



## Capitalist Rulers Whip Up Murderous White Racist Riot in Cronulla

# Mobilise Unions and Minorities Against Racist Attacks!

Reprinted below is a leaflet issued by the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club following the 11 December white racist riot in the Sydney beachside suburb of Cronulla. On 18 December a demonstration of about 1,500, organised by the Laborite National Union of Students, assembled at Sydney Town Hall in protest against the Cronulla riot. Significantly, and following earlier protest statements by the Maritime and Teachers' unions, the crowd included small groups of unionists and the "Your Rights at Work" union truck provided a podium for speakers. These

were further evidence of *anti-racist anger within the union movement*. However, the rally organisers showed their commitment to "law and order" with a call for "Three cheers for [Labor state premier] Emma!" The keynote speaker was former Aboriginal rights activist and now Labor MP Linda Burney, whose ALP government just days earlier had passed draconian legislation allowing police to lock down whole suburbs. This is aimed against minorities, particularly immigrants and Aborigines, and ultimately the organised working class.

We bitterly note that only 13 days after this rally Labor's new police powers were used against a housing estate of about 5,000 predominantly Aboriginal residents in the rural New South Wales city of Dubbo. In sweltering heat on New Year's Eve Aborigines vented their justified outrage following yet another cop bashing of an Aboriginal youth. A lockdown was imposed which gave the racist cops free rein to search residents, their homes and vehicles.

Revolutionaries oppose the illusion sown by reformists that the capitalist

state administered by Labor can be pressured to act against racist terror. Instead we seek to mobilise the real anger at the base of the multiracial unions in *independent class-struggle action*, at the head of oppressed minorities, against the racist capitalist system and the fascist gangs it spawns.

DECEMBER 18—On Sunday 11 December a racist mob of up to 5,000 overwhelmingly white youth, including significant numbers of fascists, mobilised at the Sydney beach suburb of Cronulla. Draped in the Australian flag and singing "Waltzing Matilda," this beer-sodden crowd rampaged through the streets carrying out chilling pogromist attacks against anyone of non-white complexion. Pelting cans and bottles at people and chanting "Kill the w-gs" and "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie," they chased down and cornered terrified individuals, bashing several who were lucky to escape with

*continued on page 10*

## "War on Terror" Targets Everyone

# For Class Struggle to Bust "Anti-Terror" and Anti-Union Offensive!

### U.S./Australian Troops Out of Iraq/Afghanistan Now!

In the dead of night on 8 November over 850 state and federal police, Special Operations cops and ASIO agents terrorised immigrant working-class suburbs in Sydney and Melbourne, raiding up to 22 homes. Nine men were arrested in Melbourne and each charged with "intentionally being a member of a terrorist organisation" (*Australian*, 9 November 2005). In Sydney seven people were arrested and charged with "conspiring to manufacture explosives in preparation for a terrorist act" (*ibid*). Police shot an eighth man in the neck as he tried to flee, later charging him with attempted murder.

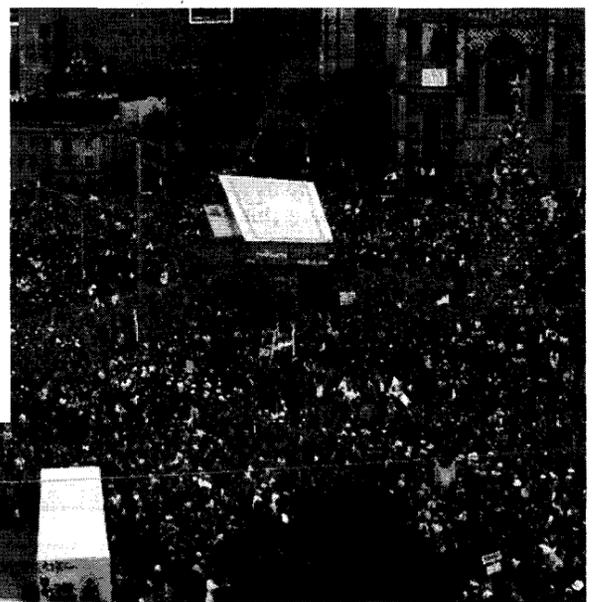
Backed by the Labor Party (ALP), these sinister raids were carefully orchestrated to occur in the lead-up to the vote on the federal government's "anti-terror" legislation and hated anti-union bill. On 2 November, the prime minister, John Howard, announced to the media that Australia faced an "imminent terrorist threat" and recalled the Senate to amend existing legislation to facilitate carrying out arrests. The press, forewarned, was on hand during the raids to dutifully provide maximum propaganda value. The day after the raids, and without presenting a shred of credible evidence, the heads of the Victorian and NSW police, along with the Victorian ALP state premier Steve Bracks and the NSW police minister Carl Scully, claimed that a terrorist attack had been averted!

Against the raids and subsequent racist hype, including ludicrous tales about threats to the Lucas Heights nuclear research facility, Adam Houda, the lawyer defending those arrested in Sydney, forthrightly declared that the arrests were "scandalous political prosecutions" and that "There's no evidence in these cases that terrorism was



Herald Sun

November 15: 150,000 angry workers took to Melbourne city streets as part of nationwide protest against Howard's anti-worker laws. Broad-based strikes can beat back anti-union and "war on terror" offensive.



Victorian Trades Hall Council

contemplated or being planned by any particular person at any particular time or at any particular place" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 November 2005). Having already carried out 18 months of surveillance, the cops admitted as much when Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty stated: "The operation is a long way from being finished. This will take several months to put together in a form that will be required by the courts" (*Australian*, 9 November 2005). Meanwhile the men, at least one appearing in the orange overalls now infamously associated with the U.S.-run torture centre at Guantánamo Bay, have been refused bail and remain in the dungeons of Labor-run Victoria and New South Wales.

The frenzy whipped up over the raids by the capitalist media has fueled racist threats and violence on the streets

with a wave of attacks on Muslims, particularly women. On 11 December, a thousands-strong racist mob went on a pogromist rampage through the Sydney beachside suburb of Cronulla, attacking anyone of vaguely Near Eastern appearance (see article above).

Using criminal terrorist bombings as a pretext, capitalist rulers from London to Washington and Canberra have seized the opportunity to jack up state repression at home, the better to stymie class struggle against attacks on wages and conditions and suppress leftist opposition to bloody colonial occupations such as in Iraq. Now the Australian government has announced that it is sending a further 310 troops, including 110 SAS killers, to Afghanistan and is pushing forward "The Defence Legislation

*continued on page 2*

# "Anti-Terror" ...

(continued from page 1)

Amendment (Aid to Civilian Authorities) Bill 2005," which strengthens legislation passed during the 2000 Sydney Olympics allowing the military to use "lethal force" domestically. The new bill would make it easier to call out the military to police and shoot civilians.

Alongside targeting immigrants in the imperialist centres, some 50,000 people have also been detained in Iraq and Afghanistan during U.S./British/Australian military and security operations. Many have been tortured and denied access to their families and lawyers. There are said to be a further 10,000 or more prisoners of the "war on terror"—"ghost detainees"—who are shuttled from one secret torture centre to the next across the world. To assist this U.S.-led network of global terror, the Australian government is building what locals fear will be a Guantánamo-style facility on Christmas Island!

We Marxists of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) say it is urgently necessary to organise a union-centred fight against both the reactionary "anti-terror" laws and anti-union laws. We condemn the 8 November raids as a racist attempt to demoralise the Muslim minority and engender patriotic xenophobia behind the sinister "anti-terror" legislation, which was rammed through federal parliament on 6 December by the Liberal/National coalition government with the backing of "Her Majesty's loyal opposition," the federal ALP, and every state and territory Labor government. The capitalist rulers through their politicians and media aim to create panic and fear and to stir the racist pot in order to divide the working class, while strengthening their arsenal of state repression. By targeting vulnerable minorities first, the bosses' aim is for the population to accept as normal what is actually a gross violation of people's rights. Hands off the Muslim minority! Those arrested should be released from prison immediately! U.S./Australia out of Iraq/Afghanistan now! From Guantánamo to Iraq—**free all the detainees!**

## Fight State Repression and Militarism!

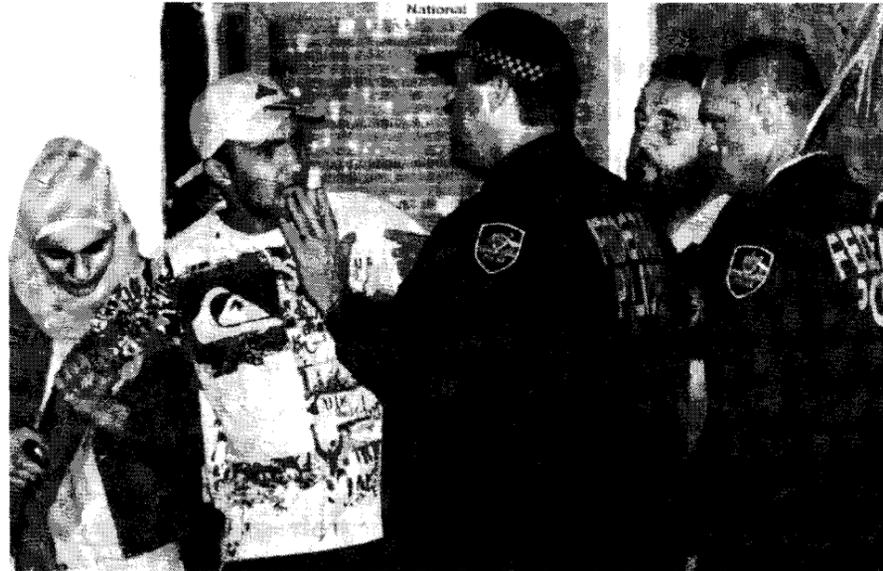
The reactionary period ushered in by the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union has been marked by heightened global imperialist rivalries over markets and resources. The junior Australian imperialists, saddled with record levels of foreign debt, seek to increase the exploitation of the working masses by strangling union power and lowering social security overheads through sadistic welfare-to-work "reforms" which especially target single mothers, the disabled and the chronically ill.

Using "counter-terrorism" as a pretext the Australian government has also moved to tighten the reactionary U.S./Australia alliance by embarking on yet another mili-

tary spending spree. Current projected expenditure, amounting to about 60 million dollars a day, is designed to make the Australian military a more mobile and active "global" force, able to back its U.S. big brother, while also upholding its own predatory interests, enforcing the plunder of resources and superprofits that Australian companies such as Leighton Holdings and BHP-Billiton gouge from the Southeast Asian masses.

It was to this end that the Australian government used the criminal Bali bombing last October to strengthen ties with the blood-drenched Indonesian military, at that time deployed against the mass

rulers at home. While it is positive that unions such as the NSW Teachers Federation and Media and Arts Alliance have denounced the new "anti-terror" laws, what is required is broad-based union **action**. The working class must be mobilised to exercise their social power, not just in defence of themselves but of all the oppressed and victims of state terror, be they desperate refugees, Aboriginal militants such as those facing charges in Palm Island today, the Melbourne taxi driver Jack Thomas framed on "terrorist" charges, or the besieged Muslim communities currently in the gunsights of the racist capitalist state. A small example of such struggle



Alan Pryke

**Man protests as federal police raid house in Revesby, southwestern Sydney, as part of 8 November racist "anti-terror" raids.**

plebeian protests opposing fuel price hikes across the Indonesian archipelago. Today under the guise of countering "terrorist" threats the Australian imperialists also justify sending military forces to the Philippines to back the Arroyo government's ongoing bloody war of terror against the Moro people in the south. Beginning this year, long-range U.S. bombers will conduct training exercises in the Northern Territory. With U.S. bases already in South Korea, Japan, Australia, Afghanistan and Central Asia, the U.S. and Australian rulers are moving to militarily encircle China as part of their strategic aim to overturn the social gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution through a combination of economic penetration and military pressure. We stand for the unconditional military defence of the Chinese, North Korean, Cuban and Vietnamese bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. As proletarian internationalists we demand: U.S. bases out! Down with the reactionary U.S./Australia alliance! Down with the Australia/Indonesia military alliance! Racist Australian imperialist military, cops, and spies out of Indonesia, the Philippines, Southeast Asia and the Pacific now!

