



Elections of Racism, Militarism

No Vote to Labor!

SEPTEMBER 10—With over 22 percent of the population officially living in poverty, the sick and disabled unable to afford decent medicines or care, repression against trade unionists, Aborigines and immigrants confronting cop raids and the Australian military assisting in the bloody occupation of Iraq, it is understandable that many want to see the end of the hated Howard regime. However, whichever major party wins the upcoming federal elections, it will mean continued attacks on the working people and oppressed in the interests of the profit-hungry capitalist rulers.

Latham's Australian Labor Party (ALP), a very right-wing bourgeois workers party, is committed to delivering more of the same racist reaction, strong state militarism and cuts to social welfare programs as the Liberal/National Coalition. We Trotskyists of the Spartacist League say there is (to our knowledge) no party standing in these elections that offers workers the opportunity to vote for their own class interests, however crudely, against their

class enemy, the capitalist rulers. We say no vote to the racist, anti-working-class ALP! What is necessary is a class-struggle fight, centred on the trade unions and drawing in all those under attack, against the bosses and those who administer for them.

Central to the platforms that the Howard Coalition and Latham ALP are standing on are "national security" and "war on terror." The ruling classes of imperialist countries around the

world have seized on the criminal slaughter of innocent people in New York on 11 September, 2001 and in the Bali bombing the following year to put in place so-called "anti-terror" laws, which in fact shred the democratic rights of all. While immigrants are the immediate targets of the "anti-terror" laws, these laws are also designed to silence dissent and go after the left and the organised working class, giving the bosses far greater capacity to spy on unionists as well as attack and disrupt strike organising. Indeed, earlier this

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Oppose Howard/Latham's Reactionary "Family Values"!

Single Mothers Hit By Capitalist Austerity, Bigotry

SEPTEMBER 6—When the right-wing Howard government sought to head off just demands for paid maternity leave by introducing a "baby bonus" payment from July, the response from the Labor Party, conservative think tanks and the tabloid media was to promulgate putrid slurs that poor, single and young mothers would "misuse" the payment. As federal parliament discussed claims that the lump sum payment would be blown on gambling and alcohol, the ALP opposition leader, Mark Latham, argued that "the \$3,000 is more likely to be spent on children than for some other purpose if it's staggered over a period of time..." (*Age*, 27 June). Meanwhile, Northern Territory Labor chief minister, Clare Martin,

reflected rampant racist prejudice when she complained that Aboriginal communities receiving the payments would "create issues with more people being able to buy alcohol..." (*ABC Online*, 25 June).

In reality the very meagre "baby bonus" pre-election bribe provides all too little relief for working-class women, who have been hardest hit by the massive redistribution in wealth over the last twenty years away from the poor. Under first the Hawke/Keating ALP federal governments and now Howard's Liberals, trade unions and workers' conditions have been attacked and social services slashed. Behind the fraud of relatively low official unemployment figures today is the reality that more single parents with

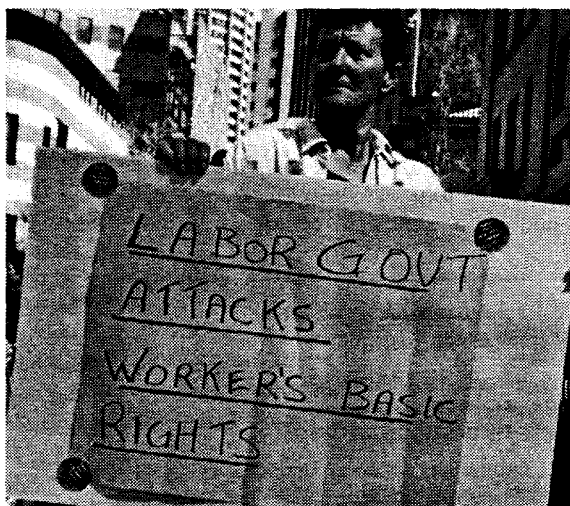
dependent children are unemployed than have jobs. The number of sole parents—most of whom are women—increased by 53 percent between 1986 and 2001. Among them are the most poverty-stricken people in this society. Today, many working-class mothers don't have enough to pay rent and utility bills or to send their kids on school excursions, let alone afford increasingly expensive childcare or have any cash spare for some decent, much-needed entertainment.

Increasingly, jobs that are available to the working class are poorly paid, tenuous part-time or casual ones as the bosses seek to increase the rate of exploitation by shedding full-time jobs where they have to pay for leave and

other entitlements. The proportion of the workforce now employed as casuals has ballooned to 27 percent. Tens of thousands of mainly Vietnamese and Chinese women toil in the home as superexploited "outworkers" in the textile industry. Women are a disproportionately high percentage of the casual workforce such that for the period 1994-99 women's earnings *declined* relative to men's. As of May 2002, working women as a whole received only 66 percent of men's pay and 42 percent of working mothers had *no* leave entitlements!

Such hardships faced by working-class parents have not stopped Latham from accusing them of not bringing up their kids properly. On 26 January, Latham announced a plan for "parental responsibility" court orders to "train" parents how to control "unruly" children. Latham moralised "Some people need help, and sometimes pressure, to be responsible parents." This rightly infuriated many, especially working-class and single mothers who have angrily denounced Latham's plans. When Latham was featured at a February ALP "community meeting," in depressed Raymond Terrace, north of Newcastle, a youth worker and mother, Kerrie-Lea Menzies, denounced Latham: "You are putting the responsibility on parents but these parents are socially disadvantaged." "These kids don't have a future," she later interjected. "You're a silver spoon in a bloody suit. Go home and have your three-course dinner," Menzies yelled, before storming out of the hall escorted by police.

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Sydney, September: Low-paid school cleaners, mostly women, strike against threatened layoffs after NSW Labor government ordered subcontracting of jobs. Working-class women have been hardest hit by anti-union attacks, casualisation, slashing of social services.

Asp photos

Unleash Union Power! For Free, 24-Hour Childcare! Permanency, Full Entitlements for Casual Workers!

Women...

(continued from page 1)

Meanwhile, Latham's ALP buddies running state governments throughout the country are making it near impossible for working-class parents to bring up their kids. State schools are being run down, public hospitals are decaying and public transport is being gutted and disorganised to such a degree that getting a child to school is an ordeal. Aboriginal, Asian, Arab, Islander and African youth face harassment from racist cops while their parents face insults and discrimination in their daily lives. Racist "war on terror" hysteria whipped up by the Liberals and ALP has spawned attacks on Muslim women, who have been spat upon, pelted with objects, or had their veils ripped off.

Latham's plan for "parental responsibility" and the reactionary hype over the "baby bonus" typify the lead-up to the 9 October federal election. As the Liberals and Labor campaign to administer further austerity upon the working class on behalf of the capitalist exploiters, they dump on the poorest and the most oppressed in society. There is no party standing in the interests of working people in these elections! What is desperately needed is some determined class struggle, which combines a fight against union busting and casualisation with opposition to the all-sided attacks on women and racial minorities at home and the imperialist occupation of Iraq abroad.

Capitalism and the Family

The slurs aimed against single mothers occur in the context of a lead-up to federal elections where Howard and Latham battle over who can portray themselves as the best upholder of "family values." The institution of the family is indeed an integral prop of the capitalist order. It is also the central source of women's oppression. The origins of the patriarchal family go far back in history. Prior to the emergence of private property and with it the family, humans lived as subsistence hunter-gatherers in egalitarian communities. But with the development of agriculture and the concomitant accumulation of social surplus, society became divided into classes. In the words of Karl Marx's collaborator, Friedrich Engels, this saw "the world historic defeat of the female sex." The biological fact of child-bearing and child rearing meant women were increasingly excluded from social production and reduced to domestic servitude. As a means of consolidating wealth in the hands of a tiny minority, the monogamous (for women!) patriarchal family arose to ensure that a man's property would be passed down to heirs who are indisputably his own children.

For most working people however inheritance is hardly a central issue! Rather the family as an institution is imposed on the working masses by the capitalist exploiting class. As an economic unit, it serves the bourgeoisie by ensuring that the labour involved in raising the next generation of workers and caring for the sick and aged is performed unpaid in the home largely by women. We fight for the liberation of women from the drudgery and oppression of domestic servitude through socialist

revolution that would lay the basis for the replacement of the institution of the family with the provision of high-quality collective childcare, first-rate communal kitchens and laundries and socialised household cleaning.

Under capitalism, the family is an important means for the ruling class to instil in the next generation of workers habits of obedience and respect for authority as well as to transmit bourgeois values. The Australian rulers want a more pliant population to minimise opposition to their ever-growing list of military expeditions, from the U.S.-led adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan, to their marauding around this region including in East Timor and the Solomon Islands. And with the exploiting class on a drive to increase profits by slashing social services and extracting more productivity from the hides of working people, they are determined to increase all measures to suppress proletarian discontent. Like their counterparts throughout the capitalist world, from the U.S. to Germany to Japan, the Australian ruling class are strengthening their military and legal arsenal of state repression and increasing efforts to divert and confuse the masses with nationalism, racism and other reactionary ideologies.

Having the working masses atomised into individual family units makes them more prey to the bourgeoisie's ideological influences: from the anti-union, racist jingoism of Murdoch newspapers and Packer TV to government "terror alerts." Parents are expected to deputise for the state in preventing their children from engaging in social struggles—like last year's student strikes against the Iraq war. Pressure to be "a good wife and mother" is meant to keep women at home in the kitchen rather than out after work discussing strike action or politics with fellow workers.

Yet many people choose to live outside the "white picket fence." This, together with the fact that unemployment and the decline in decent-paying full-time jobs caused by capitalism actually forces families apart, only drives the bourgeoisie into a frenzy of "family values" reaction as it attempts to shore up its tottering institution. Those who fall outside the "ideal" family—based on a married heterosexual couple and headed by a "male role model" who is the principal breadwinner—are in the cross-hairs of the Liberal/ALP "family values" campaign. For single mothers, this means not only having their material conditions eroded but being stigmatised within society. This is especially so for those women for whom the profit-driven capitalist system has neither jobs nor affordable childcare places to enable them to work. Others who do not fit into the illusory "norm" of the monogamous, heterosexual family, like gays and lesbians, are also under attack. In August, federal laws were passed formally proscribing same-sex marriages (see page 6). The ALP helped Howard to ram this vicious anti-gay legislation through parliament, making Australia one of the only countries in the industrialised world to explicitly legislate against gay marriages.

Meanwhile, right-wing headkicker and health minister, Tony Abbott is spearheading a renewed offensive against

women's right to abortion. And youth sexuality and consensual sex between adults and teenagers have been the subject of cruel state repression and media hysteria. In August, well-known tennis coach Gavin Hopper was jailed for over three years for a four-year consensual relationship with a female student nearly 20 years ago—because she was 14 when the relationship began. We believe that effective consent should determine sexual relations—not the age, sex, number or degree of intimacy of the people involved. Given the tangle of race, sex and class in this bigoted society, even consensual relationships can often be emotionally exploitative and unequal—but to call them "crimes" is to bring in the government, which is the very enforcer of that bigotry and exploitation.

Now, teacher Karen Ellis faces court for a completely consensual affair with a then 15-year-old student. The boy later stated: "I found her attractive...so when you find someone attractive you go after them" (*Age*, 1 September). We say: State out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Drop the charges against Karen Ellis and Gavin Hopper! Free Gavin Hopper! Down with reactionary "age of consent" laws!

Alongside "family values," the bourgeoisie are fortifying that other pillar of capitalist society, the church, to help

shore up ideological control of the exploited masses. Churches of all stripes from Pentecostal to Catholic have been receiving hugely increased government funding and patronage to take over formerly government-run (and unionised) social-welfare functions from job finding to caring for the homeless. In its recent budget the Beattie Queensland Labor government granted control of AIDS care to the Anglican Church! And while private and religious schools are being massively funded, state schools have been pauperised.

Despite this, many working-class and liberal-minded middle-class people want to defend the idea of secular, coeducational schooling. When "left"-Labor shadow minister for education, Jenny Macklin, addressed a NSW Teachers Federation conference in July, she was roundly heckled for Labor's plan to increase funding for private Catholic schools. And students at Sydney University and their supporters, including Spartacus Youth Club and Spartacist activists, have engaged in militant demonstrations against the closure of the entire nursing faculty and the transferral of some government funding to a new nursing school run by the Catholic Notre Dame university. The Bachelor of Indigenous Nursing course is also under threat. Stop the

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Dien Bien Phu, the French Resistance and the French Communist Party

In the last issue of *Australasian Spartacist* (No. 187, Winter), we reprinted the article "French Colonialist Rule Smashed at Dien Bien Phu Fifty Years Ago—Hail Heroic Victory of the Vietnamese People!" from *Le Bolchévick* (No. 167, March), the newspaper of our comrades of the *Ligue trotskyste de France*, section of the *International Communist League* (Fourth Internationalist).

