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Union-Busting Keating Out, Union-Busting Howard In

Elections '96: Carnival of Racist Reaction

After thirteen years in power, the Labor government was decisively defeated in the 2 March federal elections. Tens of thousands of traditional Labor voters deserted the ALP with Labor losing booths covering mining towns such as Broken Hill, Mt Isa and Weipa and formerly "safe" seats like Parramatta in Sydney and Oxley in Brisbane. Estimates indicate a high informal vote of around five percent and clearly many thousands did not go to the polling booths despite the anti-democratic "compulsory voting" laws. Conceding defeat, Keating proclaimed that he was handing over the country to John Howard's conservative Coalition in "good order." From the standpoint of the capitalist rulers, Labor had indeed delivered on the mandate that the

Build a Revolutionary Workers Party —Tribune of the People!

bosses gave it in 1983 when, faced with an economically militant labour movement, the Australian bourgeoisie opted for a Labor regime of Cold War, union-busting austerity. As the *London Economist* (9 March) put it: "Labor kept the country pretty strike-free through a series of accords with the union movement, in which wage restraint was traded for steady growth and low inflation."

These were New World Disorder elections "down under." With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the

Soviet Union, the services of the social democracy in the capitalist countries are seen by the bosses as ever more dispensable. The bottom line for the ruling class here, as elsewhere, is the need to take on and defeat the power of strategic unions such as the wharfies and miners in the drive to make the economy internationally competitive in a period of escalating interimperialist rivalries. Labor had fully served the bosses for thirteen long years, but the rulers now seek to launch an even more frontal assault on the working people

and prefer their open representatives in office to lead it. Thus, Howard rode into office proclaiming that he would break the MUA on the waterfront. Perhaps with an eye cocked to Tony Blair's so-called "New" Labour Party in Britain, Labor's new leader, Kim Beazley, rushed to "distance" the ALP from the trade unions; as the *Sydney Morning Herald* (20 March) reported: "While it shares the ACTU's concerns about the impact of the Government's industrial relations reforms, the Opposition is not anxious to align itself with militant unions in expected conflict zones such as the waterfront."

For the past thirteen years, the working people have been savagely ground down in order to fill the coffers of the
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Imperialist Hue and Cry Over Taiwan

Down With U.S. Gunboat Diplomacy Against China!

The following article is reprinted from the *Spartacist League/U.S. newspaper Workers Vanguard* No. 642, 29 March 1996. Australia, as a junior partner of the U.S. in the region, plays an integral role in Washington's global military network through the spy bases at Pine Gap and Nurrungar. These bases—with their intelligence-gathering and military communication functions—undoubtedly played some role in the recent deadly provocation against China carried out by the U.S. Seventh Fleet.

Smash the U.S./ Australia Alliance! U.S. Bases Out Now!

In the largest U.S. naval deployment in the Pacific since the Vietnam War, two aircraft carrier groups from the U.S. Seventh Fleet have been positioned in waters off Taiwan. This was Washington's response to Chinese military exercises coinciding with Taiwan's presidential election campaign leading up to the March 23 vote. It is classic gunboat diplomacy intended to show China—as well as America's imperialist rivals—that the U.S. is the cop of the world.

The American action was a deadly provocation against China and the peoples of the entire region. Headed by the carriers USS *Independence* and



Imperialist provocation against China: above, U.S. carrier *Independence* headed flotilla in waters off Taiwan.

Nimitz, the imperialist flotilla numbered 16 warships carrying 200 cruise missiles and 200 warplanes between them. Clinton's war secretary William Perry threatened, "Beijing should know, and this will remind them, that while they are a great military power, the premier—the strongest—military power in the Western Pacific is the United States" (*New York Times*, 20 March).

Both Taiwan's ruling Guomintang (Kuomintang, or KMT) Party, which has lorded it over the island for nearly 50 years, and advocates of Taiwan independence held mass election rallies denouncing China's defense exercises. But the U.S. military brinkmanship can't help but remind Chinese of earlier eras of imperialist gunboat diplomacy: the 1841 Opium War, when China lost Hong

Kong to the British; and the 1920s and '30s, when the U.S. and several European states stole whole sections of the country in alliance with warlord rulers, while Japan occupied Manchuria and later much of central and coastal China in a genocidal war of conquest.

Even under Taiwan's iron-fisted regime, a protest (blacked out by the
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China...

(continued from page 1)

U.S. press) of several hundred demonstrators called for the U.S. to get out of the Taiwan Strait, burning American flags. Protesters outside the American consulate in Hong Kong also condemned U.S. actions.

As Marxists, we stand for the unconditional defense of the Chinese workers state, despite the political rule of a parasitic bureaucracy, against U.S. imperialism and its Taiwan client state. This includes defending China's right to stage military exercises. And unlike pacifists and "greens," we uphold China's right to test its nuclear weapons, as it did last summer, as part of maintaining a necessary deterrent against imperialist nuclear blackmail...or worse. The U.S., the only country to ever use atomic weapons against anyone, threatened to drop A-bombs on China in the Korean War. [We refer readers to the

KMT "refugees" made it to Taiwan, at the time populated by 8 million indigenous Chinese and 200,000 Austronesian tribesmen. Ever since that time, the KMT has aspired to reconquer the mainland and reunify China through bloody counterrevolution.

Taiwan's economic "miracle" has been coupled with savage police-state rule, including decades of martial law, during which the left and labor movements were brutally repressed. Even before 1949, the Guomindang moved to cement its rule on the island through sheer terror. A burning memory among Taiwanese is the "2-28" incident: a 28 February 1947 outpouring by the local population against KMT corruption and brutality, after which Chiang's forces systematically slaughtered every potential political opponent, killing several thousand. Now, some 50 years later, Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui has "won" in a pre-ordained election over two KMT rivals and a pro-independence candidate.

Under the Guomindang dictatorship, advocates of independence for Taiwan

area for U.S. imperialism's war against the Vietnamese peasants and workers.

In the early 1970s, the U.S. achieved a rapprochement with the nationalist Maoist bureaucracy in China on the basis of shared hostility to the Soviet Union. This led to U.S. recognition of the People's Republic and a seat for China in the United Nations at the expense of Taiwan. As Mao's successors opened up China to foreign capitalist investment beginning in the late 1970s, Washington pursued a course of "engagement" with Beijing. At the same time, a 1979 U.S.-Taiwan defense pact pledges the U.S. to back Taiwan in the event of armed conflict with the mainland. And fully one-fourth of Taiwan's budget goes to its military, which includes one of the most advanced air forces in the world.

American spokesmen describe the current U.S. posture toward China as "strategic ambiguity." While China's naval and air forces possess mostly outdated weapons and vessels, the People's Liberation Army is three-million-strong, and military spending has increased in recent years. As the Chinese Stalinists have increasingly abandoned even their socialist verbiage, the bureaucracy has adopted an aggressive nationalist tone in an attempt to maintain social stability. Washington is worried that China's military buildup poses a threat to American client states and a roadblock to its imperialist interests in the region. There are 100,000 U.S. troops stationed in Japan and South Korea and on ships. Adding to the strains is the conflict over the oil-rich Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, claimed by China, Vietnam and a host of U.S. allies. And there is the always-tense Korean peninsula.

Clinton seized on China's military drills to show the flag in a bid for an electoral boost as the U.S. presidential campaign unfolds. Liberal Democrats and sections of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy have long pushed for a harder line against China under the rubric of "human rights." Meanwhile, the Republican Party has been pressuring the White House to take a more belligerent stand against China. Last year, Jesse Helms and other Republican right-wingers helped stoke China's anger by ostentatiously greeting Taiwan president Lee as he entered the U.S. to visit his alma mater, Cornell University. Now pressure is building in the Gingrich-Dole Congress to take a "hard line" against Beijing as China's "most favored nation" trade status comes up for renewal in June.

In this context, Taiwan once again becomes a potential flashpoint for military confrontation. As tensions rose over China's military exercises, Washington announced the sale of 150 F-16 fighter planes to Taiwan. In response to the dispatch of American warships to the area, Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen declared, "Those people have forgotten that Taiwan is a part of China and not a protectorate of the United States." But with the conclusion of the Taiwan elections, both Beijing and Taipei are making conciliatory statements, and Taiwan president Lee Teng-hui has hinted that he may make a visit to Beijing.

There is another major player in East Asian power politics, namely Japan Inc. The Japanese ruling class has consistently pursued a strategy aiming to bring about a "cold" capitalist restoration in China by buying off decisive sections of the venal Stalinist bureaucracy. Tokyo was the first imperialist capital to restore full commercial relations with China after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Today Japan is providing massive loans to Beijing to modernize China's infrastructure—airports, water treatment plants, highways, etc.

A top official of the Clinton administration has admitted that if the U.S. adopts a hard line against China, such as a trade boycott, "not a single friend and ally would join us," and it "would cause severe strains with Japan, South Korea, Australia and in Southeast Asia" (*Time*,

25 March). As for China's recent flexing of its military muscle in the Taiwan Strait, Tokyo went no further than saying this was "regrettable," while the Taiwan regime lashed out that the Japanese "care only about their own interests." And the interests of Japan are increasingly in conflict with those of American imperialism.