Opposition to Australian imperialist militarism abroad must be based on a fight to mobilise the multiracial working class for revolutionary struggle against the capitalist

was seen in action on 9 February 2002, in Oakland, California. The Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee (both associated with the Spartacist League/U.S.) mobilised some 300 unionists, immigrants, blacks and youth in a union-centred united-front demonstration against the U.S. government's Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act, which viciously target immigrants and the organised working class. This action showed on a modest scale the ability of a revolutionary program to mobilise workers in struggle in defence of the oppressed against the capitalist state. Workers and the oppressed need a Leninist party, a tribune of the people, which can lead the fight against all kinds of capitalist repression and thereby accrue the authority and class-struggle unity necessary to lead the proletariat to overturn this racist exploitative capitalist system.

## Capitalist Rulers' War on Civil Liberties

Howard's new "anti-terror" laws over-arch more than 30 such laws passed since 11 September 2001. New measures include "control orders" imposing house arrest and electronic tracking devices for up to 12 months without trial or access to a lawyer, as well as "preventative detention" for renewable periods of up to 14 days each, without charge. Telling anyone anything about your detention would be a criminal offence! Under new sedition laws, e.g., urging "disaffection with either house of the parliament," one can be imprisoned for seven years for so much as taking a side with oppressed peoples such as those in Iraq currently under the jackboot of murderous U.S. and Australian imperialist troops.

Indeed the definition of "terrorism" contained in these laws is so sweeping and vague it can be used against almost **anyone** on any pretext. You don't even have to be actively opposed to the Australian government or **do** anything to be targeted, as the recent raids on the Tamil Coordinating Committee in Melbourne show. Those raids were carried out at the behest of the Sinhala-chauvinist Sri Lankan government simply because the committee allegedly collected monies for

tsunami-stricken regions of Lanka controlled by the nationalist Tamil Tigers. Racist Australian cops/ASIO keep your bloody hands off the Tamil community!

Alongside whipping up racism targeting Near Eastern, Southeast and South Asian people, the imperialists' "war on terror" campaign also ominously targets the left, and thus the organised working class. This was starkly illustrated by the deportation last September of Scott Parkin, U.S. peace activist and outspoken critic of the occupation of Iraq, as a supposed threat to "national security." President of the Law Council of Australia, John North, angrily declared that the new powers could be used to round up people (like Parkin) who are considered a "security risk" during visits and talks by foreign leaders, thus short-circuiting demonstrations like that against the U.S. president and war criminal, George Bush, in Canberra in 2003. Young anti-Forbes 500 protesters got a taste of this vicious police repression last August and some are still facing prosecution in Sydney. We say drop the remaining charges now!

Modelled on legislation enacted under Britain's Labour Party of Tony Blair, the new laws are based on a presumption of guilt and seek to criminalise dissident speech and political views. They license the state's right to "disappear" political opponents without charge or trial—the essence of a police state. The imperialist rulers have fabricated an ongoing "war on terror" in order to normalise what used to be described as extraordinary police powers.

## Bourgeois Democracy and the Racist Capitalist State

Throughout society there is widespread opposition to the "anti-terror" laws, from bourgeois politicians to artists, journalists, lawyers, civil liberties groups, leftists and some unions. However, this opposition has thus far mainly been framed in terms of defence of the "rule of law" and capitalist "democracy."

Typically the reformist Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) has uncritically retailed such views. For instance, in a 7 December article "'Anti-terror' laws: creating a state of fear and injustice" the DSP's *Green Left Weekly* (GLW) quotes a Dr. Mohamad Abdalla, director of the Griffith University Islamic Research Unit, who commenting on the recent "anti-terror" arrests, said that if "they wanted to arrest them, they could have done it in a civilised and legal way" and the Associate Professor of Journalism at Griffith University, Michael Meadows, who, according to *GLW*, laments that the "anti-terror" legislation "represents a really retrograde steps [sic] in terms of the basic human rights that should operate in a democratic society."

Small "l" liberalism is a bourgeois ideology which would have us believe that each new racist, sexist, anti-working-class or war-mongering atrocity of a given capitalist government is an aberration that blights the record of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. But we Marxists know that under capitalist rule, democratic rights exist in the first instance for the benefit of the capitalist rulers. Despite their prattling about "democracy for all," the only rights to which the bourgeoisie is unalterably committed are their own rights to hold private property, to own the means of production—the factories, mines, transport and other essential industries—and to exploit wage labour. At its core the "democratic" capitalist state consists of the cops, courts, prisons and military, which are nothing less than instruments of organised violence. The bourgeois state exists and is replenished for the sole purpose of protecting the interests of those same filthy rich capitalists **against** the workers, a percentage of whose labour power is stolen every hour by the bosses for profit.

continued on page 8

## Australasian SPARTACIST

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

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Our comrade Elizabeth King Robertson died at home on October 12 after a six-year battle with cancer. Over the course of more than 30 years as a professional revolutionist, Lizzy excelled as an organizer, propagandist and editor. A patient mentor and inspiration for younger comrades, Lizzy provided a vital link in the fight to preserve our revolutionary heritage going back to Lenin and Trotsky's Communist International. At the time of her death, she was a full member of the Spartacist League Central Committee and of the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League. Her loss is incalculable both to our party internationally and to her family—Jim Robertson, Martha and Martha's children Rachel, Sarah and Kenneth—as well as her father Henry and mother Mary King and the rest of the King family.

Lizzy grew up in a large family in New York City. Following the death of her mother, Barbara, her father Henry King, a successful corporate lawyer, remarried. Mary King raised Lizzy as her own daughter, and for Lizzy she became "mom." Lizzy attended Brearley private school for girls in New York. She always valued the education she received there and many of the friendships made at Brearley endured until the end of her life. As a teenager she was sent to Miss Porter's, an exclusive finishing school for "old money" society girls. Her first-hand experience of anti-Semitism and class snobbery there played a role in her becoming a passionate fighter against racism and inequality.

Lizzy first encountered the Spartacist League in the early 1970s while a student at Boston University. Under the impact of the Vietnam War, Boston campuses were a hotbed of New Left radicalism. Lizzy was active in the Cambridge Tenants Organizing Committee, a group trying to defend working-class families from being pushed out of their homes as the universities expanded. She was recruited to Trotskyism, joining the Revolutionary Communist Youth, the SL's youth group in 1973. For many students, the brush with radical activism was just an episode of youthful rebellion on the road to an eventual comfortable career. But Lizzy's recruitment to the fight for international socialist revolution was for keeps.

Lizzy was accepted into party membership in July 1974. She had by then transferred to Detroit, where the SL was seeking to intervene among the largely black proletariat of the auto factories. She impressed comrades as the youth organizer as well as by her participation in the lively debates that took place as the party began to get more experience in trade-union work. Here she also began the difficult training to become a legal stenographic reporter, a profession in which she was active until her debilitation by cancer.

Around 1976 she transferred to New York in order to be part of the national leadership of the youth organization (renamed the Spartacus Youth League). Lizzy was elected to the SYL National Bureau in July 1976 and was a member of the editorial board of the monthly *Young Spartacus* from October 1976 through September 1978. She served for a year as the SYL National Organizational Secretary. Her experience as youth organizer and leader was crucial to Lizzy's understanding of the importance of a youth organization in the training of party cadre.

In August 1978, she resigned her leading positions in the youth organization in order to take on the job of secretary of the Political Bureau. Not only did Lizzy fulfill the demanding assignment of getting out regular and accurate minutes throughout her years in New York, but she turned the job of PB secretary into a nexus for organizing political discussions. Her close personal association with SL national chairman James Robertson began at this time, and she remained his loving companion and closest party collaborator until her death. After serving on the party Central Committee as a representative of the SYL, Lizzy was co-opted in her own right in 1979 and elected a full CC member at the August 1983 national conference. She also took charge of the subject indexing for the bound volumes of our press, which are the documentary record of our political line and our work. Lizzy transferred to the San Francisco Bay Area at the beginning of the 1990s. She tirelessly guided the local leadership, was secretary of the West Coast CC group and also took continuous responsibility for our local in Los Angeles.

# Elizabeth King Robertson



Robertson Family

1951-2005

Lizzy's strength was in tackling the intersection of political principle with concrete social reality, coming up with tactics and slogans to express our program. She closely followed the work of Spartacist supporters in the trade unions and her counsel was highly valued by those involved in such work. She was a longtime member of the Bay Area Local executive committee and fought to remain on this body despite her many other responsibilities because she understood so well that making political decisions real means daily choices of "what to betray" in order to focus on the most important things; it means finding the right comrades for the concrete tasks and preparing them politically to carry out those tasks.

Lizzy was unsurpassed as a Leninist political organizer. After a party gathering, she was inevitably involved in figuring out how to shift personnel or assignments to make the political priorities just established actually happen. She had a profound understanding of how our organizational functioning corresponds to our revolutionary purpose. For decades, Lizzy was one of a handful of comrades who took initiative in formulating, refining and codifying our internal norms and practices as the party came across new situations or as problems were seen with the existing rules.

At the ICL's Third International Conference in 1998, she gave a presentation, "On the Origins and Development of Leninist Organizational Practices." Published in *Spartacist* No. 54 (Spring 1998) along with our revised "Organizational Rules and Guidelines," Lizzy's presentation educated both young comrades and experienced cadres by providing the historical background, beginning with the first Marxist organizations founded by Karl Marx himself, to enable the conference delegates to consider the Rules. In this presentation, she explained: "Living organizational rules are one of perhaps a half-dozen elements that characterize an organization; in that sense, they are political. But they are not determinate. A sound set of organizational rules is not a guard against political departures, although departures from our organizational norms are generally a signal of political problems. In the absence of Bolshevik practices, an organization is necessarily amorphous, that is, Menshevik."

Though she rarely raised her voice, Lizzy was a powerful speaker at party gatherings. Her astute judgment and forthrightness made her a uniquely authori-

tative voice in the deliberations through which the party selects a leadership. Numerous times she was chosen to chair the nominating commission charged with recommending a slate of candidates to the party conference that elects the leading body (the CC in the SL or the IEC in the ICL). Lizzy was clear-eyed in seeing the weaknesses as well as the strengths of comrades, including her closest friends, and she was renowned for her fairness. This ability is crucial in a Leninist party, which aims to build its leadership as a collective that is stronger than the sum of its individual parts.

Lizzy was also her own harshest critic. Although in great pain, she authored a document on October 7 addressing her role in a political fight in the Los Angeles Local that had been marred by extreme characterizations of comrades and bureaucratic practices. Her purpose was not a *mea culpa* but a statement of conscientious regard for clarity, drawing the political lessons necessary to strengthen the party.

Beginning in early 1979, Lizzy was a mainstay of the editorial board of *Women and Revolution*, the journal of the SL CC Commission for Work Among Women. Lizzy authored or co-authored some of *W&R*'s articles on the most sensitive subjects, defending human sexuality and exposing the barbarous cruelty of the bourgeois state as it destroys the lives of people whose only "crime" is that their sexual proclivities and needs vary from the repressive, religion-based strictures of hypocritical bourgeois moralism. She wrote articles on the AIDS crisis, the crime of female genital mutilation, the fabricated "child abuse" day-care scandals, incest and the furor over so-called "date rape." When publication of *W&R* was suspended after the Spring 1996 issue, Lizzy continued to contribute to the articles published under the *W&R* masthead in the press of the national sections of the ICL, including *Workers Vanguard*, and in *Spartacist*. Dur-

ing the last weeks of her life, Lizzy was heavily involved in the editing of an article for the next issue of *Spartacist* examining the debates and discussions in the Bolshevik Party over women's emancipation after the Russian Revolution.

The final undoing of the October Revolution in 1991-92 was a historic defeat for the workers of the world, ushering in a difficult period for revolutionists. Our difficulties in coming to grips with the new period have been expressed in political disorientation and corresponding internal difficulties (see "Spartacist League 12th National Conference—A Hard Look at Recent Party Work and Current Tasks," *WV* No. 841, 4 February). Nobody has been immune to these problems, but comrade Lizzy played a forward role in trying to get the party out of this morass. Several times during the past five or six years, our internal bulletins have featured a document by Lizzy, submitted early in the discussion, often less than one page in length, which became a touchstone for subsequent contributions. Often her document would begin from a concrete, seemingly tactical question of a particular projected intervention somewhere, and would proceed logically to illuminate programmatic and principled issues.