The following is a clarification to this article reprinted from *Le Bolchévick* (No. 169, September).

LE BOLCHEVIK

In our article, which appeared in *Le Bolchévick* No. 167, under the headline, "French Colonialist Rule Smashed at Dien Bien Phu Fifty Years Ago—Hail Heroic Victory of the Vietnamese People!", we wrote: "Directly coming off the war of resistance against Germany, they [referring to French soldiers politically sympathetic to the French Communist Party (PCF) who had enlisted in the colonial army under its instigation] didn't understand why they were fighting in Indochina, making the parallel between the struggle of the Vietminh and their own resistance struggle." This effectively describes the state of mind of some of those soldiers, as reported by Jean-Luc Einaudi in his book *Viêt-Nam! The Indochina War 1945-1954* [2001]. But it doesn't mean to say that for us the two situations were the same and that we supported the French Resistance during the Second World War.

These two "resistances" were fundamentally very different. To begin with, France is an imperialist country, whilst Vietnam at that time was a colony. The resistance in France against German occupation from June 1941, even if it was made up for the most part of members and sympathizers of the PCF, was politically subordinated to the Gaullist wing of the French bourgeoisie, headquartered in London, and thereby subordinated to the interimperialist conflict itself. Thus on

the one side there were the American-British imperialists together with the French imperialist Gaullists and on the other was German imperialism (with the Vichy regime). In this conflict, the Trotskyists stood for defeat of both sides. They defended only the Soviet degenerated workers state (see our article "Soviet Red Army Smashed the Nazis!" *Le Bolchévick* No. 168, June). At bottom, the "Resistance," which came under the discipline of a bourgeois general staff, defended the interests of French capitalism and lined up behind the imperialist "allies." The putrid nationalism of the "Resistance"—"A chacun son boche" ["To each their German"]—made both fraternisation and the task of organising inchoate opposition within the German armed forces (as French Trotskyists attempted to do in Brest) much more difficult than they had to be.

The Resistance ultimately proved crucial to the French bourgeoisie, which increasingly rallied to the side of de Gaulle as German defeats advanced, to re-stabilise its power in 1944, and thus also to maintain its stranglehold over its former colonies for more years to come. As we wrote in the article on Dien Bien Phu: "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."

In Vietnam, to the contrary, the struggle against the French colonial occupation was carried out under the leadership of the Vietnamese Stalinists with the Vietnamese bourgeois elements lining up behind French imperialism. There was the further factor of the role played by the Soviet Union, with its might and armaments, facing the imperialists. This is why this war ended (even if it wasn't the intention of the Vietnamese Communist Party from the outset) with the imperialists being driven out and the bourgeoisie finally expropriated throughout Vietnam in 1975. Once more, we salute the heroic victory of the Vietnamese people against French colonialism! ■

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

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).

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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.

Responsibility for electoral comment taken by P. Naughten, 800 George St, Sydney.

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. 188, Spring 2004

Date of issue: September 2004

Young Spartacus

Lies, Cover-Ups and Betrayals Socialist Alternative on East Timor

Recent angry protests of up to 1,000 people in East Timor against Australian imperialism's arrogant plunder of its oil and gas resources have seen the issue of the 1999 UN/Australian intervention into that country given prominent space in the press of some ostensible socialist organisations. Australian-owned Woodside Petroleum recently threatened to withhold investment from the Greater Sunrise field in the disputed Timor Sea altogether, unless the servile East Timorese government signs revenue agreements which currently stand overwhelmingly in favour of Australian imperialism. For instance, for every dollar East Timor receives in Australian "aid," seven dollars is taken back in oil and gas reserves. The East Timorese government consented in the interim, a decision no doubt influenced by the continued, threatening presence of Australian imperialist troops in their country.

In December 2002, the combined forces of the occupying UN/Australian police force and the UN-trained East Timorese police opened fire on unarmed high-school students protesting against police violence. Imperialist "peacekeeping" troops were also deployed against the demonstrators. Eighteen were shot, five fatally. During a recent rally against the East Timorese government by former Falintil independence fighters, police reportedly fired tear gas and rubber bullets into the crowd and arrested protesters. Fewer than half of adult East Timorese can read or write and one in ten babies will die before the age of five. In what is the poorest country in Asia, 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. That this has been the deadly reality of day to day existence under Australian imperialist occupation has seen many groups hide their former support to the intervention.

While the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP), and its youth group Resistance, stick to their rotten, pro-imperialist line that the intervention was in the interests of the East Timorese and against those of Australian imperialism, and take pride in their role in promoting it, other groups, such as Workers Power (WP), the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and Socialist Alternative (SAIt), now seek to cover up their support for their "own" imperialist military.

Of these, the most cynical is SAIt, who joined "Peacekeepers NOW" demonstrations in 1999, designed to accelerate Australian imperialist intervention into East Timor. They now have the nerve to claim

that, "Aside from revolutionary socialist groups such as SA, virtually the entire left supported the 'humanitarian' invasion of East Timor" (*Socialist Alternative* No. 79, June). This is hardly surprising from SAIt, whose lies and cover-ups about their past are as long as their past itself. While they intended to hide their support for the Australian military, employing anti-imperialist and leftist

ment they argued that "there will only be about 8,000 UN troops. The Indonesian Army has 25,000." Far from opposing the invasion, SAIt implied that it should have been carried out quicker with a larger force!

Pushing illusions in the benevolence of the capitalist state, SAIt argued around the same time that "If the US, Japan and Australia had immediately

Sydney, September 1999: Socialist Alternative participation in "Peacekeepers In" demonstration. SAIt hailed union bans explicitly designed to hurry Australian troops into East Timor: a far cry from their statement that they opposed the deployment of Australian troops.



ASp photos

rhetoric based in the abstract, their actions and much of their propaganda at the time clearly expose them as the reformists they are. In fact, only the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club in both words and deeds opposed the intervention, calling for "Independence Now for East Timor! Australian/UN Imperialist Troops Out of East Timor!" With Australian imperialism now taking part in the brutal occupation of Iraq and engaging in neo-colonial takeovers of the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, the need to oppose the leadership of these ostensibly socialist traitors who preach reliance on their "own" capitalist state is as clearly posed as ever. *Australian troops/cops out of Iraq, Solomon Islands, PNG and East Timor!*

Socialist Alternative— Apologists for Imperialism

Despite hiding their accommodation to imperialism behind leftist-sounding phrases like, "Peacekeepers are not the answer," a quick read of SAIt's papers at the time shows that their opposition was not to the invasion and occupation of East Timor, but rather the tactics used to carry it out. In a September 1999 supple-

announced stiff economic sanctions...the atrocities could well have been brought to a halt before the devastation was so complete." That is, SAIt called on the bloody imperialists who backed and helped organise the massacre of up to one million Indonesian workers and peasants in 1965 and who for decades backed Indonesia's brutal occupation of East Timor, to impose sanctions on Indonesia. When still a revolutionary Trotskyist and writing in 1936 at the time of fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, James Burnham, under the pseudonym John West, wrote in his pamphlet *War and the Workers*:

"The Marxist knows that advocacy of governmental sanctions in any form necessarily binds the working class to the state and the class enemy, necessarily weakens the class position of the workers and thus the workers' struggle for power, and necessarily prepares for turning the workers over to the sanction-applying government when the sanctions find their natural outcome in war. If we support sanctions, and the sanctions lead to war, then we have already by supporting the sanctions supported the war. It takes more than verbal reservations to crawl out of the inescapable logic of cause and effect."

The logic of imperialist sanctions as explained by Burnham was most graphically seen in the case of Iraq. The same sort of sanctions that SAIt called for were employed by the imperialists for up to a decade before the imperialist bloodbath in 2003. These sanctions directly led to the death of up to one million Iraqis.

Pushing the program that the capitalist state can or will act in the interests of those it oppresses, SAIt acts to subordinate workers and leftist youth to the pro-imperialist trade union bureaucracy and Australian Labor Party (ALP): the primary political obstacles to socialist revolution.

Perhaps the most insidious and slippery part of SAIt's campaign was, along with other groups, their enthusiastic

cheering of the racist, anti-Indonesian actions led by the Laborite union bureaucrats, giving them a "working class" cover for their betrayal. That these actions were explicitly designed to hurry Australian intervention is demonstrated by the fact that they were lifted as soon as troops were sent in. The grotesqueness of these "union bans" was clearly shown by the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) when it banned wheat shipments to Indonesia: a country where workers were facing starvation following the Asian economic crisis of 1997. SAIt gushed about these actions as well as the national-chauvinist mobilisations for "troops in now," calling to "accelerate the campaign of industrial action that the union movement has initiated and build bigger and more militant demonstrations in the street" (*Socialist Alternative Special Supplement*, September 1999). The Laborite trade union misleaders were among those who pushed strongest for the invasion of East Timor, with full ALP support. The trade union leaders, through their links to the ALP, have a privileged position in capitalist society relative to most workers and for this reason they act to defend the rotten capitalist system and act as a transmission belt for bourgeois ideology within the workers movement. What is needed is a political fight to replace the union bureaucrats with a fighting class-struggle leadership prepared to act in the interests of its members and against the capitalist system.

Against the prevailing tide of "national unity," we revolutionary Marxists of the Spartacist League argued in a December 1999 special supplement that "The demand for the immediate withdrawal of imperialist troops is the precondition for the fight for East Timorese independence. As proletarian internationalists, opposed above all to our 'own' ruling class, we call for the Australian workers movement to black ban arms and supplies to the Australian-led military forces." We also called for working-class solidarity between the Indonesian and Australian proletariat and for strikes and actions to fight for genuine East Timorese independence in opposition to Australian imperialist intervention.

Another fact which SAIt now attempts to hide is their presence in the chauvinist "Troops In" demos. Though some in the group now say they were there to oppose these demands, SAIt know as well as we do that when a political party marches in a demonstration as a party, they are adding their weight to the central thrust of that demonstration. For example, while we disagree with the class-collaborationist strategy put forward by the reformists who have been leading rallies calling for "Troops Out of Iraq," we participate, giving support to those demands against the occupation while arguing for a program centred on proletarian independence from all wings of the bourgeoisie. However, we would never participate in a rally for troops in!

Telling then, is it that when on 21 August 2002, the Spartacist League initiated a united front demo at Sydney University demanding "Down With Australian Imperialism's Plunder of East Timor's Oil/Gas! Australian/UN Troops

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Green Left Weekly



Dili, April: East Timorese protest plunder of oil and gas in Timor Sea by Australian imperialism. For every dollar given to East Timor in "aid," seven dollars is taken back in oil and gas reserves.

Elections...

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year in Melbourne, building unionists, who have been fighting against a federal government union-busting vendetta, found their office bugged.

The ALP has actively assisted the government in ramming through its "anti-terror" laws. Scandalously, West Australian maritime union leader and Socialist Alliance member, Chris Cain, has bought into this nationalist "anti-terror" campaign. In backing a claim made in parliament's *Watching Brief on the War on Terror*, Cain argued that, "The major ports are open to attack, (but) if you go up the Eastern coast line there's 6500 vulnerable kilometres..." (*Australian*, 29 June). In doing so Cain has not only fed the racist campaign against refugees but come in behind the very state forces arrayed against union militancy today.

The ALP on Refugees and Iraq

Among sections of Labor's working-class base—particularly immigrants—and liberal-minded professionals there is revulsion at both the government's persecution of refugees and the ALP's

fulsome support to this. At last year's ALP conference, Latham defeated internal dissent to his refugee policy from "Labor for Refugees" and aggressively reaffirmed ALP support to mandatory detention. Now, seeking to deflect opposition to ALP refugee policy among potential Labor voters, Latham has attacked Howard for his sinister lies in 2001 that refugees aboard the "Siev 4" threw their children overboard. But in doing so Latham was careful to avoid any actual defence of refugees. Indeed, the ALP is pushing for *more* vicious "border security," arguing for a coast-guard with high-speed helicopters armed with machine guns to intercept refugee boats. We say: No deportations! Asylum for all refugees! Down with racist immigration laws! Full citizenship rights for all who manage to make it here! Down with the anti-terror laws!

Spurred on by anger at the growing racism and militarism in society, hundreds of thousands of people marched in demonstrations last year against the war on Iraq. Hoping to co-opt such sentiments as well as continued unease about the ongoing occupation, earlier this year Latham promised to withdraw Australian troops from Iraq by Christmas. But fol-



Credit: Andy Tyndall

Child held in Australian government refugee detention hellhole, Christmas Island, 2003.

lowing blowback from the U.S. administration and a frenzy by the local bourgeois media, Latham has quickly backtracked and promoted the right-wing militarist Kim Beazley to the opposition front bench. And ever since then shame-faced Labor politicians have been queu-

ing up to swear allegiance to the counter-revolutionary U.S./Australia alliance and ANZUS treaty. The ALP emphasised its longstanding support for U.S. spy bases in Australia such as Pine Gap, which doubtless assist in deadly bombings in Iraq and target the bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, North Korea and Vietnam.

