 12 March VTHC meeting, some union officials rightly saw it as an attempt to strangle defence of union activists targeted by the bosses' state, prompting them to walk out of the meeting.

We faxed our statement to unions, including those that walked out of the VTHC meeting. In arguing why they should protest the attempted VTHC ban on our forum, we stressed that assisting the campaigns of police organisations to silence defenders of Aboriginal rights is manifestly against the interests of all union members and the oppressed. In response to our statement and discussions, opposition to the pro-cop censorship increasingly bore down on Hubbard and Trades Hall. Reportedly at a meeting of union officials, Hubbard conceded saying that a space would be made available for the SL forum. On the day of our forum, the left social-democratic Socialist Alliance group came out with a letter which urged "the VTHC executive to reverse this ban, and guarantee that freedom of speech that the democratic workers' movement values so highly."

All those who acted to overturn the ban on the 31 March forum should be congratulated. We call on all those who participated in defeating this attempt to silence opponents of racist repression, and indeed all those who oppose the brutal oppression of the Aboriginal people, to take up the defence of those arrested over the 15 February upheaval and demand the charges be dropped. *Those who heroically struggled against racist cop brutality should not be left to fight alone!*

On 1 April, eleven of the 25 militants who had been arrested around the Redfern events faced court appearances in Sydney. Disgustingly, many of the defendants had been held in custody since their arrest and Presiding Magistrate

Moore again denied many of them bail. As the bail application of Thomas' uncle, Michael Hickey, was refused, an Aboriginal woman supporting the defendants bitterly noted "see if you're black, this is what happens." Relatives also told Spartacist supporters attending the hearing in solidarity with those arrested, that Moore is so notorious that he is known as "No Mo[ore]re bail!"

It is urgently necessary for class-conscious workers, leftists, Aboriginal activists and Asian and Arab youth, who are also under siege from the cops, to mobilise in united-front defence of the Redfern militants. Already unionists and leftists are correctly fighting to defend union militant Craig Johnston. It would



Australian Redfern, 24 February: Aboriginal youth protest after teenager Thomas "TJ" Hickey was chased to his death by the racist cops.

be a powerful boost to the embattled Aboriginal people if this campaign was linked to a fight to: *Free the arrested 15 February Redfern militants! Drop all the charges now!*

In order to prevail against the might of the capitalist state, it is necessary to mobilise the social power of the organised working class *independently* of the

Australasian **SPARTACIST**

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

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

EDITOR: P. Balasubramaniam

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mike Wallace

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Glenn Blackall

Printed by trade-union labour.

Published quarterly by Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co., GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001.
E-mail: spartacist@bigpond.com. Subscriptions: \$5 for 4 issues; overseas \$7.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
Printed by Spotpress Pty Ltd, 105 Victoria Rd, Marrickville.

ISSN 0311-3264

No. 187, Winter 2004

Date of issue: June 2004



Previous editions of Australasian Spartacist

ASp No. 185, Summer 2003/04
\$0.50 (12 pages)

ASp No. 186, Autumn 2004
\$0.50 (12 pages)

Mail/make cheques payable to:
Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co.
GPO Box 3473
Sydney NSW 2001

French Colonialist Rule Smashed at Dien Bien Phu Fifty Years Ago

Hail Heroic Victory of the Vietnamese People!

The article below, on the stunning victory of Vietnamese revolutionaries against French imperialism, is reprinted from *Le Bolchevik* (No. 167, March), newspaper of the *Ligue trotskyste de France*, section of the *International Communist League* (Fourth Internationalist). Later the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants defeated U.S./Australian imperialism on the battlefield, leading to the establishment of a workers state — albeit bureaucratically deformed — throughout Vietnam in 1975. The Australian working class owes a special debt to the Vietnamese masses. Their struggle gave impetus to important acts of working-class solidarity against the Australian military, and their victory punctured a hole in this country's "culture" of racist white supremacy. For we Trotskyists, defence of the gains of the anti-capitalist revolutions in Vietnam, China, North Korea and Cuba is key to our fight against Australian capitalism.



AFF

LE BOLCHEVIK

At 5.30p.m. on 7 May 1954 the Vietminh, the Vietnamese Communist forces commanded by General Giap captured the French army command post and took the French general de Castries and the whole general staff of the Dien Bien Phu fortress prisoner. The remainder of the garrison surrendered in short order. After 55 days and nights of combat the Vietminh troops destroyed the entire French force in this decisive battlefield of the Indochina war — the victory was total. This year we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of this victory of the Vietnamese masses which sounded the death knell of nearly one hundred years of French colonialism in Indochina, and opened the road to the liquidation of the French colonial empire in Africa — less than six months after Dien Bien Phu the Algerian War began.

The Indochina war was not just a colonial war to regain control of the region

for French imperialism. In 1946, the Soviet Union occupied the whole of Eastern Europe, while the Chinese CP led a civil war against the bourgeois forces of Chiang Kai-Shek's Guomindang, which would culminate in the victorious Chinese Revolution of 1949. Thus the Indochina war fitted explicitly into the imperialist policy of "rolling back communism." Indochina was in the front line of the imperialist war drive against China and the USSR. American imperialism made common cause with France, Eisenhower vowing that international communism must not be permitted a single step forward in Southeast Asia. We celebrate the victory of Dien Bien Phu on two counts: not only did it drive French colonialism out of Indochina — it also signified the consolidation of a workers state in the north of Vietnam, even though it was bureaucratically deformed from the outset. In spite of its total military victory, the Stalinist leadership gave up at the negotiating table a good part of what had been gained on the battlefield. Not until 21 years later with the capture of Saigon, and after the American imperialists had killed mil-

lions more, did the war finally end.

The Indochina war began with the bombing of Haiphong by the French imperialists in November 1946. They bombed despite the French having formally recognised the independence and sovereignty of Vietnam. Following the imperialist bombing of Vietminh-controlled Haiphong in the north, the Vietminh set in motion a vast counter-offensive — branching out into all regions occupied by the French. The Vietminh deployed not only regular army troops but also "autonomous companies" of urban and rural self-defence militias and a force of non-combatants — the *dan cong* — engaged for a fixed term of service at the front to transport supplies, construct and repair roads. The Vietminh combined military actions with political mobilisation. Guerilla formations existed throughout the country. In 1952-1953 agrarian reform, "land to the tiller" was initiated, arousing millions of peasants with the will to fight in order to defend these gains.

Dien Bien Phu is a large valley in the western part of the mountainous region of North Vietnam bordering Laos. The French military command chose to make

Dien Bien Phu its point of confrontation with the Vietminh. In November 1953 they parachuted forces in, consolidating the post into a fortress. The occupation and consolidation of Dien Bien Phu became the axis of imperialist propaganda trumpeting once and for all renewed French military power and superior strategic capacity.

At the start of summer 1953, the French forces had grown to about 450,000 over the whole theatre of operations in Indochina (of which 120,000 were French, Africans or legionnaires, the rest being composed of Vietnamese auxiliaries). Dien Bien Phu was considerably reinforced, with a total of around 16,000 men. With such a force at his disposal, General Navarre affirmed repeatedly that Dien Bien Phu was a fortress, solidly entrenched, which the Vietnamese troops would never manage to capture.

On the Vietnamese side, the main problem was the isolation of Dien Bien Phu, which was very far from the rear bases of the Vietminh, and accessible only by a hundred-kilometre donkey trail. This little-used route crossed an endless succession of steep mountains, cut by hundreds of rivers and streams. In order to be able to use artillery — provided by China and the Soviet Union — it would be necessary to open this route and make it accessible to trucks. The trail was opened up by engineering units, throwing up dozens of bridges in a relatively short time in spite of intensified attacks, heavy rains and floods. Hauling the armaments was an extremely arduous battle in which extraordinary courage and energy were shown. On many occasions fighters sacrificed their lives to save the artillery. Only part of the transport of the 4.5 million kilometre-tonnes of supplies was mechanised; raw human labour moved the rest.

The Vietminh organised supply-lines of rations, ammunition and medicines over several hundred kilometres crossing treacherous mountain passes. They were under continual enemy bombardment

continued on page 4

bourgeoisie and their state. Central to the SL forum was our program for union/minority/black mobilisations against racist state terror and for a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights. This program contrasts with calls promoted by groups such as Socialist Alliance for a "full independent inquiry" or for a royal commission to investigate police actions. As our forum presenter noted, any inquiry set up by the capitalist state can only be a whitewash. This is graphically illustrated by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which concluded in 1991 and which endorsed the police and coroner verdicts of "suicide" and "death by natural causes" in all 99 cases it reviewed.

The "legal system" that would conduct or oversee such an "inquiry" is fresh from the union-busting Cole Royal Commission, which targeted the CFMEU, and is currently prosecuting and viciously denying bail to the Redfern militants! No "independence" can be expected from the racist state whose cops and prison guards

are responsible for the deaths of John Pat, Eddie Murray, Dan Yock, Thomas Hickey and hundreds of other Aboriginal people. Nor can a shred of justice come from this state whose army is part of the U.S.-led Coalition that is brutally occupying Iraq, imprisoning whole cities, like Falluja, and gunning down its dark-skinned residents from tanks and helicopters.

Calls for a royal commission are indeed *counterposed* to the necessary proletarian-centred defence of Aboriginal people. Such calls *demobilise* struggle against the brutalities of the capitalist state by promoting illusions that the latter can be pressured to be more partisan towards Aboriginal people. Pleas for the state to set up an inquiry give authority and therefore added strength to the same force that would try and crush any struggle against racist repression and capitalist exploitation.

Cops Out of the Unions!

In a small way, the Police Association's diktats to Trades Hall to ban a leftist

meeting in defence of Aborigines show clearly why the cops have no place in the workers movement. In what other matters have the cops utilised their VTHC affiliation to further repression against the workers movement? Are the Police Association going to demand that the VTHC hand over the names of CFMEU building union militants who are being targeted by the police auxiliary Building Industry Task Force? And imagine trying to prepare a mass picket line or a union-centred action defending Aborigines when the very police force that is organised precisely for the purpose of violently attacking such struggles is part of the meeting where these campaigns are organised! We say: Cops, prison guards out of the unions!

The VTHC leadership's embrace of the cops reflects the union bureaucracy's subservience to the capitalist state. The union tops' program is to get their Labor Party parliamentary mates elected to government to administer the bourgeois state — for example, the NSW Carr government

that has been terrorising Redfern Aborigines and attacking plebeian Asian and Arab youth or the Victorian Bracks regime that is hardlining it against public sector union demands.

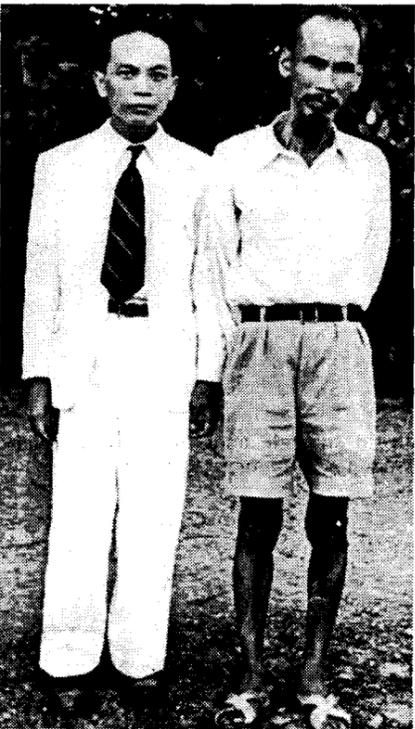
A class-struggle leadership of the unions will be built in a political struggle against the Laborite misleaders, and the poisonous nationalism and allegiance to the capitalist state that they promote. Such a leadership would be linked to an authentic Leninist party, that would champion the cause of all the oppressed in the fight to sweep away the entire racist capitalist system and construct a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia. In such a republic, Aboriginal militants, won to the side of the revolutionary proletariat, would play an important role in leading the construction of a new egalitarian society. And they would no doubt be prominent in the Red workers militia formed to defend the conquests of the formerly downtrodden against the overthrown oppressors. ■

Dien Bien Phu...