After Lizzy's cancer was diagnosed, she undertook surgery, chemotherapy and, finally, radiation. Her father ensured that she obtained high-quality care, which was ultimately unavailing. She continued to do her biweekly sales and other public political activity. In April 2003, she was wounded by a "non-lethal projectile" fired from a cop shotgun during the vicious police attack on antiwar protesters, longshoremen and port truckers at the Port of Oakland.

Her comrades, family and friends will miss Lizzy's presence in our lives for as long as we have consciousness. We will miss her fine mind, her humor, her warmth and compassion. We will always remember her beauty and courage. Even in the midst of our grief, we celebrate her life and find comfort in knowing that she lived as she chose to and never wavered in her belief that fighting for the liberation of all the exploited and oppressed was the right way for her to live. For us, she has been a very strong link in the chain of continuity that goes all the way back to Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, and Cannon. We resolve to honor our beloved comrade Lizzy by carrying on her struggle.

—Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 857, 28 October 2005



Spartakist Spartacist

# From Berlin to Moscow The ICL's Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution

## For New October Revolutions!

Left: ICL banner at January 1990 Berlin Treptow protest: "Down with NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!" Leaflet for March 1990 elections: "No to Capitalist Reunification!" Right: ICL raised banner on Revolution Day, November 1991 in Moscow, distributed statement: "Soviet Workers—Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!"

We reprint below a presentation, edited for publication, given by comrade Jane Clancy at a Spartacist League/Britain educational held in London on 21 May. This article first appeared in Workers Hammer No. 191 (Summer 2005), publication of the SL/B, British section of the International Communist League.

### WORKERS HAMMER

1989 was quite a year. The events that erupted then would come to fundamentally change the entire political landscape of the world. I will give you some snapshots of what took place. In February, the last Red Army troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan. These troops had been fighting against a reactionary cabal of Islamic fundamentalists, tribal chiefs and landowners committed to the enslavement of women and the elimination of any scintilla of social progress, and who were armed and bankrolled to the tune of billions of dollars by U.S. imperialism. The withdrawal was not because the Soviet troops were losing; this was not "Russia's Vietnam" as it was portrayed at the time. Rather, the troops were withdrawn as part of a Kremlin bid to try to appease the imperialists.

In May, hundreds of thousands of students and workers rallied in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Singing the revolutionary workers anthem, the "Internationale," they had come out in opposition to the corruption of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucrats and the devastation wrought by their introduction of "market reforms." In June, counterrevolutionary Solidarność—the only "union" that Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan ever supported—swept the elections in Poland. The same month, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping drowned the nascent political revolution in Tiananmen Square in blood. In July, the Soviet Union was shaken by the first ever nationwide miners strike. Provoked by the impact of market reforms on their lives and livelihoods, the miners quickly generated organisational forms of proletarian power: strike committees and workers militias.

In October, coincident with the official

celebration of the 40th anniversary of the East German deformed workers state, the DDR, that country was erupting in increasingly massive protests against the Stalinist regime of Erich Honecker. On 4 November, the largest demonstration in the country's history took place as half a million people rallied in East Berlin under banners reading: "For Communist Ideals—No Privileges," "For a German Soviet Republic—Build Soviets!" On 9 November, the Berlin Wall was opened.

The other speakers at today's dayschool will provide accounts of the intervention of our international tendency—the International Communist League—into these momentous events. We fought for the defeat of the forces of capitalist counterrevolution and for the defence of the gains for the working class and oppressed of the world that were embodied in the collectivised industry and planned economy of these countries, however warped and distorted by Stalinist bureaucratic mismanagement. We fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist traitors, whose bureaucratic stranglehold over economic, political and cultural life and betrayals of revolutionary struggles internationally in the name of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism undermined and, in the end, paved the road to the destruction of these workers states. We fought for the revolutionary, internationalist programme that animated Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, which led the first and so far only successful workers revolution in history in October 1917. We did not prevail, but we fought!

By 1990, the forces of capitalist counterrevolution were sweeping Eastern Europe. In 1991-1992 these forces would devour the Soviet Union, the homeland of the Russian Revolution. The world we live in today is the product of that world-historic defeat for the workers and oppressed of the world, out of which U.S.

imperialism emerged as the world's unrivalled "only superpower." It is common coin now for outfits like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) [British followers of the late Tony Cliff] and other so-called leftists to decry the deranged nuclear cowboys in the White House as the "world's biggest terrorists." True enough. But these self-proclaimed socialists, who cheered the forces of counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, made their own small contribution to this outcome. Now where do they turn? To the European imperialist rulers! On the eve of the one-sided slaughter in Iraq, they appealed to the European heads of state to "give peace a chance" and stay the hand of U.S. imperialism. Now they raise the call for a "social Europe" as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism. The European rulers want a counterweight all right. They are out to increase their competitive edge, economic and military, against the U.S. To do so, they are taking it out of the hides of the working class and oppressed, savaging what remains of the so-called welfare state. The reforms collectively known as the welfare state

were themselves introduced to try to piece off a combative and politically conscious proletariat and to ward off the "spectre of communism" as the Soviet Union's authority was renewed with its defeat of Hitler's Nazis in World War II.

Now you have this "Make Poverty History" campaign appealing to none other than the G8 to come to the aid of the impoverished masses of the so-called Third World. This is revealed as such a fraud by the fact that even Gordon Brown [Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Labour government] has called on people to join the demonstration in Edinburgh this July coincident with the G8 meeting at Gleneagles. The SWP thinks this is great, as long as Brown puts his money where his mouth is, which is exactly what he intends to do. Brown's tour of Africa earlier this year made clear that "Make Poverty History" is simply a cynical cover for increasing "free trade"—that is, the increased pillage and exploitation of sub-Saharan Africa. Declaring that it is time to stop apologising for the British Empire—not that I've noticed too many people apologising for the crimes of the empire—he saluted it as "open, outward looking and international." I believe he made these remarks in Kenya! One need look no further than the mass graves of the tens of thousands killed by British forces during the Mau Mau rebellion in the 1950s for a taste of Britain's

In the camp of imperialism: Internationally ISO welcomed Soviets' Afghanistan pullout, hailed counterrevolution in USSR.

bloody and brutal colonial heritage.

When the Soviet Union existed, the nominally independent former colonies had the breathing space to at least manoeuvre between the Soviets on one side and the imperialists on the other. No more. Now the imperialists think it's open season. Together with the total devastation and fratricidal wars that erupted in the wake of counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, increasing imperialist depredations and military repression from Africa to Central America to Asia have forced many thousands of people to leave their homes in order to seek a better life for themselves and their families (often just to stay alive) in the advanced capitalist countries. They have been met with a backlash of racist and chauvinist reaction fomented by the capitalist rulers—as the recent electoral contest between the Tories and Labour is testament to. The capitalists are happy to use these immigrants to do the dirtiest, the most gruelling and lowest paid jobs. The purpose of their anti-immigrant campaign is to keep the working class divided, pitting one against the other and all against the “foreigner.”

To this is added the “war on terror.” Here the Islamic fundamentalists who were yesterday's allies in the imperialists' war against “godless communism” are today's enemies. Of course this is no war at all in any military sense. Rather, it is a political construct aimed at strengthening the capitalist state's machinery of repression against any perceived challenge to its rule.

It is surely not the case that the Soviet Union in its Stalinist degeneration was the beacon for world revolution that it was under Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks.



**Soviet military parade in Moscow. USSR's nuclear parity with U.S. helped stay hand of imperialism.**

glass but one of real living social struggles. And there have been a lot of such struggles by the workers and peasants of China, and increasingly so.

We are not passive observers. The lessons of our interventions against the forces of capitalist counterrevolution from East Germany to the Soviet Union arm us for the fight to defend the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution against the forces of capitalism and for political revolution and the institution of the rule of workers and peasants soviets, based on proletarian democracy and revolutionary internationalism. The latter is the key, for the defence of the Chinese deformed workers state is an international one, linked to the fight for new October Revolutions in the imperialist centres.

Today we want to give you a picture of the revolutionary opportunities that existed, before the defeats that followed, and how we fought to seize on them to

larism” is *verboten*. The Socialist Party, for whom the Labour Party's Clause IV, translated into “nationalising the commanding heights of the economy,” was long presented as the epitome of “socialism,” can barely even choke that out these days. It's reserved for what they used to call “Sunday speechifying,” that is, when you present your “maximum” programme. Then there is Workers Power. In 1979 they saw Khomeini's mullahs as the ticket to a revolutionary mass movement. In the early 1980s, they saw Solidarność as such a vehicle, even while allowing that its aims were counterrevolutionary. Needless to say, their previous mass movements didn't work out too well. Now they look to the European and World Social Forums as the vehicle for building a new “revolutionary” international. This has all the promise of their previous endeavours. These social forums are nothing other than the vehicles for class collaboration and for various out-of-power popular frontists to get back into the business of ruling with and for the capitalist class.

### The Impact of the 1917 Russian Revolution

In preparing for this presentation, I went back and re-read a speech by James P. Cannon, a founding leader of American Trotskyism, given on the 25th anniversary of the Russian Revolution in 1942, amidst the carnage of World War II and following the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler's war machine. He spoke to the impact of the Russian Revolution amidst another period of reaction brought on by World War I:

“I can remember the dark days of the First World War, 1914-1918. Then as now, all the hopes for humanity's progress seemed to be drowned in the blood of the war. Reaction seemed to be triumphant everywhere. The enemies of the proletariat gloated over the treachery and capitulation of the socialist parties [which had lined up behind their “own” capitalist rulers in the war]; and to many—to the

great majority, I venture to say—the theory and the hope of socialism seemed vanished like a utopian dream. And then, as now...fainthearts and deserters mocked at those who continued the stubborn struggle and held on to the revolutionary faith. The whole world labor movement was overcome with depression and despair in 1914-1917.

“But the Russian Revolution of November 7 changed all that overnight. At one blow, the revolution lifted the proletariat of Europe to its feet again. It stirred the hundreds of millions of colonial slaves who had never known political aspiration before, who had never dared to hope before. The Russian Revolution awakened them to the promise of a new life.”

—“The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution,”  
*Speeches for Socialism* (1971)

The October Revolution created a workers state based on workers councils (soviets). The Soviet government expropriated both the Russian capitalist and imperialist holdings and repudiated outright Russia's massive debt to foreign bankers. It gave land to the peasants and self-determination to the many oppressed nations of the former tsarist empire. Laws discriminating against ethnic and national minorities, against women and homosexuals were eliminated. The revolutionary government declared that the state had no business interfering in the consensual sexual relations of the population whatever form they took. This statement would have the “no sex please we're British” left in this country—who go into a frenzy over our defence of Michael Jackson against the American state's anti-sex, racist witch-hunters—in an uproar.

The Soviet government proclaimed the right of working people to jobs, health, housing and education, and took the first steps to building a socialist society. But as Marx put it, “Right can never stand any higher than the material conditions on which it is based.” Today there are all sorts of new “theories” that you can win without taking power, or that the road to liberation lies through the utopia of building “autonomous” zones which somehow will be free of capitalist exploitation. But the fight for the emancipation of humanity is not some kind of mental act by good-willed, right-thinking people. Nor can it be achieved while scarcity remains, which simply perpetuates the fight for survival. As Marx understood, the eradication of the exploitation of man by man must necessarily be based on conditions of material plenty.

There is great material abundance in the world, particularly in the advanced capitalist countries. Our job is to seize that wealth, overwhelmingly created through the labour of the masses of working people, from the hands of capitalist owners who expropriate the fruits of this labour

*continued on page 6*



**U.S. military brutalising captured Iraqis in Falluja, November 2004.**

Nonetheless, it was a counterweight to the untrammelled ambitions of the world's imperialists. Economically it not only demonstrated an alternative to capitalist exploitation but the superiority of a planned economy. Militarily it stayed the hand of the imperialist rulers, particularly the U.S., in the nuclear eradication of any perceived enemies. It was the military and industrial powerhouse of the states where capitalism had been eradicated. And now that it no longer exists, the imperialists have their sights aimed at the destruction of the remaining workers states—Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea; China, the largest and strongest of these states, is the big prize. All of the imperialist powers are jockeying both through economic and military means to reconquer China for imperialist exploitation.