While worrying about Australian troops in Iraq and "terrorism" in the region, Beazley pontificated, "We must convince our [U.S.] ally that it is in the general allied interests that we should concentrate on the South-East Asian region" (*Australian Financial Review*, 27 May). This sums up Latham's earlier talk of "bringing our troops home" which had nothing to do with anti-militarism but everything to do with the transferral of military resources to enforce lucrative Australian imperialist investments and interests closer to "home." Indeed, the ALP has recently been pushing for a more sizable infantry to intervene in "regional crises," and "welcomed" the proposed purchase of a \$450 million cruise missile system, which would make the Australian air force the most powerful in the Southeast Asian area.

Similarly, the Greens, who sometimes

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East Timor...

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Out of East Timor!" endorsed by such groups as WP and the Freedom Socialist Party, SAlt refused to endorse or attend it, labeling it a "stunt" and declaring it was not a pressing issue in what was nothing but a show of their total contempt for the victims of bloody Australian imperialism. On the very day of the demonstration, East Timor saw heated protests by former Falintil fighters against the UN/Australian occupiers underscoring how "pressing" the issue was for the oppressed East Timorese. In fact SAlt have *never* called for Australian/UN troops out; a fact that underlines their accommodation of Australian imperialism.

Anti-Communism = Pro-Imperialism

What may amount to SAlt's most cynical, shameless statement in papers full of them is in their article "Can the United Nations' Help East Timor?" (*Socialist Alternative* No. 35, June 1999). They state "The most blatant example of the United Nations being used as an instrument of US foreign policy was the Korean war in the 1950s. This UN-legitimised conflict left about two million people dead and five million homeless..."

Before undergoing a non-political, cliquist split in 1995, SAlt was a part of the ISO, and still adheres to the underlying politics of this tendency. This tendency came into being when in 1950, Tony Cliff, the ideological father of SAlt and the ISO, was justly expelled from the Trotskyist Fourth International for refusing to defend the North Korean deformed workers state against British, U.S. and Australian imperialism in the Korean War mentioned by SAlt. This shameless capitulation to the anti-communist British Labour Party is conveniently left out of the above-mentioned article.

From this time, under the bogus theory of "state capitalism," the Cliffites



Asp photos

August 2002: Spartacist League initiated united-front demonstration demanding "Down With Australian Imperialism's Plunder of East Timor's Oil/Gas! Australian/UN Troops Out of East Timor!" at Sydney University and (right) Socialist Alternative supporters refuse invitation to join demonstration, labeling it a "stunt."

have displayed complete hostility towards the deformed and degenerated workers states, siding with any force intent on their destruction. For the ISO, lining up behind their "own" imperialists against the USSR further bogged them in the Laborite, reformist swamp. They rallied for the reactionary, priest-infested, pro-capitalist and anti-Semitic Solidarność who ushered counterrevolution into Poland. They cheered the Islamic fundamentalist Afghan *mujahedin* (prelude to the Taliban), which enslaved women in the veil, against the Soviet Red Army and Afghan leftists. In 1991 they hailed the ascendancy of Boris Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary forces, crowing, "Communism is dead".... It's a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist*, September 1991). Counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union has brought misery to its masses. Unemployment, once virtually non-existent, now stands at astronomical levels, while there has been a resurgence of nationalist bloodletting and communalist violence. Life expectancy has reverted to pre-revolutionary, tsarist levels as health and education, once provided for all, become increasingly restricted. We fought against counterrevolution and for the Trotskyist program of workers political revolution, distributing thousands of pieces of literature to Soviet workers and soldiers calling on them to "Defeat Yeltsin/Bush Counterrevolution!" We continue to defend the remaining deformed workers states of China,

Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea. Despite being led by nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, these countries, having overthrown capitalism, have at their core a collectivised economy with workers property forms laying the basis for real material and social advances, and representing real gains to the workers of those countries, and indeed, the world. What is needed is proletarian political revolution, to oust the privileged Stalinist bureaucracies and institute workers democracy based on soviets.

Since SAlt's split with the ISO their anti-communism has not abated. In every issue of their paper they include a spiel against the deformed workers states of China and Cuba as societies "essentially no different from the West." In constantly promoting, and siding with, the "democratic" imperialist powers as superior to those places where capitalism has been overthrown, it is not surprising that they lined up with these same powers over intervention into East Timor.

Break With the ALP! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The precondition for a successful working-class struggle capable of confronting capitalism is the political independence of the working class, which requires a break with the ALP. The ALP is what Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin termed a bourgeois workers party: that is, a party whose program and leadership is thoroughly pro-capitalist, but with a working-class base. Far from seeking to

break the working class from Labor, parties like the ISO and SAlt, tail them and push illusions in them as a "lesser evil," thus tying workers to their class enemy. More recently the ALP has supported the neo-colonial takeovers of the Solomon Islands and PNG, while at home backing reactionary legislation banning gay marriage and draconian anti-terror legislation whose main target is immigrants, and ultimately the left and organised labour. Despite all this, SAlt, as they always do, have called for a vote to Labor in the upcoming federal elections. Whatever one's subjective intentions may be in voting for the ALP in the upcoming elections, objectively one is also voting for their anti-working class and socially reactionary policies, including discrimination against homosexuals. **Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Down with "anti-terror" laws! Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military!**

In sharp contrast to this disgusting Laborism, we say: **No Vote to Labor! Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!** It is only through the building of such parties internationally that the rule of capital will be smashed and, under the rule of the international working class, imperialist subjugation from East Timor to Iraq will end forever. It is these parties that the International Communist League, of which the Spartacus Youth Club and Spartacist League of Australia are part, are committed to building. ■

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posture as peaceable folk, and who even call for the "demilitarisation of the South-East Asia-Pacific region," have in the recent period been strident regional militarists. Last year the ALP and the Greens backed the colonial-style Australian military occupation of the Solomon Islands which only last month led to desperate protests by imprisoned islanders against their inhuman treatment. And with anti-communist Greens leader, Bob Brown, in the forefront, both the Greens and Labor have been belligerent in their attacks against North Korea. We fight for the unconditional military defence of the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban deformed workers states, including their right to nuclear weapons to defend themselves against the imperialists. We say: Down with the anti-communist U.S./Australia alliance! U.S. bases out now! Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military! From Iraq, to the Solomons, to PNG to East Timor: racist Australian imperialist troops/cops get out now!

For International Class-Struggle Action!

An economic adjunct to the U.S./Australia alliance is the recent Free Trade Agreement (FTA), a reactionary trade bloc between the two imperialist states. Mindful of elements within the union bureaucracy pushing protectionist tariffs, the ALP initially stalled on supporting the agreement. However later, while generating a media circus which played on the desperation of many people for cheap medicines, the ALP gave its support to the Bush-Howard agreement. Labor's condition for supporting the deal was government acceptance of a Labor amendment that would only very partially deter drug companies from using the FTA to increase the price of pharmaceuticals. But in June this year, the ALP voted *in favour* of legislation that will drive up the cost of subsidised medicines by an estimated whopping 21 percent, thus adding significantly to the bills of those suffering from chronic and life-threatening illnesses such as cancer, diabetes and AIDS. This, combined with Latham's recently released tax policies, which would actually make things financially worse for the very poor and many sole parents, speaks volumes for the contempt in which the ALP holds workers and the downtrodden.

Meanwhile, with its visceral hatred of working people, the openly pro-business Howard government has gone after the ALP for allegedly wanting to strengthen the power of the unions. Hardly. Aside from tepid remarks about collective bargaining, the ALP has assiduously avoided giving the impression that it might defend union struggles. This was graphically seen when Latham, following the provocative 2 September High Court ruling which further severely circumscribed the legal "right" for unions to take industrial action, responded that nothing could be done. The imprisonment of union mili-

16 February, 2003: On the eve of the imperialist rape of Iraq, Spartacist banner at Sydney anti-war rally draws a class line against Laborite and Green Australian nationalism, illusions in UN.



tant Craig Johnston by the Victorian state Labor government of Steve Bracks, and the vicious attacks on the jobs and conditions of low-paid school cleaners by the NSW Labor government of Bob Carr, give workers a portent of the approach a federal Labor government would take to the unions.

We say there should be class-struggle actions to demand freedom for Craig Johnston. Down with all the bosses' anti-union laws! Key to defending the unions and unleashing working-class power is a political break from pro-capitalist Laborism. Down with nationalist protectionism, which lines up workers behind their exploiters at home and divides them from their true allies—the workers of the world! The protectionist notion that workers and capitalists have a common "national interest" in protecting local industry is a fraud. Any partnership between workers and the bosses only serves to stop workers from fighting against the capitalists and their decaying system, which is the real cause of unemployment as well as poverty and war.

What is needed to defend workers' jobs and conditions and make new gains is hard class struggle: strikes and mass pickets. To secure what working people need requires taking the means of production out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters through socialist revolution. Then, with the working class organised as the ruling class, a workers state based on democratically elected workers councils (soviets) would begin to reorganise society to the benefit of those who produce the wealth and not the wealthy few.

Fake Socialists: Wedded to Labor, Supporting the Greens

Given the ferocity of government attacks over the last eight years, mostly backed by Labor, the Greens have begun to attract significant numbers to their brand of sugar-coated capitalism. Their opposition to anti-union laws as well as their strident protectionism has also seen them become popular with some sections of the trade-union bureaucracy.

Yet despite an occasional policy that seeks to ameliorate the most vicious

aspects of capitalist rule, the Greens, who base themselves predominantly on the liberal petty bourgeoisie, are a fully-fledged capitalist party that stands in defence of the profit system. While opposing the mandatory detention of refugees, the Greens buy into the bosses' attempts to whip up nationalist fervour by relentlessly targeting "foreign ownership" and promoting national "self-reliance." Likewise, while they were present at protests against the war on Iraq, they are thoroughly loyal to the Australian imperialist military and its occupation forces in Iraq. When the invasion of Iraq began last year, Bob Brown rushed to declare that "the hope must be that the war will be short and swiftly remove Saddam Hussein." He continued: "Our one point of unity is heartfelt support for our loyal Australian defence force personnel in Iraq" (Greens media release, 21 March 2003).

One might expect that the Greens' commitment to the capitalist order would give purported socialists some pause. To the contrary, from Socialist Alternative to Socialist Alliance (SA) to the Socialist Party (SP), there has been a wave of left groups promoting electoral support for the bourgeois Greens. One of the most shameless in this exercise of class betrayal is SA, which is dominated by the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP). SA see the growth of the Greens as "very positive." In some respects this is not surprising given that SA push many of the same liberal illusions, particularly on the question of the capitalist state. For example, SA's promise to "halve spending on defence" is an open commitment to maintain the imperialist military which, along with the cops, courts and prisons, forms the core of the capitalist state that today kills Iraqis, attacks Aborigines, incarcerates refugees and keeps the working class down.

What SA is centrally about is an ALP electoral victory through preferences. Sometimes disguising this push for a Latham government with the catchcry of "Throw Howard Out," SA bleat, "Only a strong left vote can force Labor to be better than Howard."

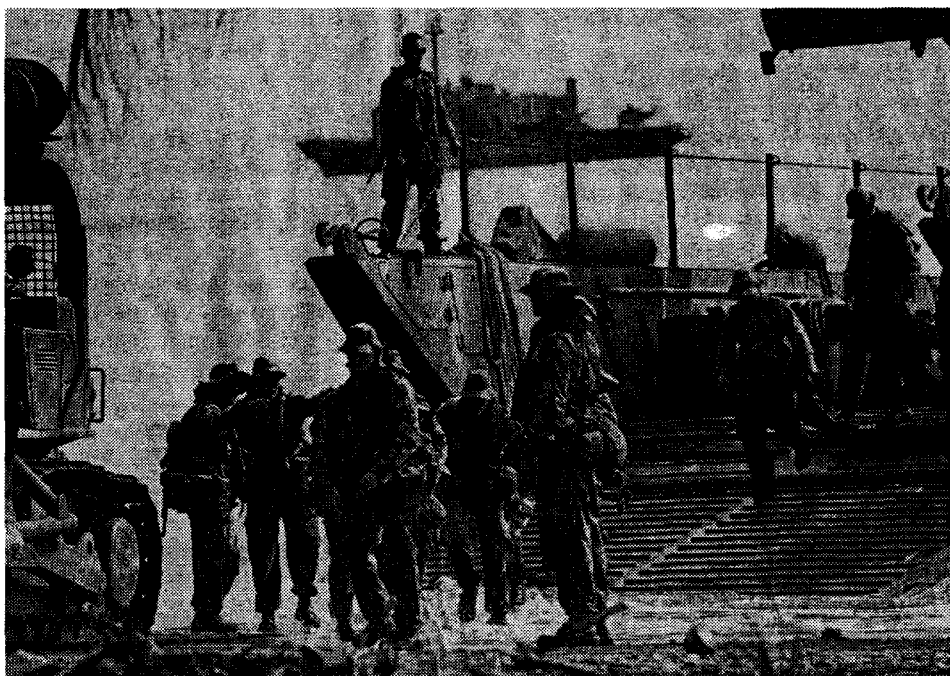
The SP, affiliated to the Committee for a Workers International, also call for a vote to the Greens. However, they simultaneously call for "a socialist mass workers' party" that would "mobilise the broadest amount of support from unions, community organisations student organisations, existing socialist and progressive parties...." "The programme of such a party," they continue "would be around basic issues such [sic] defending Medicare and the PBS, free education for all, opposition to racism, support for union coverage for all workers etc."