(continued from page 3)

decisively aimed at destroying the roads, including the use of delayed-action bombs. Hundreds of men and women *dan cong* devoted more than three million days' labour to the purpose. Tens of thousands of rafts and canoes, innumerable convoys of horses and mules used roads and tracks, rivers and streams to supply the front. The rafts and canoes, mostly operated by women, crossed numerous falls and rapids.

The Vietminh launched their offensive after meticulous preparation. General Vo Nguyen Giap, commander in chief of the Vietnamese army, summarised the unfolding of the battle (*Dien Bien Phu* [1964]). The order to attack was given on 13 March 1954 and the campaign unfolded in three phases. By 7 May demoralisation gripped the French. Their supply planes turned back without dropping their parachutes. The French began to destroy their armaments, with soldiers throwing their guns and ammunition into the river. At 2 p.m. the Vietnamese assault was launched, meeting little resistance. At the position known as 507, the whole French garrison put up the white flag and



no credit

General Vo Nguyen Giap (left) and Ho Chi Minh.

surrendered, soon followed by the other positions. It became clear that the French ranks had disintegrated, their troops had lost any will to fight. Everywhere Vietnamese troops penetrated, the French waved the white flag and surrendered. In all 1,749 officers and NCOs were killed or captured, 62 planes (of various types) were shot down or destroyed.

Vietnam: A Revolution Deformed From the Start

The victory of the Vietnamese masses against the imperialists, first the French and then the Americans, was made possible by the delivery of arms from the Chinese Communist Party, which had come to power in 1949, and by the Soviet nuclear shield which restrained the U.S. imperialists in their desire to annihilate North Vietnam with nuclear weapons. In his memoirs ex-president Nixon said of the Indochina war: "In Washington, the Joint Chiefs of Staff devised a plan, known as Operation Vulture, for using three small tactical atomic bombs to destroy Viet Minh positions and relieve the [French] garrison" (quoted by Michael Maclear, *The Ten Thousand Day War: Vietnam, 1945-1975* [1981]). The heroic will to struggle of the Vietnamese masses was proven by their incredible endurance in the face of years of repression and barbaric "saturation" bombing. If the North Vietnamese masses showed proof of incredible qualities of courage and self-sacrifice in their

struggle to liberate themselves from the imperialist yoke, it is because they knew what they were fighting for. The victory of the Vietminh would signify the liquidation of capitalism through the installation of a deformed workers state.

The Vietnamese Revolution was not a proletarian revolution based on soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers as in 1917 in Russia. The founder and principal leader of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Ho Chi Minh, had only become active in the Communist International after 1923, when the latter was beginning to degenerate under the leadership of Stalin and Zinoviev. With the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" (the USSR), the Vietnamese Communist Party had as its program the struggle for a bourgeois-democratic Vietnam. When Japan collapsed in August 1945, Ho Chi Minh massacred the Trotskyists in Vietnam as his way of greeting the "Allies," including the French colonialists. After his seizure of power in Hanoi in 1945, he didn't hesitate to ordain the ex-emperor Bao Dai "supreme political advisor" of the new "democratic" government. Ho was especially determined to silence any expression of proletarian combativity, shown for example in the crushing of the Hoa Gay soviet in December 1945.

The reoccupation by French troops of several key positions in Saigon in September 1945 unleashed a genuine insurrection in the workers districts. The Trotskyists were in the front line there and led some of the most combative workers militias. In this heroic struggle, they were massacred not only by the French and British expeditionary forces, but above all by the Stalinist Vietminh. We Trotskyists reclaim the banner of Vietnamese Trotskyism crushed by Ho Chi Minh's Stalinists. Ta Thu Thau, the Vietnamese Trotskyist leader, who joined the ranks of the Left Opposition in 1929 during his stay in France, outlined this perspective when he wrote in 1930: "Only revolution on the basis of an organisation of the proletarian and peasant masses is capable of liberating the colonies [...] it is necessary to bring together the question of independence with that of the proletarian revolution." (*Cahiers Léon Trotsky* No. 40, December 1989). It was the Vietminh who arrested and assassinated Ta Thu Thau in 1945. (For more information about these events, see our Spartacist pamphlet, *Stalinism and Trotskyism in Vietnam* [1976]).

As long as the Soviet Union existed it was possible, on rare occasions, that a petty-bourgeois guerilla struggle could overturn capitalism. In this case a *deformed* workers state, qualitatively similar to the USSR under Stalin, would be established. In our Declaration of Principles we speak about Cuba, an example which also applies to Vietnam:

"Experience since the Second World War has completely validated the Trotskyist theory of the permanent revolution which declares that in the imperialist epoch the bourgeois-democratic revolution can be completed only by a proletarian dictatorship supported by the peasantry. Only under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat can the colonial and semicolonial countries obtain genuine national emancipation. To open the road to socialism requires the extension of the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries. [...] In Cuba, a petty-bourgeois movement under exceptional circumstances—the absence of the working class as a contender for social power in its own right, the flight of the national bourgeoisie and hostile imperialist encirclement, and a lifeline thrown by the Soviet Union—did overthrow the old Batista dictatorship and eventually smash capitalist property relations. But Castroism (or other peasant-based guerrilla movements) cannot bring the working class to political power. [...] To place the working class in political power and open the road to socialist development requires a supplemental *political* revolution led by a Trotskyist party."

—Spartacist No. 54, Spring 1998

Historically the Vietminh only had a minimalist position on the agrarian question, limiting themselves to demanding a reduction of 25 percent in ground rent. The constitution of the Democratic

Vietnamese prisoners arrested for subversion of a French garrison in 1907.



Republic of Vietnam of 1946 stipulated that "The right of ownership and possession by Vietnamese citizens is guaranteed." But from 1953 things changed when the local peasants unions commenced genuine implementation of the decree of 12 April that year, which stipulated the reduction in ground rents, the elimination of debts and the distribution of lands belonging to the colonists. In spite of its limitations, this campaign renewed the vigour of the poor peasant masses and they flocked to the Vietnamese Communist Party. This was key to the determination of the masses in the war. After the new legislation the commander in chief of the French expeditionary corps observed that he was no longer dealing with "the same adversaries."

Significantly the Vietminh leaders called the Vietnamese war against French imperialism the "patriotic war" led by "our people" without any mention of social combat against oppressive capitalism. Instead of a perspective of international revolution, the Vietnamese Stalinists spoke of "patriotic war" which was "the continuation of our national and democratic revolution." In the same way, Giap claimed that with the 1954 Geneva Accords, signed after Dien Bien Phu by Vietnam and the imperialist powers, "our people obtained a great diplomatic victory." That is a lie! In fact the Geneva Accords were a real betrayal of the Vietnamese masses by the Stalinist bureaucracy. As soon as a status quo had been reached in 1953 in the Korean War, the Kremlin began to push for peace negotiations in Vietnam, even though the Vietminh were in the process of winning. According to the commentary of an observer close to the CIA: "Ironically the accord written at Geneva profited all the parties except the winners. [...] Only the Vietminh, the winner, lost. Or had been betrayed. Ho Chi Minh was persuaded in one manner or other—apparently under the joint pressure of the Chinese and the Soviets—to accept half of the country on the basis that the other half would be his as soon as elections were held." The effective result of the Geneva Accords was that South Vietnam was surrendered to capitalism; it became a forward base of imperialism once more and twenty more years of war were necessary to liberate the south of the country, this time in a war against U.S. imperialism.

Racist French Colonialism in Indochina

For the French colonialists, the Vietnamese were quite simply not human. There were innumerable cases of gratuitous assassination and torture. Wrenching testimonies were related by Andrée Viollis, a French journalist visiting Vietnam in 1931 (Jean-Luc Einaudi, *La Guerre d'Indochine 1945-1954* [The Indochina War 1945-1954] [2001]). Examples of torture practices in the bureaux of the Sûreté included: "deprivation of food with rations reduced to thirty grams of rice per day; caning the ankles, the soles of the feet; applying pincers to the temples to squeeze the eyes out of their sockets, tying the victim by the arms to a post suspended a few centimetres from the ground, the petrol funnel, the wooden press, splinters under the nails, deprivation of water."

Those tortured were systematically accused of being communists. The colonial army pitilessly annihilated any impulse of popular resistance, including for the most elementary demands. The smallest demonstration calling for lower taxes, for example, was met with machine guns and massacre. Viollis relates an incident she witnessed in December 1930 near Son Tinh: "It was announced that several kilometres away there was a contingent of unarmed demonstrators heading along the river. It was 6 a.m. A machine-gunner and crew were sent for; they were installed at a junction, hidden by a bend in the road. As a thousand natives massed at this junction, they were fired on point blank. The screaming of these defenceless people was terrible. [...] There were some thirty dead."

After the Indochina war broke out in 1946, the army imposed a blockade on rice destined for the North to try to subdue Vietnam by famine. The French navy sank dozens of junks transporting rice and thousands of tonnes of their precious cargo were sent to the bottom of the sea. Henri Martin—a communist active in the French army in Vietnam between 1945 and 1947—revealed their mission: "When we were at sea, alongside South Annam, we would rip open the junks and every day there were planes machine-gunning. Motorboats sank the boats. At the end of several weeks there were none left. We had to prevent the rice arriving in the North. It was a high-level military directive: aviation, motorboats, that's what we were mobilised for" (quoted by Einaudi, *ibid.*).

Moreover a large part of the soldiers engaged in the war on the French side were composed of Nazis won over and in the pay of the French. The testimonies related by Einaudi indicate, for example, that the 3rd foreign infantry regiment was one third composed of Germans fleeing "denazification." Other companies were 80 percent "former" Nazis. France paid "five francs per day" to the German soldiers to convert them into French legionnaires. Apart from the African colonial troops, another part of the army was composed of French militants of the French Communist Party (PCF), whose party made them volunteer, with the aim of recycling former Resistance fighters into the bourgeois army, notably as NCOs.

The troopers were particularly vile toward women. Liliane Veyrenc, who worked as an army cinematographer in Indochina described, in a 1955 report, that for the European NCOs, "the greatest joy lay particularly in torturing the women, especially when they were young and pretty, and there were many women because as well as the amateur snipers ("zoukid"), genuine women's networks were set up in the provinces, regions, etc." (quoted by Einaudi, *ibid.*).

At the economic level, colonialism was slavery pure and simple: in 1930 in Vietnam, according to journalist Louis Roubaud, agricultural or industrial enterprises would normally be equipped with handcuffs and prison cells. Rubber was, after rice, the principal Vietnamese export. The workers who produced it were reduced to a virtual state of servitude, subject to malaria, dysentery and malnutrition, to the point that, in one of the Michelin plantations between 1917 and 1944, 12,000 workers out of 45,000

died (see Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam—A History*). French imperialist capitalism was built on the bloody pillage of its colonies, and it has not become less inhuman since, as seen today in Burma with the oil company Total.

The treatment of Vietnamese prisoners by the French was such that they were terribly embarrassed at the end of the war when the question of prisoner exchange was posed. Most of the prisoners to be returned by the French were in such a physical state that they couldn't be seen without opening the French government to accusations of abuse according to international practices. Hence the following letter from General Beaufort, addressed to the commander in chief in Indochina: "the information that I received from BDPGI [war prisoners bureau] — if it came to be known — would risk placing us in an unpleasant, if not difficult, situation, since it includes a list of more than 4,500 detainees who died in captivity. Official information given by the officer of the combined central commission in charge of the matter, leads me to believe that the number of Indochinese prisoners of war dead or executed exceeds 9,000 in total." And he asked "that the prison and camp registries be sheltered from inappropriate disclosures" (quoted by Einaudi, *ibid.*).