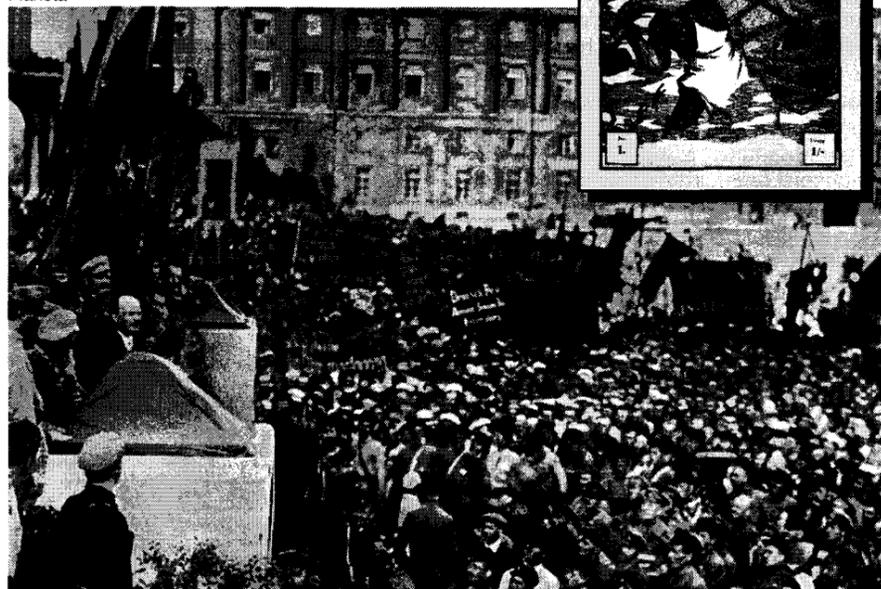
The Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy has opened the door in whole areas of the country, the free-trade zones, to the imperialists and off-shore Chinese bourgeoisie. Their increasingly aggressive introduction of market reforms, or as they call it, “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” has eroded the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Organisations like the Socialist Party and Workers Power, who joined in the chorus of Cold War anti-Communism against the Soviet Union, now simply write off China as capitalist. But that verdict has yet to be decided. It is not a question to be observed like a bug under a

advance the cause of working people internationally. Looking back at these past fights is preparation for future struggles. This is particularly important today when the idea of the proletarian socialist liberation of humanity is at best considered some kind of idealist utopia. This too reflects the impact of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which unleashed an ideological offensive by the imperialist rulers that “communism is dead” and that the destruction of the Soviet Union simply proved Marxism to be a “failed experiment.”

Consciousness has been thrown back to the extent that today there is little identification among workers between their struggles and “socialism,” however that was previously understood. For most youth, the idea that there even is a working class, much less the understanding that the proletariat has the social power and historic interest to bury the capitalist system, is considered some kind of antiquated Marxist notion. This is encouraged by endless gobbledegook churned out by the ideologues of the “anti-globalisation” movement who simply seek to give capitalism a more “democratic” and “humane” face-lift. And the putative “socialist” left has followed suit.

The SWP dares not breathe the word “socialism” in its Respect electoral coalition for fear of alienating its allies in the mosques. Even the mention of “secu-

Planeta



**July 1920: Lenin addresses Petrograd demonstration commemorating heroes of world proletariat during Second Congress of Communist International. Inset: First issue of journal of C.I. founded in 1919.**

(continued from page 5)

for their own profit. Only the working class has the social power—deriving from its role in production, its numbers and organisation—and the clear objective interest to eradicate the capitalist system. What it lacks is the political consciousness and revolutionary leadership to wage such a struggle. It is that critical element that the Bolshevik Party brought to the workers of Russia.

But the material conditions for the actual development of a socialist society did not exist in backward Russia, nor do they exist within the confines of any one country. From the beginning, the Bolsheviks understood that the fledgling Soviet workers state would not survive unless the revolution was extended internationally to more advanced capitalist countries. They saw the October Revolution as the opening of a Europe-wide workers revolution, and indeed at the end of the war a wave of revolutionary upheavals swept Europe. The social democrats—who had gone over to the side of “their own” imperialist rulers during the war—acted to save the rule of the bourgeoisie from the working class. The newly founded Communist parties, which had been formed in response to the example of the Russian Revolution, were too weak and inexperienced to lead these revolutionary upsurges to victory.

The capitalist world surrounded and isolated the Soviet Union. From 1918 to 1920 the revolution had to fight for its very survival in a civil war, when the forces of every major imperialist power intervened on the side of the counter-revolutionary White Guards. The already backward economy was almost completely devastated through World War I and the ensuing civil war. The vibrant proletariat which had accomplished the 1917 Revolution had practically ceased to exist as a class, and famine ravished the countryside. But even under these conditions, in 1923 when an extraordinary revolutionary crisis shook Germany, the workers of the Soviet Union rallied to its cause. The German workers looked to the German Communist Party, the KPD, to lead them. But the leadership of the KPD looked to the left wing of the Social Democracy as an “ally,” and they let the opportunity for proletarian insurrection pass.

This defeat had an enormous impact in the Soviet Union, leading to a wave of demoralisation among the already ravaged proletariat. Out of these conditions of scarcity and backwardness, and the isolation of the Soviet workers state arose a conservative, nationalist bureaucracy headed by Stalin. At the beginning of 1924 this bureaucracy seized political power out of the hands of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard. Repudiating the very programme of revolutionary proletarian internationalism which had led to the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, and which continued to be defended by Trotsky's Left Opposition, the bureaucracy came up with the anti-Marxist “theory” of “socialism in one country” as the ideological justification for its rule. The bureaucracy consolidated its power by destroying the entire leadership of the Bolshevik Party through the blood purges of the infamous Moscow Trials. The Communist International was turned from an instrument for world revolution into the foot soldiers of the Kremlin's efforts to seek “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism in the name of “building socialism in one country.”

As we wrote in “When Was the Soviet Thermidor?”—one of the early articles that we translated into Russian for our intervention into the Soviet Union—“After January 1924, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled and the purposes for which the USSR was ruled had all changed” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 43-44, Summer 1989). But this was a political not a social

counterrevolution. The collectivised property forms created by the October Revolution were not destroyed but remained as gains for the workers of the world. While waging a relentless struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, the Trotskyists fought unstintingly for the defence of these gains against world imperialism and counterrevolution.

At the same time, the situation was very unstable. The rule and privileges of the Stalinist bureaucracy derived from their position on top of the Soviet workers state. But they simultaneously acted as the transmission belt for the relentless and hostile pressures of world imperialism which was

the brink of disaster: he beheaded the Red Army and ignored repeated and desperate warnings from heroic Soviet spies like Leopold Trepper in Nazi Germany and Richard Sorge in Japan of the imminent invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler's Nazis. Nonetheless it was the Soviet Union that defeated the Nazis, at the cost of well over 20 million dead. As Cannon remarked in his 1942 speech:

“[The] economic strength of the Soviet regime, and the strength of the revolutionary tradition, are being reflected now in the military field. The whole world has been surprised and astounded by the military prowess of the Red Army. All the military experts counted upon a defeat of

the imperialist West.

The expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the creation of deformed workers states represented tremendous gains, which we defended. But as Trotsky wrote of the earlier Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland, the central question was the impact of these social transformations on “the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones.” There was no such consciousness and organisation of the proletariat leading to the social transformations in Eastern Europe. While the Soviet victory over Hitler's Nazis was testimony to the continued impact of the memory of the October Revolution, this was increasingly supplanted by the Stalinist bureaucracy with a defencist national patriotism. Coming out of the war there were revolutionary situations in Italy and Greece and massive strikes in France, Belgium and other countries. But these struggles were disarmed, in some cases literally, and overall politically, by the Stalinist parties. These parties wielded the renewed authority which had accrued to them coming out of the Soviet victory to push the class-collaborationist programme of keeping class peace with the so-called “democratic” bourgeoisie. Thus, in terms of the central political criterion of the impact on consciousness, organisation and capacity of the proletariat to defend former conquests and fight for new ones, the role of the Stalinists confirmed what Trotsky had written earlier: “From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution.”

## Cold War II and the Unravelling of “Socialism in One Country”

Economically, the Soviet Union demonstrated the vast superiority of a collectivised planned economy over capitalism. But this was distorted, limited and deformed under the bureaucracy and its dogma of “socialism in one country.” In his 1936 book *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky analysed the vast contradictions of the Soviet degenerated workers state:

“It is possible to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made Western pattern by bureaucratic command—although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost. But the further you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow.... Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery.”

Economic planning can be effective only when the workers identify themselves with the government that issues the plans. And to identify with the government means workers must rule through soviets. When they are alienated from the government, the plan will be subverted from the base: the formal target plans may be met, but by poor quality goods. Raw materials will be used wastefully and state-owned supplies diverted into the black [underground] economy. All of these conditions were present in the Soviet Union over the course of decades. By the late 1970s, the contradictions of “building socialism in one country” would come dramatically to the fore.

In the early part of that decade, the Soviet Union had achieved rough military parity with U.S. imperialism, which was bogged down in its long, losing, dirty war in Vietnam. The Soviet economy also got a big boost from the rising world market price of oil. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, the living standards of the population increased dramatically. The states in Eastern Europe were also beneficiaries as the Soviet Union supplied them with oil at a fraction of the world market price.

But all of this began to change in the mid-to-late 1970s. Defeated by the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants, U.S.



Trotskyist SWP of James Cannon (inset) upheld military defence of Soviet Union during World War II.

committed to the destruction of the workers state. The 1938 Transitional Programme, the founding document of Trotsky's Fourth International, defined the Soviet Union as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state and laid out two basic historical alternatives confronting it:

“The USSR thus embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains a *degenerated workers' state*. Such is the social diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism.”

Yet this very unstable and very contradictory situation continued on for over another 50 years. Why was that? The answer lies in the outcome of World War II.

### The Aftermath of World War II

During World War II and ever since, the lie has been peddled—as it was again at this year's VE day celebrations—that World War II was the “great democratic war against fascism.” In fact, like World War I, it was an interimperialist war, a battle for markets and greater spheres of influence and domination by the imperialist powers. Like the Bolsheviks in World War I, the Trotskyists' policy was one of intransigent defeatism towards all the imperialist bourgeoisies. This meant fighting to transform the imperialist war into a civil war—into proletarian revolutionary struggle against all of the imperialist combatants. At the same time, the Trotskyists fought for the world's working class to come to the defence of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies of whatever camp.

Trotsky had predicted, and with great justification, that World War II would shatter the bureaucracy and would provoke revolutionary upsurges of the proletariat, just as had been the outcome of World War I. Stalin did bring the Soviet Union to

the Russian armies in the space of a few weeks or months.... The Trotskyists were not taken by surprise. Trotsky predicted that imperialist attack on the Soviet Union would unleash marvels of proletarian enthusiasm and fighting capacity in the Red Army. He could do that because he, better than others, understood that the great motive power of the victorious revolution had not all been expended. The Red Army that the world hails is an army created by a proletarian revolution. This revolution lives in the memory of the Soviet people. That and the basic conquests, which they still retain and upon which they stand, constitute the basis upon which the Red Army has unfolded such unparalleled capacity for defense and resistance and heroic sacrifice.”

Defeating the Nazi forces in the battle of Stalingrad, the Red Army swept through Eastern Europe and straight into Berlin and smashed the Third Reich. The other regimes in Eastern Europe—overwhelmingly collaborators with the Nazis—fled to the nearest American headquarters, leaving behind a power vacuum. In the aftermath of the war, the imperialists turned on their erstwhile Soviet “allies” with the launch of Cold War I, aimed at the “containment” and destruction of the Soviet Union. In the face of this renewed imperialist offensive, the Stalinists moved to establish deformed workers states throughout Eastern Europe and in the Soviet-occupied East Germany as a “buffer zone.” The ruling classes, whose power had been smashed, were expropriated. However, with the exception of Yugoslavia, where Tito's partisans prevailed in a peasant guerrilla war, these expropriations took place from without, through cold social transformations from the top down. The workers states were deformed from the outset—the mirror image of the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union—as collectivised property forms predominated under the political rule of nationalist bureaucracies. The Soviet military forces were effectively the state power, and nowhere was this more true than in East Germany, which was the front-line state directly facing

imperialism began to rearm itself, building up a huge military arsenal directed against the USSR, which had been the central target of the imperialists since the 1917 Revolution. This began under Democratic Party president Jimmy Carter and his "human rights" campaign for a whole cabal of Soviet dissidents. The aim here was the "moral rearmament" of U.S. imperialism, to overcome the American population's deep distrust of the government and to refurbish the tarnished "democratic" and military credentials of U.S. imperialism.