What SP are projecting here is a party consisting of members with widely divergent levels of class consciousness. Unity in such a politically heterogenous party can only be maintained on a lowest common denominator program where the more politically advanced workers are swamped and weighed down by backward layers more under the sway of bourgeois ideological influences. Such a party would, for example, be incapable of fighting against the nationalist poison of protectionism, since protectionism currently has wide support in the

workers movement, including from most of the more militant workers and unions who could support the SP around "basic issues." Similarly, such a party would end up often supporting the capitalist state and sometimes even promote Australian imperialist interventions. After all, the union leaderships and most "existing socialist and progressive parties" that the SP propose to "mobilise the broadest support from," accept the "need" for the imperialist military and, along with the SP, marched in demonstrations in 1999 for Australian troops to East Timor.

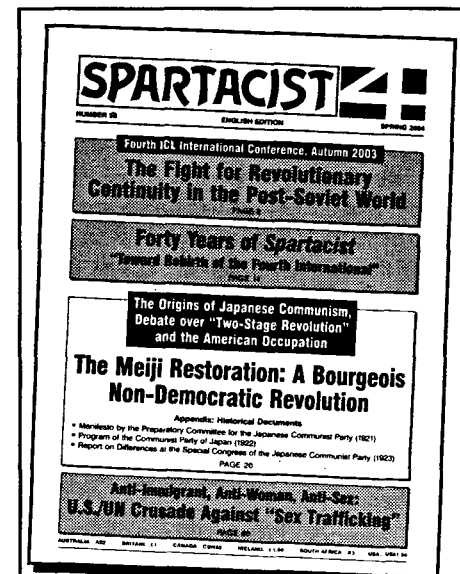
In short, a workers party like the one SP propose, that does not recruit to clear revolutionary principles, will be incapable of winning the working class from Laborite nationalism and subservience to the capitalist state. At best it would be a left version of the ALP, i.e., a new political obstacle to workers revolution.

Unlike SP, we Trotskyists of the Spartacist League, section of the International Communist League, seek to build a genuine communist vanguard party. Such a party of the working class would be built on the model of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the October 1917 Russian Revolution, the only consciously-organised successful workers revolution to date. Forged in the struggle to split the working-class base of the ALP from the nationalist, pro-capitalist tops, a revolutionary workers vanguard party in Australia would be cohered on a program that is openly revolutionary and internationalist. This party would take up every manifestation of capitalist oppression and would seek class-struggle unity with the working masses of Asia, from the combative proletariat of Indonesia and the Philippines to the powerful working class of Japan. In the course of struggles it would unite and politically prepare workers for the inevitable crises of the capitalist system and at the decisive moment, in the footsteps of the Bolsheviks, lead the proletariat in a socialist revolution. ■



Troops based in north Queensland city of Townsville (a city notorious for anti-Aboriginal racism) landed in Solomon Islands August last year to impose racist Australian imperialist control over the brown-skinned population.

Kate Geraghty



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



For the Right of Gay Marriage...and Divorce!

Marriage and the Capitalist State

Thousands of people have participated in protests against legislation introduced by the Howard government to ban the recognition of marriage for same-sex couples. On 13 August the Marriage Amendment Bill 2004 was passed in the Senate, and into law, with support from the Australian Labor Party (ALP) opposition.

Approximately 1,000 people attended a 26 June demonstration in Sydney organised by the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, where the ALP was loudly booed and denounced by protesters for supporting this reactionary legislation. The Socialist Alliance-dominated Community Action Against Homophobia (CAAH) organised a 25 July protest in Sydney. CAAH treacherously presented on the speakers platform federal Labor MP Tanya Plibersek who defended the ALP's support for the legislation. Plibersek was rightly booed and heckled by angry protesters but rally organisers refused to denounce her from the platform.

We reprint below an article from Workers Vanguard (No. 824, 16 April), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., on the right to gay marriage. The article was widely distributed by Spartacist participants at the 26 June and 25 July gay rights demonstrations.

"Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

"On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

"The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital."

—Communist Manifesto (1848)

Until the welcome day capitalism *does* vanish, the monogamous family remains the legally enforced social model, at least in Western societies, for the organization of private life in its most intimate aspects: love, sex, bearing and raising children. It is the central social institution oppressing women; anti-gay bigotry flows from the need to punish any "deviations" from this patriarchal structure. Why anyone not under social pressure or economic duress would voluntarily enter the bonds of matrimony is, of course, one of life's mysteries. Nonetheless, it appears that these days the only people who actually want to get married are the only ones President Bush wants to stop: gays and lesbians.

Absolutely, they ought to have the right to marry. And just as absolutely, we socialists fight for a society in which no one needs to be forced into a legal strait-jacket in order to get medical benefits, visitation rights, custody of children, immigration rights, or any of the many privileges this capitalist society grants to those, and only those, who are embedded in the traditional "one man on one woman for life" legal mold.

Controversy over "gay marriage" has roiled the U.S. since last November, when the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that permitting only "civil unions" for gay couples was unconstitutional, thus establishing the right to gay marriage in Massachusetts. In February the San Francisco mayor ordered same-sex marriage licenses issued, and 4,037 gay and lesbian couples from 46 states and eight countries got hitched before

President Bush, supporting the anti-gay constitutional amendment, intoned: "The union of a man and a woman is the most enduring human institution, honored and encouraged in all cultures and by every religious faith," complaining that "After...millennia of human experience, a few judges and local authorities are presuming to change the most fundamental institution of civilization." Meanwhile, the *Wall Street Journal*, beady

same time, gay marriage in itself will not end the often deadly prejudice and pain gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people encounter every day in this homophobic, anti-sex society. But that pain makes it even more important to fight for every possible democratic right, every form of social and political equality that can be wrested from this society.

It is a vital task of the workers revolutionary vanguard to fight for full democratic rights for gays—including, today, marriage rights—and to fight to win the working class to this cause. The Spartacist League has done this since its inception. As Lenin pointed out in his 1902 work *What Is To Be Done?*:

"Working class consciousness cannot be genuinely political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected...Why is it that the Russian workers as yet display so little revolutionary activity in connection with the brutal way in which the police maltreat the people, in connection with the persecution of the religious sects, with the flogging of the peasantry, with the outrageous censorship, with the torture of soldiers, with the persecution of the most innocent cultural enterprises, etc.?... We must blame ourselves for being unable as yet to organize a sufficiently wide, striking and rapid exposure of these despicable outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it), the most backward worker will understand, *or will feel*, that the students and religious sects, the muzhiks and the authors are being abused and outraged by the very same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life."

Here in the United States, one of the most politically backward "advanced" capitalist countries on earth, saddled with a huge burden of puritanism and religious fundamentalism to boot, there is a lot of backwardness on the gay question.

Even among black workers, historically among the most militant in the proletariat and in general those with the fewest illusions in the "good nature" of this rotten capitalist social order, there is a significant amount of anti-gay prejudice. Much of it is pushed by conservative forces in the black church, although even the black churches are deeply split on this question. As we wrote in our article, "For the Right to Gay Marriage!": "In its extreme, one gets the phenomenon of a black Baptist minister, the Rev. Gregory Daniels, who declared, 'If the K.K.K. opposes gay marriage, I would ride with them' (*New York Times*, 1 March). He might saddle up, but it will be a short ride—the first target of this motley collection of nativist, anti-labor fascists is black people" (*WV* No. 821, 5 March).

In contrast to this myopic anti-gay prejudice is the compassion so many black people feel because they know firsthand the torment and danger of oppression and discrimination. A Massachusetts State Senator from Roxbury put it well: "I know the pain of being less than equal, and I cannot and will not impose that status on anyone else. I was but one generation removed from an existence in slavery. I could not in good conscience ever vote to send anyone to that place



Sydney Star Observer

Protests in Sydney (right) and Hobart (above) against Australian government legislation banning gay marriage. Bigoted new law was supported by ALP.



jamiedunbar.com

ceremonies were ordered halted on March 11. The Green Party mayor of New Paltz, New York, jumped into the fray, officiating at 25 same-sex marriages. When he was barred by court order from continuing, two local Unitarian ministers took over, only to have criminal charges filed against them by the Ulster County D.A. for solemnizing "unlicensed marriages" in March.

In 1996, Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act which pronounced, "the word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife." With unholy glee, Christian fundamentalists of all sorts are now pushing an amendment to the U.S. Constitution banning states from recognizing gay marriage (39 states already refuse to countenance it). Others warn direly that the floodgates of unspeakable immorality are now open. Polygamy is the least of it; Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, dissenting from last year's Supreme Court decision overturning Texas sodomy laws, claimed that decision could abolish bans not only on same-sex marriage, but also "adult incest, prostitution, masturbation, adultery, fornication, bestiality, and obscenity."

profit-making eye on the bottom line, featured a piece on "Cashing In on Gay Marriage" (March 11), while vendors presented "Loveland," a "Same-Sex Wedding Expo" at New York's Jacob Javits convention center.

All this sudden churning of the crazed, hypocritical witches' brew that passes for American political discourse these days, especially on questions involving sex, certainly has its darkly humorous and bizarre side. Partly that's because the messy reality most people actually live in bears little resemblance to the rigid official portraits of Christian moral rectitude this government claims as models of social behavior. But the deeper social issues involved are deadly serious, ranging from the most intimate personal questions to broad areas of responsibility for raising new generations, and how to care for others, whether family, friends or lovers; in short, how "private life" in its entirety is defined and organized.

Workers Must Fight for Democratic Rights for Gays!

Apocalyptic predictions of the end of civilization if gays are allowed to marry are obviously hysterical fantasies; at the

from which my family fled." Others can't see that an injury to one is an injury to all, and so in a backhanded way end up in the camp of the racist anti-gay bigots. Black columnist Adrian Walker, writing in the *Boston Globe* (12 February), quoted one clergyman: "Think about Emmett Till, the Scottsboro Boys, and those police dogs in Birmingham—and then tell me they've faced what we've faced." This has nothing to do with civil rights." This reflects in part the pernicious influence of Democratic Party "constituency" politics, where one sector of the oppressed is pitted against another in the scramble for aid from a state which defends capitalist rule.

Of course there are many, and qualitative, differences between black oppression and gay oppression in this society. Racism is the bedrock of American capitalism, the great fault line in American politics since the founding of the nation on the backs of black slaves. The ruling class consciously manipulates racism to weaken the proletariat. The fight for black freedom will be central to the proletarian revolution in the U.S. For that revolution to succeed, the working class, including its strategic black component, must understand its historic task is to abolish class society in order to open the road to human freedom for *everyone*. And that most certainly includes gays—and everyone else who, however self-defined, rebels against the straitjacket social roles imposed by the capitalist ruling class.

Further, violence against gays, lesbians and, increasingly, transgendered people is a deadly constant on America's mean streets and in the repressive holding pens known as public schools. The grisly 1998 murder in Laramie of Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old gay Wyoming student who was kidnapped, beaten, burnt and then left tied to a fence to die, shocked the nation. Though accurate statistics are almost impossible to come by, given that many victims don't come forward because they rightly fear more harassment from cops, school authorities or parents, and because

1999, U.S.: Spartacists at New York City one-year anniversary memorial rally for Matthew Shepard (inset), murdered by anti-gay bigots in Wyoming.

Workers Vanguard



States. The point of these few examples is not to "prove" that any social group is more or less hurt than any other, but to indicate that moral regimentation is part of what keeps this unjust society running the way it does.

It was a good thing that the U.S. Supreme Court struck down sodomy statutes in its 2003 *Lawrence v. Texas* ruling, because it explicitly overturned the Court's infamously reactionary 1986 decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick* that upheld states' anti-sodomy laws. That decision castigated gays with statements like "proscriptions against sodomy have ancient roots." Chief Justice Warren Burger practically called for a holy war against homosexuals, writing approvingly in his concurrence that "Blackstone described 'the infamous crime against nature' as an offense of 'deeper malignity' than rape, a heinous act 'the very mention of which is a disgrace to human nature,' and 'a crime not fit to be named'." This is the legal language that gives cover to gay-bashing.

