



May 14: Sydney demonstration in support of Mugeon-ri community's resistance to the U.S.-South Korean military base. (photo: Raymond Mallary)

On May 14 about two dozen people rallied in Sydney in support of a community in South Korea who have been resisting the expansion of a joint U.S.-South Korean military training area into their farming village. The protest was held outside the South Korean consulate in Elizabeth Street.

The Mugeon-ri local community have been displaced by the joint training area since 1980. Many of those evicted then moved to the nearby village of Ohyeonri. But now the two hundred or so people in Ohyeonri face being thrown out by the expansion of the military base (*DMZ, Hawai'i Legacy Website, 7 February 2009.*)

Many Ohyeonri community members have relatives in nearby North Korea and are opposed to a U.S. invasion of North Korea. The main purpose of the massive U.S. military presence in South Korea is to target the North Korean workers state.

Although the U.S.-propped up regime in South Korea claims that they have already grabbed enough land for the expanded Mugeon-ri base, they want all the residents out. As Korean activists have explained, this eviction is in order to increase the intensity of military training in the base. This coincides with increased U.S./South Korean/Japanese provocations against North Korea.

The May 14 Sydney protest was organized by the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition and involved activists from various tendencies including the Communist Party of Australia. Trotskyist Platform (TP) supporters joined the action in support of the Mugeon-



South Korea, October 2008: Protesters march against the expansion of the joint U.S.-South Korean military training base at Mugeon-ri.

ri/Ohyeonri community, understanding that solidarity with their struggle was objectively on the side of the struggle against the anti-communist U.S. military deployment in South Korea. Our placards at the protest linked opposition to the expansion of the Mugeon-ri military training base with the need to defend the North Korean and Chinese workers states (in spite of the bureaucratic deformations that distort these states.) Among the TP placards at the rally was one that stated: "U.S. troops in Mugeon-ri and all of South Korea are a threat to socialistic North Korea and ultimately China. So is the U.S.-Australia Pine Gap spy base. U.S. out of South Korea! Close Pine Gap!"

Another TP placard read, "Support the Mugeon-ri farmers! And support South Korean workers! Get U.S. troops out of South Korea! We won't forget U.S. complicity in the 1980 Kwangju massacre." This sign referred to the horrific May 1980 massacres of over 2,000 protesters by the South Korean military and police. The events followed an uprising by leftist students and workers in the city of Kwangju against the U.S.-backed South Korean dictatorship of General Chun Doo-hwan. The Kwangju masses, demanding an end to martial law and an increase in minimum wages, had taken control of the city for several days. But their struggle was drowned in blood as the South Korean police and special forces clubbed demonstrators to death and opened fire on them. The South Korean Army was at the time **under the direct command of the U.S. military**. It was America's John Wickham, the U.S.-Korean Combined Forces Commander who gave the order to release the South Korean Army's 20th Division from Seoul to storm into Kwangju. Today, the U.S. occupation force in South Korea remains a missile aimed at the heart of the militant South Korean working class, just as it is a threat to North Korea. **Support the international campaign against the expansion of the U.S.-South Korean military base at Mugeon-ri! All U.S. troops get out of South Korea now!**