This renewed Cold War got red hot with the intervention of the Soviet Army into Afghanistan at the end of 1979. As we wrote in our article "The Russian Question Point Blank" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 29, Summer 1980):

"Afghanistan is a flash of lightning which illuminates the real contours of the world political landscape. It has exploded the last illusions of détente to reveal the implacable hostility of U.S. imperialism to the Soviet degenerated workers state. It has stripped away all diplomatic cover for Washington's alliance with Maoist/Stalinist China. And it has confronted the left inescapably with 'the Russian Question': the nature of the state originating in the Bolshevik Revolution and its conflict with world capitalism.

"For revolutionary socialists there is nothing tricky, nothing ambiguous about the war in Afghanistan. The Soviet army and its left-nationalist allies are fighting an anti-communist, anti-democratic mélange of landlords, money lenders, tribal chiefs and mullahs committed to mass illiteracy. And to say that imperialist support to this social scum is out in the open is the understatement of the year."

We said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!"

It should have been a reflexive response for any self-respecting leftist or radical to take the side of the Red Army in a war where they were fighting not only in defence of women from barbaric reaction but the defence of the gains of the October Revolution. But overwhelmingly the generation of leftist radicals who only years earlier were marching in mass protest against the Vietnam War chanting "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh" now found themselves on the side of U.S. imperialism against the Red Army. The likes of Tariq Ali, who during the Vietnam War was the epitome of "anti-imperialist" radicalism, reportedly even the model for the Rolling Stones song "Street Fighting Man," wasn't street fighting anymore. He was baying along with the imperialists demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

Here was a big change in political period. It had been somewhat fashionable to be a leftist during the Vietnam War. At the time, most radicals identified with Marxism as the road to liberation, regardless of how they might have understood that. But now the winds were blowing in a distinctly different direction, as Cold War anti-Communism was the order of the day. While the left's support for Khomeini's mullahs in the 1979 "Iranian Revolution" was the precursor to siding with the imperialist-backed forces of Islamic reaction in Afghanistan, they really went



**Soviet intervention opened road to extending gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples. Top right: Afghan women mobilised against U.S.-backed mujahedin, 1985. Right: Women, children on Kabul street 1996, under Islamic reactionary rule.**



Der Spiegel



AP

whole-hog behind counterrevolutionary Solidarność in Poland. After all, here was a "movement" commanding the allegiance of masses of Polish workers. How had this happened?

These were the bitter fruits of Stalinist misrule, which had come to a head under the weight of burgeoning foreign debts. As I said before, in the early 1970s the Soviet Union had heavily subsidised the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe, particularly with cut-price oil as well as other raw materials. But by the mid-1970s, the oil prices were jacked up and the shipments cut down so that the Soviets could sell on the world market. This itself is a savage indictment of "socialism in one country." At the same time, these countries were hit by a world capitalist recession, which collapsed their export markets. To maintain employment and living standards, the East European Stalinist regimes turned to the loan sharks of Wall Street, the City of London and the Frankfurt Börse. Having mortgaged their countries to the Western banks to meet their debt payments, these regimes imposed ever more severe austerity programmes dictated by the IMF. In Poland the economic crisis drove the historically socialist Polish workers into the arms of Solidarność, which was heavily backed and bankrolled by the Vatican and the CIA.

### The Gorbachev Regime

At the same time, all the contradictions, deformities and limitations of the "socialism in one country" which Trotsky had so brilliantly analysed in *The Revolution Betrayed* were also coming to a head in the Soviet Union. Under the increasing military pressure of U.S. imperialism, and trying to preserve domestic stability at home through maintaining living standards (not to mention the bureaucrats handsomely enriching themselves), economic growth had fallen by about half

under the corrupt Brezhnev regime. Here again they ran up against the limitations imposed by their own bureaucratic rule when it came to the technical and scientific innovation needed for the renewal of Soviet industry. Hostile to workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism, the only means at the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy to raise labour productivity was to subject workers and managers to the discipline of market competition. Coming to power in 1985, the new "modernising" regime of Mikhail Gorbachev introduced *perestroika*—"market reforms." To increase productivity, workers' wages were geared to profitability; piece rates were reintroduced, widening income differences between workers, managers and the technical elite; factory was pitted against factory, industry against industry in the struggle for resources and consumers. It fuelled nationalism and the break-up of the USSR, pitting far richer, more industrialised areas against more backward, less industrialised ones.

Underlying this growing inequality was the appetite, especially among a layer of younger bureaucratic functionaries and intellectuals, to enrich themselves at the expense of the working class. A privileged layer, many of them the sons and daughters of the bureaucracy, envied the indulgences of their counterparts in the West. This was reflected in increasingly open expressions of belief in the superiority of Western-style capitalism.

To relieve the overhead of military expenditures in the face of the increasing military build-up of U.S. imperialism, the Gorbachev regime offered a "partnership" to the imperialists. Here Afghanistan was key, and in 1989 the Red Army troops were withdrawn. Days before the last troops left, on 7 February 1989, the Partisan Defense Committee, the class-struggle legal and social defence

organisation associated with the Spartacist League/U.S., sent a telegram to the Afghan government offering to "organize an international brigade to fight to the death" to defend "the right of women to read, freedom from the veil, freedom from the tyranny of the mullahs and the landlords, the introduction of medical care and the right of all to an education." We anticipated drawing into this international effort the ranks of militant fighters in many parts of the globe who would see in such a brigade the opportunity to strike a powerful blow against the imperialist system by which they themselves were oppressed and dispossessed. We also saw that this could have a powerful effect among the Soviet army veterans who saw themselves as performing their internationalist duty in Afghanistan. This would have been an important lever for advancing the programme of revolutionary internationalism and proletarian political revolution within the Soviet Union itself.

Though our offer of a brigade was turned down, the Afghan government did ask if we could undertake a publicity and fund-raising effort for the embattled citizens of Jalalabad, then under siege by the bloodthirsty *mujahedin*. We raised over \$44,000, largely from working people and minorities, a number of whom had their origins in the region. But this campaign had greater significance. It showed that with the betrayal of Afghanistan, as well as developments in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China, the absence of a communist party worth its name was acutely felt. And in 1989 we founded ourselves as the International Communist League.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan was the opening act of the counterrevolutionary tide that would engulf Eastern Europe and then the Soviet Union itself. In 1992 this was admitted by Eduard Shevardnadze, then Soviet foreign minister, who said: "The decision to leave Afghanistan was the first and most difficult step. Everything else flowed from that" (*Washington Post*, 16 November 1992). Less than a year later, the Kremlin bureaucrats would pull the plug on the East German deformed workers state, giving the green light for capitalist annexation of the DDR by the Fourth Reich of German imperialism. This will be addressed in the remarks of other speakers here today.

I will simply conclude where I began. Our fight to defend the gains that were embodied in these workers states, however warped and deformed by Stalinist misrule, and our fight today in defence of China and the remaining workers states was and is part of our struggle for new October Revolutions. As Trotsky said: "Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones." The period we live in now, one conditioned by the destruction of the world's first workers state, is deeply reactionary. But the lessons of past struggles are the ammunition for arming new cadre for the struggles that can and will break out. Out of such struggles will further be steeled the cadre for building a revolutionary, internationalist proletarian vanguard—the crucial instrument for the socialist liberation of humanity. ■



Peter Turnley

**Left: Chinese workers join students at Tiananmen Square, May 1989. Right: Migrant workers in Beijing barricade construction site demanding unpaid wages, January 2003. Proletarian political revolution is key to defending and extending gains of 1949 Revolution.**



AP

# "Anti-Terror" ...

(continued from page 2)

The DSP has a long record of fostering illusions in "democratic" Australian capitalism, and pushed for Australian military adventures from Somalia to East Timor under the guise of "humanitarian" assistance. However in reality the murderous racism and militarism of Australian imperialism are integral to the normal workings of any imperialist system, democratic or otherwise. Recent wrangling in parliament over the "anti-terror" laws has underscored once again that especially in the most advanced capitalist societies democratic forms of government serve to shroud the nature of the state as the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the exploited and oppressed masses. The federal ALP, having already promised to *vote for the government's "anti-terror" legislation*, was incensed when the government rejected key recommendations of the joint parties Senate Committee such as excising the sedition component of the legislation. Meanwhile Bob Brown, leader of the nationalist bourgeois Greens who voted against the legislation, angrily criticised the recall of the Senate before the 8 November "anti-terror" raids declaring it



Andy Tyndall

**Young child incarcerated in Australian government refugee hellhole on Christmas Island, 2003. Today locals fear government is building "anti-terror" facility on island.**

could have "alerted would-be terrorists and may have led one suspect to escape and/or destroy evidence" (Greens Media Release, 14 November).

These parliamentary critics of Howard share the government's aim of defending the interests of Australian capitalism. They differ only slightly on the means. The ALP seeks to tinker with the legislation to make it "fairer" while "in no way compromising the fight against terrorism" (ALP Media Statement, 2 November 2005). The Greens, who argue Australia already has sufficient repressive legislation and are critical of the government for not amending the law allowing for the November raids much earlier, want a cleaner, more efficient method to "prosecute terrorists." Such views are shared by many liberals who express concern that the "anti-terror" laws undermine people's faith in the purportedly "fair and democratic traditions" of Australian capitalism. Try telling the families of Aborigines such

as TJ Hickey or Mulrunji Doomadgee who were killed by the state, or desperate refugees incarcerated in concentration camps such as Baxter or Villawood, about the fairness of capitalist "democracy" in Australia!

As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin pointed out in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918): "It is natural for a liberal to speak of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: 'for what class?'" Further on, he explained:

"Take the fundamental laws of modern states, take their administration, take freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or 'equality of all citizens before the law,' and you will see at every turn evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with which every honest and class-conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a 'violation of public order,' and actually in case the exploited class 'violates' its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner."

All parliamentary democratic bourgeois states have *always reserved and frequently used* police-state powers to lock up alleged dissidents in the interests of capitalist rule particularly, but not only, at times of war and supposed threats to "national security." In 1916, it was the Labor government of Billy Hughes that jailed hundreds of members of the International Workers of the World (IWW), and shut down left-wing newspapers for their opposition to conscription and the imperialist carnage of World War I. In 1926 anti-union amendments to the Crimes Act threatened to imprison for one year anyone "urging or taking part in a lockout or strike after Proclamation that a serious industrial disturbance exists" (J. Cossedge *et al.*, *Rooted in Secrecy*, 1982). In 1952 the same act was amended to give the Attorney-General inquisitorial powers and in 1960 further amendments included a new crime of treachery, punishable by life imprisonment, this included "helping in any way anyone Australian forces are likely to oppose" (*ibid*).

Proletarian rights such as the right to organise unions, to strike and to picket, currently under savage attack by the bosses, have historically been wrested from the bourgeoisie through the independent action of the working class. Similarly the extension of broader democratic rights, such as the right to free speech and assembly, have been secured through social and class struggle, and are eminently reversible in the absence of such struggle. The previous sedition laws were last used in 1960 against an Australian patrol officer, Brian Cooper, who advocated independence for Australia's brutally oppressed Papua New Guinea colony. They became a dead letter in the late 1960s/early 1970s following the mass strike against the anti-strike penal powers in 1969, and the strikes and mass protests in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolutionary struggle against U.S. and Australian imperialism's dirty losing war.

Indeed the near general strike and protests in Victoria in defence of tramways union leader Clarrie O'Shea, imprisoned under the penal powers, not only saw the release of O'Shea but also broke

**Australian imperialist troops land as part of occupation of Solomon Islands in August 2003. Government increases in military spending means increased racist oppression at home and abroad.**



through the bosses' legal barriers, paving the way for further strike victories and gains in working conditions. By 1972 the Australian and U.S. imperialist military were also losing their anti-Communist colonial war against the Soviet-backed Vietnamese workers and peasants. Utilising fractures in the social order created by military defeats on the battlefield and buoyed by working-class struggle at home, unionists, women's liberationists, Aborigines and students took their demands to the streets. These struggles led to the bosses conceding some significant reforms in order to buy social peace, including a national health service, the abolition of university fees and affordable "no fault" divorce.