Gays still don't have full civil rights: they aren't allowed to serve openly in the U.S. military, for example. According to the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a gay rights group, in the ten years since Democratic president Bill Clinton adopted the infamous "don't ask, don't tell" policy, around 10,000 service members have been discharged for being openly gay. As we stated when that policy was raised: "Open gays and lesbians have just as much right as anyone else to participate in the armed forces," while raising the classic Marxist slogan of "Not one man, not one penny" for the military ("Gays in the Military," WV No. 569, 12 February 1993). This is the tradition of militant Marxism in opposition to imperialist war. At the same time, the military is a microcosm of society as a whole, and so we fight against racist atrocities and discrimination in the armed forces just as we do in the rest of society. The fight to integrate black soldiers fully into the armed forces toward the end of World War II created a potentially powerful base for struggles for black emancipation—and in fact black civil rights activists also fought for homosexual rights in the armed forces then.

Government and Social Control of Women

Many people still would argue, gays should have democratic rights, but why marriage? The capitalist politicians running for president are all dancing around the pretty meaningless "civil union" cop-out, basically catering to religious reactionaries with votes. But isn't marriage in some sense "special," more private, more "sacred" somehow? Not at all. Monogamous marriage is a creation of society, not god (since there isn't one), and it has been used historically as a means of reactionary social control by the ruling class.

We advocate effective consent in all sexual relations and think that what any combination of individuals do in bed is

nobody's business but the participants themselves, as long as it's consensual. While defending the right to gay marriage, we also argue that the "marriage mania" represents a fundamentally conservative thrust by the well-to-do petty-bourgeois gay milieu. It's a far cry from "free love" and the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969 to today's marriage ceremonies, PTA meetings and Democratic and Republican Party fund-raisers. In the quest for bourgeois "respectability," gay pride day organizers have viciously banned NAMBLA (North American Man-Boy Love Association) from their marches (thereby fueling the "anti-pedophilia" hysteria which targets all gays) and welcomed contingents of gay cops who spend a good part of their time busting "sex offenders."

Nonetheless, by analogy to our position on the armed forces, we oppose excluding any category of people from access to the privileges and benefits such institutions offer in this society. At the same time, in the course of fighting for these rights, we seek to convince activists that to really resolve women's and gay oppression it is necessary to create a socialist society, in which the current functions of the bourgeois family are socialized: communal childcare; communal kitchens; free, quality health care; and in all ways freeing women from the burden of child rearing and household slavery.

A look at the history of monogamous marriage in the United States reveals its use as a tool of governmental control. A valuable book on this subject, Nancy F. Cott's *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2000), states: "The structure of marriage...facilitates the government's grasp on the populace.... In the form of the law and state enforcement, the public sets the terms of marriage, says who can and cannot marry, who can officiate, what obligations and rights the agreement involves, whether it can be ended and if so, why and how." The following history is largely drawn from that book; quotations from other sources are noted.

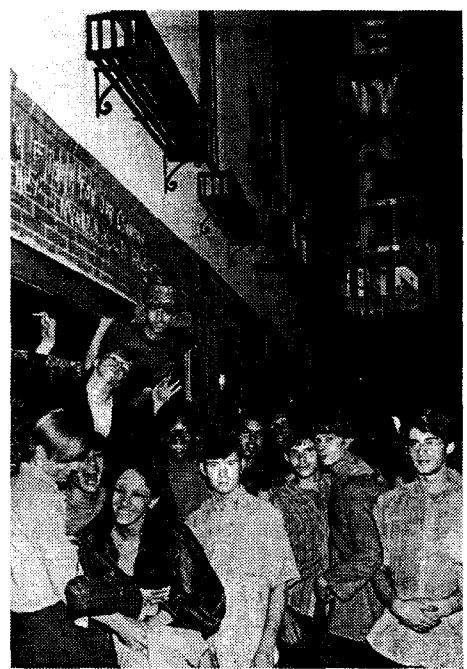
One of the book's central themes is how entire categories of people, especially those deemed "inferior," were

denied the legal right to marry in many states. This included, most notoriously, black slaves, who of course had no rights whatsoever. And for decades after the Civil War, blacks and Asians were banned from marrying whites. Additionally, as Cott writes, "Prohibiting divergent marriages has been as important in public policy as sustaining the chosen model." Thus polygamous Mormons and Native Americans were forbidden to practice their own forms of "marriage," while attempts at utopian communes made in the years before the Civil War came under massive assault following the North's victory and the consolidation of the American nation under the strengthening grip of industrial capitalism.

In America from the beginning, marriage, though infused with Christian doctrine, was a matter of governmental control, not primarily a religious institution, because the U.S. was established on the formal basis of separation of church and state. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, marriage itself, based on older common law, was seen as "a form of governance.... A man's headship of a family, his taking the responsibility for dependent wife and children, qualified him to be a participating member of a state.... Under the common law, a woman was absorbed into her husband's legal and economic persona upon marrying, and her husband gained the civic presence she lost." This concept in fact continued right up through the 20th century, and was really only dealt a decisive blow, in terms of public civil rights at least, with women getting the right to vote nationally in 1920. However, Congress determined in 1922 that a wife would lose her citizenship if she married a foreigner and stayed in his country for two years; other grounds for female loss of citizenship included marriage to an Asian, a polygamist—or an anarchist!

Within the strict confines of the marriage relationship, male supremacy remained largely intact. Cott describes three U.S. Supreme Court cases, in 1904, 1908 and 1911, all of which essentially upheld the husband's right to control of his wife's body. The 1904 case determined a husband's right to collect "damages" from his wife's lover in a case of adultery, even asserting that the husband's right to "exclusive" sexual intercourse was "a right of the highest kind, upon...which the whole social order rests" (rhetorical excess, to be sure; were this literally true, civilization would have collapsed long ago). The 1908 case justified Congress's ban on bringing women to the U.S. for an "immoral purpose," thus keeping out a man and his mistress and upholding the government's authority to legislate monogamy and punish women who transgressed. The 1911 case involved a woman's attempt to sue her husband for assault and battery. The Supreme Court refused to interfere between man and wife, rejecting the "radical and far-reaching" belief that a wife could sue her husband for injuries "as though they were strangers," and that it was "better to draw the curtain, shut out the public gaze," as an earlier North Carolina court decision put it, on the prerogatives of male brutality within the family circle. It took massive

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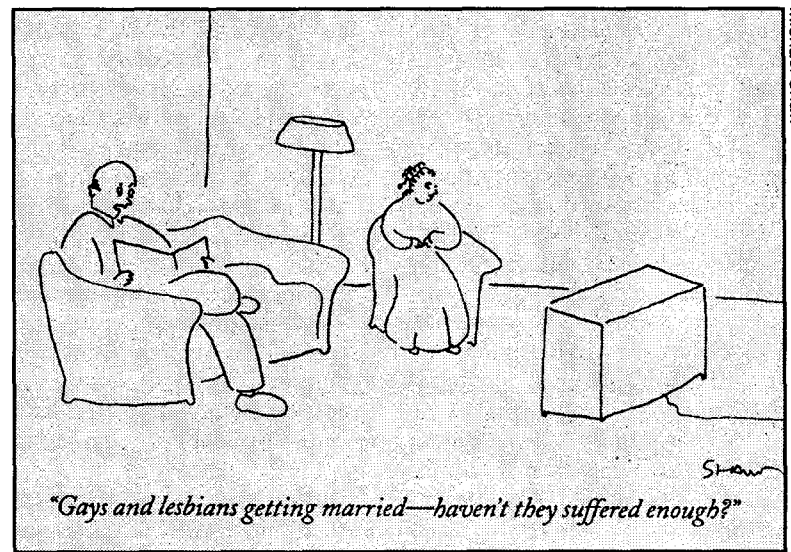


Fred W. McDarrah

New York City, June 1969: Young gay activists gather outside Stonewall bar after brutal cop attack which triggered "Stonewall Rebellion."

official statistics don't always accurately list "hate crimes," there are still well over 1,000 reported cases a year of violence, sometimes fatal, against gays and lesbians and others deemed sexually "deviant."

A recent Internet search uncovered an article from the *Arizona Tucson Citizen* (23 February) titled "Gays, Jews Top Targets of Hate Crimes Here," which described the June 2002 beating to death of 24-year-old Philip Walsted, who was gay. It was a hate crime, according to police. In January of this year another gay man was found lying on the street, badly beaten, near a gay bar in Tucson, while a gay University of Arizona student was stabbed in 2000. That's just a few stories from one city. According to the Winter 2003 Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Report, there were 27 murders of transgendered people in a 21-month period (2002-2003) in the United



Michael Shaw

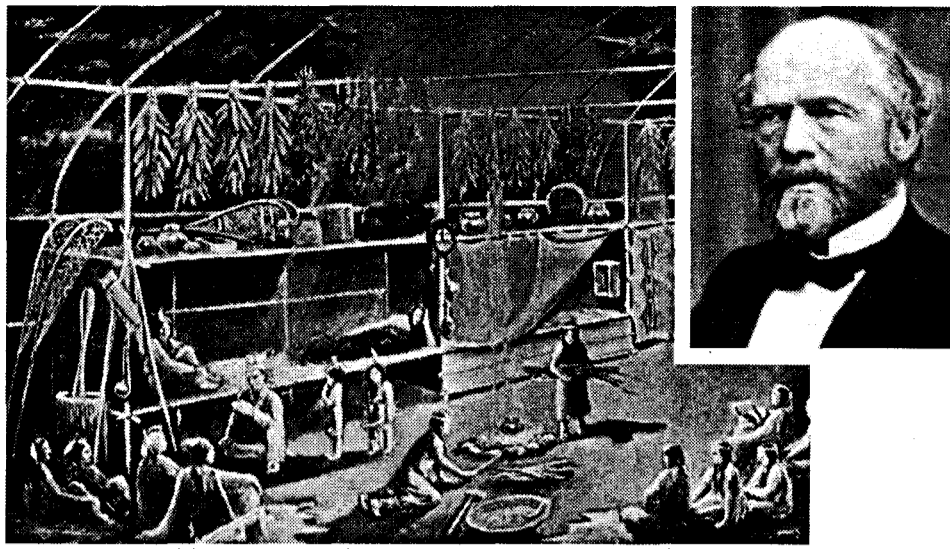
Marriage...

(continued from page 7)

social upheaval and a wave of New Left-derived feminist activism in the 1970s to finally breach what was in fact the husband's right to rape his wife; only in 1984 did a New York court finally overturn that state's marital rape exemption, then followed by others.

Native Americans, Blacks, Asians, Immigrants: Forced or Banned Marriages

The creation of the American nation rested on the backs of black slaves—and on the virtual obliteration of the native Indian population of tribal hunter-gatherers and agriculturalists—resulting in the creation of a bourgeois democracy for white, male property owners. How much more we could have learned about the early history of our species from these indigenous peoples, relentlessly slaughtered and driven onto "reservations," is a question American Marxists must feel keenly. Friedrich Engels' work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), was after all inspired by American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan's pioneering research into the family patterns of North American tribes. It was this research, in good part, that led to the Marxist understanding that in fact human beings have lived "for millennia" in *non-patriarchal* relationships, in tribal, matrilineal societies in which women were not enslaved within the straitjacket of monogamous marriage, in which children were the responsibility of both men and



Municipal Museum, Rochester; Morgan Papers, University of Rochester (inset)
Interior of an Iroquois long house. Research by anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan (inset) on pre-capitalist societies informed Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*.

ment to adopt monogamy as 'the law of social life' to become citizens."

On the other hand, for black slaves in America, legal marriage was out of the question, though slaveholders did encourage childbearing to reproduce and expand the slave population, especially after 1808 when importation of slaves was banned. "Concubinage, which is voluntary on the part of the slaves, and permissive on that of the master...in reality, is the relation, to which these people have ever been practically restricted," wrote the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court in 1838. Thus the fight for the right to marriage, as an assertion of the right to control one's own body and make a free contract with another human

ment in that family order which lies at the very foundation of Church and State." On the other side, those among the anti-slavery abolitionists and early women's rights advocates who shared the liberal ideals of individual freedom and the view that "self-ownership" was a natural right, saw that both slaves and married women lacked this basic right. As Lucy Stone put it, "Marriage is to woman a state of slavery. It takes from her the right to her own property, and makes her submissive in all things to her husband."

Following the Civil War, successive stages of immigration fed the fires of growing industrialization in the U.S. Here too the government's marriage policies were aimed at social control. Chinese immigrants on the West Coast, who first came in the gold rush, were in demand for mining and railroad-building, but when the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, an explosion of anti-Chinese racism was unleashed. The first federal step to restrict immigration, the Page Act of 1875, was aimed at Asian women, who were supposedly all prostitutes, and required "the U.S. consul to make sure that any immigrant debarking from an Asian country was not under contract for 'lewd and immoral purposes.'" By 1913 eight states had laws against whites marrying Japanese or Chinese people.