By comparison the Vietminh treated the French prisoners very well, as testimony gathered by Einaudi shows: the camps were not shut in, having for example kitchen gardens to "improve the normal diet"; the prisoners had a daily ration of "600 to 700g. of rice" (the same amount as the guards), occasional vegetables and on commemorative occasions they received meat (buffalo, pork). In another camp, the situation was better yet: "rice (always as much as you wanted) to which was added small quantities of meat (chicken, pork) or freshwater fish." The prisoners had "two meals a day" until December 1950 and three meals from that date. Furthermore testimonies indicated that the prisoners were not forced to labour; their only duties were to look after their own needs. Colonel Robert, who was a prisoner of the "notorious" Camp 113 where the French deserter Georges Boudarel served, testified that he had "witnessed absolutely no bad treatment or violence towards the prisoners." There, however, the hardship was graver because of the general hardship in the country resulting from the blockade by the French imperialists and the poor sanitary and climatic conditions—the ration of rice was only 300g and there were several deaths from beriberi or dysentery.

Betrays of the PCF Toward the Vietnamese Masses

The suffering endured by the Vietnamese masses under the onslaught of the French army was in part thanks to the French Communist Party, which however was seen by hundreds of thousands of workers and oppressed in France as their legitimate leader and by the colonial masses as their ally. But in the matter of independence of the French colonies, as in other questions, the PCF leadership confirmed in word and deed its loyalty to French imperialism against the colonial peoples. And for good reason—it sat as a member of most of the imperialist French governments from 1945 to 1947. Its program in Indochina accorded perfectly with its program in France which consisted of destroying the pre-revolutionary situation that followed World War II and allowing the French bourgeoisie to stay in power. Likewise it served Stalin's counterrevolutionary program of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. The parasitic bureaucracy which came to ascendancy in 1923-24 in the USSR had abandoned the perspective of world proletarian revolution. In the name of the illusory construction of "socialism in one country," it was ready to do anything to appease imperialism in other countries, including subordinating the Communist parties to their "own"

bourgeoisie. The alliance of the Stalinists with the American imperialists and with De Gaulle against Nazi Germany would be translated into Stalinist support to the re-establishment of the French colonial order in Indochina in 1945.

Thus in April 1945 PCF leader, Henri Lozeray, proclaimed in the official party journal: "Clearly and unequivocally we can say that if the populations of the French overseas territories have the right to separate from the Metropolis, this separation, at the present time, would go against their own interests [...]" because those populations "are not in a position to guarantee themselves a truly independent existence" (quoted by Jacob Moneta, *The PCF and the Colonial*



Victorious Vietnamese Communist forces take Saigon, 1975. Military victory over U.S. and Australian imperialism and South Vietnamese puppet regime brought about social revolution.

Question [1971]! A month later, at the time of the 10th Congress of the PCF in June 1945, Caballero, secretary-general of the Algerian Communist Party — a branch of the PCF—concluded his speech by emphasising that "Those who claim independence from France are conscious or unconscious agents of another imperialism."

When at the beginning of 1947 the question of voting military budgets, giving the government the means to finance its war in Indochina, arose, the PCF gave the following instruction to its representatives: the parliamentary group should abstain while the five ministers would avoid "breaking ministerial solidarity" (Moneta, *ibid.*). As a result, the credits were passed without a problem. Whatever it was to say later, the PCF was a fervent partisan of the French Union "reuniting" French imperialism and its colonies; thus the *Cahiers du communisme* [Communist Notebooks] (March-April 1947) wrote: "National interest requires us to maintain French influence and positions in the Far East. The pursuit of hostilities against the people of Vietnam in violation of the principles of the Constitution would inevitably lead to ruining these positions and this influence, as was formerly the case in Syria and Lebanon." In March 1947 Maurice Thorez, secretary-general of the PCF, and at the same time vice-president of the Ramadier Cabinet, signed the order for military intervention against the Vietnamese.

Especially after the PCF was expelled from the French government, certain voices were raised for the independence of Vietnam. The Marxist Cultural Group, associated with the PCF and based in Saigon, wrote in an article entitled, "Vietnam Independence, Only Chance for France": "Pursuing the solution of force would create irreparable damage between the two peoples, our military 'victory' in a ruined country full of legitimate hate, would, in the long or short term, seal our total and shameful eviction" (our emphasis).

The growing number of French victims also had an impact in France. A remarkable film by Paul Carpita, *Le Rendez-vous des quais* [Rendezvous On The Docks], shows a general strike against the war in the port of Marseilles in the early 1950s,

with the arrival of a ship bringing back troops including many wounded and killed. In August 1953 there was a victorious general strike in defence of pensions. *What a revolutionary workers party in France would have done would be to seek to mobilise the French working class on the basis of internationalist solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese people, including carrying out propaganda inside the French army.* Growing opposition to the war in the working class was reflected in the fact that numerous French soldiers influenced by the PCF were individually revolted by the methods of the French army, in spite of the pro-imperialist line of their party. They felt hostile to the aims of the war and

the ICL] energetically took up his defence (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 524, 12 April 1991). According to figures cited by Jacques Doyon, more than 2,000 soldiers deserted the French expeditionary forces, not counting the tens of thousands of Vietnamese auxiliaries who deserted (*The White Soldiers of Ho Chi Minh*, 1973). From 1947 to 1954, tens of thousands of North Africans were sent to Indochina, while their own countries were convulsed by the first movements of the independence struggle. Meanwhile they continued to suffer racial discrimination in the heart of their units. Once in Vietnam, hundreds of them, including more than a hundred Moroccans, deserted and joined the Vietminh, who kept calling for anti-colonialist solidarity (Nelcya Delanoë, *Poussières d'empires* [Dust of Empires], 2002).

Today the PCF has chosen to make Henri Martin, a Communist militant of the time, "the" hero of the Indochina war. On 17 January 2004 a "Henri Martin Day" was held in his honour in Paris, with numerous personalities and historians, and in his presence. In fact the PCF is seeking to use Henri Martin to rewrite its own history and cover its own betrayals of the Indochinese and French masses, as it did three years ago with the question of torture during the Algerian War (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 761, 6 July 2001). Returning to France after his service in Vietnam, Henri Martin was assigned to the arsenal in Toulon. There he took part in the distribution to soldiers of PCF leaflets opposing the war. Arrested in March 1950 he was dragged before the courts for "sabotage" and "campaigning to demoralise the army" and sentenced to five years in prison. Supported by the PCF, his trial had reverberations throughout France and a large-scale campaign was launched to free him. But, far from making it a platform to mobilise the French working class on the side of the Vietnamese people in struggle and for a revolutionary offensive, the PCF insisted that Henri Martin had acted out of French patriotism (see *l'Humanité* of 7 January).

Defend the Vietnamese Deformed Workers State Against Capitalist Restoration!

As long as it existed, the Soviet Union was a military and economic shield for Vietnam against the repeated assaults of imperialism and also those of China, criminally allied with the USA from 1972 on. The collapse of the USSR in

continued on page 8

Australasian Spartacist Subscription Drive Success

1 March to 14 April

Quota (in points) 250
Final total 256

Workers Vanguard/Australasian Spartacist

Marxist working-class biweekly of the Spartacist League/U.S. and Marxist newspaper published quarterly by the Spartacist League of Australia (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History* and the *Class Struggle* plus another Spartacist pamphlet)

\$20 for 22 issues WV and 4 issues ASP

Australasian Spartacist

(includes English-language *Spartacist*)

\$5 for 4 issues

Overseas: \$7

Workers Vanguard

(includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History* and the *Class Struggle*)

\$15 for 22 issues

Name _____

Address _____

Suburb _____ State _____ P'code _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

187

Mail/make cheques payable to: Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co., GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Japan: The Struggle Against Women's Oppression

We print below a translation of an article from *Spartacist* (No. 29, April), publication of the *Spartacist Group Japan*, section of the *International Communist League*.

スパルタシスト

On 1 May 1921 about 20 women joined 10,000 of their class brothers in the second official Japanese May Day demonstration. The women were organised by the group called *Sekirankai*, a socialist women's organisation. In preparation for the May Day rally, *Sekirankai* wrote a manifesto, authored by Yamakawa Kikue. This was four years after the 1917 Russian Revolution, and the manifesto gives an indication of the power that revolution held for working people and women:

"May Day is our day, the day of the oppressed, propertyless working class. For several tens of centuries, the path women and workers have travelled down is the path of the history of oppression and ignorance. But the light is coming close. In Russia, the echo of the victorious extermination of the darkness of capitalism from the face of the earth is moment by moment thundering like the roar of a bell at daybreak. Within this echo is the power of the secluded woman, and, within the limits of our ability, together with our brothers, isn't it the chimes of the liberation of the propertyless class in Japan?"

"The *Sekirankai* is a women's organisation that plans to participate in the enterprise to destroy the capitalist society and build a socialist society. The capitalist society turns us into slaves at home and oppresses us as wage slaves outside the home...."

"The *Sekirankai* declares all out war on this cruel, shameless society.... Socialism offers the only way to save humankind from the oppressions and abuses of capitalism. Sisters who love justice and humanity, join the socialist movement!"

At that time, under the infamous Article 5 of the Police Security Regulations, women were legally prohibited from joining political organisations, attending political meetings and giving political speeches. All 20 of the women who marched in this May Day demonstration under red and black flags were arrested. The next major activity of this organisa-

tion was raising the funds necessary to get their comrades out of jail. Due to state repression, the life of *Sekirankai* was very shortlived. Some of its members left the socialist movement. Others, such as Sakai Magara and Nakasone Sadayo were arrested for distributing anti-war leaflets to soldiers. Takatsu Tayoko and her husband were arrested for producing a publication that included threats against the emperor system.

Early Heroic Struggles of Women Workers

By 1890 women had become the backbone of the developing Japanese industrial economy. Female workers, the majority of whom were indentured, outnumbered males in light industry, especially textiles, where a workforce that was 60 to 90 percent female produced 40 percent of the gross national product and 60 percent of the foreign exchange during the last part of the nineteenth century.

It is no accident that in every modern social revolution and numerous class battles women workers have been among the most audacious and courageous fighters. The low wages, long hours, prevalence of disease, prison-like conditions and rampant sexual attacks drove women workers to fight. The first strike in Japan was in 1886 at the Kofu Amamiya Kihyoei silk mill. More than one hundred women walked out in protest over longer working hours, lowered wages and arbitrary fines. Their action took management so much by surprise that they won most of their demands, including a return to the 14-hour workday. This strike sparked a series of others that summer.

On the eve of the government's celebration of the Meiji constitution, strikes and walkouts gathered force throughout the country. In late September of 1889, 300 women workers struck the Tenma Cotton Spinning Company of Osaka demanding higher wages and the promised bonus payments. In the face of firings and physical intimidation, the workers persisted for days. A key factor in the successful outcome of the strike was that the male machinists decided to join the strike. By the time the strike ended on 5 October, 60 men and 20 women had



Mainichi Shinbunsha

In 1926 there was a 10-day struggle against the Kawasaki-Fuji Cotton Mill over the question of firings. Woman activist leads a demonstration of strike supporters from Tokyo through the city of Kawasaki.

been arrested, but the workers received a wage hike and some control over their bonuses, setting a precedent for workers in other mills.

The early strike activity carried out by female textile workers was done without the support of an organised union movement. All wings of the union movement—from patriotic to social democratic to the *Hogikai* federation affiliated with the Communist Party—refused to organise women workers and also "colonised workers," the Koreans and Chinese who were working in Japan, on a mass basis. At the high point of prewar unionisation in the 1930s, Japanese women constituted less than six percent of unionised workers, while they were 52.6 percent of the entire factory workforce in 1930. Today women comprise almost half of the workforce but less than 20 percent of the union membership.

The role that Japanese women played in the labour movement was noted at the 2nd World Conference of Communist Women in July 1921. In addressing the conference, Leon Trotsky noted:

"...In the progress of the world labour movement, women proletarians play a colossal role. I say this not because I am addressing a women's conference but because sheer numbers indicate what an important part the woman worker plays in the mechanism of the capitalist world—in France, Germany, in America, in Japan, in every capitalist country.... Statistics inform me that in Japan, there are many more women than men workers; and consequently, if the data at my disposal is credible, in the labour movement of Japan, they, the proletarian women, are destined to play the decisive role and to occupy the decisive place...."