Chinese Revolution in Danger

Revolutionaries must defend China against attacks from the imperialist powers and their proxies. Yet at this time, neither the U.S. nor the most rabid Guomindang irredentists on Taiwan want a military confrontation with China, as this would threaten the course taken by the Stalinist regime in pursuing capitalist market "reforms." Through dismantling centralized economic planning and agricultural collectivization, and by opening up whole chunks of China to foreign exploitation, the Stalinists have encouraged the rapid growth of capitalist-restorationist forces, including inside the bureaucracy itself, which aim to destroy what remains of the gains of the 1949 Revolution.

Taiwan businessmen have already penetrated the mainland with almost \$30 billion in investment—second only to Hong Kong—mostly in light manufacturing plants in the capitalist "Special Economic Zones" (SEZs) where wages are a fraction of those on Taiwan. In a recent incident attesting to the horrendous conditions in these plants, 19 workers died on New Year's Day as a fire swept through a Taiwanese joint venture factory producing Christmas decorations in the Shenzhen SEZ. In 1993, a fire in a Shenzhen toy factory killed 87 workers who could not escape because the doors and windows had been locked by management.

Under the watchword "One China, two systems," the Chinese Stalinists have said they do not intend for reunification to threaten Taiwan's capitalist economy. The reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese control on 1 June 1997 is intended by the Stalinists to be a showcase of this policy. At a conference in Beijing last year with leading Hong Kong capitalists, a Chinese government official stressed that Hong Kong would remain "financially independent"—to the extent that Beijing would not even collect taxes there. However, such arrangements are highly unstable, and would soon go in one direction or the other. Reunification without expropriation of Hong Kong and Taiwanese capitalists would give a further powerful impetus to counter-revolution on the mainland.

As the counterrevolution which destroyed the Soviet Union demonstrated, the restoration of capitalist rule in China would be an unmitigated disaster for the worker and peasant masses. The prospect of capitalist restoration is already stoking the fires of inter-imperialist rivalry as the U.S. and Japan position themselves to grab the anticipated spoils (and the Germans have started to invest heavily).

It is a cruel irony that the Stalinists' pro-capitalist policies have invited back into China the hated Guomindang oppressors who were driven out in 1949. But capitalist restoration is far from a certainty. Waves of labor unrest and peasant revolts testify to growing plebeian resistance to "free market" measures. Militant struggle, however, is not sufficient to defeat the forces of counterrevolution. The Chinese working people need a revolutionary Marxist leadership—a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party—to mobilize the workers at the head of the peasantry in struggle to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. Such a leadership would link the struggles on the mainland with workers struggles in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Japan, fighting for the perspective of proletarian political revolution in China and socialist revolution in the capitalist countries leading to a socialist federation of Asia. ■



Xinhua

China's naval forces conducting military exercises. Trotskyists defend People's Republic of China against imperialist attack.

last issue of *Australasian Spartacist*, No. 157, and the article entitled "New World Order Socialists' Target China".]

At the same time, we categorically opposed the French nuclear tests in the South Pacific as part of our opposition to all imperialist military forces. With the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state under Yeltsin's counterrevolution, the world's capitalist powers are scrambling to capture spheres for exploitation, posing the threat of trade wars leading to shooting wars, including with nuclear weapons.

Taiwan: American Client Police-State

The Western capitalist press has been trumpeting Taiwan's economic power, and, now, its first-ever presidential "free elections." In fact, this fiercely repressive state, which calls itself the "Republic of China," was foisted on the Taiwanese by U.S.-backed dictator Chiang Kai-shek's KMT. Chiang's forces fled there in 1947-49 as they were routed by Mao Zedong's peasant-guerrilla army in the closing stages of the Chinese civil war. As the Chinese Communist Party consolidated its rule on the mainland, 2 million

were subjected to harsh repression. In fact, Lee's current pro-independence rival was jailed in 1964 and then forced into exile until 1992. With the growth of Taiwan's economy, sentiment for independence has spread to wider layers of young professionals and businessmen who see this as a vehicle for their own advancement. But Taiwan is ethnically, linguistically and historically Chinese. Taiwan was a Chinese province that was occupied by Japan from 1895 until the end of World War II. Particularly today, the demand for Taiwanese independence is aimed at maintaining a capitalist state.

The Taiwan Strait has been a stage for repeated imperialist provocations against China. In the years following the 1949 Chinese Revolution, the U.S. pumped in billions of dollars of aid—and enormous military support—to maintain Taiwan as a platform for capitalist superprofits and as an anti-Communist beachhead in East Asia. With the onset of the Korean War, the American navy occupied the Taiwan Strait. In 1958, U.S. naval forces patrolled the Strait at a time when Beijing came close to war with Taipei over the latter's control of the islands of Quemoy and Matsu. In the 1960s, Taiwan served as a key staging

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Rabelais Attacked by Labor, Liberal Governments, Shafted by Student Bureaucrats

Hands Off the Student Editors and Leftist Activists! Drop the Charges Now!

We print below the text of a leaflet produced and circulated by the Spartacus Youth Clubs in Melbourne and Sydney.

Leftist student activists in Victoria have been viciously targeted for repression by the former Labor federal government and the Kennett state Liberal government. On 26 February editors of the La Trobe University (LTU) student newspaper *Rabelais* faced the Preston Magistrates Court, charged with publishing an "offensive publication." Under the law, the student editors each face up to two years in jail and a \$24,000 fine. Against this witchhunt, emanating from the office of the then-Labor government's minister for education, Simon Crean, a demonstration of some 50 people outside the courthouse was joined by members of the Melbourne Spartacus Youth Club. As the demonstration dispersed, the kill-crazy Victorian cops dragged student activist Daniel Sammut from the crowd, having been ostensibly identified from video tape footage of a student occupation at LTU in August of last year. Protesters angrily confronted the cops, demanding that Daniel be released and blockaded the entrance to the police lockup chanting "Free Daniel Now!" Later, cops attacked the demonstration when protesters attempted to stop a cop vehicle from leaving the grounds.

Scandalously, it was a member of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) Student Representative Council (SRC) who handed over the video tape of the LTU occupation to the RMIT administration in order to prove the SRC's "innocence." The administration then duly handed it over to the Victorian cops. Kennett's cops have arrested Left Alliance (LA) member Nigel Peacock at his home on 12 February, and more recently Jane Kemelfield, LA member and President of the LTU SRC, in a dawn raid on her home. Now, Simone Howard has also been arrested by the Victorian cops. With student bureaucrat "friends" like these, who needs enemies?

26 February protest against trial of Rabelais editors, Melbourne: SYC calls for militant united action by students, workers and minorities to repel this attack.



We demand: drop the charges against the Rabelais editors! Drop the charges against Nigel Peacock, Daniel Sammut, Jane Kemelfield and Simone Howard! Cops off campus!

The Politics Behind the Repression

The pretext for the attack on the *Rabelais* editors was the printing of an article entitled "The Art of Shoplifting" in their July 1995 issue. The instrument was the vicious Victorian government. Following an outcry by reactionary forces—including the Retail Traders Association—Crean wrote to the Liberal Victorian Attorney General Jan Wade demanding that she prosecute the student editors. Wade complied. Now, that issue of *Rabelais* has been banned in every state (except in New South Wales, where it can only be distributed in plastic wrapping!).

Under the influence of the heterogeneous, student-parochialist and ultimately Laborite Left Alliance grouping, *Rabelais* has been a mix of youthful irreverence and material that puts them in "left field." Thus, *Rabelais* ran articles submitted by us on our Trotskyist fight against capitalist counterrevolution in the former East Germany, printed the scathing attacks on the Australian Labor Party (ALP) by Russian revolutionary

V.I. Lenin, exposed government blueprints for imposing martial law and covered at length the international campaign to abolish the racist U.S. death penalty and to free U.S. death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal—former Black Panther leader and renowned journalist.

If the state succeeds in victimising these student activists, it will be a green light for further attacks on the left and labour movement. An ominous sign of state censorship, the attack on *Rabelais* is an attack on basic democratic rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press. **All opponents of this witchhunt should mobilise—what is needed is broad, militant united action of students, workers and minorities to repel this attack!**

Student protest was a thorn in the side of the former Labor government. And such will be the case now that Howard & Co., the avowed, open representatives of the bosses, have been elected, their way paved by Laborite betrayal of the working people and oppressed. The bosses and their Labor servants (whether in government or in "opposition") are intent on heading off potential radicalisation of an increasingly alienated and volatile layer of youth confronting a future of massive unemployment, education cutbacks, mounting racism and ultimately inter-imperialist war. The capitalist system, irrespective of which party governs, is gouging students and youth in an offensive to make education more a privilege of the wealthy, to put young workers on sub-minimum wages or on the scrap heap altogether. **We in the Spartacus Youth Clubs (SYCs) fight for no fees, for open admissions and a living allowance for all, including overseas students. Free quality education for all! Abolish the administration! For student-staff-worker control of the universities!**

Unlike the assorted "socialist" tails of the ALP resident in groups such as the Student Unionism Network (SUN) or Cross Campus Education Network (CCEN) we revolutionary communist youth fight for students to ally their struggles with that of the working class. Thus, when the Laborites and their "left" supporters were trying to deep-six the gross racist attack on immigrant students contained in the last federal budget, it was left to the SYCs in Sydney and Melbourne to mobilise united-front actions (including with some elements in LA) against this White Australia obscenity.