"Free Love" Utopias and Polygamy

In the stormy years leading up to the great social explosion that was the American Civil War, the last progressive gasp of the bourgeoisie (like the 1848 Revolutions in Europe) in North America, many experimental utopian socialist alternatives to monogamous marriage flowered. There were many "free love" communities established in the U.S., inspired by such utopian visionaries as Robert Owen, Claude Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier, whose profound insight that the status of women is the decisive indicator of social progress inspired further Marxist theory on the subject. The New York Oneida community, founded in 1849 with a pamphlet called *Slavery and Marriage: A Dialogue*, did away with the exclusive pairing of couples, though within a rather formal structure. These groups, though ridiculed and condemned, were not by and large prosecuted before the Civil War, but afterward, when in the name of "consolidating" the nation, a crackdown on most forms of "social deviation" began.

One interesting—and still contemporary—group stands out in all this: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, one of whose founding tenets is the right of men to polygamy, or multiple marriage to many women at once. Right-wingers today throw up their hands in horror at gay marriage, breathlessly bemoaning that polygamy will be next. Well, guess what, it's already here, and has been for over a hundred years, out in Utah and other Western states, where an estimated 30,000 old-style Mormons still practice the sect's early preaching, though the "official" church formally renounced it a long time ago. We believe

the Mormons have the right to be left alone, to practice their religion and live their private lives however they see fit. Our position for the right of gay marriage, like the right of Mormons to practice polygamy, stems from our opposition to government interference with the rights of individuals to effect whatever consensual arrangements they wish. We pointed out that American Mormons, including the women, essentially freely choose their practice, unlike in countries without bourgeois revolutions, where women are still little more than property of their patriarchal masters and where polygamous social systems must be relentlessly opposed. As we wrote in "Free Tom Green! Mormon Polygamists: Leave Them Alone!" (WV No. 764, 14 September 2001), defending a man convicted of felony bigamy charges:

"The family structure—whether monogamous or polygamous—necessarily oppresses women. However, not everybody understands the source of their oppression, and people do all sorts of things that are undoubtedly bad for them that the state still has no business throwing them in prison for. As Marxists we understand that the family serves a real social purpose and cannot simply be 'abolished,' even in a workers state, but must be replaced with alternate social institutions."

Women's Liberation, Individual Freedoms and the Fight for Socialism

So, as radical columnist Alexander Cockburn put it, "Why rejoice when state and church extend their grip, which is what marriage is all about?" ("Sidestep on Freedom's Path," *CounterPunch*, 20/21 March). Cockburn quotes early ACT UP activist Jim Eigo on the question: "Why are current mainstream gay organizations working to strike a bargain with straight society that will make some queers less equal than others?... Marriage has no more place in efforts to achieve equality than slavery or the divine right of kings. At this juncture in history, wouldn't it make more sense for us to try to figure out how to relieve heterosexuals of the outdated shackles of matrimony?"

It certainly would. And it is the modern Marxist movement which has figured out how to break those shackles, through abolishing the system of private property in the means of production, thus abolishing the need for the bourgeois family structure to pass on such private wealth. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote in response to the magazine *Liberty* (14 January 1933) which asked, "Is Bolshevism deliberately destroying the family?":

"If one understands by 'family' a compulsory union based on the marriage contract, the blessing of the church, property rights, and the single passport, then Bolshevism has destroyed this policed family from the roots up.

"If one understands by 'family' the unbounded domination of parents over children, and absence of legal rights for the wife, then Bolshevism has, unfortunately, not yet completely destroyed this carryover of society's old barbarism.

"If one understands by 'family' ideal monogamy—not in the legal but in the actual sense—then the Bolsheviks could not destroy what never was nor is on earth, barring fortunate exceptions." ■

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Women and Revolution

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No. 1 (May/June 1971) through No. 20 (Spring 1980)

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AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST



Oneida Community Mansion House

Oneida community, one of many 19th-century U.S. communes inspired by utopian socialists that practised alternatives to monogamous marriage.

women. Monogamous marriage is a social invention brought to North America by the colonizers, along with their diseases, their "sacred family" and their slaves.

So the Native American population, when not simply killed, was offered an "enlightened" choice by their overseers: rot on the reservation or give up your "heathen" ways. As Cott puts it, "Most groups—notably the Iroquois, who dominated the eastern part of North America—did not make the nuclear family so fundamental an economic and psychological unit as Protestants did, nor did they generally recognize private property as such.... The federal government consistently encouraged or forced Indians to adopt Christian-model monogamy as the *sine qua non* of civilization and morality." In some cases it was considered that Indians could be "civilized" by converting to Christianity, and marriage of an Indian woman to a white male was tolerated, though in some dozen states marriages between Indians and whites were declared non-valid. The 1887 Dawes Act stole Indians' communal land and undermined their tribal way of life, assigning male family "last names" to Indians (against native cultural tradition), and establishing "individual property-ownership, and further subverted native American women's roles as agriculturists by presuming the Indian male should be the landowner and farmer." Cott writes: "Like ex-slaves and ex-polygamists, Indians were required by the federal govern-

being, was seen as an important aspect of the fight for black freedom.

As it is with just about everything else in America, racism is deeply intertwined with marriage law. Attempts to keep the "white race" "unmixed" were a unique feature of the American colonies since their inception (with the peculiar result that people of all different skin tones and ancestral background are automatically considered "black" if there is even a hint of a black ancestor somewhere). Ever since the inception of monogamous marriage and the family, from ancient times on, laws against intermarriage between different classes aimed to preserve ruling-class privileges. Spain in 1776 had such laws, as did the British imperialists in Ireland in the 14th century, for example. But America uniquely developed the illogic of racism, due to its slaveholding history, to such an extent that even after the victorious Civil War that freed the slaves, many states still banned black-white marriage; in Mississippi the penalty was life imprisonment. The miscegenation law was not repealed in Alabama until 2000!

The relationship between slavery and women's subordinate position in marriage was widely noted and utilized by those on both sides of the issues. Southern evangelical Protestant ministers, who published more than half of pre-Civil War pro-slavery tracts, regularly quoted the Bible; a typical claim was that god "included slavery as an organizing ele-

Women...

(continued from page 2)

closing of the nursing school at Sydney University! No to government funding of private and religious education—for the separation of church and state! For a massive boost in funds for public education; for free, secular, quality education for all!

It is in the working class's interest to champion the democratic rights of all sections of the population, throwing off the tyrannies and prejudices that constrain them from fighting together against the bourgeoisie's rule of exploitation. The full combative potential of women and minority workers must be unlocked. We Trotskyists of the Spartacist League (SL), section of the International Communist League (ICL), stand for **free abortion on demand, free quality health care for all!** Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! For the right of gay and lesbian marriage and divorce! Full democratic rights for homosexuals!

"Official" racism and anti-woman reaction has spawned violent attacks that must be decisively combated. In Melbourne, "Blackshirts," a despicable group of "aggrieved fathers," have been terrifying and threatening single mothers. Wearing black paramilitary uniforms and unmistakably fascist swastika-like insignia, the group carries out its goal "to bring back family values" by picking out divorced women for intimidation and harassment at their homes. The organised workers movement and left should defend the women targeted and drive these thugs off the streets.

Working Class Demands Maternity Leave, Childcare

By and large, the family "morality" that the government and church seek to impose on the population is at variance with what a lot of working people care about and certainly need. The mass of working people want quality health care, secure employment with decent wages and hours, and working parents want affordable and accessible childcare. A sizeable majority of the population supports women's right to abortion.

An increasingly strongly felt demand of working and middle-class women and men, in the last few years, has been for paid maternity and paternity leave. A union campaign has enabled workers at some sites, like Sara Lee and Robert Bosch, to be granted such conditions. Strike action by Sydney University workers last year won staff 14 weeks fully paid maternity leave and a further 38 weeks leave at 60 percent pay. But Australia still stands, alongside the U.S., alone amongst the wealthy nations of the OECD with **no** universal paid maternity leave scheme.

Bosses' organisations have desperately opposed any government-paid maternity leave and Howard's reactionary Liberal Party minion, Nick Minchin, denounced proposals for such a scheme as "middle class welfare." Seeking to appease its working-class base, for a period ALP leaders attacked Howard over his government's failure to introduce a paid

maternity leave scheme and promoted Labor as the party that would increase funding for childcare. But as elections neared, the ALP disappointed many of its supporters by announcing in March a policy excluding guaranteed paid maternity leave as it rushed to assure corporate heavies of its "family values" credentials and economic "responsibility." Latham announced a paltry "baby-care" payment that would be means-tested on family income, effectively meaning that married mothers on low income would lose the payment if their husband's income was high enough to push the combined income above the threshold.

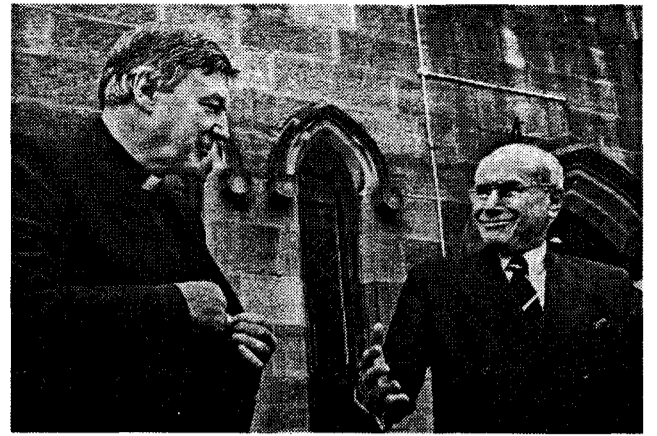
Such economic discrimination against working women has been a feature of the conservative Howard regime, whose tax policies have been carefully designed to push women back into the home. For example, a sizeable tax deduction for parents with dependent children (The Family Tax Benefit—Part B) is effectively denied to couples if both partners work, even if they are on low incomes. Research by the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling shows that as a result of the design of the tax system and the exorbitant cost of childcare, a married woman with three children who gets a 13-hour-a-week part-time job on the minimum wage will lose \$1.08 for every \$1 earned!



July 29: Nurses rally at RPA hospital against closing of Sydney University nursing faculty.

Despite all these constraints women's participation rate in the workforce has increased since the 1980s albeit often in insecure casual jobs, with only a few hours per week. Increased participation in the workforce has seen a concomitant increase in the demand for childcare places. At the same time childcare has become more expensive and less accessible for working women. In 1996, the Howard government savagely cut subsidies to community-based childcare centres. Today, the unmet demand for childcare is estimated to be anything from 200,000 to one million places! Waiting times for privately-run childcare places can be up to two years. And while child-

August 1: Anti-abortion bigot and archbishop of Sydney, George Pell, and prime minister Howard announce funding for nursing course at a private, Catholic university. Government had shortly before pulled the plug on nursing at public Sydney University.



Australian

care workers are paid pathetic wages, the estimated cost of childcare has risen by 30 percent in the last two years and hovers at about \$50 a day. Those who find these charges unpayable have to call on grandparents or other relatives and friends in a constant juggling act; or couples often work opposite shifts so that the kids will not be home alone.

It is in the class interests of the whole of the proletariat to actively fight for free and accessible childcare and champion the fight for women's emancipation. From strikes and bans by nurses, hospital workers and teachers, to pickets at struck manufacturing plants, women have been at the centre of many union struggles that have occurred in the last few years. But

from petty individual housekeeping to large-scale domestic services" (V.I. Lenin, "International Working Women's Day" [March 1921]). This would enable women to fully participate in the workforce and in the running of society and to have the leisure time for artistic and other pursuits. In the course of a few generations this would lead to the complete disappearance of backward social attitudes towards women. And freed from the economic and social compulsion which forces couples in capitalist society to remain together and sometimes causes them to split apart, human beings can finally engage, and disengage, in relationships and pleasures of whatever form they choose purely on the basis of mutual inclination.

Break With Laborism!

While socialism is in the objective interests of the exploited masses and all the oppressed, the present leaders of the Australian working class, the ALP parliamentary and union leaders, are thoroughly loyal to capitalism. The Laborite misleaders base themselves on a privileged section of better-paid workers, a labour aristocracy, who are conservatised by receiving crumbs from Australian imperialist exploitation in this region. Over the last 20 years, the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats in this country have allowed thousands of full-time, permanent jobs to be lost through factory closures and casualisation without serious class-struggle opposition. The Laborite tops act to subordinate struggles to the decisions of the bosses' arbitration courts and sell them out with the lie that an ALP-run capitalist government will improve the lot of working people.