Following these strikes, the government moved fast. The Meiji government adopted heavily Confucian-influenced values of the samurai class as the foundation for its new social and legal structures which made women subordinate to men. The new order took the form of the *ie* [family household structure], as the basis for its new hierarchical social structure with the emperor on top as the head of the household (the entire country) and the husband as the absolute head of his respective household. Primogeniture was mandated for all classes. In 1898 the Civil Code and Domestic Relations and the Inheritance Law were enacted. Both pieces of legislation institutionalised more rigid family controls than most people had known in the feudal period. In 1890 the Law on Political Associations

and Assembly was passed, making it illegal for women to participate in any political activities and to even listen to political speeches. In 1900 this law was reinforced with the passage of the Police Security Regulations whose infamous Article 5 was mentioned above. By the 1920s even the bourgeois *Mainichi* newspaper commented that, "Japan maltreats and insults her women to a graver extent than any other country on the globe."

For more than 100 years women have been protesting against the so-called Japanese family system. Given that the family came to be crucial in the structures of authority under the Meiji Constitution, any attempt to even question the role of the family in society was met with government repression. In 1884, Kishida Toshiko, who toured the country giving speeches demanding political rights for women, was arrested for her attack on the family system. She described the family as imprisonment for women and compared the upbringing of daughters to the cultivation of the bonsai, whose shape is created by the trimming of roots and branches. Another woman was Fukuda Hideko. She had been arrested in 1885 on charges of treason for fighting for the Korean independence movement following the Sino-Japanese accord of the same year. In 1907, she established the socialist women's journal *Seikai Fujin* (Women of the World) in which she argued that equality between men and women can not be achieved without a social transformation along socialist lines, and what was necessary was the destruction of private property.

Emperor System Sanctifies Social and Sexual Hierarchy

In many aspects, the crucial questions facing working women today parallel those from the Meiji period, when women were regarded as *hara wa karimon*, obligated to produce a suitable heir for the family and empire. They were to be teachers of patriotism and loyalty in the home, and in the midst of social unrest, pillars of stability as *ryosai kenbo* [good wife, wise mother]. Today, the reactionary "good wife, wise mother" ideology is still codified in law, paternalistic corporate practices and religious superstition. Japan is home to the bullet train, Sony PlayStation, robotics, and developer of state-of-the-art technology. It has the technological knowledge and capability,



VAAP

Petrograd, March 1917: Women at demonstration in support of workers soviets (councils) raise banner demanding eight-hour workday. Demonstrations by women workers sparked 1917 Russian Revolution.

if placed in the hands of the world's working people, to begin the work of eliminating scarcity, hunger and poverty. And yet, women are still prohibited from entering tunnels under construction for bullet trains out of fear that the "mountain goddess" will become jealous, nor can they step inside a sumo *dojo* (ring) because they are "unpure."

Women in all capitalist countries are oppressed. But what is it about Japan that makes thousands of young women want to leave the country and never return? In this country, women's oppression is deeply intertwined with the perpetuation of the emperor system, whose purpose is to sanctify social and sexual hierarchy, the family, private property and the "glory" of the Japanese state. Reactionary Confucian ideology and Shinto and Buddhist religious superstitions permeate every aspect of society and are used by the state as a wedge to interfere into and regulate every aspect of social and private life. This includes even the right of people to name their children what they want. The government has an official list of names, and if you deviate from that list one's child cannot be listed in the family registry.

The traditional household system institutionalised in the 1898 Civil Code may have been technically outlawed by the postwar Civil Code, but its fundamental principles and practices continue. The new Civil Code legally did away with many of the more Confucian

"settle down" and assume their "appropriate place" in society is immense. Older unmarried women are now referred to as *makeinu* (losing dogs) and *motenai onna* (unwanted females). Those past 50 who are not married are even supposed to check a special category on the national census that brands them as *shogai mikon-sha* (lifelong unmarried people).

In almost all international social indices Japanese women are placed at the bottom. This is true for surveys regarding percentage in the workforce, the type of job, salary, number of politicians, etc. Just over half of all Japanese women work, compared to more than 70 percent of their Western counterparts. Those that do have jobs are mainly confined to "contingency" work; 77 percent of all part-time workers are female. On average, women's salaries are less than 60 percent of their Japanese male counterparts, the lowest percentage of all industrialised nations and a percentage that has been maintained steadily since women first entered industry as textile workers in the late 1800s.

The special oppression of women is essential to the maintenance of power and profit for the ruling class and will not be voluntarily sacrificed. Cheap marginal labour in the workforce makes possible tremendous profits because as lower paid workers with little protection, the situation that women have been placed in undermines the wages and conditions of the working class as a whole.

Language is a reflection of social reality, and the hierarchical structure of Japanese society, the *senpai-kohai* [superior-inferior] relationship that exists in the home, in the schools and in business, is clearly evident in the demeaning four-tiered language structure requiring different levels of submissiveness depending on whom one is addressing, based on class, age, sex and status. A special language, which most people do not understand, still exists which serves to give a mystical aura to all institutions related to the emperor system.

But perhaps the most vivid reflection of the inequalities in society as evidenced in the written and spoken language concern women. *Onna kotoba* [women's language] deliberately promotes obedience and submissiveness. It is to be used for all public functions, and inside the family when dealing with one's in-laws. All written characters concerning woman either denote humility or are derogatory, starting with the character for woman itself. All words for wife, and there are many depending on whose wife one is talking about, contain the meaning "the one inside the house." We fight for the elimination of status, age and sex discrimination and, concomitantly, their reflection in demeaning language.

Women's Oppression Is Rooted in the Nuclear Family

The oppression of women is a social institution that rests on private property. It is a human invention that is subject to change as any other. Women's oppression is rooted in the institution of the family and has been a feature of all class societies. With the beginnings of industrial capitalism, production moved from the home to the factory. The household became totally private and women became economically powerless and wholly excluded from social production.

It is the family—and the necessity to control sexual access to the woman to ensure that the children of the marriage, who will be the man's heirs, are really genetically his children—which generates the morality codified in and reinforced by religion. It is the family that throughout a woman's life gives definition to her oppressed state: as daughter, as wife, as mother. As 19th century revolutionary Friedrich Engels wrote in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884): "The overthrow of mother right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took

**February 1994:
Nurses protest
against
murderous
overtime,
short-staffing
and cuts in
medical care
while
demanding
good medical
treatment for
everyone.**



Toshiki Sawaguchi

command in the home also; the woman was degraded and became a mere instrument for the production of children." And if you think this was true only 100 years ago, remember the comments of the racist, woman-hating governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintaro. A couple of years ago he stated that women who have reached the age of menopause no longer have any right to live because they no longer serve any socially productive function.

The family is a key social unit for the maintenance of capitalism. For the capitalists, the family provides the basis for passing on accumulated wealth. And where there is no property to pass on, the institutionalised family serves to raise the next generation of workers, care for the sick and aged, and instill conservative social values and obedience to authority. The working-class family is expected to provide for all the social services that capitalists don't want to pay for. It is therefore in the material interest of the working class to play the historically progressive role of socialising family functions after the revolution.

Each nuclear family exists in isolation from the rest of society, and thus weakens the class consciousness of the workers. Social institutions and conventions—like marriage and the family—are part of the way the ruling class maintains power and regiments society. "Family values" based on religion constitute a conservatising ideology to regiment the population and prop up bourgeois law and order aimed at justifying and reinforcing the family.

Since at least 1996 there has been a movement to pressure the Diet to pass legislation allowing a married couple to have separate surnames. The continuation of this law has resulted in many couples not marrying at all. Last month, Liberal Democratic Party members basically killed a bill to change this law. Their objections are a clear indication of the importance the ruling class places on the maintenance of the nuclear family as the basic unit for regimenting society. One LDP member stated that "The proposed bill will promote too much individualism in society and lead to the

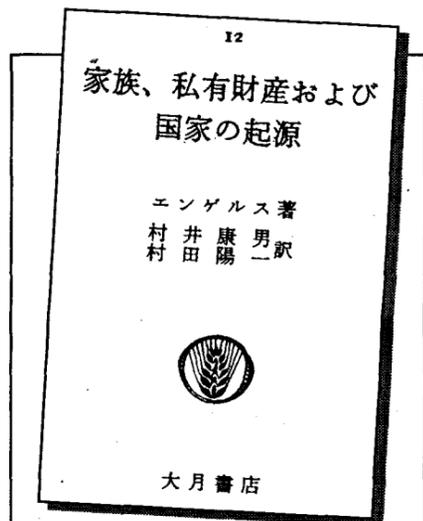
collapse of Japan's family system. It is part of a campaign for breaking up the country" (*Kyodo*, 12 March).

The nuclear family, as a socio-economic unit, is oppressive to all its members. Unmarried couples and parents, and their children face all kinds of discriminatory treatment in every aspect of their daily lives and it is the *koseki* [family registry] which is the instrument that enforces this. The *koseki* system is hell even for those who fall in the most prized social status category—the oldest born son, who, if he decides to change his gender, is prohibited from registering that change, and therefore becomes a *henin* (non-person).

There is a lot of bourgeois hypocrisy involved here. For years the government has been on a campaign to increase the birthrate. The JCP [Japanese Communist Party] jumped on this reactionary baby bandwagon in 1999 when they announced that a high birthrate is an index of social equality for women. The next year they noted that their "proposal for economic reforms to correct 'capitalism without rules' is closely connected with the task of overcoming the 'low birthrates'" ("Draft Resolution of the 22nd Congress of the Japanese Communist Party," 2000). At the same time, women who choose to have children outside the so-called ideal one man, one woman, 2.5 children family structure are ostracised. Single mothers are being denied all economic assistance from the state, children born outside of marriage are bullied in the schools. And the state is denying children born from surrogate mothers entry into the family's *koseki* which means that they do not legally exist.

As members of the proletariat, working women, at the side of their class brothers, have the social power necessary to fight for their emancipation. The overthrow of the capitalist order through workers revolution will open the way for the elimination of all oppression and exploitation based on the abundance of a worldwide planned economy. It is only this that will enable us to replace the oppressive institution of the family with socialised domestic service, freeing

continued on page 8



This book, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," by Engels, explains the development of the family system and private property, which are the source of women's oppression.

aspects of the family system and no longer categorised women as "imbeciles" as did the Meiji Civil Code. But regulations concerning marriage and divorce, and confirmation of paternity and inheritance were maintained. There is an article making it legally mandatory to distinguish between children born in and out of wedlock. Another article stipulates that a woman must wait six months before remarrying after divorce so as to determine the paternity of a child, and another article says a woman can only inherit one-half of her husband's estate. While the new code allows for a couple upon marriage to choose which surname they will use, it must be either the man's or the woman's to accommodate the family registry. While not enforced legally, temples and officials in charge of cemeteries refuse to allow people with different surnames to be buried in the same tomb, meaning that a married woman must be buried with her husband's family, giving new meaning to the old saying that even in death a wife must follow her husband.

While in some cases the courts have ruled that it is illegal to force a woman to quit work when she gets married, or when she reaches the "appropriate" age for marriage commonly set at 30, the social pressure exerted on women to

Publication of the Spartacist Group Japan

Current issue: \$1
International subscription: \$15

Order from/make cheques payable to:

Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co.
GPO Box 3473
Sydney NSW 2001



Japanese Women...

(continued from page 7)

women to fully participate in social and political life.

Marxism vs. Reformism

Because we understand that women will never be liberated or equal under capitalism does that mean that we do nothing between now and the time of a socialist revolution? Does that mean that Marxists do not support or fight for reforms that would make the situation just a little bit better?

Marxists recognise that struggles for bourgeois-democratic rights are of great importance to the proletariat. We recognise the struggle for reforms, which are measures that improve the conditions of the working people without destroying the power of the capitalist ruling class. For example we are in favour of and fight for legislation that would allow couples to choose whatever name they want after marriage. We support the right of people to decide how to divide their goods after their death. We oppose all legislation that discriminates against children born outside of a marriage. We fight against all discrimination against homosexuals. We defend the right of people to change their sex if they so want. We defend the right of gay people to marry.