And we did mobilise, much to the discomfort of the ALP's left tails.

Similarly, the fight to defend the *Rabelais* editors has been sabotaged by the Labor loyalism of the fake left, typified in its frantic (and failed) efforts to get the vile union-busting, student-hating Keating re-elected. A 24 January National Union of Students (NUS) press release on *Rabelais* completely ignored the role of the ALP government. In tune with this, SUN and its various "left" participants in LA, Socialist Alternative (SA), International Socialist Organisation (ISO), Workers Power (WP), Militant and Resistance/Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) have been attempting to obscure the bipartisan nature of these attacks. Why? Because, in the main, they were working for a Keating electoral victory (LA baulked, to its credit, at outright support to the ALP) and have no strategy for social struggle outside this pathetic Laborite, parliamentarist framework. We do: it's class struggle to defeat the bipartisan attacks on workers and the oppressed and the forging of a genuine revolutionary workers party, a Bolshevik party, to lead the struggle for the smashing of the whole rotten capitalist system.

"Left" Waterboys for Labor: Despair and Treachery

The successful occupation at LTU in August 1995 was in protest against the university administration withholding student funds to the SRC in the aftermath of the furore over the July issue of *Rabelais*. The administration used Kennett's Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) legislation. The fake leftists duly lined up to make this Liberal legislation "the main enemy" in their non-response to the attack on *Rabelais*.

As we said when the VSU legislation was first introduced: "We defend students and their organisations against these vicious government attacks. At the same time, we understand that government funding of student organisations is a mechanism of cooption and corruption; in the last analysis they are thereby constrained to do the bidding of their paymasters." We went on to note: "These bodies are not 'unions' analogous to the trade unions of the working class, but include students of every class. They are bound by a thousand threads to the capitalist campus administrations and invariably run by assorted careerists, not

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Spartacist League Forums

Stalinist Bureaucracy Opens Door to Capitalist Restoration and Free Market Misery

CHINA
For Proletarian Political Revolution!

For Unconditional Military Defence of China Against Imperialism!

- Down with Imperialist gunboat diplomacy against China!
- Smash U.S./Australia alliance! U.S. bases out of Australia now!

Sydney

City
Thursday, 16 May, 7 pm
AMWU Council Room
136-140 Chalmers St.,
Surry Hills

Melbourne

City
Saturday, 18 May, 2 pm
Meeting Room, Lincoln Hotel
Cnr Queensberry & Cardigan Sts.,
Carlton

Melbourne

RMIT
Tuesday, 21 May, 1 pm
John Curtin Hotel (JC's)
29 Lygon St., Carlton
(Opposite Trades Hall)

Further information: (02) 281 2181, (03) 9654 4315

Scargill's Challenge to Blair Upsets Labour-Loyal Applecart

The article below is reprinted from *Workers Hammer* (No. 149, February/March 1996), newspaper of our comrades in the Spartacist League/Britain.

The launch of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and its decision to run Brenda Nixon as a candidate against the Labour Party in the Hemsworth by-election set the cat amongst the pigeons of the so-called "far left" in Britain. The idea of splitting with the Labour Party is a violation of faith for the Labourite left. Even those groups, like Militant Labour and the Socialist Workers Party, who called for a vote to Nixon, were not breaking from loyalty to Labourism whether as represented by Scargill or Blair's Labour Party.

For communists who fight to build a revolutionary internationalist party of the proletariat, breaking the stranglehold of the Labour Party over the working class is a key strategic task. Although the programme of Scargill's SLP is simply that of "old" Labour as against the "New" Labour Party of Tony Blair, this split within the Labour Party offers the possibility for a fundamental realignment of the political configuration in this country out of which a genuine working-class party can be constituted.

The Spartacist League/Britain called for critical support to, and actively campaigned for, Brenda Nixon. As our article in this issue, "Break with Labourism, 'old' and 'new'—for a revolutionary workers party!", points out, the issues on which Nixon campaigned, taken together with her running as a party of opposition to the Labour Party:

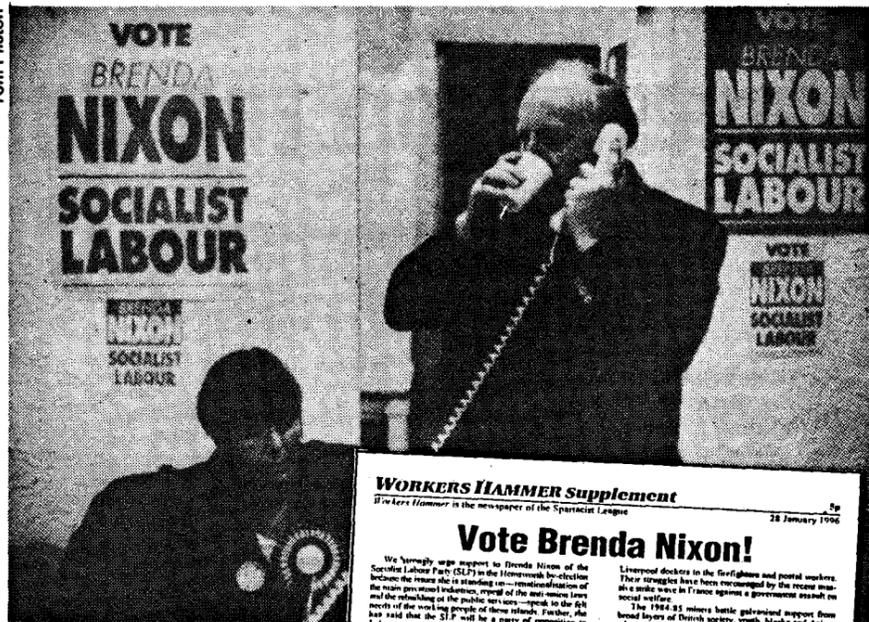
"...provided an opening for communists to intervene to demonstrate to the working class the need for an authentic workers party—one imbued with the understanding that the only guarantee of the welfare of the working class lies through the destruction of a system based on the exploitation of the workers."

As revolutionaries we seek to exacerbate, and resolve, the contradiction that is the British Labour Party, between its pro-capitalist leaders and its working-class base. The Scargill split represents an opportunity for a hearing amongst the most advanced layer of the proletariat for a *revolutionary* programme. In contrast, whether opposed or in favour of the SLP, the rest of the left maintain a fundamental allegiance to Labourism.

"New" Labour Socialists

Unremarkably, the editor of the Communist Party of Britain's *Morning Star* denounced the SLP as "a diversion from the overwhelming need to defeat the Tory government". This was echoed by the Alliance for Workers Liberty who railed against the SLP for taking the liberty of standing candidates against the Labour Party. No surprises here. The launching of the SLP caused slightly more torture for the ever rightward-moving centrists of Workers Power. In the end they resolved their agony by shamelessly calling for a vote to Blair's Labour candidate in the Hemsworth by-election.

When Scargill's new party was first mooted, Workers Power dabbled with the idea of being a loyal opposition within it, claiming "Our aim is the construction of a revolutionary Socialist Labour Party" (*Workers Power*, December 1995). Hardly. In fact, WP couldn't even stomach the idea of a party in



Spartacist League/Britain gave critical support to Brenda Nixon (above), candidate for Parliament of the Socialist Labour Party headed by miners union leader Arthur Scargill (above, right).

opposition to the Labour Party. The same article argues that "a revolutionary SLP" would "call for a vote to Labour in any constituency where there was no revolutionary candidate, and continue to demand that Labour acts in the interests of those workers!"

This was posed as the means to ensure that "revolutionaries in a new party are not cut off from workers who have yet to break from Labour", ie, by maintaining the allegiance of said workers to Labour by sowing illusions that the Labour Party can be pressured to act in the interests of the proletariat. By January, Workers Power could see the door into the SLP being closed in its face, when Scargill made clear that no other organisations, outside of "bona fide" trade unions, would be allowed into his party. Although continuing to enthuse over fighting to "make the SLP a revolutionary party", they began castigating Scargill for practices "derived directly from Stalinism".

By the February issue of *Workers Power* this had reached full flower. Accusing Scargill's SLP of the "worst features of Stalinist bureaucratic centralism", they pouted, "Workers Power members and supporters will not be voting for the SLP in Hemsworth. We will vote Labour". Trying to put some left gloss on supporting a candidate who even they noted was "a trusted right winger", "hand-picked by the Blair leadership", Workers Power argued, "Arthur Scargill is a reformist.... He does not believe the working class needs a revolution." True enough. But one can only marvel at the hypocrisy of these snivelling Labour loyalists.

The example they give to demonstrate Scargill's reformism was that during the miners strike he "dared not condemn the TUC and Kinnock for their sabotage" because he "had no perspective of a head-on political clash...which would pose the question of power". This too is quite an accurate political assessment, and one that we have repeatedly made. But it is pretty rich coming from Workers Power which during the miners strike echoed not only Kinnock, but

Margaret Thatcher and the scabs in calling for a strikebreaking ballot vote after the miners were already out.

Denouncing Scargill for not calling a ballot, *Workers Power* (2 May 1984) opined:

"In refusing point blank to call for any form of national vote for or against a national strike, Scargill, Taylor and Co have left themselves without any weapon for winning over Nottingham miners except mass picketing and demonstrations."