Today, while ACTU leaders have proclaimed their support for greater access to childcare, they have failed to mobilise any class-struggle action to fight for this. Instead they have channelled proletarian demands for childcare into parliamentary lobbying and calls for a cross-class "National Childcare Advisory Body." Meanwhile, for all the ACTU's talk about fighting for paid maternity leave, when Latham announced in March his policy that notably excluded such a scheme, ACTU president, Sharan Burrow nevertheless hailed the policy as a "fabulous foundation stone" for more family-friendly workplaces (*Australian Financial Review*, 1 April). And while there have been important union campaigns for paid maternity leave at individual work-sites, the ACTU has primarily been derailing working-class demands on this question into a case in the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) focused on the demand for **unpaid** maternity leave! Summarising the nature of the ACTU "strategy," Burrow stated: "We don't seek to impose additional burdens on business" (ABC-FM news bulletin, 1 September).

To shackle union power to the promise of "victory" in the IRC is a traitorous policy. The courts are not neutral "umpires" between the interests of workers and capital but are part of the capitalist state—at its core the cops, military, prisons and courts—which acts to enforce the rule of the bosses. To the extent concessions from the bosses are ever formalised in the courts it is not because of their "justice" but because the bosses have calculated that the balance of forces at a particular moment demands this in order to stave off what they really fear, the

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Statement of the International Communist League, 23 October 2002

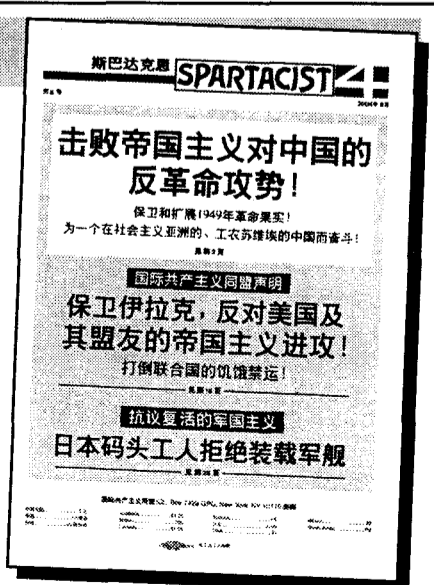
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Women...

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unleashing or continuation of union industrial action. The Arbitration system was in fact set up in the early 1900s as a racist pact between the "White Australia" Laborites and the capitalist rulers. It enshrined anti-woman chauvinism, providing the legal basis for paying women lower wages, declaring in 1912 that "a man was paid to support a family and a woman only to support herself." In June of this year, the IRC provoked just outrage from unionised teachers when it ruled that Catholic school principals deserved more pay than their secular state school counterparts due to their "mission" for the "renewal of the church."

What needs to be built in the unions is a class-struggle leadership, one that will fight for the complete political independence of the working class from the capitalist state. Such a leadership would be linked to a multiracial revolutionary workers party that would actively fight to champion the emancipation of women. A communist party would include a section for work amongst women aimed at extending the influence of the party to layers of working-class and plebeian women whose participation in the revolutionary movement is vital. In fighting to build such a party, the SL looks to the example of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks.

Women's Liberation and Workers States

In 1917, the Bolsheviks led the Russian working class in the first successful workers revolution in history. Upon taking power, the revolutionary government acted promptly to make marriage a contract between free and equal partners that could be dissolved at the request of either partner and removed all laws against homosexuality as well as laws discriminating against "illegitimate" children. In 1921 (with Soviet Russia devastated from the Civil War against imperialist-backed counterrevolutionaries) the government issued a decree that if layoffs occur, then in cases where male and female workers were equally qualified they were to be given equal consideration in retaining their jobs, with the exception that single women with children under one year of age were to be given preference. A far cry from Howard and Latham indeed! In the early 1920s, the Bolshevik leadership sought to pioneer, to the extent the backward economic conditions allowed, socialist measures that would lay the basis for women's emancipation from thousands of years of household enslavement by providing community-run childcare, dining and laundry facilities.

The defeats of revolutions abroad and the isolation and economic backwardness of the young Soviet workers state enabled a conservative, bureaucratic layer, headed by Joseph Stalin, to usurp political power in the mid-1920s. This bureaucracy subverted the revolutionary, internationalist ideals of the 1917 revolution and began promoting the family as a "fighting unit of

socialism." Yet despite the bureaucratic degeneration, until it was destroyed in capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, the Soviet Union continued to be based on collectivised property forms, which embodied real gains for the working class and women especially. This could be seen in the former German Democratic Republic (DDR), "East Germany," a state built on the pattern of the Soviet degenerated workers state when the Red Army smashed Hitler's Nazis at the end of World War II. Despite the heavy hand of the repressive Stalinist bureaucracy over both the economy and society, the collectivised property forms and centrally planned economy meant that women in the DDR were highly educated and



Women's demonstration in Petrograd, March 1917. Banner says: "As Long as the Woman is a Slave There Can't be Freedom—Long Live Women's Equality."

skilled (over 90 percent employed and across all trades and professions) and had without doubt the best maternity and childcare benefits in the world (for example day-care centres attached to factories and a year's maternity leave at full pay).

After the DDR was swallowed up in a capitalist reunification with West Germany in 1990, women of the former DDR were hit with mass layoffs and some found that they stood a better chance of getting a job in the Fourth Reich if they showed a certificate of sterilisation along with their resumé! The ICL fought tooth and nail against the capitalist counter-revolutions in the former USSR and DDR. In contrast other left groups, like the International Socialist Organisation (many of whose leaders at the time later formed the clique split from the ISO called Socialist Alternative), Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), Socialist Party (then called Militant) and Freedom Socialist Party (FSP), capitulated to the imperialists' anti-communist Cold War. They supported the movements for counterrevolution from the Vatican-backed, anti-abortion Polish Solidarność to Yeltsin's U.S.-backed Moscow barricades in 1991. Despite the formal claims of these fake-revolutionary groups to stand for women's liberation, they lined up behind the counterrevolutions that have led to terrible unemployment, an historically unprecedented fall in life expectancy, the dismantling of once

plentiful day care centres and in some cases loss of abortion rights.

Today the ICL fights for the unconditional military defence of the remaining deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. The 1949 anti-capitalist revolution in China, while bureaucratically deformed from its inception, meant not only important gains for the workers and peasants but greatly uplifted women from centuries of oppression, symbolised by the barbaric practice of foot-binding. Today the pro-capitalist "market reforms" of the heirs of Mao have weakened the collectivised economy and undermined the position of women. Just as we did in the

former USSR, we fight for workers political revolutions to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies in the remaining workers states in order to preserve and extend the gains of the social revolutions.

The Fight For Revolutionary Consciousness

The triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in the ex-USSR has not only been devastating for working people there but has emboldened the capitalist exploiters everywhere. The world has become a lot nastier and uglier for workers, minorities and women and this has been increasingly so since George W. Bush, backed by the likes of Howard and Tony Blair, seized on the criminal WTC bombing to declare a never ending "war on terror." This country is certainly no exception. Commenting on the attacks on the position of women today, bourgeois feminist Anne Summers in a book published last year, *The End of Equality* noted: "It is salutary that it has become necessary so soon after the victories of just two decades ago to have to start the struggle again."

The viciousness of recent outbursts by politicians against single mothers is a reflection of the profound anti-woman bigotry and hatred that infects this country. "Ocker" racism and sexism exist in all layers of society including the working class. A key task of a Leninist party in Australia is to root out these poisons from the workers movement. Such a party would fight to win the proletariat to the understanding that only by championing the cause of all the oppressed—Aborigines, women, immigrant minorities, gays—can the working class draw behind it the broader masses in the struggle against its own exploiters. This can be achieved most effectively in the course of intervention into hard-fought integrated class struggles, when the proletariat is most able to unite across racial, cultural and gender differences.

But any fight against backward ideas in the proletariat must involve a political struggle against the main transmission belt of such bourgeois ideologies into the working class—the Laborite misleaders. The upcoming federal elections present an opportunity to further this struggle. With the ALP standing on a platform of restricting civil liberties in the name of "war on terror," support for the joint U.S./Australia Pine Gap spy base and

reactionary "family values," we forthrightly say there is no class basis for even the most critical support to the ALP: No vote to Labor!

But this is certainly not the case for the reformist left whose perspective has always been based on the illusion that mass pressure can force a Labor government to serve the interests of the oppressed. Take for example the "socialist-feminist" FSP, who are part of the Socialist Alliance electoral lash-up, which also includes the DSP, ISO and others. In an article on maternity leave and childcare in the *Radical Women Supplement* of their latest paper, the FSP assure their readers that a vote for Socialist Alliance will actually be a vote for Labor: "Australia's preferential voting system ensures that a vote for SA will throw the current bums out and warn Labor that women and our allies mean business" (*Freedom Socialist Bulletin*, Winter/Spring). So for all their avowed militancy in advocating women's rights, the FSP effectively say that Latham's dumping of promised paid maternity leave (which they angrily noted in their article), vilification of single women with children and support for the ban on same-sex marriages is worthy only of a "warning," as opposed to opposition. In this way, the FSP act to undercut opposition to the ALP's racist, anti-worker, anti-woman program.

The Socialist Alternative group are even more blatant in calling for a vote to Labor (which they do at every federal election!): "Socialist Alternative says vote Labor or Green in the House of Representatives" (*Socialist Alternative*, July). They show that they are devoid of class principles by supporting the bourgeois Greens, even as they admit that, "the Greens are not a working class party. They want to work co-operatively with big business to change policies."

Socialist Alternative attempt to decorate their support for Labor with the statement that: "Every student rally and occupation, every march for refugee rights, every protest against the occupation of Iraq and every strike both makes the election more political and makes it harder for Latham to back down on his promises" (*Socialist Alternative*, July). But it is precisely most of Latham's "promises"—increased Australian (imperialist) intervention in the Asia-Pacific region, punitive "learn or earn" work for the dole schemes and "parental responsibility" court orders—that the working class must oppose. And to the extent the fake-socialist left are successful in prettifying the "promises" of the ALP, which is the central political obstacle to class struggle, they in fact undermine student actions, marches for refugee rights, protests against the occupation of Iraq.

After eight years of incessant right-wing reaction under Howard, there is pressure for working people to think that anyone else would be an improvement. But building workers who remember that it was an ALP government that smashed the militant BLF union, poor mothers who hate the insults Latham throws at them and determined advocates of refugee rights are all reluctant to vote Labor. We seek to strengthen opposition to Laborism among such elements and bring to them a consistent revolutionary alternative to bankrupt social democracy.

While the ALP rests on the most highly paid, whitest and most male-dominated sections of the working class, the revolutionary workers party that we are fighting to build will include all sections of the multiracial proletariat, especially its more poorly paid, women and immigrant components. Women will surely play a leading role in international socialist revolution. And in the classless, egalitarian society that will finally emerge, the full creative potential of all the formerly downtrodden will be unleashed. Then women will have a genuine opportunity to develop the scientific brilliance of a Marie Curie or the musical talents of a Jacqueline du Pré. And all of humanity will be the richer for this. ■

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Redfern...

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Later, Aborigines told a Spartacist reporter that this finding shows that the cops can do as they please, another said that at least three youth had seen the police chase the young man. Others spoke of sinister intimidation of witnesses who implicated police, including the destruction of a witness's car. Meanwhile the police immediately increased numbers on The Block in Redfern to crack down on eruptions of anger against the finding. As Scotty Prince, an Aboriginal man, said at The Block later that day, "We are trying to prove to the world that we are not just disadvantaged [but that] they are still killing us. It is legalised terrorism. It is on a larger scale in the bush. It is happening to a lot of kids all around the country. We know that the police are guilty" (*Australian*, 18 August).

The backdrop to the Coroner's verdict was the 2 August interim report of the Standing Committee on Social Issues, a parliamentary committee set up by the NSW state Labor government soon after the February events. Chaired by Labor "left" Jan Burnswoods, this report backed Police Minister John Watkins' 16 July support to a massive bolstering of police strength in Redfern, itself a response to "Strike Force Coburn" a police "inquiry" into the events in February.

Having earlier announced a \$6 million conversion of the TNT tower overlooking The Block into a seven-storey police station, Watkins, flanked by Police Commissioner Ken Moroney, declared that Redfern would get 56 new officers, and the creation of an "Operational Support Group," a full-time riot squad of 46 officers. This force is to be used across NSW and represents a danger to all those who would resist government attacks, including striking workers. Ominously the pumped-up police in Redfern are now looking to more "forceful police action," including the possible use of rubber bullets, long-range capicum spray, gas grenades and armoured rescue vehicles similar to those used by British troops in Northern Ireland. As we stated in our 22 February article, "Defend Redfern Aborigines—Mobilise Union Power!" (*Australian Spartacist* No. 186, Autumn 2004), "Bob Carr's so-called inquiries will be used to protect the cops and target Aborigines today."

In the context of capitalist decay—the erosion of infrastructure and attacks on working conditions, and increased

poverty and desperation—such racist state contempt for Aboriginal people spawns and emboldens rightist and fascist attacks on the streets. The Aboriginal tent embassy in Canberra has been fire-bombed no less than three times in the last fifteen months. In June last year one such vicious act of arson gutted the shipping container office resulting in the largely irreplaceable loss of 31 years of photos and documents of Aboriginal activism. This is yet another deadly example of denying Aborigines their history of resistance to racist repression and dispossession.