However by the 1980s, the ruling class had enlisted the Hawke/Keating Labor governments to roll back gains that the working class had won in the late sixties and early seventies. In 1983 the ALP came to power as U.S. imperialism's loyal ally in anti-Soviet Cold War II pledging to use its "special relationship" with the unions to bolster the bosses' profits by holding down wages. On both counts Hawke surpassed all expectations. Under the no-strike class-collaborationist Accord, industrial disputes dropped to their lowest level in decades. When anyone got out of line the ALP government, assisted by the ACTU tops, carried out open union busting. By 1991-92, pumped by capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and having joined the U.S. in the bloody slaughter of the first Gulf War, Hawke and Keating carried out all-sided attacks against minorities. University fees were first imposed on overseas students and later generalised to the rest of the student population. Thirteen years of ALP rule sufficiently weakened the organised working class to pave the way for Howard's vicious right-wing Liberal/National coalition government.

## Anti-Communist ALP Pushes "War on Terror" Reaction

In parliament on 10 November ALP leader Kim "Bomber" Beazley declared "Well, Prime Minister, we are united in the war on terror but we are against you in your war on Australian workers." That some ALP leaders, even strike-breaker Beazley, have taken to occasional posturing and rhetoric in opposition to the government's anti-union laws reflects the fact that Labor remains a *bourgeois workers party*. While its program and leadership is thoroughly pro-capitalist it retains organic ties to the working class through the very trade unions that today are currently facing savage attacks. What is necessary is a sharp political struggle within the unions against Laborite nationalism and subservience to the capitalist state. The working-class base of the Labor Party must be split away from the pro-capitalist tops who have been consistently vocal and bellicose in pushing the bourgeoisie's "war on terror."

Committed to the defence of Australian capitalism, the ALP, when in power administers the bosses' state on its behalf.

Prior to the 27 September Council of Australian Governments (COAG) "counter-terrorism summit" instigated by state Labor premiers, federal ALP opposition leader Beazley attacked Howard's proposed "anti-terror" laws as "soft" and "impractical." He also demanded that state police be given the power to "lock down" whole suburbs or districts to search, seize and detain anything and anyone, practices now legislated in New South Wales following the white racist riot in Cronulla. This fanatical militarist has been so eager to outstrip the federal government on "security" that he committed the ALP caucus to vote for the federal government's legislation without having seen the draft of the bill! Meanwhile all Labor state premiers *acted* to back the Howard government's "war on terror."

Echoing the language of the first anti-Soviet Cold War which targeted the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), South Australian Labor premier, Mike Rann, recently spoke darkly of "the enemy within." In 1949, at the beginning of Cold War I, it was the Chifley Labor government that established ASIO. The same year, they sent the army to smash the great Hunter Valley coalminers' strike, where CPA influence was strong, and jailed CPA leader Lance Sharkey for sedition. He had declared that Australian workers would welcome Soviet forces in this country following the Soviets' defeat of the Nazi-led war machine in WWII. More recently, in Victoria between 1985 and 1992 during the Labor governments of John Cain and Joan Kirner, a coterie of secret spies around the Operations Intelligence Unit (OIU) targeted more than 1,200 individuals and organisations —socialists (including the Spartacist League), trade unions, Aboriginal, immigrant, civil and women's rights groups (See "Victoria's Secret Spies," *ASP* No. 162, Summer 1997/98).

## "Anti-Terror" Laws are Racist Anti-Union Laws

The ultimate purpose of the "anti-terror" and anti-union laws is to intimidate and regiment the working class to be obedient, low-paid wage slaves and also ready cannon fodder in future imperialist wars. And while it is business as usual for the capitalists to try to drive down wages and working conditions, what they can actually get away with will depend on the response of the working class who, with their hands on the levers of production, have the potential social power to bring the wheels of profit grinding to a halt. On 15 November more than half a million angry workers flooded city streets around Australia protesting the bosses' vicious anti-union legislation, many defiantly walking out in the face of threatened reprisals by the bosses. However, at a time when hundreds of thousands of workers were ready to take up the fight against the attacks on their jobs, conditions and union rights, the ACTU tops refused to actually call workers out on *strike*. Instead they promised to keep the profits flowing and continue to peddle a

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protracted "community" campaign (ultimately aimed at electing the ALP at the next federal elections) that embraces the churches and courts in the name of flag-waving national unity. With the very right to union organising under threat the union tops push the lie among their working class base that some "good old Aussie" boss might agree with them that the anti-union laws are against the "national interest." This false ideology that there is a common national interest between workers and the bosses serves to delude workers into loyally serving underneath their capitalist masters. In fact, the "national interests" are the *bourgeoisie's interests*.

The vile nationalist course pushed by the union misleaders falls in behind the government's deeply racist and nationalistic "anti-terror" legislation which, to take but one example, specifies that one can be imprisoned for seven years for urging "a group or groups...to use force or violence against another group or other groups." It is not difficult to see how the bosses could use such legislation to target workers defending themselves on a picket line against cops and scabs such as the hard fought picket at Australian Envelopes in Melbourne last year.

Exposing how the capitalist rulers label the just struggles of workers as "terrorist," Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote in 1911:

"The strike, in their eyes, is the principal method of terrorism. The threat of a strike, the organization of strike pickets, an economic boycott of a slave-driving boss, a moral boycott of a traitor from our own ranks—all this and much more they call terrorism. If terrorism is understood in this way as any action inspiring fear in, or doing harm to, the enemy, then of course the entire class struggle is nothing but terrorism. And the only question remaining is whether the bourgeois politicians have the right to pour out their floods of moral indignation about proletarian terrorism when their entire state apparatus with its laws, police, and army is nothing but an apparatus of capitalist terror."

—"The Marxist Position on Individual Terrorism"

As we reported in the last issue of *Australasian Spartacist*, the recently introduced Maritime and Transport Security Bill was scandalously *drawn up with the assistance of maritime, transport and manufacturing union tops*. Then they claimed surprise that government bureaucrats had unilaterally expanded background "security" checks of the 130,000-strong shipping and transport workforce to include such "crimes" as "picket lines, industrial disputation and lockouts." At the mass rallies of 15 November, one week after the arrests of 18 men on terrorism charges and amidst the nationalism, religion and talk of re-electing Labor, the ACTU union tops did not so much as mention the government's "war on terror," let alone oppose it. This lining up behind the bosses' national unity crusade can only set the unions up for further attacks by the same racist capitalist state which during the Hawke/Keating Labor years smashed the builders labourers' and pilots' unions and which last year threw militant unionist Craig Johnston in prison.

Consisting of workers drawn from all over the world, the working class in Australia has both the social power and the material interest to push back the capitalist rulers' onslaught and come to the defence of oppressed minorities. This is no pipedream. In August 1996, at a 35,000-strong rally against the Howard government's attacks on welfare and union rights, angry building workers, miners and minorities rushed to defend an Aboriginal contingent at the head of their march when Aborigines came under attack by cops. Against the government's anti-union and "anti-terror" laws what is needed is to combine opposition to the overt racist targeting of immigrants and refugees with a fight for jobs and full

union rights *for all*. The working class must take up the fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations! Close the concentration camps! Down with the racist "anti-terror" and national security laws! We need a class-struggle fight against racist Australian capitalism.

### Reformist Left Capitulate to "War on Terror"

Integral to our fight to lead the working class to power is our internationalist class-struggle opposition to Australian imperialist depredations abroad. We say: *Down with Australian imperialism! Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military!* When the bombs began to rain on Baghdad in March 2003, we took a side in defence of Iraq, without giving an iota of political support to the Saddam Hussein regime. Today we call



Sydney, 16 February 2003: On eve of imperialist attack, SL/SYC contingent at massive anti-war rally took a side in defence of Iraq, called for Australian imperialist troops out of the Persian Gulf and East Timor.

for a class-struggle fight against the capitalist rulers at home demanding the unconditional withdrawal of Australian imperialist troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Setbacks to the imperialists' depredations in Iraq objectively serve the interests of workers and the oppressed internationally. Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defence against the imperialists, without giving any political support to the insurgents and while vehemently opposing deadly communal violence and religious fundamentalism.

As Leninists, we know that genuine socialist opposition to imperialist war and reaction must be premised on a program for the class independence of the proletariat. This is a far cry from the perspective of our reformist opponents, such as Socialist Alliance (SA) and Socialist Alternative (SAIt). In 2003 they embraced cross-class coalitions such as the Victorian Peace Network (VPN), which stood for the disarmament of Iraq! The VPN included the Victorian Trades Hall Council and the bourgeois Greens who, when the war began, both openly stood in solidarity with the Australian imperialist troops.

Today, continuing in the same vein SA and SAIt are ensconced in the Stop the War Coalition, which demands that Australian imperialist troops be brought "home" "to reduce the threat" of a terrorist attack. Far from class-struggle opposition to imperialist militarism, these demands fall in behind the pro-capitalist Labor Party tops who are not only gung-ho for the "war on terror" but seek a stronger military presence closer to home to "protect Australian borders" and enforce Australian imperialist plunder throughout the region.

But the reformists don't stop there. Openly capitulating to the government's "war on terror" propaganda, SA calls for "No to War and terrorism," while the Taaffeite Socialist Party (SP) seeks

"workers unity against terrorism and war," placing an equals sign between the imperialist powers and reactionary Islamic terrorists. By obscuring who the *main* enemy is, these demands are a capitulation to social chauvinism and stand counterposed to the necessary fight for *unambiguous working-class opposition* to the "war on terror" national unity crusade carried out by the racist Australian imperialists who are notorious for their viciousness and deadly terror against Aborigines and the peoples of the South Pacific and Southeast Asia.

This is not surprising coming from SA, whose constituent parts, along with SP and SAIt, all joined the chauvinist outpouring in September 1999, marching in protests calling for Australian troops to intervene into East Timor. The racist Australian military occupation enforced mass poverty and the theft of East Timor's oil

and train extreme Islamic fundamentalists (including Bin Laden) for a *jihad* against the Soviet Red Army. The Taaffeite Militant (SP's forebears) and the International Socialist Organisation (ISO, SAIt's forebears) jumped on the anti-Soviet bandwagon on the side of the bloodthirsty Islamic militias and their imperialist backers.

We hailed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, noting that this was a progressive act by the Stalinist bureaucracy that offered the possibility of extending the gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution to the Afghan peoples, not least to hideously oppressed women. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 was a bitter betrayal of the Afghan peoples and opened the door to counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The likes of SP and SAIt leaders (then in Militant and the ISO respectively) logically went from support to the imperialists and their allies in Afghanistan to hailing "democratic" counterrevolution in the Soviet Union (see "The ICL's Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution," page 4). Capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has given an enormous boost to the forces of religious reaction around the globe, while also leading to a "one superpower world" in which U.S. imperialism and its allies feel they have free rein to ravage the semicolonial world. For the imperialist rulers "Islamic terrorism" has become a surrogate for the war against "godless communism." It has become the new enemy against which they seek to rally the population in support of imperialist terror abroad and increased state repression at home.

We Trotskyists oppose terrorism as a strategy even when it derives from real, if misguided, anti-imperialist impulses and targets genuine institutions of state repression, which the criminal bombings of the World Trade Center, Bali nightclubs and London tube manifestly did not. Substituting individual acts against symbols of imperialist oppression is directly counterposed to the task of mobilising the working class for a socialist revolution. Our purpose is to infuse the working class with the consciousness that it has the class interest and social power to eradicate the system of capitalist imperialism. In Australia this demands a political struggle to split the working-class base from the racist pro-capitalist tops of the ALP who are loyally dedicated to defending the security of the Australian imperialist state. We need to build a multiethnic, revolutionary party that Lenin and Trotsky would recognise as their own. Such a party will lead the working class to victory through proletarian socialist revolutions internationally. This alone can lay the material basis for jobs, free quality healthcare and education for all, and put an end to racism, oppression, exploitation and war. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■

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193

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# Cronulla...