In the tradition of parliamentary Labourism, WP sees the picket line—a basic weapon in the class struggle—a weaker instrument than the ballot.

The 1984-85 miners strike was affected throughout by the imperialist drive to destroy the Soviet Union. We argued that those who refused to defend the remaining gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution, although grievously undermined by the Stalinist bureaucracy and since swept away by Yeltsin's capitalist counterrevolution, could not defend the unions at home against capitalist attack. Having dutifully echoed the anti-communist Labour leaders in cheering virtually any and every counterrevolutionary force within the former Soviet bloc throughout the 1980s, the connection between the defence of the bureaucratically deformed workers states and the defence of the unions was brought home with a vengeance against Workers Power in 1990 when they were the co-sponsors of a tour by one Yuri Butchenko.

Well-connected with Russian fascists, Butchenko emerged during his British tour as a key player in the witch hunt against Scargill, appearing with the head of the scab UDM to "testify" in the lying frame-up that Scargill had misappropriated funds during the miners strike. Although somewhat embarrassed by this incident, today Workers Power's denunciations of Scargill's "Stalinism" is only further testament to their fealty to Labourism and "democracy".

"Old" Labour Socialists

In response to Scargill's announcement that he would be forming the SLP,

Socialist Worker opined: "We're sympathetic to Scargill's reasoning. But at least until the next election, a left alternative to Blair has to be extraparliamentary." The call for extraparliamentary "struggle" has long served Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party as a cover for their real position of parliamentary loyalty to Labour. While advocating a vote for Brenda Nixon in the Hemsworth by-election, they made doubly clear that this didn't mean opposition to Blair's Labour Party. Advising that it was okay to vote for Nixon in this ultra-safe Labour seat, they warned: "it would be a mistake for the SLP to stand in every constituency, especially in marginal areas where Labour is challenging the Tories". They argued that a "victory for Labour at the next general election will be a boost to the confidence of every worker and trade unionist in Britain" (*Socialist Worker*, 20 January).

Militant Labour has been amongst the biggest enthusiasts for the SLP, despite being excluded from joining it as a pressure group, for which they have all the reformist prerequisites from their longstanding role in the same capacity within the Labour Party. While Scargill has refused their bid to build an autonomous branch of the SLP in Scotland, Scottish Militant Labour have been instrumental in launching the "Scottish Socialist Alliance".

A lash-up of Labourites and ex-Stalinists, to the right of the SLP, the primary aim of this "alliance" is to campaign for a Scottish Assembly. Their whole programme is based on getting Blair elected to Westminster and allows for the option of voting for *bourgeois* parties like the Scottish National Party (SNP) or the Liberal Democrats. To this end, Militant has already proposed an electoral bloc with "Liberation", the youth wing of the SNP. Class independence of the working class is an elementary principle for Marxists, which always means opposition to popular fronts. We refuse to vote for workers parties (or candidates) in such coalitions with the bourgeoisie in all circumstances.

The Chauvinism of Social Democrats

As Leninists we fight against all forms of national oppression. Against the dominant English chauvinism, we uphold the right of self-determination of Scotland and Wales, although we presently advocate a framework of common struggle of the working people of Scotland, Wales and England against their common oppressors. At the same time, like Lenin, we give no quarter to nationalism of any stripe. The stance of Militant in Scotland is the exact opposite.

For decades they were buried in the Unionist Labour Party and notoriously indifferent to questions of special oppression. Now excluded from the Labour Party and faced with the growth of nationalism in Scotland, where they have some base, they seek to build a nationalist popular front. With the Labour Party promising a Scottish Assembly (to save the Union of course) Militant can tail Labourism and Scottish nationalism simultaneously.

Scandalously, in Northern Ireland Militant has avidly pursued an ugly (and potentially deadly) "alliance" with the *paramilitary* wing of the Ulster Loyalists. Militant meetings in Belfast and Dublin have hosted Billy Hutchinson, a leading member of the "Progressive Unionist Party" which is a front group for the

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Workers Power

Centrists in the Service of Social Democracy

Announcing the founding of its group in Australia, the Melbourne-based Workers Power (WP) group produced a public statement titled: "Vote Labor but Organise to Fight" (undated). In March, WP produced the first issue of its press, *Australian Workers Power*, the front page of which is virtually indistinguishable from that of *Socialist Worker, Militant, Socialist Alternative* and the rest of the mainstream reformists; headlined: "Mass Action Can Stop Howard." Having all called for a vote to Labor—the racist strike-breaking government which over thirteen years in power amply demonstrated its loyalty to the bosses and contempt for the working people it claims to represent—these outfits now plead that the Laborites lead a fight to "stop Howard."

Workers Power is a relatively new addition to the left-Laborite swamp in Australia. But it's not new on the international scene. Posing as a Trotskyist alternative to the reformists, WP is a right-centrist outfit whose claims to revolutionary Marxism are demonstrably fraudulent. As we will show, WP has spat on every major principle of Trotskyism: from unconditional military defence of the deformed and degenerated workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, to military defence of non-imperialist nations against imperialist attack, to the Leninist understanding of the state and the centrality of revolutionary internationalist leadership. Having planted its shop-soiled flag in Australia after recruiting a small number of people from the Melbourne Left Alliance student milieu, WP seeks to channel disaffected youth and other militants back into the Laborite fold. For anti-imperialist, anti-racist, pro-working class youth seeking a way to fight capitalism and an alternative to Laborite betrayal, WP offers only a backward slide into the social-democratic morass.

In the last issue of *Australasian Spartacist* we printed the article "Workers Power's 'International' Falls Apart/Chickens Come Home to Roost Over Balkans Betrayal" which exposed WP's refusal to take the military side of the Bosnian Serbs against the NATO bombings, the heaviest imperialist onslaught since the Gulf War. Echoing Margaret Thatcher, WP called for lifting the phoney "arms embargo" against the Bosnian Muslim regime in Sarajevo and boosted the "defend Bosnia" campaign in Britain, a stalking horse for UN/NATO military intervention against the Bosnian Serbs. As NATO bombs rained down on the Bosnian Serbs, WP baldly declared: "in the war between NATO and Republic Srpska, revolutionaries continue to take a revolutionary defeatist position on both sides." This position was an open repudiation of the elementary Leninist principle of unconditional military defence of a small nation or semicolonial people against imperialist aggression. It was also very much in the service of the pro-imperialist British Labour Party tops. WP's Bosnia betrayal blew apart its rotten-bloc "League for a Revolutionary Communist International" (LRCI) as its New Zealand group split wide open and all of its Latin American supporters decamped.

Workers Power has been moving hard and not slowly to the right since the events in East Germany in 1989-90. While claiming to hold some version of the Trotskyist position for the unconditional military defence of the deformed and degenerated workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, WP's conclusion at every key juncture was to side with imperialist-

sponsored counterrevolution. WP stood—literally—on the counterrevolutionary barricades with Yeltsin/Bush in the homeland of the Russian October in August 1991. Attempting to cover their betrayals, WP concocted the ludicrous position that, except for the former DDR, the former Soviet bloc states today are "moribund workers states," that no fundamental counterrevolutionary transformation has occurred. (Indeed, by WP's lights, the Bosnian Serbs constitute a "moribund workers state," but that didn't stop the LRCI from its prostration to NATO imperialism.) WP's line boils down to saying that the nature of the state is determined by the extent to which property is nationalised. For a start, such a position effectively revises Lenin and Engels on the nature of the state, the armed bodies of men who constitute an organ for the oppression of one class by another. It also dovetails very much with the left Laborite view that "socialism" will be achieved by successive nationalisations through parliamentary enactment.

Leon Trotsky's powerful work "Centrism and the Fourth International" (1934) applies well to Workers Power today; Trotsky noted in part:

"A centrist occupies a position between an opportunist and a Marxist somewhat analogous to that which a petty bourgeois occupies between a capitalist and a proletarian: he kowtows before the first and has contempt for the second.

"On the international arena, the centrist distinguishes himself if not by blindness then by shortsightedness. He does not understand that in the present epoch a national revolutionary party can be built only as part of an international party."