None of these measures challenge the very base of the capitalist economic system. And all are possible under capitalism. But as long as capitalism continues to exist, reforms cannot be enduring or far-reaching. Workers fight for better conditions and use reforms to intensify the fight against wage slavery. Marxists utilise reforms to develop and broaden the class struggle.

At the same time we wage a most resolute fight against reformism which directly or indirectly restricts the aims and activities of the working class to only the winning of reforms. Reformism is bourgeois deception of the workers, who, despite individual and temporary improvements will always remain wage slaves as long as there is the domination of capital. It is in the nature of capitalism to raise the rate of exploitation in order to maximise profits. The oppression of women, unemployment, racism and wars are integral to the workings of the capitalist economic system.

Oppose Capitalist Counterrevolution and "Market Reforms"

The struggle for women's rights has assumed particular political importance since the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe. The early Soviet Republic attempted under Lenin and Trotsky's leadership to free women from domestic bondage through communalising childcare and daily household tasks. Laws against homosexuality and abortion were struck down, and divorce made simple. But the abolition of the repressive family institution only begins with a socialist revolution. The family cannot be abolished by decree but must be replaced. Under conditions of scarcity in post-revolutionary Soviet Russia, devastated by civil war and imperialist invasions, the material resources were lacking. With the ascension to power of the Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the early gains for women were abolished and the family was hailed as a "fighting unit for socialism" to reinforce obedience to the authoritarian bureaucracy. Seven decades of bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state have culminated in capitalist counterrevolution. The return of the imperialist "free market" has unleashed an aggressive attack against the rights won by women and the workers movement through the proletarian conquest of state power.

In Asia, the ravages of "market socialism" can be most graphically seen in China. Before the 1949 Chinese Revolu-



Tokyo, January 30: Teachers protest government decision forcing recognition of *kimigayo* (national anthem) and *hinomaru* (national flag).

tion, just as in Japan, the systematic oppression of women was integral to the Confucian code of conduct, which mandated loyalty to father, husband and the emperor. Most women in China didn't even have a name. It was their fate to be sold into marriage. Young girls suffered the agony of having their feet broken and bound. Permanently maimed, the mass of women were cut off from any role in social production and locked into the home to act as household slaves and sexual toys for their husbands. The overthrow of capitalist rule laid the basis for hundreds of millions of women to achieve enormous advances. While the Stalinist bureaucratic deformations, poverty and social backwardness of the Chinese deformed workers state are far from capable of achieving the liberation of women, even the gains that women have won are now under increasing attack as female infanticide and kidnapping for prostitution and forced marriages are on the rise. In the words of Marx, all the old crap is returning. Just as we fought against capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and East Europe we fight against the imperialist incursions in the remaining deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. The Stalinist bureaucracies have gravely weakened the system of nationalised property internally while conciliating imperialism at the international level. These bureaucrats must be swept away by a proletarian political revolution, replacing the bureaucracy's political rule with workers' democracy.

Socialist Revolution is Only Solution to Crisis of Capitalism

In addition, growing rivalries between the imperialist countries and the capitalists' drive to increase profits through intensified exploitation have fueled a reactionary social climate in which basic rights are increasingly targeted for restriction or elimination. The attempts to rewrite Japanese imperialism's racist, brutal war in the Pacific, to label the *ianfu* ["comfort women" enslaved by the Japanese military during World War II] as prostitutes, the enforcement of the *hinomaru* and *kimigayo* as the national flag and anthem are part of the bourgeoisie's attempts to ideologically prepare the working class for the next imperialist slaughter.

As the recession deepens and unemployment soars, women workers are the first fired and the last hired. The workplace is where the fight for women's liberation intersects the proletariat's fight for emancipation from wage slavery. Defending the right of women to work is not an abstract task for the future, but an integral part of the fight for socialist revolution. Central to the defence of women and minority workers is the abolition of the arbiter work system and the organisation of common, industrial unions that will fight for equal pay and equal access to technical training and job upgrading. We call for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay and for free, 24-hour childcare.

Among the results of a union misleadership that won't fight for women's rights are weak unions that don't defend

any of their members and an uncontested misogynist climate in society as a whole. The current reformist leadership accepts the bourgeoisie's outlook that working women are only a temporary aberration and should be treated differently from men, i.e., with lower pay, few benefits and no union protection. What is necessary is to oust the sell-out leadership of all three union federations and organise the entire working class—Japanese, minority and immigrant, men and women—in a common struggle.

The working class must also fight against the growing social climate, brought about by the economic recession, that reinforces traditional family values. We say down with the retrogressive attempts to get women to have more children. We call for free abortion on demand and for full access to free and safe contraceptives. We demand billions of yen for medical research to fight AIDS and demand the end to discrimina-

Dien Bien Phu...

(continued from page 5)

1991-1992 has enormously increased the vulnerability of Vietnam and the other remaining deformed workers states (China, Cuba, North Korea) against the imperialists. Since the launch in the 1980s of *doi moi*, the Vietnamese version of "market socialism," the concessions of the bureaucracy towards imperialism have continued to grow, dangerously strengthening the hand of forces pushing capitalist restoration. The enormous growth of unemployment and poverty in China's countryside is a result of similar measures.

Collectivisation of the large-scale means of production, monopoly of foreign trade and centralised planning all resulted from the destruction of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class and of its expropriation, as well as the expropriation of the imperialists. In spite of the *doi moi* reforms, Vietnam today remains a deformed workers state. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Vietnamese government "still continues to hold a tight rein over major sectors of the economy, such as the banking system, state-owned enterprises, and areas of foreign trade" (U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: Vietnam* [July 2001], at www.state.gov). The 9th Congress of the Vietnamese CP held in 2001 affirmed that "the leading role of the state sector of the economy must be strengthened." State enterprises comprise 80 percent or more in many key sectors of industry such as electricity, aviation and telecommunications. Land remains state property and Vietnamese laws do not recognise private ownership, with individuals having only the right to tenancy for life.

According to United Nations statistics, Vietnam in 2001 had a net level of secondary school attendance of 62 percent and an adult literacy rate of 92.7 percent. There were 52 doctors for each 100,000 inhabitants (over 10 years old) and 99

tory treatment of HIV-positive and AIDS patients.

There is enormous resentment against the rigid feudal-derived hierarchy weighing upon present-day Japanese society. Recent surveys have found that more than half the women in their 20s are not married, and have no plans to do so. Young women are refusing to use women's language and instead have adopted words formerly used only by men. This is the solution that some have opted for in their struggle to achieve equality in an arrogant, male chauvinist society. These individual acts of rebellion, while refreshing, at bottom do not challenge the fundamental root of women's oppression.

Real human dignity and equality can only come about through the collective ownership of the means of production—the steel mills, railroads, auto plants. Then the allocation of resources will be according to human need and not according to profits made in *Otemachi* [financial centre of Tokyo]. There is no way that capitalism can be reformed sufficiently to accommodate women's liberation. Since the institution of the family is an integral part of the capitalist system, the struggle for women's liberation cannot be achieved under capitalism.

Those who would build a multiethnic Leninist-Trotskyist party must see the emancipation of women as central to a proletarian socialist revolution. Our call for a workers republic combines the tasks of emancipating the working class from wage slavery and the necessity of sweeping away all the social rot left over from feudalism, such as the abolition of the emperor system. This is the kind of party we are fighting to build, part of an international communist movement inspired by the liberating program of revolutionary Bolshevism. ■

percent of one-year-old children were completely vaccinated against tuberculosis (*Human Development Indicators*, 2003). Compare these indicators to those of Indonesia, a country of infinitely more abundant natural resources, notably oil, whose economic status places it in the short list of "newly industrialising countries" and whose population is weighed down under the yoke of imperialism. Net secondary school attendance is 48 percent, the adult literacy rate is 87.3 percent, the ratio of doctors is 16 to 100,000 inhabitants and the percentage of children vaccinated against tuberculosis is 65 percent. That Vietnam, a country so poor in natural resources, so overpopulated and especially so crushed by cruel and interminable wars of aggression can offer its population services superior to those of Indonesia testifies to the enormous liberating potential of a society where the means of production have been collectivised. But there will never be a basis to go forward to socialism without a centralised and planned economy on a world scale, including in the major advanced capitalist countries. It is necessary to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy which rests on the planned economy, through a *political* revolution which will base the workers state on soviets (workers councils).

We are for the unconditional military defence of Vietnam and also China, North Korea and Cuba against attempts at capitalist restoration, whether external or internal. Intimately linked to this duty is the overriding necessity of a proletarian political revolution to sweep away the ruling bureaucratic caste with its nationalist perspective of "socialism in one country." A genuine Leninist-Trotskyist party would mobilise the working class for the defence of all the remaining workers states and for the extension of the social revolution into South Korea and Japan, the industrial powerhouse of the region. To begin this task, we honour the memory of the Vietnamese fighters who vanquished French colonialism 50 years ago. ■

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

withdrawing troops is to better prosecute the "war on terror" closer to home. What this means is further constricting civil liberties domestically while more aggressively enforcing Australian overlordship of the South Pacific and greater efforts to prop up the unstable neocolonial regimes in Southeast Asia. As ALP shadow minister for defence, Chris Evans, recently declared, "Labor's security priorities are...in our immediate region, in East Timor, PNG and the Solomon Islands. And in the war against terrorism. Dangers exist in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand" (transcript of speech, 21 May, ALP website). The ALP's promise of greater "engagement" in Asia also includes tightening the military vice around the North Korean deformed workers state—a project that is aimed also at fostering capitalist counter-revolution in North Korea's Chinese ally.

In political counterposition to Labor's "in our backyard" militarism, Spartacist placards at the 20 March rallies against the occupation of Iraq included "U.S./British/Australian Troops Out of Iraq! Australian Troops Out of East Timor!" and "Defend Cuba, China, North Korea and Vietnam Against Imperialist Attack and Internal Counterrevolution!"

"War on Terror" Targets Everyone

By now the whole world has seen the photographs of naked, hooded, sexually abused detainees, subjected to practices

legislation. New laws target the rights of everyone and are designed to create a climate of fear and paralysis in the face of the capitalist rulers' increased attacks on jobs, conditions and social services. The government has buttressed these laws with big money. The ASIO secret police will get an additional \$131.4 million over the next four years leading to an 80 percent increase in staffing between 11 September 2001 and 2006.

The federal ALP has in the main backed the government's new legislation while Labor state governments have instituted their own reactionary laws and paramilitary forces. Latham is also seeking to capture the racist vote by trying to outflank Howard on "border security." The ALP calls for the creation of a coast guard—"a cop on the beat 24 hours a day, 365 days a year"—that would target desperate asylum seekers, while "freeing up" the navy for military actions in the region.

A sinister example of the bipartisan "war on terror" is the federal Liberal and NSW state ALP governments' persecution of Sydney medical student Izhar Ul-Haque. Izhar is the first person charged over training with a banned terrorist organisation under federal laws passed in 2001. Following six weeks segregation in a maximum-security dungeon at the notorious Supermax prison in Goulburn, Izhar was recently released on bail following a court order which declared he "did not pose a threat to Australia or its people." What is most dangerous about this case is that the state has not accused Izhar of even planning a terrorist act. Rather, he faces a charge that carries a prison sentence of up to 25 years for simply having

troops from Iraq." The endorsers of this coalition include militant Victorian construction union head Martin Kingham, Joan Shears from Rally for Peace, Qld, whose immediate concern is "to support Latham," and the bourgeois Greens. But the Laborites and Greens are openly and resolutely loyal to the Australian imperialist military, they simply believe it should be deployed elsewhere rather than Iraq. When the U.S.-led assault on Iraq began in March last year, they rushed to reaffirm their absolute support for "our loyal troops," which means they fully side with the U.S. and Australian armies against anti-occupation insurgents. Thus the fact that Socialist Alliance forms a coalition over Iraq with the Laborites and Greens makes a mockery of the claim of some of their components, like the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), to stand with the Iraqi people against the colonial occupiers.