Later in July 2003 more than 40 police were unleashed to carry out an early morning raid on the embassy to supposedly remove the burnt-out shipping container for "safety reasons." While they were at it, the cops assaulted and arrested embassy activist Darren Bloomfield. It is little wonder that fascists, such as the recently surfaced Newcastle-based Australia First Party and Patriotic Youth League, are increasingly active on campus targeting overseas students with intimidation and violence. This scum must be stopped from organising through mass campus worker/student mobilisations.

Workers, Immigrants, Aborigines: Same Enemy, Same Fight

Fighting alongside and in defence of oppressed minorities it is the working class that has the potential social power and common interest to push back the attacks of the bosses and their repressive state apparatus—the cops, courts, prisons and army—which exists to defend the tiny minority of profit-gouging capitalist rulers against the exploited and oppressed majority.

The recent imprisonment, at the behest of the Victorian ALP government, of former manufacturing union leader Craig Johnston for militant actions in defence of striking workers, throws a spotlight once again over just which class the state serves. Many unionists know that it is the same cops who terrorise Aboriginal people and immigrants, who target striking workers' picket lines. Indeed it is the same capitalist courts that railroaded Johnston that are now railroaded the Aboriginal militants, and it is the same capitalist prison system that now incarcerates both the Aboriginal militants and Johnston. We say: Free Craig Johnston! Drop the charges now!

Ever since the eruption of anger against racist cop terror on 15 February

cratic rights of the peoples of Iraq and the Near East—the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples as well as the Kurds, Shi'ites, Sunnis and others. Liberation and justice can only come with the overthrow of bourgeois rule in the region and the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East, as part of the fight for international socialist revolution.

The subjugated Iraqi masses face the same racist and union-busting enemy faced by working people and the oppressed in the United States. It is in the class interests of the multiracial American proletariat to fight for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq. In Iraq, the struggle against the American occupation must be combined with a struggle against all forms of bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism. As we wrote last issue, "While making clear that the main enemy is U.S. imperialism, a revolutionary party with roots and influence in Iraq today would mobilize against the reimposition of *sharia* [Islamic law], against communalist sectarian attacks, for organizing the vestiges of the workers movement and the legions of the unemployed on a class basis through strikes and workplace occupations against the thieving imperialist occupiers and parasitic clerics." *U.S. out of Iraq now! Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!* ■



Bill Hearne

Sydney, 15 February: Courageous black youth battle racist cops. Aboriginal community in Redfern erupted after cops chased to death 17-year-old Kamilaroi Murri youth.

the Aboriginal people of the inner Sydney suburb of Redfern have faced unrelenting state persecution and a sinister build-up in police strength. It is desperately necessary and in the interests of all workers—from construction to manufacturing, from rail and health to striking NSW cleaners—to take up the defence of Redfern Aborigines, beginning with the Redfern militants currently in the cross-hairs of the state. We need a class-struggle leadership of the unions built in political opposition to the current Laborite union misleaders who are hand in glove with the likes of the anti-working-class Bracks and Carr state Labor governments. Such a leadership would be linked to a Leninist party, committed to nothing less than the overthrow of the whole racist capitalist system through victorious workers revolution.

Reprinted below is a 13 August protest statement faxed to the NSW Attorney-General, Robert Debus, by the Partisan Defence Committee, a class-struggle defence organisation in solidarity with the Spartacist League. This statement has also been sent to unions, left, Aboriginal, anti-racist and immigrant groups soliciting further protest statements and seeking to build for union/minority actions in defence of Aboriginal opponents of racist cop terror. *An injury to one is an injury to all! Free the Redfern militants! Drop the charges now!*

Partisan Defence Committee

On the evening of 15 February, the Aboriginal community in Redfern erupted in anger following the death early that morning of 17-year-old Kamilaroi Murri youth Thomas "TJ" Hickey who had been impaled on a steel fence after being chased by police the previous day. The upheaval on 15 February was preceded by a series of provocations by the police, who first cruised through the area taunting Aboriginal youth with racist epithets following TJ's death, and then with their riot shields readied assembled in large numbers blocking off streets around The Block. Aboriginal youth and their supporters responded with a courageous nine-hour stand to defend their community against the cops. Now the state Labor government's police have arrested more than 35 people over the 15 February events. Those hunted down, many of whom are children, face multiple charges, including "riot" and "affray." Many of

those arrested have already been incarcerated for many months even though court proceedings are still at a preliminary stage. Those who continue to languish in jail include the dead youth's uncle, Michael Hickey. We demand the dropping of all charges against the 15 February defendants and the immediate release of those militants held in custody!

The 15 February upheaval was a result of years of unremitting terror against the Aboriginal community in Redfern's Block that has been waged by the current state Labor government as well as earlier NSW Liberal and Labor governments alike. Again, on 30 July, 250 police rampaged through The Block after having assembled at Sydney University. Residents were enraged as police manhandled even the young and elderly. We strongly condemn this assault, the pretext for which was a crackdown on drugs out of "concern" for children living in The Block. The notion that the capitalist state's armed bodies have concern for young Aborigines is both sickening and utter hypocrisy. It has been the capitalist state's officials who have overseen the theft of Aboriginal children from their families over generations, and it is the same capitalist state police who chased TJ to his death, who have caused the death of innumerable black youth from John Pat to Daniel Yock. In reality the "war on drugs" is a convenient pretext for racist attacks against Aboriginal, Asian, Islander and Arab youth.

The state government's campaign against the residents of The Block and the associated media frenzy have helped fuel a climate of vicious anti-Aboriginal racism. Seizing on an outpouring of ignorant prejudice, the Sydney City Council outrageously dismantled the Aboriginal tent embassy in Victoria Park last week.

However the 15 February struggle met with sympathy from many opponents of oppression both here and internationally. The Carr Labor government is now notorious for its brutal repression of young Aboriginal, anti-racist and anti-Iraq War protesters and for its attacks on workers, including those who struggle to maintain the decrepit NSW rail and hospital systems. As such there are many good reasons for the organised workers movement and left and minority youth to rally in opposition to the state's persecution of the Redfern militants. Once again we demand, Free the Redfern militants! Drop the charges now! ■

Iraq...

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the Taliban—Wahhabi extremists of Sunni Islam and the erstwhile allies of the U.S.—destroyed irreplaceable ancient Buddhist statues in Afghanistan in 2001, claiming they were an "affront" to Islam.

The seething hatred for the arrogant occupiers could again explode into open military conflict at any time. But our call for military defense of those who take up arms against the occupation is by no means a blanket endorsement of the so-called "Iraqi resistance"—we oppose the murderous communal violence against other religious, ethnic and national groupings, the terrorist bombings which wantonly blow up innocent civilians, the kidnappings and execution of foreign civilian workers.

The once-powerful Iraqi Communist Party—with its strong secular traditions—was smashed decades ago by the Ba'athists in league with the U.S. imperialists. And today, with the devastation of war and occupation, and after more than 12 years of murderous United Nations sanctions, the Iraqi economy is in ruins, with unemployment at 70 percent. Nonetheless, it is urgently necessary to fight to forge Marxist workers parties in Iraq and throughout the region. Capitalism can never equitably resolve the demo-

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Free the Redfern Militants! Drop the Charges Now!

Down With NSW ALP Government Persecution of Aborigines in Redfern!

The brave young Aboriginal militants who defended their community against police "stormtroops" on 15 February continue to face prosecution. Many have been denied bail and left to languish in the dark and terrifying pits of the NSW state prison system, where they daily confront the possibility of deadly racist police and screw violence. Indeed in the last two decades hundreds of Aboriginal deaths in prisons across Australia are testimony to the fact that a prison sentence for Aborigines is often a death sentence. And it is not just in the prison hellholes and lockups that young Aborigines are killed but also on the streets.

Predictably, the findings of the inquest into the death of the Aboriginal youth that sparked the February struggle were a total whitewash. The

Coroner exonerated the police of any responsibility for causing the death. In an example of the Orwellian claptrap of the capitalist injustice system, the Coroner said the cops followed the young Aboriginal man, but they didn't pursue him! That the young man died "during police operations" but the cops had nothing to do with his death! While the cops, he said, "were not completely candid," the Coroner directed people to understand the "traumatic effect" on the police and even commended one of the officers for his "leadership and effort" when finding the young man impaled on the fence. This despite the fact that reportedly the young man was wrenched from the fence, pinned down and searched, and it was even up to witnesses to call an ambulance! Aboriginal

people have also stated that the young man's bicycle was actually struck by a police vehicle and have queried what happened to the bike once it was taken into police possession.

Capitalist State Spearheads Racist Reaction

This "verdict" was a black-and-white example of the stone-cold racism that confronts Aboriginal people at every level of this vicious capitalist society. Was it any wonder that the dead Aboriginal youth's family and friends were inconsolably distraught and angry after the findings? The scream of "No justice!" from an enraged Aboriginal woman was the true summation of this kangaroo court.

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Stephen Cooper

30 July: Racist cop raid in Redfern.

U.S./Australia Out of Iraq!

Imperialist Massacre in Najaf

The Australian military currently has around 1,000 troops in and around Iraq as part of the bloody U.S.-led imperialist occupation. A recent exposé by journalist Brian Toohey reveals that at least 30-40 personnel from the elite killers of the Australian Special Air Services are involved in secret operations in Iraq including "counter-insurgency, kidnapping, demolition and protecting visiting VIPs," along with "instruction in assassination techniques," as part of a "US special operations program in the Middle East and elsewhere," (Australian Financial Review, 28-29 August). This follows revelations that Australian army personnel were intimately involved in the drafting of torture policy for the U.S.-led occupation forces and their prisons and the subsequent attempted cover-up of sexual abuse and torture at the Abu Ghraib prison (see Australasian Spartacist No. 187, Winter 2004). The following article on the imperialist devastation of Najaf is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 831, 3 September), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League. Like our comrades in the U.S., the Spartacist League/Australia states that insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defence against U.S., British and Australian imperialism.

AUGUST 30—As we go to press, an uneasy truce appears to have been established under the auspices of Shi'ite ayatollah al-Sistani between the U.S. occupation forces and the Shi'ite leader



Reuters

Imperialist military forces devastate Najaf in fighting against insurgents led by Shi'ite cleric Moktada al-Sadr.

Moktada al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army. But Najaf is a shattered city, with up to a thousand dead, and U.S. bombing continues in Sunni Falluja, as the massively armored, brutal, torturing occupation army continues to rape Iraq.

During the past month's military assault by U.S. troops against Najaf, it was the duty of proletarian forces internationally to offer military defense to the forces of the Mahdi Army against the imperialists' onslaught. This would include acts of solidarity, such as halting U.S. arms shipments through work stoppage actions internationally. There is growing sentiment in the U.S. against the occupation, but American workers have to go beyond that and actively champion the military defense of those fighting the occupation. This will require a struggle

against the craven and pro-imperialist trade-union misleaders who tie the workers to their class enemy.

Despite the insurmountable divide in politics and worldview between ourselves, secular Marxists, and the Islamic fundamentalists around the reactionary Shi'ite leader al-Sadr, in the battle for Najaf the side of the working class was clearly with the Mahdi Army. As we wrote in our last article on Iraq, "As revolutionary Marxists, we have a side in the current situation, against the U.S., its allies and Iraqi lackeys.... Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers (including the over 20,000 private mercenaries operating in the country), we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism. Every blow struck against

the imperialist occupiers is a blow struck against the enemy of workers and the oppressed all over the world" ("U.S. Out of Iraq Now!" WV No. 830, 6 August).

Meanwhile, even as the Pentagon churns out more cover-up "investigations" of the Abu Ghraib torture chamber, new horrors are coming to light. "Keep them standing," was the order at a Marine-run jail in Iraq called "Camp Whitehorse," where a 52-year-old detainee, Nagem Sadoon Hatab, was beaten to death because he wouldn't or couldn't keep standing. According to a report of the court-martial of Marines involved, in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* (28 August), Hatab had six broken ribs and a broken hyoid bone in his neck when he was found dead, naked, curled in a fetal position, in the prison's yard. Marines violently beat Hatab and claimed he fell into some razor wire, then dragged him by the neck, stripped him and left him to die.

When U.S. rulers first launched the war against Iraq, they claimed to be fighting to bring "freedom" to the oppressed Shi'ite and Kurdish people. But as the occupation, with all its savage atrocities, marches on, so does increased resistance to it, including by Shi'ite clerical leaders. Now, the U.S. portrays the likes of al-Sadr as nothing more than terrorists and barbaric religious fanatics. But it should be noted that al-Sadr and his allies recently intervened to free a kidnapped American journalist, Micah Garen, because of his work documenting the looting of Iraqi antiquities from 5,000-year-old archeological sites near Nasiriyah, while

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