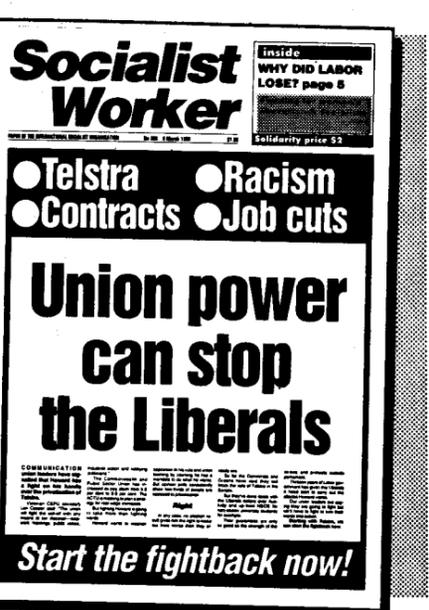
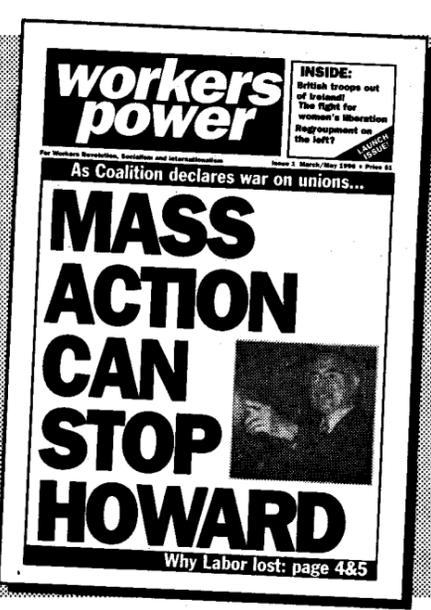
WP's LRCI, far from being any kind of nucleus of a democratic-centralist revolutionary international, is rather based

nasty little nationalism of these respective social democracies. Here, Workers Power accompanied its call to vote Labor in the federal elections with a list of demands on the ALP: in a call that is downright reactionary, WP grovelled before "democratic" Australian imperialism, demanding that it "break all military and diplomatic ties with the Indonesian state" (emphasis ours)—in the real world, an act prefiguring war by Canberra against neo-colonial Indonesia. Nowhere in WP's list of "demands" will you find a mention of the U.S. bases or the U.S./Australia alliance, let alone opposition to it. In New Zealand, the remnants of Workers Power proclaim that small imperialist country to be a semicolon, stating: "We would defend New Zealand as a semi-colony from imperialist attack but with militant class struggle methods" (NZ Workers Power "Where We Stand"). With this statement, reeking of the "little New Zealand" nationalism pervasive among the Labour left, WP would find itself fighting alongside its "own" bourgeoisie in the event of a military conflict with another imperialist country. Some "anti-imperialists!"

Echoing the old saw of the Economists against whom Lenin polemicised in the early part of the century as he struggled to forge the internationalist revolutionary vanguard party of the proletariat, *Workers Power* (No. 1, March-May 1996) writes that "The economic struggle has to be transformed into a political struggle: a struggle centred not only on wages and conditions, but one that seeks the defeat of all anti-union legislation." In 1902, comrade Lenin wrote in *What Is To Be Done?*: "As a matter of fact, the phrase 'lending the economic struggle itself a

rule dedicated to the administration of capitalism and the alliance with U.S. imperialism (and its agencies: CIA, IMF, World Bank, etc.)—WP twaddles on about putting "Labor to the test of office." Unlike these pathetically Labor-loyal centrists, many workers obviously figured that Labor had already been put to this "test," and voted with their feet (or didn't vote at all). The "immediate needs" of the working people were not and cannot be met under capitalism, whether Labor or Liberal rule the roost in Canberra.

In several sentences, WP completely dismisses the struggle for a revolutionary leadership that can take the proletariat from being a class in itself, to a class for itself, ultimately to the seizure of state power against the rule of the bourgeoisie. That struggle is central to authentic Trotskyism, but for Workers Power, the task of "socialists" is to push the trade-union bureaucrats to push the ALP to "meet workers' immediate needs." In the same issue, *Workers Power* states: "There is no chance of moving Labor to the left while keeping the support of the party's powerful ruling class backers. Left Labor governments only come to power when the bosses fear something more powerful: mass, revolutionary working class struggle." This is a very telling statement, exposing the gulf between revolutionary politics and WP's brand of left Laborism. Communists seek to lead revolutionary working-class struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish workers rule, not to pressure the social democracy to the left. We note, too, that Gough Whitlam's government, before it was sacked by the CIA and the queen's man in Canberra, administered capitalism for the bosses no less than



Spot the difference? Above: *Militant*, *Workers Power*, *Socialist Worker* all called for vote to ALP; now plead to Laborites to "stop Howard." Right-centrist Workers Power is another creature of the social-democratic swamp.

on unprincipled lash-ups where all parties hold their differences in reserve, and with enough programmatic "flexibility" to span British Labourism and Latin American nationalism. The ungluing of the LRCI over Bosnia attests to this—as did the spectacle of their Irish and British groups taking counterposed positions on the IRA's Enniskillen bombing (see "Workers Power vs. Leninism...", page 6).

Laborism, Economism and Nationalist Chauvinism

WP's heart and soul belong to the British Labour Party and its brethren from Australia to New Zealand to Canada. This also means tailing the

political character' means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms"; "precisely trade-unionist politics." WP said in its election statement: "The alternative that is really needed is a revolutionary workers' party. However, at this point in time the vast majority of workers are not attracted to such an alternative." The "vast majority" of workers have not been broken from Laborism, so WP will do its bit to keep it that way: "Workers illusions have to be broken by putting Labor to the test of office, at state and federal level. Unionists have to force the union leaderships to place demands on Labor to meet workers' immediate needs" (WP No. 1). Give us a break! After over thirteen years of federal Labor rule—a

any other Labor government.

WP writes that "Labor and 'socialist' parties are moving rapidly to the right just to keep up with the demands of the capitalists they want to serve" and WP proceeds to "keep up" with these very rapidly rightward moving parties. Thus, in Britain, WP called for a vote to the "New" Labour candidate of Tony Blair as against the candidate of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP). We have reprinted on page 4 the article from our British comrades' press, *Workers Hammer*, entitled "Scargill's Challenge to Blair Upsets Labour-Loyal Applecart" which notes that although the program of Scargill's SLP is simply that of "old" Labour as against the

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Workers Power vs. Leninism on the Irish Question

On 11 March, Workers Power held a public meeting on the subject: "What position should Revolutionaries take on the Irish Question?" featuring British WP spokesman Paul Morris. Steering well clear of the fact of its grotesque refusal to side militarily with the Bosnian Serbs against NATO imperialist attack, in which the British rulers were up to their necks, Workers Power tried to paint itself as "anti-imperialist" fighters in the struggle against the British occupation of Northern Ireland. Ducking our exposure of their slavish support to Blair's "New" Labour Party in Britain, which has been instrumental in supporting the imperialist-brokered "peace" fraud, WP waxed lyrical about the "revolutionary dynamic" of the national question in Ireland. As for the numerous times which Workers Power's Irish affiliates, the Irish Workers Group (IWG), have crossed the class line by supporting the Irish Labour Party in coalition with bourgeois parties and/or giving political support to the petty-bourgeois nationalists of Sinn Fein in the North, WP main-

tained a deafening silence. The discussion revealed the vast gulf between the politics and practice of these right centrists and revolutionary Marxism on an historically and currently key question for the international working class.

A starting point for a Marxist position on Ireland is the demand for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British troops from Northern Ireland, a call consistently raised by our comrades both in Ireland and Britain. Such cannot be said for WP's phoney "international." British Workers Power buried the call for "Troops out now!" during the 1981 protests over the H Block hunger strikes in capitulation to the prevailing Sinn Fein and Labourite pressure to restrict protests to respectable "humanitarianism." For its part, the IWG omitted any mention of Northern Ireland, let alone the call for British troops out, when tailoring its propaganda to the parochial, social-democratic sensibilities of the popular-front Mary Robinson bandwagon in 1989. (The "modernising" Robinson typifies a wing of the Irish bourgeoisie in the South which seeks an accommodation with the Ascendancy politicians of the North at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority, in pursuit of the chimera of a "peaceful" bourgeois coexistence North and South. Notably, her election was favourably received by Northern Orange politicians.)

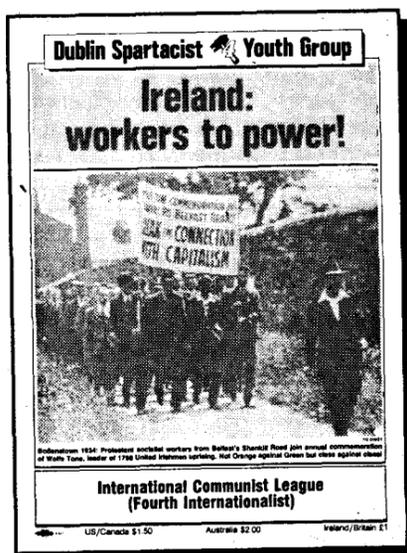
Workers Power links the call for "Britain Out Now!" with the demand for the "self-determination for the whole Irish people"—a slogan which echoes the program of the Sinn Fein nationalists for the forcible reunification of Ireland. In stark contrast to WP's prostration simultaneously to "Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition" in the British Labour Party—which in power sent the troops into Northern Ireland—and its vicarious fawning after the IRA/Sinn Fein, our Marxist program is premised on the recognition that there are two communities in Northern Ireland; it is a situation of *interpenetrated peoples*

where, under capitalism, the self-determination of one people can be carried out only at the expense of the other. We struggle for a proletarian axis—not Orange against Green but class against class! Integral to this is a program addressing the oppression of the Catholic minority and appealing to the joint class interests of the Catholic and Protestant workers against the reactionary Orange demagogues, the Green bourgeoisie in the South as well as the Green nationalists in the North. Linked to our demand for the withdrawal of the British Army is the call for programmatic anti-sectarian workers militias to combat Orange and Green terror and imperialist rampage. Our call for no forcible reunification, for an Irish republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles, consciously leaves open the question of where the Protestants will fall in the course of the struggle for workers revolution throughout those isles.