For its part the Socialist Alternative (SA) group have taken to enthusing about "the Iraqi resistance" while barely saying a word about the anti-woman, anti-communist nature of the clerical reactionaries and former Ba'athists involved. But anti-imperialist youth should not be fooled by SA's radical phrasemongering. Their main work is devoted to pressuring the Australian-military-loving Latham to "make a firm commitment" to withdraw troops. Indeed in their article, "Latham's 'Troops Out' Pledge," they gush that Labor's declaration for the withdrawal of troops and subsequent positive poll results for Labor show that "Labor can win significant numbers around to progressive positions—when they actually take a stand" (*Socialist Alternative*, May). Occasionally SA acknowledges and opposes Latham's line that troops should be redeployed from Iraq to better carry out the "war on terror" closer to home. However these statements cannot mask the fact that the *main thrust* of SA's work promotes support, albeit with criticism, for the ALP. And on May Day, they were at it again, busy pushing a petition that Latham keep his promise to get troops home by Christmas. Their petition dishonestly avoided mentioning that Latham's promise is *inextricably* bound up with a pledge for greater Australian intervention in this region. By dragging opponents of the occupation to back Latham's promises over Iraq, SA *inevitably* drags them also behind Latham's accompanying pledge to defend the "national interest" through more aggressive intervention "in our backyard."

While the fake-socialist groups act as the ALP's left props, the overall role of the ALP itself is to channel working-class discontent—not only over Iraq but at wars, unemployment and union busting in general—into safe channels for capitalism. Thus the capitalists have historically called upon Labor, a bourgeois workers party, to administer capitalism in times of war or difficulty for them: last century the ALP ran the country during the two world wars and the Depression.

In stark contrast to the reformist left, we revolutionaries seek to deepen the contradiction between the horror at the Iraq occupation among sections of the ALP's base and Latham's program for strengthening the capitalist state that is carrying out this occupation. We seek to further the struggle to break the proletariat from their pro-capitalist ALP misleaders in the fight to build a communist party that will genuinely serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. In this fight every setback for the capitalist rulers, every exposure of their crimes, must be utilised to win the proletariat to a consistent and principled opposition to the imperialist military and state. To this end we demand: *Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military! No vote to Latham's White Australia ALP, the enemy of workers, immigrants and the peoples of the region.* The fight against imperialist war and militarism can only be victorious if it is based on an independent class-struggle strategy leading to the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class.

Socialist Alternative and Anti-Imperialism

SA's claim to "support the fight against the occupation" is a cynical cover as they

plunge headlong into building "critical" support for Latham. But even their current posture is highly conjunctural and expendable. *Before* the invasion of Iraq last year, SA briefly raised the correct position of defending semicolonial Iraq against imperialist attack. But as the actual war approached, SA simply abandoned this position! They found it a barrier to more heavily immersing themselves in cross-class anti-war coalitions like the Victoria Peace Network, which not only refused to defend Iraq but treacherously called for its disarmament on the eve of the war. Now with not a single Australian soldier killed so far since the invasion began, SA find it convenient to again have a pretence of siding against the imperialists in military clashes in Iraq. But even this posture is always stated in opposition only to the U.S. and never the *Australian* military. Check out all the front-page covers and headlines of Iraq articles from SA this year and you will see that they only call for U.S. troops out, while any call for Australian troops out is buried in the fine print of the articles. So much for SA's "UN-AUSTRALIAN AND PROUD!" rhetoric.

It is instructive to examine how SA responded to an Australian imperialist intervention much closer to home: the 1999 Australian-led UN colonial takeover of East Timor. Unlike with Iraq, in this case the whole of the Australian bourgeoisie and all their Laborite lackeys were united in unequivocal support for the expedition. And what did SA do? They capitulated to the Australian chauvinist frenzy. Despite writing "peacekeepers are not the answer," SA joined with the Labor Party, Greens, Democratic Socialist Party, ISO and the Taaffeite Socialist Party (SP) in enthusiastically *marching in the September 1999 rallies for Australian troops to "Save East Timor."*

Now as Australia gradually downsizes its direct military presence in East Timor and Timorese students hold angry anti-Australia demonstrations and hunger strikes brandishing signs such as "F.k your petrol arrogance," SA, and the ISO and SP, increasingly try to cover their tracks over East Timor. In SA's latest and most cynical attempt, they conclude an article in their June issue, titled "Australia's plunder of East Timor," with the statement "Let's hope that next time Australia tries to intervene to 'save' some country in the region there are tens of thousands marching *against* intervention." What breathtaking chutzpah! In fact SA not only marched in the demonstrations *for* "Troops in NOW" but demanded the building of "bigger and more militant demonstrations in the streets" (*Socialist Alternative*, September 1999).

In SA's previous issue, they attempt the standard sleight of hand that they have been using to justify their history on East Timor. After noting that "tens of thousands of Australians rallied, calling for 'Troops in NOW' to stop the slaughter," they continue: "While socialists supported the outpouring of solidarity with the East Timorese, we were absolutely

continued on page 10



Sydney, September 1999: Socialist Alternative were prominent at pro-imperialist rally which called for Australian/UN "peacekeepers" to East Timor, screamed that Howard had blood on his hands...for not sending troops in sooner!

ASP photos

that purposefully violate the deepest taboos of Muslim society. With great bravery, former prisoners are now speaking out, despite the shame they experienced. "Then the interpreter told us to strip," one man told the *New York Times* (5 May) about his ordeal. "We told him: 'You are Egyptian, and you are a Muslim. You know that as Muslims we can't do that.' When we refused to take off our clothes, they beat us and tore our clothes off with a blade."

While the scandal has now become a major political issue, it's clear what is so far publicised is only the surface of a cesspool of consciously inflicted human misery. The new military overseer of U.S. prisons in Iraq, Major General Geoffrey Miller, is the sinister former commander of the extralegal concentration camp at Guantánamo Bay that holds people without trial. For more than two years Australians David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib, and about 600 others have been living under barbaric conditions and denied basic rights. Like many, Habib has not even been allowed access to legal counsel! Free all the detainees from Guantánamo to Iraq! U.S. out of Guantánamo Bay—it belongs to the Cuban deformed workers state!

While up to their necks in blood from the torture and murder of Iraqis abroad, the Australian bourgeoisie imprisons at home, and in the desolate Pacific island of Nauru, Iraqi refugees—as well as Afghans, Iranians and South Asians. In these hellhole detention camps refugees face constant racist abuse and barbaric beatings by camp guards. *Close the refugee concentration camps! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

Following the criminal attack on the World Trade Center and the Bali bombings, there has been an increase in anti-immigrant racism in this country and a massive expansion of anti-terror

briefly trained with an organisation that even the police admit he left months *before* it was banned late last year. Down with the persecution of Izhar! While in this case the charge relates to an Islamic fundamentalist organisation, the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, ultimately the law could be wielded against the left and militant trade-union groupings. Indeed, it could be used by the government to jail anyone who was at any time a supporter of an organisation that the government is at some time in the future able to proscribe!

However, what the bourgeois rulers can actually get away with depends on the level of social and class opposition to their reactionary agendas. Anger at the bosses' attacks on working conditions has been seen in a series of strikes and rallies by multiracial workers across the country from nurses, to postal workers, to the effective pickets of 4,000 striking steelworkers at BlueScope Steel's Port Kembla plant in late April. Working people are also seething over the dwindling level of public health care and infuriated at the decay in public transport systems. Non-white racial minorities are sick of being blamed for everything from unemployment to crime to terrorism. A class-struggle leadership of the proletariat would seek to meld working-class anger against union busting and destruction of social services with class-struggle opposition to racist repression and imperialist marauding in Iraq and the South Pacific.

Reformist Left: Promoting Bourgeois Forces, Rallying Behind Latham

But far from a class-struggle strategy, what the left lash-up Socialist Alliance offers is cross-class coalitions. Socialist Alliance actively builds and publicises the Sydney Stop the War Coalition, which calls for "an end to the occupation and immediate withdrawal of all Australian

Just Out



Fourth ICA International Conference, Autumn 2003
The Fight for Revolutionary Continuity in the Post-Soviet World

Forty Years of Spartacist
"Toward the Birth of the Fourth International"

The Origins of Japanese Communism,
Debate over "Two-Stage Revolution"
and the American Occupation

The Meiji Restoration: A Bourgeois Non-Democratic Revolution

Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Woman, Anti-Sex:
U.S./UN Crusade Against "Sex Trafficking"

Spartacist (English edition)
No. 58, Spring 2004
\$2.00 (60 pages)
Make cheques payable/mail to:
Spartacist ANZ Publishing Co.
GPO Box 3473, Sydney NSW 2001

Drop the Charges...

(continued from page 12)

are a people desperately yearning for state assistance to "save themselves from self-harm." But the right-wing Howard regime and state ALP governments continue to push their obscene ideological crusade to blame Aboriginal people for their own oppression. This campaign has served to justify government attacks on Aboriginal organisations, including bipartisan support for the abolition of ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission) and dismemberment of the Aboriginal Legal Service. As we wrote in our article "For a Class-Struggle Fight for Aboriginal Rights" (ASp No. 185, Summer 2003/04), the fact that ATSIC has given loyal service to the racist Howard government is not enough for the ruling class, which wants to crush even the most minimal pretence of an independent Aboriginal voice.

For the Broadest Possible Class-Struggle Defence!

Attacks against Aboriginal people have increased in intensity in the context of the so-called "war on terror," which in reality is a war of terror against Asian and Arab minorities and the most oppressed within society, and ultimately targets the working class as a whole. In seeking to convict and imprison the Redfern militants, the capitalist rulers seek to deprive the Aboriginal people of some of their most defiant elements, making it easier for state forces to run riot against black communities. And in prosecuting those from a brutally oppressed people who resisted cop terror, the ruling class is sharpening its tools of state repression, the better to use against those, such as trade unionists, who would lead combative class-struggle actions—like defending picket lines against police attack.

We have intersected sympathy for the February 15 militants at building sites and immigrant working-class suburbs and from Aboriginal people, leftist youth and anti-racist students. One of the defendants noted the overwhelming moral support they are getting throughout the Redfern neighbourhood. But this sympathy is yet to be harnessed into an organised and conscious struggle against the prosecutions. There have for

instance, to our knowledge, been no demonstrations organised in defence of the arrested militants.

Additionally, many prominent Aboriginal activists have so far not called for the dropping of all charges against the defendants. A list of demands put forward by Lyall Munro and others at a 24 March rally only included the plea for "all arrests of Aboriginal people in relation to the riot of 15/2/04 at Redfern cease pending, the completion of the Royal Commissions investigations into the circumstances surrounding the riot." The demand did not include defence of the 22 people already arrested at the time.

Amongst the left, the only group other than ourselves to so far openly call for dropping the charges is the Communist League, a group linked to the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. Other left organisations such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance which have declared support for the Aboriginal community over the 15 February events have, to date, not called in their newspapers for the dropping of charges against the Redfern defendants. This is no doubt connected to the fact that these reformist groups do not want to draw attention to racist prosecutions undertaken by a state ALP government when they are already gearing up to campaign for a vote to Latham's ALP—either directly or through preferences—at the yet-to-be-called federal election. But if the Aboriginal opponents of cop brutality are convicted it will encourage state repression against all who protest police violence and racist injustice. **We call on all those left groups and others who have stated support for the Redfern Aboriginal community but have not called for dropping the charges against the February 15 defendants, to forthrightly take up the defence of the arrested militants.**

Key to the success of any defence campaign will be mobilising the social power of the integrated, organised workers movement. The power of class-struggle defence was seen in 2002-2003, when a campaign of strikes and demonstrations by the CFMEU union saw charges against Victorian leader Martin Kingham dropped. Kingham had been charged over his laudable refusal to hand over the names of militants to the union-busting Cole Royal Commission into the construction industry.

Working class action in defence of Aboriginal people is not only necessary but is possible. In 1989 when police in Sydney gunned down Aboriginal worker

David Gundy, hundreds of building workers downed tools and joined the subsequent protest outside special weapons police headquarters. But fighting to mobilise proletarian defence of Redfern Aborigines is intertwined with waging an intransigent political struggle against the current grip of racist Laborism in the workers movement—a point that is underscored by the fact that it is a Labor government that is witchhunting the February 15 militants.