(continued from page 1)

their lives. Such was their frenzy and murderous intent that they attacked ambulancemen trying to assist injured victims and even cops who got in their way. Increasingly emboldened fascist outfits such as Australia First, the Patriotic Youth League and Blood and Honour, who pose a deadly threat to immigrants, Aborigines, gays and ultimately the organised working class, were deeply involved in fomenting and building this racist riot.

The white racists and fascists who carried out this celebration of "Aussie pride" took their cue from the very top in Australian society. Following the reported beating of lifeguards at Cronulla a week before, allegedly by Arabs responding to racist epithets, Howard confidant and radio shock jock, Alan Jones, began whipping up a racist frenzy, including by airing the vile SMS rallying call for mob violence. Rupert Murdoch's mass circulation *Daily Telegraph* fuelled the fire with headlines like: "Fight for Cronulla" and "Lines drawn on the beach sand." This was on top of the ever-escalating decade-long campaign by the NSW ALP government to criminalise Sydney's Arab population, particularly Lebanese youth. And topping this off has been the ruling class "war on terror" which targets first and foremost, alongside the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan, all Muslims, and Arab and Asian populations in Australia.

This racist eruption was whipped up by the capitalist rulers in order to divide the working class at a time when the bosses are pushing through their biggest attack on unions and working conditions for decades. However, decent working people from all backgrounds are horrified by the white racist attacks. Today as an elementary act of self-defence it is desperately necessary that the multiracial working class be mobilised in defence of minorities on the streets and to crush the fascists whose program is murderous racist terror.

In the absence of a fight by the organised working class against such racist terror, the justified anger of some youth of immigrant background was vented in some indefensible retaliatory acts, including indiscriminately attacking individuals and wrecking cars. A church hall in Auburn has been torched. Seizing on such actions, the NSW government rushed through draconian new police powers to lock down whole suburbs, to search people and cars, and to confiscate cars. Penalties for the crimes of "riot" and "affray" have been dramatically increased along with removing the presumption of bail. Exposing their reactionary agenda, the bourgeois media and politicians talk almost exclusively about the "problem" of "Lebanese youth" while burying the white racist rampage on Sunday. The



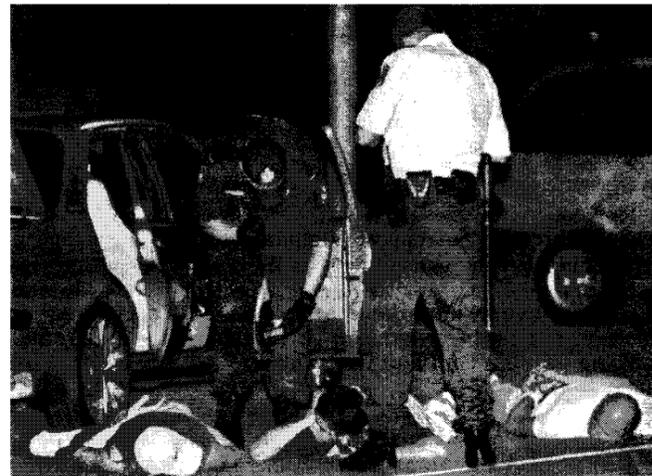
Wearing the Nazi swastika at Sydney demo in 1975, Jim Saleam now dons a suit as fascist "Australia First" candidate for Marrickville council.

"lock down" powers target Arab or other immigrant and working class suburbs. Pickets and protesters who defend themselves from scabs or police attack could see themselves facing 15 years jail, and without the right to bail!

Following their success in Cronulla and this green light from the bourgeoisie, the fascists have grown in confidence. Anti-Arab attacks have broken out in virtually every capital city in Australia and a repeat of Cronulla has been threatened from Perth to the Gold Coast.

## Down With Liberal/ALP Racist State Repression

Having done everything possible to encourage the lynch-mob mentality seen at Cronulla, the racist prime minister, John Howard, and equally bigoted "opposition" leader, Kim Beazley, refused to label the Cronulla riot as racist. Instead Howard described the murderous attempted pogrom as "just incredibly bad behaviour" (*Age*, 16 December) while Beazley ranted about "the rule of law" and "core Australian values" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 December). Justifying the pogromist mob Howard proclaimed: "We should never lose sight of the fact that primarily



Darren McNamara

what happened was a group of people broke the law the previous weekend when they assaulted two lifeguards..." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 December). The ALP NSW premier Iemma declared that new laws were necessary to battle "Middle Eastern thugs" and recalled parliament to ram through the new police powers which will be directed in the first instance against youth of immigrant background. And, giving the racists and fascists exactly what they want, thousands of police have been mobilised this weekend to effectively prevent non-white youth going to Cronulla and other beachside suburbs.

Alongside vicious attacks on unions, Aborigines and women, for years the Liberal/Labor parties have whipped up and intensified anti-immigrant hysteria. Based on defence of Australian capitalism, White Australia racism and nationalism is the natural bond between the Liberal/National Party coalition and the Labor Party. It was the Hawke/Keating federal ALP government that introduced mandatory detention for refugees in the early 1990s and then denied social security to new immigrants. Since then, they have backed virtually every anti-immigrant measure by the Coalition as they vied to win over the considerable electoral base of Pauline Hanson's fascist One Nation party. Spurred on by the gutter Murdoch press and under the guise of the "war on drugs" and "gun crime," the Carr Labor government established no less than five police strike forces from 1999 to 2004 targeting the embattled Asian and Arab people throughout southwestern Sydney.

Indeed the violence against minorities in Cronulla is the logical extension of the ongoing violence carried out by the state, from the racist police who regularly target youth for harassment and who attacked heavily immigrant anti-war student protests in 2003, to the growing army of ASIO spies who carry out surveillance of

Man bashed with beer bottles by part of thousands-strong white racist mob, riddled with fascists, during pogromist riot, Cronulla, 11 December 2005.



Andrew Meares

immigrant neighbourhoods. In October 2003 the Labor premier of NSW, Bob Carr, responded to shootings reportedly involving Lebanese people by declaring, "Obey the law of Australia, or ship out of Australia. We're not going to see, step by step, our civilisation dragged back to medieval standards of revenge cycles" (*Daily Telegraph*, 16 October 2003). Announcing the recent beefing up of police powers, including yet another police strike force, Iemma and Police Commissioner Ken Moroney have condemned the violence as "un-Australian."

December 14, 2005: NSW Labor government's cops bullying youth of immigrant background in racist dragnet cast around Sydney's south following Cronulla riot. Police thugs are enforcers of capitalist repression.

To the contrary, the white racism on display in Cronulla was *very* much a part of White Australian capitalism, which was founded on bloody genocidal wars against the Aborigines and exclusion of non-white people and today means cop killings of Aborigines and the incarceration of refugees in concentration camps.

## Break With Laborism: For a Class-Struggle Fight!

In this brutal society where the magnates of capital are reaping record profits while almost one in four people live in poverty, the bosses engender racist divisions in order to drive down the conditions of all. Incessant in their drive for increased profits and lower overheads, the capitalists have further trashed jobs, childcare, public housing, transport, education and healthcare. In this situation of generalised social rot there is a lot of anger and desperation, which can go in different directions including spawning race hate and fascist bands. What is necessary to turn things around is some racially integrated working-class struggle. Unifying workers in struggle will cut against the bosses' divide-and-rule schemes.

There are plenty of workers itching to take on the bosses. This was quite palpable on 15 November when more than half a million workers from many different ethnicities rallied in cities throughout the country against the government's vicious anti-union attacks. However, the pro-capitalist ACTU leaders are deeply opposed to launching a militant fight against the bosses' anti-working-class assaults. For instance they have no intention of organising a fight for jobs for all at union wages. Politically supporting the ALP, these labour lieutenants of capital play the role of channelling working-class unrest and justified hatred of the bourgeoisie into deadly class collaboration under the capitalist system. Today this is expressed in

the impotent and deeply nationalist "community" campaign they are pushing to defend "the Australian way of life," thus feeding the despair and racism out of which fascist outfits grow. Instead of a leadership which uses nationalism to tie the workers and oppressed to the ruling class, we need a revolutionary leadership that mobilises the working class to use its social power to fight in its own interests, which are irreconcilably counterposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie and capitalist governments. Break with the ALP! For an internationalist revolutionary workers party which is a tribune of all the people.

Concretely, Unions NSW have embraced the bosses' reactionary agenda by facilitating the Police Association's demands for more "resources." That the peak union body in NSW should push the cops' demands is an outrage and insult to those like the Morris McMahon picketers or Redfern Aborigines who have had to defend themselves against these violent, racist thugs. The Police Association is not a union and no one should be under any illusion that police will protect minority communities from racist attack, least of all Near Eastern people, who have been under constant and escalating state harassment ever since the first Gulf War in 1991. Indeed one of the abiding childhood memories of many youth of Near Eastern parentage would be the vicious NSW police attack on the Sydney Arabic Day Carnival in 1993.

The cops are special bodies of armed men whose job it is to defend the interests and private property of the capitalist rulers against the interests of the exploited working class. They are not "workers in uniform" as the union tops and some left groups like the Socialist Party (SP) claim, but the armed enforcers of capitalist repression. As part of the necessary fight to make the unions weapons of struggle, the cops, security guards and prison screws must be driven out of the unions! They have no place in the workers movement!

Labor-loyal reformist left groups such as SP, Socialist Alternative (SAI) and the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) have produced statements on the racist riot in Cronulla. While buried in their statements, the ISO and SP at least acknowledge that the NSW ALP government has acted oppressively at times. SAI however, cannot even bring themselves to mention the ALP. But whatever their occasional criticism of the ALP, the reality is that these groups habitually call on the working class to vote ALP either directly or through preferences including during every racist ALP election campaign.

## For Multiracial Union Defence to Crush Fascists in the Egg

Today the small fascist gangs are growing, spawned by the racist climate of "anti-terror" state reaction. History shows that when the fascists come into their own is in periods of acute social crisis, when bourgeois democracy is no longer sufficient to contain working-class militancy. In the meantime the ruling class holds the fascists in check while generally turning a blind eye to their terror. At times the state will also utilise them to do some of their dirty work. NSW fuehrer of Australia

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

# France...

(continued from page 12)

police on hit-and-run operations against the minority ghettos. Instead of Sarkozy's raids, they promote the so-called good old days of the "neighborhood police" put in place by the late popular-front government of Lionel Jospin of the Socialist Party (PS) and Marie-George Buffet, the current head of the Communist Party (PCF). The PCF and Lutte Ouvrière (LO), which is linked to the American pseudo-Trotskyist organization Spark, have even attacked Sarkozy for reducing the number of police working daily in the ghettos. LO wrote in *Lutte Ouvrière* (8 July):

"In complete contradiction to his promises, the minister Sarkozy has conducted the same policy on his turf as his colleagues: playing tricks with the numbers to hide the decrease, closing police precincts, budgets without funds."

The "neighborhood police" was a favorite concept of Jean-Pierre Chevènement, minister of police in the Jospin government, who is still widely hated by undocumented immigrants and by ghetto youth, whom he liked to refer to as *sauvageons* (little savages). He introduced new laws enabling charges to be brought against anyone found helping undocumented workers. The harking back of the PS and PCF to Jospin and Chevènement's "neighborhood police" days is a deadly omen for immigrants and youth. It was Jospin's cops who killed Habib Ould Mohamed in Toulouse in 1998, provoking a riot for three full days in the Le Mirail neighborhood, which was quelled by a massive mobilization of the riot police, exactly as Sarkozy/de Villepin are doing now. Again, in April 2000, a neighborhood patrol killed Ryad Hamlaoui near Lille, provoking another wave of unrest.