Defending republican fighters against British state terror and demanding the freedom of republican prisoners from British prisons, Marxists distinguish between defensible attacks on symbols of imperialist oppression and *indiscriminate* attacks on Protestant and British civilians which are not defensible. In 1988, the IRA carried out a criminal sectarian bombing at Enniskillen which targeted Protestant—and Catholic—civilians. At the time, WP in England supported the action, cheerleading the IRA from afar, as is the standard practice of much of the British fake left. But the IWG "unequivocally condemn[ed]" it in the face of massive outrage throughout Ireland against the bombing. Some "international"! The differences between WP and the IWG over Enniskillen testify less to differing "principles" than to differing opportunistic appetites: such is the real methodology of centrists who capitulate to different, and often contradictory, social forces depending on the national terrain.

The revolutionary internationalist leader of the Russian October Revolution, V.I. Lenin, was intransigently opposed to any political support to petty-bourgeois nationalists such as Sinn Fein/IRA, whether it be expressed unconditionally (WP in England) or "conditionally" (as the IWG claims to do). He stressed: "Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the 'most just,' 'purest,' most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism..." ("Critical Remarks on the National Question," *Collected Works*, Vol. 20). There is no way to square the WP/IWG program and practice with this basic Leninist premise.

For a more in-depth treatment of the above questions, we refer our readers to the Dublin Spartacist Youth Group pamphlet "Ireland: workers to power!" containing the *Theses on Ireland* adopted by the International Executive Committee of our tendency in 1977. For an examination of WP/IWG's hysterical and frenzied polemics against us, coinciding with the sharp right turn that the LRCI undertook when confronted by the events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, see the "Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists" bulletin advertised below. The bulletin reprints in full the some 28 pages produced by the IWG following our exposures of their right turn, their consistent dropping of the call for "free abortion on demand" in Ireland and their British group's scandalous sponsorship of the tour of a Russian fascist "trade unionist" and ally of the scab "Union of Democratic Mineworkers," one Yuri Butchenko. As we noted in the introduction to the bulletin: "In Britain, Workers Power and the Spartacist League are frequently considered to be the leading contenders for the organisation which stands for authentic Trotskyism. The material contained in this collection should enable the reader to arrive at a satisfactory answer to this question." ■



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Workers Power...

(continued from page 5)

"New" Labour Party of Tony Blair, the SLP candidate to whom we advocated critical support stood in opposition to Labour and on issues such as the re-nationalisation of the main privatised industries, repeal of the anti-union laws and the rebuilding of the public services which did speak to the felt needs of the working people. In this instance, advocating critical support provided an opening for communists to intervene to demonstrate to the working class the need for an authentic workers party—one imbued with the understanding that the only guarantee of the welfare of the working class lies through the destruction of a system based on the exploitation of the workers. As our comrades in Britain noted in the article "Break with Labourism, 'old' and 'new'—for a revolutionary workers party!" (*Workers Hammer* No. 149, February/March 1996):

"Critical support is an application of the tactic of the united front developed by the Communist International in the early 1920s. By proposing urgent united action around concrete issues in defence of the working class, the young Communist Parties sought to win the mass of workers who retained allegiance to the reformist social-democratic parties, proving in struggle the superiority of the communist programme and leadership. Likewise in Britain today, we seek to exacerbate the contradictions between the aspirations and interests of the working-class base of the Labour Party and its pro-capitalist leaders."

But Workers Power, dedicated to the ultimate task of putting Mr Tony Blair

into No. 10 Downing Street, couldn't stomach the idea of a party in opposition to the Labour Party.

The Struggle Against Special Oppression: WP Flunks

For communists who fight to build a revolutionary internationalist party of the proletariat, breaking the stranglehold of Labor over the working class is a key strategic task. It requires a political struggle against the national chauvinism, racism, sexism and the whole gamut of bourgeois ideology of which the Laborites are the purveyors within the mass organisations of the proletariat. While the newly-launched Australian WP prints reams of coverage on "organising" the "rank & file," "why Labor lost," "why the bosses want our blood," "mass strike action can stop Howard," etc., it devoted precisely one tepid paragraph of its post-elections coverage to the orgy of racism which marked the elections. At that, WP completely amnestied the ALP: "Indigenous people and immigrants can expect to be in the Coalition's firing-line." In fact, the elections were a *bipartisan* carnival of racist reaction.

The LRCI's French group, Pouvoir Ouvrier (PO), refused to mention the words "racism," "immigrant" or "Vigilante" in their paper during the dramatic December strikes, knowing that the union misleadership had signed on with the racist war against immigrant workers and their children subjected to deportations and police terror. As our comrades in the Ligue Trotskyiste de

France noted in the article "Pro-imperialist Balkans warmongers/PO: 'far left' cover for strikebreaking bureaucrats" (*Le Bolchevik* No. 136, January/February 1996):

"As the last link in the popular-frontist syphilitic chain, PO cling to the 'far left' reformists, who cling to the 'left' reformists, who in turn cling to the bourgeoisie's chariot. Together with the rest of the 'far left,' they raised the call for an 'unlimited general strike' as their central perspective. This demand...is meant to duck the main issue of this strike: the political fight on a revolutionary program against the existing class-collaborationist leaderships and construction of the revolutionary party. Their conception of a general strike is purely and flatly economist (reformist), aiming only at

obtaining a few crumbs within the limits of capitalism..."

In Canada, WP called for a "No" vote in the recent referendum on Quebec independence; simply put, WP supported the Anglo-dominated status quo. In "explanation" for this shameful chauvinism, WP pouted that the Quebec nationalists had deprived the Canadian social democracy of a base of support: "In contrast to most of Canada's nine other provinces, Quebec provides no substantial base of support for the New Democratic Party (NDP), Canada's equivalent of the Labour Party." (*WP [Britain]*, February 1996). The prospects

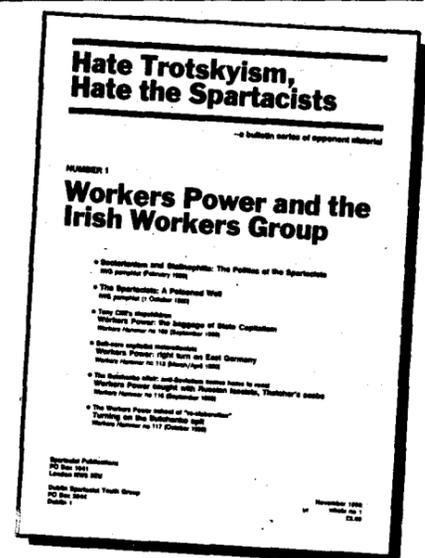
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New World Order Elections: Bipartisan Attack on Workers and Oppressed

No Vote to Labor!

Revolutionary Marxists fighting for the emancipation of the working people can offer no support, however critical, to any of the parties standing in the federal election. The Tories of John Howard are clearly the representatives of the bosses; the ALP of Paul Keating has amply demonstrated during some thirteen years in governmental power its servility to the bosses, its hostility to and contempt for the working class and oppressed it claims to represent. The Labor government has eagerly participated in the "New World Order" imperialist slaughter from Iraq to Haiti to Somalia, at the same time it presides over jackal imperialist depredations against the Papua New Guinea neocolony and Bougainville. Domestically, the hallmarks of ALP rule have been union-busting austerity, racist police terror, nationalist anti-immigrant attacks and assaults on the conditions of women. To advocate a return of these traitors to office would itself be an act of class treason for any avowed revolutionary socialist organisation.

The New World Disorder ushered in following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union is marked by the resumption of the fierce inter-imperialist rivalries which prefigured the imperialist wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45. Today the increased integration of the world market economy exacerbates and lays bare again this savage competition, thus the consolidation of competing trade blocs: the German-dominated European Union; the U.S.' NAFTA and the Japanese imperialists' ambitions for a renescent "Greater East Asia Co-Prospersity Sphere." Ultimately, this will be resolved either by socialist revolution to smash imperialism from within or through another global holocaust—this time with the imperialist powers armed with nuclear weapons.

Australian capitalism occupies a particularly excruciating position, caught between Japan, its major trading partner, and the U.S., to whom it looks for "defence" and for whom it acts as a junior partner in the region. The bottom line for the bourgeoisie here, as elsewhere, is that an escalated drive against the conditions and living standards of the working class is required to meet their aspirations to compete regionally on the world market. When the dust settles on this parliamentary circus wherein the working class has the "choice" between the venal heirs of Menzies or the pompous Labor statesmen of jackal Australian imperialism, the resulting government will be the sworn enemy of the working class and oppressed.

The question posed point blank is the need for an internationalist revolutionary workers party. Such a party would mobilise the immense social power of the organised working class and in the fight for proletarian rule draw under its leadership the oppressed masses. To break the Laborite stranglehold on the ranks of the labour movement through hard class battle, to unleash the workers social power, the forging of such a leadership is the urgent task of the hour. Our goal is to expropriate the bloodsucking bosses and replace the boom-bust system of capitalist anarchy with a rationally planned economy organised through a government based on workers councils—i.e., a socialist revolution.

The Partnership of Labour and Capital is a Lie!