There is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

While we support taking up all possible avenues of legal defence that are available in these cases, we place all our trust in the independent mobilisation of the working people and none whatsoever in the capitalist "injustice" system. The courts, alongside the prisons, police and army, are at the heart of the capitalist state, which exists to maintain the rule of the tiny capitalist class over the working class and oppressed masses through organised violence and terror.

The court hearings of the Redfern cases have already been a travesty of justice. Thomas Hickey's two arrested uncles—Michael and Darryl—have repeatedly been denied bail and are held in widely separated jails, Bathurst and Parklea. Curfews are placed on those defendants who have been granted bail: while some are not allowed to enter Redfern, others are not allowed to leave the area!

A stark example of the "justice" that one can expect from the capitalist legal system was seen in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, set up under the federal Hawke Labor government in the late 1980s. That inquiry determined that "in none of those [99] cases was there a finding that foul-play, in the sense of unlawful, deliberate killing of Aboriginal prisoners by police and prison officers, had occurred." All the killer cops walked free, even while it reported that four of the "deaths were the result of gun shot wounds following the discharge of firearms by police or prison officers." As part of this whitewash "inquiry," which we opposed from the beginning, the Royal Commission grotesquely blamed Aboriginal people for their own deaths in custody: "it appears the greatest specific risk to Aboriginal people in custody was self-harmful behaviour." And the recommen-

dations? *Greater surveillance* of Aboriginal detainees by vicious cops and prison screws!

For a Class-Struggle Fight for Aboriginal Rights!

The 15 February struggle met with sympathy from leftists all around the world from the Philippines to France. Indeed the courage, tenacity and astuteness of the Redfern militants are an inspiration to all those fighting against racism and subjugation. As Marxists, we understand that it is the working class, that uniquely has the social power to put an end to racist cop terror and violence by leading all the downtrodden in a socialist revolution, that sweeps away the entire rotting capitalist system.

That there is sympathy for defending Aboriginal people amongst class-conscious workers was seen by the fact that the CFMEU's Martin Kingham and ACTU head, Sharan Burrow, both felt compelled to declare union support for the Aboriginal cause at a 10 May rally in Melbourne against the abolition of ATSIC. But they failed to mobilise the thousands of striking building workers who had immediately before rallied nearby in defence of unionist Craig Johnston, who was facing court on charges relating to a militant union struggle. A class-struggle leadership of the unions would have seized this concrete opportunity to combine, in action, the fight against union busting with the struggle for Aboriginal rights.

The current Laborite leaders of the workers movement buy into and promote the fraud of the "national interest," which always means the interests of the racist exploiting class against those of the proletariat and the oppressed. What the working class, Aborigines, immigrant minorities and proletarian women need is a new leadership—a revolutionary, internationalist workers party. As an integral part of fighting for workers revolution, such a Leninist party would be a tribune of the people—and that importantly includes defending Aboriginal opponents of racist cop brutality. **We say: Proletarian-centred united-front action in defence of the Redfern Aborigines is both possible and urgently necessary! Touch one, touch all! Drop the charges against the Redfern militants! Free the remanded prisoners now! ■**

Iraq...

(continued from page 9)

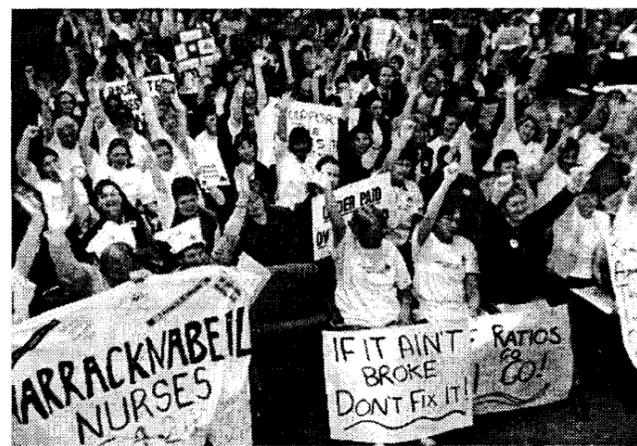
opposed to the deployment of Australian troops...." Here SA attempt an artificial separation between supporting the September 1999 rallies and supporting the purpose of these rallies. But SA know as well as we do that when a political party participates in a march, it is adding its weight to the central thrust of the march, which in this case was, by SA's own admission, for "Troops in Now!"

For all their cover ups today, not only were SA silent at the time on calling for Australian troops to get out of East Timor but as a political tendency they have never, ever, called for this in their newspaper! In contrast, from the beginning the Spartacist League held forums and demonstrations, which demanded no Australian/UN intervention in East Timor. We intransigently opposed the September 1999 "Troops in Now!" rallies and fought for the understanding that opposition to the imperialist occupation is the precondition for the genuine independence of East Timor. **We demand: Australian troops/cops out of East Timor, PNG and the Solomon Islands!**

Capitalism and the Atrocities of War

Capitalist society was born in blood; modern imperialism continues the brutal practices of mass murder, torture, humiliation and racial oppression that accompany exploitation of labour and the ceaseless struggle between competing imperialist forces to dominate the world.

Some apologists for imperialism may use the bloody history of the imperialist



David Crossling

April: Striking nurses rally in Melbourne. Working-class anger at attacks on conditions and services must be combined with struggle against Australian imperialist marauding abroad.

epoch to claim, "Well, everyone does it, it's just human nature." No, it is not human nature, but the everyday workings of the imperialist system. It's true that Abu Ghraib itself was the dictator Saddam Hussein's own prison where opponents of Hussein were brutalised. Uganda's Idi Amin, Indonesia's anti-communist butcher Suharto—these names still have the power to shock, and they all were taught by their imperialist masters. For decades the CIA and U.S. military with assistance from allies like Australia have trained right-wing regimes in the techniques of torture to be used mainly against working-class militants and leftist organisers. Having helped install Suharto in 1965, Australian governments pumped funds and resources into arming and training the Indonesian Kopassus special forces killers, who for decades have run riot killing and maiming from Aceh to East Timor to West Papua.

But in fact "everyone" does not employ such barbaric methods. We communists

denounce imperialist torture and murder as barbaric weapons of exploitation. Our goal is the liberation of the working class and all the oppressed from enforced inequality and exploitation, and we repudiate such methods. Communist military policy seeks to unite working-class and oppressed people across national boundaries, while crushing the ruling classes who drive their populations into war against each other. Marxism, a working-class, international and revolutionary political force, had its highest expression in practice so far in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 when the working class took state power. The historical experience of Trotsky's Red Army that defended the proletarian conquests under conditions of civil war and imperialist invasion is a stunning refutation that torture and other atrocities are endemic to all armies.

In 1920 the army of capitalist Poland under the nationalist strongman Jozef Pilsudski, backed by Western imperialism, invaded the Soviet Ukraine. Captured

Red Army men were routinely tortured before being killed. As the Red Army launched a successful counteroffensive, Leon Trotsky, head of the Red Army, issued an order on 10 May 1920:

"From all sectors of the Western and South-Western fronts come reports of unheard-of atrocities committed by Polish White Guard forces upon captured and wounded Red Army men. They are tortured, beaten, shot and hanged.... These facts arouse justified fury and desire for vengeance in the heart of every warrior. Such vengeance is just. But it must be aimed at those who are really responsible for the dishonourable attack and the brutal atrocities—at Pilsudski's Government, at the Polish gentry and the Polish bourgeoisie. It would, however, be wrong and unworthy of revolutionary fighters to take vengeance on Polish prisoners. No, the Red Army will show magnanimity towards a captured and wounded enemy.

"To a captured Polish Legionary, be he peasant or worker, we shall explain the criminality of his ruling classes. We shall enlighten his mind and make of him our best friend and comrade, just as we did with our German, Austrian, Hungarian, Kolchakite, Denikinite [Russian White Army] and other prisoners-of-war."

—*The Military Writings and Speeches of Leon Trotsky*, Vol. 3 (New Park Publications, 1981)

To do away with imperialist war, it is necessary to put an end to the capitalist system—a system based on exploitation of labour, a system propped up by racial oppression, a system which breeds wars of conquest for the capitalist market. Our purpose is to forge the multiracial revolutionary workers party that will sweep the bloody capitalist class from power and put the wealth of this country into the hands of the workers who create it and to the service of humanity. ■

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

Pong Su...

(continued from page 12)

with us so that we are sufficiently compensated for our unjust imprisonment for one year and return back to the Democratic Republic of Korea, the motherland we are longing for" (*Australian*, 28 April 2004).

As part of our thoroughgoing defence of the North Korean deformed workers state, we protest this blatant attack on its citizens and demand their immediate release. **Free all of the Pong Su crew detained in Baxter now! Close the concentration camps! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

For the Unconditional Military Defence of North Korea, China!

Behind this grave injustice lies an even greater threat, the destruction of the North Korean deformed workers state and the encirclement of China.

After the overturn of capitalist relations and the rule of the landlords in the North following World War II, the U.S. in 1950, with Australia's involvement, launched a war against North Korea from the South where they already had troops stationed. During the ensuing war the imperialists killed some three and a half million Korean, Chinese and Soviet soldiers and civilians and reduced the country to rubble. The armistice which resulted in a stalemate, considered a defeat for the U.S., saw a string of capitalist dictatorships in the South propped up by tens of thousands of U.S. troops, a presence which provocatively remains there to this day. The U.S. imperialists also lined up nuclear weapons along the border which they would have used were

revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy whose negation of international socialist revolution, coupled with futile attempts to appease imperialism and brutal suppression of workers democracy, undermine the gains of these revolutions. In fact, it is the North Korean bizarre cult leadership's strange form of "socialism in half a country," known as *juche* (self-reliance) that is responsible for many of the ills now facing North Korea. It will take *social* revolution in the imperialist centres, Japan, U.S., Australia, etc. and workers *political* revolution in the deformed workers states (where social revolution has already been achieved) to ultimately lift the threat of North Korea's destruction and bring about the revolutionary reunification of the peninsula.

Defend North Korea and China's Right to Nuclear Weapons! All U.S. Troops and Bases Out of South Korea!

The propaganda drive and military pressure against North Korea was accelerated after the American bourgeoisie used the criminal attacks on the World Trade Center for their own imperialist purposes. This was shown when George Bush labelled North Korea a "rogue" state, part of an "Axis of Evil" and continued with the hue and cry over North Korea's admitted development of nuclear technology. This from the ruling class responsible for Hiroshima and Nagasaki! In fact North Korea, China and Cuba are among the seven countries targeted for a potential nuclear first strike as outlined in the Pentagon's "Nuclear Posture Review"!

Bush's junior ally in Canberra, John Howard, was quick to follow suit in



North Korean tank greeted by cheering civilians, Seoul, 1950. Three and a half million Korean, Chinese and Soviet troops died defending the overturn of capitalist relations in the North.

national Socialist Organisation (later to split along cliquist lines to form SA while still adhering to the politics of the ISO), called for counterrevolution in the USSR and the Eastern European deformed workers states. When capitalism was restored in the USSR, they lauded its arrival, decrying "Communism is dead"... It's a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*The Socialist*, September 1991). Their very tendency came into being when in 1948 Tony Cliff sought a theoretical justification, that the USSR was "state capitalist," for abandoning defence of the USSR to capitulate to social democracy in Britain. Cliff applied this theory two years later, refusing to defend the North Korean deformed workers state during the Korean War, for which he and his comrades were rightly expelled from the Trotskyist Fourth International. It was Cliff's allies of the British Labour Party in power in England who joined Australian and American forces in their bloody fight against China and North Korea under the flag of the UN.