The PCF issued a special statement (*l'Humanité*, 4 November) on Clichy demanding: "Place the police at the service of the whole nation, which means democratization, training, neighborhood residency and adequate funds." LO's editorial on Clichy mentions immigration or racism only once, in order to warn that Sarkozy's antics will "encourage more repressive attitudes among the police and racism among many of its elements." As if putting a different top cop in charge and throwing a few "bad apples" off the force would create "good" French cops. All these reformists are trying to rehabilitate the police in the eyes of oppressed youth, thus promoting deadly illusions in the bourgeois Republic. The police cannot be reformed to serve the population. Promoting the lie that they can be reformed is what distinguishes reformists from revolutionaries. Like the other armed bodies of men that constitute the core of the state (prison guards, the



Left: High school students expelled from school for wearing headscarves in 2003. Right: Paris cops evict impoverished African immigrants from living quarters in rundown building in September. French proletariat must fight anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim reaction.

army), their function is to protect private ownership of the means of production by the capitalists. The capitalist state has a legal monopoly on weapons in order to maintain the capitalist system: the police are the guard dogs of the bourgeoisie, not "workers in uniform." **Police, prison guards, out of the unions!**

### PCF, LCR: Architects of a New "Popular Front"

In its statement, the PCF speaks accusingly of Sarkozy: "The government has shown that it is incapable of guaranteeing public order." The PS and PCF are using the current riots in order to refurbish their much-tarnished credentials and present themselves as those who are more capable of maintaining order in the largely minority neighborhoods, and thus can be relied upon by the bourgeoisie to run the bourgeois state more smoothly.

At bottom, the issue for the PCF is to push forward a new coalition, including with bourgeois parties like the Greens, Chevènementistes and Left Radicals, to win the 2007 elections. And the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) as well as LO (albeit more indirectly) are helping them out. The "left," including the PCF and the pseudo-Trotskyists from the LCR and LO, are sharing a platform on November 8 in Paris with two little Chevènementiste bourgeois parties, MARS and MRC, supposedly against the privatization of the EDF electricity monopoly. Thus, the LCR and LO promote illusions that you can fight the capitalist onslaught by uniting with capitalist parties!

### Down With the Racist Campaign "Against Terrorism"!

In early October at Charles de Gaulle Airport, baggage handlers went on strike

for permanent hiring of casual workers and for higher wages (following the privatization of Air France under the previous government of Jospin/Bufet). The strike was broken by the government, using Vigipirate and a supposed terrorist threat posed by luggage not being sorted. This shows very concretely what we have been saying for years: Vigipirate targets all immigrants and minorities, as well as the working class as a whole. It may be wielded again in coming weeks if a major strike gets underway at the French railway.

LO has from Day One refused to oppose Vigipirate and this goes hand in hand with its leading role in pushing the racist campaign to expel young women wearing the headscarf from school. In France, Islam is a religion of the oppressed and of the ghettos. The headscarf represents a reactionary social program that confines women to the home in a position of servitude. The expulsion of Muslim girls from school can only reinforce their isolation and oppression and fuel racism against all immigrants. We oppose these racist campaigns and defend the girls who wear headscarves against the bourgeois state. Instead of that, LO welcomed Chirac's law banning the headscarf, a racist law that is part and parcel of the daily harassment against Muslims, and LO spokesman Arlette Laguiller even linked arms at a 6 March 2004 march of women from immigrant neighborhoods with Nicole Guedj (then-Secretary of State for prison construction from Chirac's UMP party)!

LO does mobilize on behalf of undocumented immigrants, just as many bourgeois liberals do who believe the French Republic should be able to integrate those immigrants who often have been in France for years and have raised families in this

country. However, racism against ghetto youth runs deep and goes to the core of French capitalism, serving to profoundly divide the working class. LO consciously evades the issue, talking only of "poor neighborhoods," avoiding the key question of racial oppression. What is needed is to forge the revolutionary unity of the working class, starting with workers mobilizations against racist police terror. We fight to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, committed to leading the proletariat of this country in socialist revolution. ■



### Publication of the Ligue trotskyste de France

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First, Jim Saleam, who was imprisoned in 1991 for a shotgun attack on the Sydney home of the African National Congress representative, has boasted that when he was in the Nazi party in 1974 Special Branch approached him to break into the Queensland University Students' Union and steal documents.

Importantly the New South Wales Teachers Federation and the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) have condemned the white racist violence in Cronulla. However it is necessary to turn these words of condemnation into union actions. Instead the MUA "call[s] on all levels of Government and community organisations to take a stand and work to eradicate these racist sentiments from our society" (Statement by the Sydney Branch Executive, 12 December). Such appeals to capitalist governments only serve to legitimise the state, which is the key source of racist terror under capitalism. The unions must realise that the "lockdown a suburb" laws will be used to prevent mass union

picket-line mobilisations like those in the 1998 Patrick's waterfront lockout where thousands of workers assembled to defend the MUA at places like Port Botany, Webb Dock and Fremantle.

The hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers facing racist attacks are not just victims. They form a key component of the multiracial working class, which has the social power and class interest to combat racist divisions and push back the bosses' attacks. A fighting unity of oppressed minorities with the social power of the heavily multiracial trade unions needs to be forged in struggle and completely independent of the capitalist state. What is needed are organised racially integrated workers defence guards, drawn from responsible union men and women, mobilised in places such as Cronulla as a show of force. A few weekends of multiracial workers contingents patrolling the Cronulla beach area would teach the white fascist scum a lesson should they dare raise their heads. It would also ensure that

anyone, of any colour or background, could take a swim and enjoy the sun. Such a perspective for independent proletarian defence of immigrant rights demands a political fight within the unions to break with Laborite nationalism and loyalty to the capitalist state.

During racist riots in the midst of World War II in the U.S. city of Detroit, which left 26 blacks murdered, the then-revolutionary Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party proclaimed:

"The hoodlums and hooligans who are today assailing the Negroes are training themselves for other acts of violence. Tomorrow or the day after they can be unleashed by the Fords, Wilsons and Chryslers as storm troops and strike-breakers against the unions themselves. Workers, take warning! This is how fascist gangs were formed and fascism arose in Europe and crushed the labor movement. Do not permit them to take root here.... Flying squadrons of union militants should stand ready to protect the rights of their Negro fellow workers menaced by the mobs."

— Militant, 3 July 1943

Earlier this year the fascists of the Patriotic Youth League mobilised outside the offices of the CFMEU construction union, complaining that the union was "importing foreign workers." They were rightly dispersed by angry unionists, including from the MUA. We Trotskyists of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club stand for united working-class struggle against capitalist rule. Racist terror must be met with working-class justice. United actions mobilising the power of the organised working class and minority organisations must be brought to bear to smash fascist terror. Such a course demands a political fight to split the working-class base of the ALP from the racist pro-capitalist tops. Forging an internationalist proletarian revolutionary party is the key to building a society where racism no longer exists. For that to be achieved we need to overturn the whole capitalist system through workers revolution. ■



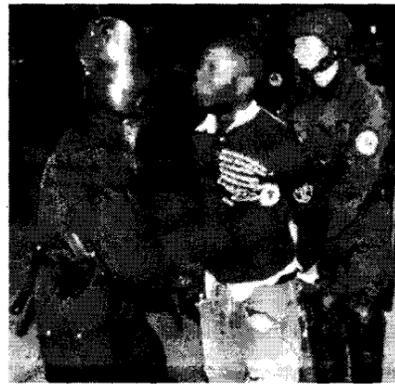
## Down With Racist Cop Terror!

# Ghetto Youth Upheavals Sweep France



AFP photos

Paris suburb Clichy-sous-Bois invaded by cops. Right: Cops arrest youth on 30 October.



The following article, reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 858, 11 November), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., is based on a leaflet issued on 5 November by our comrades of the *Ligue trotskyste de France*.

PARIS, November 8—On October 27, two youth of African origin, Ziad Benna and Bouna Traoré, were electrocuted in a power substation where they had sought refuge from a police dragnet in Clichy-sous-Bois, near Paris. For over a week, immigrant and minority ghettos and neighborhoods have been in flames. Thousands of cars as well as some warehouses and stores have burned. The unprecedented unrest in the suburban ghettos has also flared up in the center of Paris and spread to suburbs all over France and beyond. Cars were set ablaze outside the main train station in Brussels and in a working-class neighborhood of Berlin.

The French government continues to fuel the outrage. A state of emergency invoking sweeping police measures has now been imposed against the seething ghettos. Some 10,000 police have been deployed while more than 1,200 youth have been arrested and some have already been sentenced to months in jail. We demand the *immediate release of all the jailed youth and the dropping of all charges! Down with racist police terror against youth in the immigrant ghettos!* We also oppose Vigipirate, a plan consisting of racist joint police and army patrols in train and metro stations and airports, which has been on “code red” for five months now.

The explosion started in Clichy-sous-Bois, a rundown ghetto with a population consisting heavily of immigrants and French youth of immigrant descent. The official unemployment rate there is 25 percent; in reality, probably more than 50

percent of youth there are unemployed. No wonder Clichy exploded. The bourgeoisie does not have much to offer these youth except police patrols, jail and death—in some prisons about 80 percent of the inmates are of Muslim background, whereas Muslims make up less than 10 percent of the population of France.

A recent sociological study documents “apartheid at school,” with racist segregation now even more intense in high schools than in housing. As a result, these youth have little to no perspective of finishing school or getting a job. And the situation has gone from bad to worse over the last 20 years, under “left-” and right-wing governments alike. Racism is inherent to capitalism, and in France it is rooted also in its colonial past: the French

bourgeoisie still seethes over its defeat in the Algerian liberation struggle over 40 years ago. A consistent fight against racist oppression requires a fight to overthrow the whole capitalist system.

Riots such as these are an expression of despair by unemployed youth so marginalized that they are deprived of any means to be a factor for effective social change. The unrest has also included incidents of indiscriminate attacks on individuals who happened to find themselves in the wrong place, and has devastated the neighborhoods these youth have to live in. Yet despite the vast energies expended and the devastation suffered, these outbreaks usually change nothing. This makes it even more important for workers to fight for better conditions for residents of these



Clichy-sous-Bois residents march on 29 October. T-shirts reading “Dead for Nothing” honour two young men who died after being chased by police.

neighborhoods. The working class is the social force that has the objective interest and power to overturn this whole system of capitalist exploitation, racism and misery, and build a workers state based on a planned economy.

Aulnay-sous-Bois is another city in the 93rd district, a heavily working-class and immigrant region outside Paris that was prominent in the recent riots. In Aulnay there is also a large Citroën auto plant where young workers, mostly of North and West African immigrant origin, carried out a winning strike this past March. Thousands of youth from the area have jobs at the nearby Charles de Gaulle Airport, one of the largest in Europe. The power of the multiethnic workforce of the area, French and immigrant, can be unleashed to fight against the terrible conditions in the ghettos and in defense of the oppressed youth. But for this to happen, what is necessary is a relentless fight against the chauvinist trade-union bureaucracy, which restrains and betrays working-class struggles because at bottom it shares the bourgeoisie’s concern that French capitalism be made more “competitive” against its international rivals.

The government’s vicious attack against a whole generation of youth is intended to fuel racist divisions within the multiethnic working class of this country in a context of savage attacks against the whole proletariat and growing working-class resistance. After the seamen of the Corsica-Mediterranean ferry line lost their strike, stabbed in the back by the CGT union leadership (see “Corsica and Class Struggle in France,” *WV* No. 857, 28 October), the government, wielding an anti-strike court injunction, is now trying to break a month-long strike by Marseille transit workers. A strike has been called for November 21 by all the major unions of the SNCF railway. This makes it all the more urgent for the organized workers movement to oppose the government’s racist onslaught. For the working class, it is a life-and-death question to stand united and fight off the attacks on its standard of living and on social services. As the *LTF* wrote in *Le Bolchévik* (September 2005):

“An attack against one is an attack against all. The whole workers movement... must mobilize in defense of its most vulnerable class brothers, the workers coming from North and West Africa in particular, who form a strategic component of the proletariat of this country, whether in construction, auto or among the sanitation workers of Paris. What’s needed is a campaign to unionize the temp workers, time-limited jobs and ‘new hire contracts’ [a new type of contract below union standards]. *Down with Vigipirate! Down with racist expulsions and deportation charter flights! Full citizenship rights for all those who are here! French troops out of Africa!*”

### Neighbourhood Police and Riot Police: Guard Dogs of the Bourgeois Order

The trade-union bureaucrats and the reformist parties should be condemned for their refusal to protest the government’s racist onslaught in Clichy-sous-Bois and other neighborhoods. They mainly complain that Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy is a crazed maniac, only pursuing his career to become president. Thus they give backhanded support to his rival, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin (a close ally of President Jacques Chirac), who has even increased the level of police repression since he took over the situation after the first days of rioting. The reformists condemn Sarkozy for sending riot

*continued on page 11*

SUMMER 2005/06