As the mouthpiece of the bosses, the *Australian Financial Review (AFR)* put it in a 29 January article entitled "The Price of Victory": "both parties face having to make major surgery to Canberra's finances if they are to meet their joint promise to bring next year's Budget into real balance." The *AFR* goes on to outline the targets for devastation: "the big universal programs of health, education, childcare and superannuation...Australia's middle-class welfare." It is indicative of the bipartisan consensus on "economic restructuring" that the *AFR* care not so much whether the Labor or Liberal party takes the reins in Canberra, but rather that both prepare to take on the power of the trade unions and further dismantle the hard-won gains of the working people. If today (some of) the bosses consider dispensing with Keating's services, it is because the Labor government, along with the ACTU tops, has laid the groundwork to enable an all-out capitalist offensive to be launched in the raw.

Thirteen years of Labor government and its Accord—policed in the "national interest" by the ACTU sell-outs with their subservience to the bosses' state, its Arbitration courts and Labor's union-busting "industrial relations reform"—has enforced "wage restraint" and vastly undermined the strength of the trade unions. Under Labor official unemployment remains at over eight percent, hourly labour productivity has gone up by 24 percent, industrial disputes have fallen dramatically and living standards have plummeted some 13 percent. Against the Laborite fake left which in 1983 hailed Hawke's election as a victory for the working class, we told the truth. Pointing out that Hawke was

standing on an openly pro-imperialist, anti-working class program, we refused any support. Hawke immediately enlisted Australia in the front ranks of the U.S.-led anti-Soviet war drive. At "home" any union which threatened the Accord was ruthlessly smashed—the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) in 1986 and the airline pilots union in 1989. First under Hawke and now under Keating, Labor's union busting has emboldened the bosses; Howard & Co. now talk openly of destroying the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) on the waterfront.

But the bosses and their Labor servants have not had things all their way. Strike action by the MUA won a stay of execution for the Australian National Line (ANL), slated for sell-off by Keating and Brereton. In October widespread strike action in Western Australia stymied the introduction of draconian anti-union legislation. Then in November miners and wharfies took national strike action in defiance of anti-union laws and threats of sackings. The November strikes were precipitated by CRA's union-busting offensive at Weipa in the far north of Queensland, but the fact that the ACTU tops were forced to put themselves at the head of the strikes attested to much broader anger and desire to fight at the base. With the federal elections looming, the union bureaucrats moved heaven and earth to derail the strikes, preaching that workers put their faith in the bosses' Arbitration court. The Weipa workers were left to fight alone, eventually acceding to ACTU demands that they return to work on the "promise" of a favourable Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) ruling. That's not what they got; subsequent stirrings for renewed strike action by the Weipa miners have been quashed by the ACTU tops.

Against this bureaucratic betrayal, we proposed the sort of class-struggle program necessary to beat back the bosses' attack:

"It's more than high time to take the gloves off—to hell with appeals to the ALP tops! Reject the ACTU's sell-out deals! For all-out strike action by maritime, miners, power and transport workers! Roll back the contract system! Smash enterprise bargaining! Enforce the closed shop! For uniform wages and conditions for the same job at the highest level on an industry-wide basis! Down with union-busting privatisations! In order to prevent bureaucratic sabotage and coordinate the struggle, it is necessary to elect strike committees and dump the give-back bureaucrats! For picket lines that nothing and nobody crosses! For industrial unions forged through struggle on the principle of one out, all out! Rip up the anti-union legislation through hard class struggle! Bury Arbitration! For the com-

plete independence of the unions from the capitalist state!"

—*ASp* No. 157, Summer 1995-96

A fighting program would include the calls to organise the unorganised, for jobs for all—for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! For a sliding scale of wages to defend against the ravages of inflation! We pointed out that in such a battle, the organised working class would have fighting allies amongst broad sections of the population. As our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF) noted at the time of the French workers' dramatic strike struggles in December: "The bourgeoisie is united in its determination to wage war on the workers and oppressed. To fight back, to win, the working class needs a general staff, a revolutionary leadership based on a program that those who labour must rule."

For a Class-Struggle Fight on Behalf of All the Exploited and Oppressed!

• A key weapon in the union bureaucracy's sell-out arsenal is racist, nationalist protectionism. This is designed to line up workers behind their "own" bosses and set them against their class brothers and sisters internationally. The recent orgy of anti-French chauvinism in the wake of Chirac's resumption of nuclear testing in the Pacific was a case in point. Trade union and Labor Party leaders who would never say peep about the counterrevolutionary ANZUS treaty and American military bases vied in flag-waving "national unity" mobilisations with hoary reactionaries from ex-servicemen's organisations fresh from the racist, anti-Japanese "Victory in the Pacific" commemorations.

Demanding the ouster of the U.S. spy bases at Pine Gap and Nurrungar, we declared in a joint statement with our LTF comrades protesting French nuclear tests, entitled "The Main Enemy Is At Home!/Independence for French Colonies! Australian Imperialism Hands Off the South Pacific!":

"The Spartacist League/Australia, which fights for a workers republic in Australia, part of a socialist Asia, has denounced this nationalist union sacrée as a class betrayal of the interests of the workers and oppressed in Australia and internationally, leading ultimately to social-patriotic unity in the bourgeoisie's war to defend their markets and spheres of influence in another inter-imperialist war—in the case of the Australian bourgeoisie, in the position of subordinate ally of the considerably more powerful and dangerous U.S. imperialist power."

Alongside protectionism and national chauvinism has been the racist scapegoating of immigrants, including round-

continued on page 8

Build a Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Party

Elections...

(continued from page 7)

ups of "illegals," their incarceration in hell-hole detention centres and mass deportations. Particularly in Adelaide and Melbourne, the National Action fascist scum have staged repeated provocations. And it is no accident that the sinister Australians Against Further Immigration Party (AAFIP) was spawned under Labor's rule: former ALP MP Graeme Campbell (recently shed in an attempt to bolster the "anti-racist" credentials of the ALP) is an endorser of the AAFIP campaign in this election. Indeed, the ALP advises voters in Bennelong to give their third preference to the AAFIP candidate. While the Liberal/National coalition panders to the most blatant, ugly ocker racism, the ALP was itself founded on the "White Australia" policy and it is the Labor government which has presided over both hideous anti-immigrant racism and the continuing immiseration of and cop terror against the Aboriginal people.

Established on the near-genocide of the Aboriginal people and the racist exclusion of Asian people, today the capitalist state carries out *de facto* executions of Aborigines on the streets and in the lock-ups on a massive scale, internationally notorious. Under Labor, the rate of Aboriginal imprisonment has risen by 51 percent and the rate of deaths in prison has almost trebled. Just since the new year, three more Aboriginal people have died in custody. Against appeals to the state for "justice," we struggle to mobilise the power of the integrated, organised labour movement to champion the rights and address the special oppression of the Aboriginal people. An example of our program in action was the May 1993 Spartacist League-initiated militant occupation of the Student Prince Hotel in Sydney which broke that pub's racist ban on Aboriginal youth. The solid core of unionists who joined the action were key to the event's success. The international fight to free black American journalist and death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and to abolish the racist death penalty in the U.S. is also an acid test for those who would fight to smash White Australia capitalism. The Partisan Defence Committee (PDC—the social and legal defence organisation in political accordance with the Spartacist League) has and will continue to mobilise united-front actions here as part of the worldwide effort to save Mumia from racist state execution.

While Keating's blather about "reconciliation" is profoundly cynical and largely for international consumption—in the mould of his "republic" rhetoric (see page 10)—Marxists are not indifferent to the legal recognition of the existence of the Aboriginal people prior to the British colonisation and the quashing of *terra nullius* contained in the *Mabo* ruling. Not until 1967 were Aboriginal people so much as counted in a population census or allowed to vote. We support any attempts by the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait

Islanders to claw back some of the land which has been stolen from them as well as to whatever compensation can be wrested under the tight-fisted High Court ruling. Elementary justice—not only for the dispossessed Aboriginal people, but for all the exploited and oppressed—demands not some limited, ultimately reversible concessions in the courts but the *expropriation* of industry and agriculture by proletarian revolution. *Down with racist protectionist poison! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Close Keating's concentration camps! For union/minority mobilisations to crush fascist scum! For a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights!*

● ACTU president-elect Jennie George—who was personally responsible for pressuring the Weipa miners back to work—has launched a union campaign to

government has presided over the further erosion of the tenuous existence of legal abortion. Reactionary age-of-consent laws target youth and in particular homosexuals. Anti-gay bashings on the streets have been reinforced by state attacks such as the 1994 cop raid on the Commerce Club in Melbourne. While feminists appeal to the capitalist state, we understand that the foundations for the liberation of women—the collectivisation of the social functions of the family which will enable women to participate in socially productive labour—can only be laid through socialist revolution. *For free abortion on demand! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Free quality health care for all! For effective and freely available contraception, fully-paid maternity leave and free 24-hour childcare!*



Welpa miners following CRA backdown. Their struggle sparked national strike action by wharfies and miners and was knifed by ACTU tops.

swing women voters back to Labor under the slogan "Australian women—don't risk it." What consummate cynicism! Under the Labor government, working women—and in particular immigrant women workers—have been hit hardest by the attacks on unions, jobs and conditions. Women make up a large proportion of the burgeoning layer of part-time and casual workers as well as of the "hidden unemployed." Women earn on average 67 percent of male wages. There have been cuts in child care allowances. The plight of thousands of immigrant women slaving for as little as \$2.00 per hour as outworkers, or enduring the sweatshop conditions of the textile factories, has been met with complicit non-action by the government and union tops.