In a recent article on North Korea, SA called to "oppose U.S. imperialism, whether it rears its ugly head in Iraq, Syria, Iran or North Korea" (*Socialist Alternative* No. 68, June 2003). SA's lumping of North Korea with "small" capitalist dictatorships in the Near East ignores the progressive difference of the collectivised economy. It is designed to escape the need for military defence of North Korea when, for example, "small" North Korea is clashing with "small" capitalist South Korea. Furthermore, while they spare some rhetoric for U.S. imperialism's threats against North Korea, no doubt in response to some sympathy from leftist youth impressed with North Korea's refusal to accept imperialist diktats to disarm, they diminish the role of their own bourgeoisie by saying *nothing* of Australian imperialism's hostility. Any pretence of opposing U.S. imperialism against North Korea, even by SA's shady standards, is less than empty when viewed in the light of the Cliffites' refusal to do so when it was clearly posed... during the Korean War!

They also echo the CIA's promotion of the "Free Tibet" rallying cry, which is a spearhead of counterrevolution in China. In fact, despite the Han chauvinism of China's ruling Stalinist bureaucracy, the overthrow of the feudal society of the Tibetan "lamaocracy" brought real gains for the Tibetan masses. Slavery and forced peasant labour were abolished, modern health care was introduced and a modicum of education was established—which lowered the illiteracy rate from 90 percent to roughly 45 percent.

A reason for the hatred SA display towards China, apart from their rabid anti-communism, is their tailing of the

Labor Party and their continuous efforts to have them elected. The Labor Party, which often purports to champion the interests of the workers and has its historic base in the working class, have on the issue of North Korea tried to outdo the right-wing Howard government in belligerence and hostility. Likewise the bourgeois Greens, who in arguing against the invasion of Iraq, declared that Australia's interests would be better served if its imperialist forces were more aggressively focused against North Korea. Their leader, Bob Brown, ranted that "We know that North Korea has rockets that can reach north Australia. They may or may not already have nuclear warheads and they are a much more serious threat to Australia than Iraq" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 2003). A fundamental task of the socialist is to break the working class from the pro-capitalist ALP and attract them to the program of a revolutionary party, *not* sow illusions in social democracy as a "lesser evil" deserving of workers' votes. **No vote to the racist ALP! Build a revolutionary workers party!**

Just like their parliamentary brethren, the current treacherous ALP misleaders of the trade unions also act against the interests of the working class, promoting the lie that the working class and the capitalists share a common "national interest." In a recent especially disgusting example of this, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) echoed the federal ALP's calls for a coastguard to "protect" Australia's shores. In an article posted on their website on 22 April 2003, they state "In the wake of the arrest of the Pong Su off Newcastle over the Easter weekend, the MUA has renewed its support for the development of an integrated coast guard to protect Australia. This would help secure the coast against people smuggling, terrorism, gun running and drug importation like the latest heroin bust allegedly from the [North] Korean flagged vessel Pong Su in Victoria last week." In buying into the bosses' "national security" propaganda, the MUA misleadership join the campaign against the deformed workers state, thereby acting against the interests of their own members. Further, by mentioning the threat of terrorism they threaten themselves, calling on the state to strengthen its repressive apparatus whose ultimate target is the organised labour movement.

It is necessary for unionists and leftists to protest the unjust and anti-communist detention of the innocent *Pong Su* crew: What is also necessary is for Leninist vanguard parties to be built which will lead the working class to political revolution in North Korea and China, and social revolution in South Korea, Japan and Australia. **For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!** ■



Militant South Korean workers combat cops, 2001. Social revolution in South and workers political revolution in North is key to the revolutionary reunification of Korean peninsula.

it not for the military counterweight of the Soviet degenerated workers state.

Our unconditional military defence of North Korea, in spite of it being ruled by a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, is at base a defence of the overturn of capitalism and overthrow of the rule of the landlords. Despite bureaucratic deformities from their inceptions, the creation of collectivised economies in China and North Korea represented tremendous gains for the working class and oppressed.

The imperialists have long seen the Korean peninsula as an ideal place from which to launch a military attack on China and have never reconciled themselves to the "loss" of North Korea. They desperately wish to see the gains of both the 1949 Chinese, and North Korean revolutions overturned so that they can restore capitalism and transform these countries back into the giant sweatshops they once were, where the imperialists exercised an unchallenged right to brutal imperialist exploitation. Capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR in 1991-1992 shows what would be in store for the masses of North Korea and China if this were to happen. Instead of the high living standards promoted by the capitalist liars, they will be faced with mass unemployment, nationalist reaction and attacks on women's rights and all living conditions. In fact, the destruction of the USSR, which heavily subsidised the North Korean economy, has contributed to the dire straits of North Korea itself, as well as leaving it without important military protection.

As part of our unconditional military defence, we fight for workers political

raising "concerns" about the possibility of North Korean ships transporting "weapons of mass destruction" into the hands of terrorists. Joint military exercises were carried out in September last year by Australia, Japan, France and the U.S. as a threat to North Korea while her ships have been intercepted and occasionally sequestered by Japan, Spain, Australia and Taiwan amid threats of a full-scale naval blockade. If carried out this would be an act of war! The North Korean government has promised to respond if the U.S. and its allies provoke them militarily. While the pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism pursued by the Stalinist leaders seriously compromises defence of the deformed workers state, the working class have a military side to take if such a conflict ensues... with the North Korean deformed workers state!

ALP, Fake Left, Union Tops: In League with Counterrevolution

It would seem elementary that anyone claiming to be a socialist and wanting to overthrow capitalism would stand for the defence of those places where capitalism has already been overthrown, but this is not the case. Despite all the provocations against North Korea, the fake-socialist left has either at best, remained silent, or at worst, openly sided with their own ruling class in pushing counterrevolution. In every issue of their paper, Socialist Alternative (SA) promote hostility to those places where capitalism has been overthrown by claiming they are exploitative societies no different from the West. SA's founders, when still leaders of the Inter-

Spartacist League of Australia

E-mail: spartacist@bigpond.com Web site: www.icl-fi.org
Melbourne Sydney
GPO Box 2339 GPO Box 3473
Melbourne Vic 3001 Sydney NSW 2001
Phone: (03) 9654 4315 Phone: (02) 9281 2181

International Communist League

Box 7429 GPO, New York, NY 10116, USA



Unions, Leftists: Defend Aboriginal Opponents of Racist Cop Terror!

Free the Redfern Militants! Drop the Charges Now!

MAY 27—More than 35 people have so far been hunted down and arrested over the explosive events on 15 February in Redfern, when the Aboriginal community erupted in anger after 17-year-old Thomas "TJ" Hickey was chased to his death by police. Those arrested face multiple charges, including "riot" and "affray," relating to the nine-hour pitched battle that Aboriginal youth and others boldly fought against the phalanxes of cops dispatched under Bob Carr's state Labor government. Many of the defendants have been cruelly denied bail and have remained in detention since their arrest, awaiting trial. And police are preparing more arrests. *We say there should be united-front protests and actions to defend the heroic Redfern militants. Trade unions, Aboriginal activists, leftists and immigrant youth must be brought together in struggle to demand: Free all the February 15 detainees now! Drop all the charges!*

Many of those arrested are youth who have faced Children's Courts. Since the February upheaval, there has also been a sudden increase in Aboriginal children being removed from families in the Redfern area, without warning, by the Department of Community Services and police. In exposing this reality, the Redfern Legal Centre's Helen Campbell spoke of how the situation is being described as the "fourth stolen generation." Meanwhile Aboriginal leader, Lyall Munro, was provocatively arrested on 12 May when he intervened against police harassment at Redfern railway station. He is facing charges of assaulting a police officer, resisting arrest and offensive behaviour. Munro to his credit has vigorously defended the actions of Aboriginal youth on the night of 15 February. *We demand: Drop the charges against Lyall Munro!*



Redfern, 15 February: Aboriginal youth defiantly face off massive mobilisation from racist cops. Daily Telegraph

The events on the weekend of 14-15 February brought to boiling point the pent-up anger of the local Redfern Aboriginal community against their ongoing brutal oppression. Black residents around the area known as The Block face daily harassment by cops. Routinely, they are stopped and searched, their houses repeatedly invaded and sometimes they are taken into custody and beaten. One local told *Australasian Spartacist* about an incident when cops pulled a gun on residents who went to the aid of an Aboriginal man being bashed by police in a taxi. This inner-city ghetto has been subjected to such racist cop terror for decades, not least through terrifying raids by squads of heavily armed cops in the dead of night. As we reported on one such Gestapo-style rampage in 1990, cops put guns to children's heads, dragged elderly women from their beds and held a petrified community hostage (*Australasian Spartacist* No. 135, February/March 1990).

State brutality against Aboriginal people occurs throughout the country. On 1 February this year in Melbourne an Aboriginal man, Raymond Merritt, was beaten within inches of his life by at least five cops. They smashed the window of the car he was driving, sprayed him with capsicum spray and kicked, punched and beat him with batons. Nitin

Sawhney, an English musician who witnessed the frenzied bashing, described the incident: "Literally, it was Rodney King all over again but it was like 20 times worse. They were just kicking this guy to death, man, I've never seen anything like it" (*mX*, 5 February).

The February explosion in Redfern itself was immediately preceded by a string of cop provocations. After having caused the death of Thomas Hickey, cops cruised the area, taunting youth with racist epithets. Then reminiscent of the Israeli military in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, police blocked off the streets into The Block, forming phalanxes with their riot shields readied. What followed was not a mindless "riot" by Aboriginal people as has been labelled by the Carr Labor government and the capitalist-owned media. Rather it was a determined and well-organised stand to defend their community against the brutal racist cops.

This struggle against cop violence has shown as a lie the hideous notion, created by the ruling class (with the assistance of a few self-proclaimed Aboriginal "leaders" like Noel Pearson), that Aborigines

continued on page 10

Sydney, 24 February: Spartacist League at march in memory of Thomas "TJ" Hickey, 17-year-old Aboriginal youth chased to his death by police.



Young Spartacus

Protest Detention of the Innocent Pong Su Crew!

Anti-Communist Frame-Up Exposed! Defend North Korea!

JUNE 1—In a prime example of racism and anti-communism inherent in bourgeois "justice," 27 of the 30 crew members of the North Korean ship, the *Pong Su* have been falsely detained for up to a year on bogus drug-smuggling charges. The 27 *continued* to be detained even after their case was thrown out of court and it was deemed they had no case to answer. The North Korean government protested the crew's treatment and demanded they be returned home. The crew, indignant at their continued denial of liberty and demanding to be

returned home, went on a hunger strike in late April, culminating in three men being hospitalised.

These unjust incarcerations come in the context of Australian imperialism contributing forces to the brutal colonial occupation of Iraq as part of the "war on terror," while domestically, the capitalist state attacks, prosecutes and jails Redfern Aborigines who defend themselves against racist cop violence (see above), launches immigration raids on worksites such as popular seafood restaurant Doyles and is cracking down on unions and unionists. It is this same state that is whipping up anti-communist hysteria over alleged drugs and weapons smuggling by ships from the North Korean deformed workers state in what is a continuum of this pervasive climate of repression and reaction.

When Special Air Services troops seized the *Pong Su* off the east coast of Australia in April 2003 for allegedly dumping 125kg of heroin, foreign minister Alexander Downer went into a frenzy of vitriol, decrying "North Korea is a socialist state, there is no private enterprise in North Korea. We are very concerned there could be any association between North Korea and drug trafficking." Downer's suggestive allegations, however, were exposed as a lie when even an Australian Federal Police top agent had to admit, "We have got no evidence of any [North Korean] government involvement" (*Australian*, 22 April 2004).

While three crew members have been committed to stand trial on charges of aiding and abetting the importation of heroin, the continued detention of the

remaining 27 crewmen after all charges against them were dropped was based on the pretext that the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) sought to interrogate them on the spurious grounds of "organised crime links." Their unjust incarceration in the desert-hellhole Baxter detention centre, normally reserved for refugees and immigrants, is an affront to basic democratic rights and an attack more generally against the North Korean deformed workers state.

As we go to press, the 27 crew have apparently been cleared by the ACC and their passports returned. Relegated to the status of "illegal immigrants," they face imminent deportation. We note that the men recently declared "We would like to request the Human Rights Protection Committee to actively co-operate

continued on page 11