It was none other than Paul Keating, who from the benches of the opposition in 1970—in his first parliamentary speech—demanded of the then Liberal federal government: "Is it doing anything to put the working wife back in her home?" Under Keating, increasing violence against women in the home and on the streets has been combined with judicial rulings sanctifying rape within marriage and of prostitutes. The Labor right wing of Keating & Co. owe much to the anti-Communist clericalism of Santamaria and the Grouper legacy, thus the ALP

● As thousands of students demonstrated against education cuts and increased fees in a national day of action last March, Keating—confronted by angry protesters in Adelaide—shot back "get a job!" (Marie Antoinette's version, under more insurrectionary circumstances, was "let them eat cake.") Youth unemployment is now over 28 percent. Two years ago, Labor introduced a sub-minimum "training" wage designed to throw youth off unemployment benefits and to bring down union-level wages. Higher education has increasingly become the privilege of the privileged. In the last federal budget, Keating & Co. announced a plan to eliminate thousands of immigrant students from Austudy benefits. As against the Laborites of the National Union of Students, who were all too happy to accept this in exchange for the government holding off on the imposition of full upfront undergraduate fees, our comrades in the Spartacus Youth Clubs initiated united-front protest demonstrations against this racist measure. With student protest a thorn in its side, the Labor government is now on a campaign to silence the youthfully irreverent La Trobe Uni publication *Rabelais* which has a leftist reputation, using as a

pretext an article on shoplifting and as the instrument the vicious Kennett Victorian state government. We demand: *free quality education for all! No fees! To open up tertiary education to working-class and minority youth: open admissions—for a living allowance for all including overseas students! For student-staff-worker control of the universities! Government hands off Rabelais!*

Labor's Left Waterboys and Other Fakers

A host of reformist and centrist organisations have loyally signed on to do their bit for the return of the Keating government. This has nothing in common with the Leninist tactic of advancing critical support (as a rope "supports" a hanged man) to bourgeois workers parties under certain conditions where they are standing independently of any capitalist party and upholding some element of class interests against the bourgeoisie. Under those conditions, communist critical support could further the strategic aim of *splitting* the working class base from the pro-capitalist leadership. There is no basis for such a tactic in these elections whatsoever. But for the likes of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO), its recently departed comrades in Socialist Alternative (SA), the Militant and Workers Power (WP)—all of whom call for a vote to the ALP—electoral support to Labor is a way of life.

Dovetailing with this is a touching faith in the bourgeois state. The ISO et al. plead for "justice" from this quarter—from demanding that the findings of the Royal Commission whitewash into Aboriginal deaths in custody be "implemented" to calling on the "good offices" of jackal Australian imperialism to intervene against Indonesia on behalf of East Timor. These groups grotesquely embrace the cops and prison screws as "workers in uniform." The ISO's co-thinkers in the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have openly stated that "part of the struggle to smash the state may involve supporting rebellions of sections of the police against their officers and employers" (*Socialist Worker*, 28 August 1993). The Militant similarly calls for "democratic control of the police," for cops to be brought "into the orbit of the labour movement" through the "right of the police to an independent, democratic trade union organisation to defend their interests as workers." Workers Power chimes in as well that police "strikes" for more weapons, more money and a free hand would somehow lead to the weakening of the state. (See Spartacist pamphlet *Militant Labour's touching faith in the capitalist state*.)

In *The State and Revolution*, V.I. Lenin laid out the fundamental Marxist understanding of the state: it consists of "special bodies of armed men" and "is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another." Like Lenin, and unlike the Laborite reformists and centrists above, we understand that no amount of tinkering with the existing structure via parlia-

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Free Langer! Down With All the Compulsory Voting Laws!

ment or "pressure" on that bourgeois talk-shop—the bosses' ventriloquist's dummy, covering the real exercise of power—will change the spots on the rule of capitalism. The ISO, SA, Militant and Workers Power have meanwhile demonstrated in practice their hostility to the dictatorship of the proletariat, concretely over the defence of those states where capitalism had been overthrown. As Trotskyists, we fought down the line for defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and internal counter-revolution, an essential component of this defence being the struggle for workers political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy. The Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" was used to sabotage proletarian revolution in the capitalist countries in favour of building popular-front alliances with the "progressive" wings of the bourgeoisie; in the service of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, the Stalinists' multiple betrayals opened the floodgates to capitalist counterrevolution.

The state capitalist ISO's British mentors were born in renegacy from the Trotskyist movement—expelled from the Fourth International for their public repudiation of the defence of North Korea against U.S./British imperialism in 1950. The ISO & Co., throughout Cold War II, stood in every case with Washington (also London and Canberra) against the USSR. Despite a formal divergence of line, the Militant likewise sided with the forces of capitalist counterrevolution from Polish Solidarność to Yeltsin's barricades in August 1991. As for Workers Power, its politics are a quintessential example of what Trotsky characterised as the "crystallised confusion" of centrism, landing it ultimately in the same camp as the others.

While formally adopting a position of Soviet defencism in 1980 over Afghanistan, WP condemned the Soviet intervention against imperialist-backed feudal reaction as "counterrevolutionary" (later also denouncing the Soviet withdrawal as "counterrevolutionary"). In 1981, they "critically" championed Solidarność while admitting that Solidarność in power would mean capitalist restoration. In 1989, while claiming to be against the capitalist annexation of the former DDR by the Fourth Reich of German imperialism, WP sided with counterrevolution at every crucial stage. The following year, they supported the anti-Soviet, fascist-infested nationalist movement in Lithuania; in 1991, they stood, literally, on the Yeltsin barricades. It was not a long step from this trail of treachery to Workers Power's open prostration before the NATO imperialist terror bombers in the Balkans, a position so revolting that it blew apart Workers Power's phoney "League for a Revolutionary Communist International" (LRCI) (see "Chickens Come Home to Roost Over Balkans Betrayal," *ASp* No. 157, Summer 1995-96). Workers Power's refusal to take a stand on the side of the Bosnian Serbs against the heaviest imperialist onslaught since the Gulf War slaughter was the last straw for the bulk of its New Zealand section and all of its Latin American supporters, who split. Here, Workers Power's role is to harness young militants to the yoke of Laborism, which necessarily means accommodation to Australian imperialism.

For their part, the Stalinist leftovers of the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) answer the disgruntlement of what remains of their trade union base over the betrayals of Labor by advocating support not only to the ALP but also to openly bourgeois forces such as the Greens or Democrats. Thoroughly electoralist, the SPA advises its supporters that where some "progressive" bourgeois candidate deemed more "people-friendly" than the ALP is standing, to vote for them. This mini-version of the popular front is no "alternative" what-

28 FEBRUARY—On 14 February Albert Langer—a long-time political activist who now describes himself as an "anarcho-Stalinist" and is a member of the "Neither" grouping which denounces the current election campaign as a "Tweedledee and Tweedledum" contest—was jailed for ten weeks by the Victorian Supreme Court for contempt of court. Langer's "contempt" consisted of distributing material protesting the Federal electoral laws and advocating a method whereby voters could escape giving a preference to either the Australian Labor Party (ALP) or the conservative Coalition of Liberals/National Party. The reactionary electoral legislation under which Langer was charged makes voting compulsory and is designed to ensure that the bulk of votes cast end up going either to the ALP or the Coalition, irrespective of the intentions and desires of the voters. A week earlier the court had granted an injunction against Langer on behalf of the Australian Electoral Commission which essentially banned him from political activity during the election campaign. Langer defied this outrageous injunction and is now in Pentridge prison: *free him now!*

We denounce the jailing of Albert Langer as a blatant assault on democratic rights and freedom of speech. As we go to press, the powers-that-be have "allowed" Langer to represent himself in the court to appeal his sentence. We demand the immediate dropping of all legal actions and injunctions taken out against Langer and his co-thinkers such as the "Neither" group and the Anarchist Media Network. Against the whole panoply of reactionary legislation, we say: *for the right not to vote!*

Langer's jailing throws some light on the reality of the parliamentary swindle—proclaimed by the bourgeoisie as the very apex of "democracy"—in which the citizenry of this country is coerced by the threat of state sanctions to participate in the elections and through which the political monopoly of the two major parties is reinforced. The electoral laws are a particularly valuable mechanism for the ALP apparatus to co-opt or marginalise potential left-wing dissidence by, in effect, telling the working people to vote ALP or face state sanctions. That the likes of Tim Fischer and John Howard have denounced Langer's jailing while the ALP remains virtually silent attests to the fact that Labor is the main beneficiary of "compulsory voting." Meanwhile,

from the *Sydney Morning Herald* to the *Australian Financial Review*, the bourgeois press have demanded "Free Albert!" Elements of the ruling class believe Langer's jailing to be an "excess" against a harmless eccentric. And it doesn't look too good just at a time when the population are being inundated with "bread-and-circuses" electoral rhetoric designed to mask the essential convergence between Keating and Howard. (As Keating and Howard compete to govern in the interest of capitalism, many class-conscious workers could agree that the "choice" offered them is that between "Tweedledee and Tweedledum.")

The ALP was founded on the pillars of White Australia racism, economic protectionism and the lie that by electorally capturing governmental power Labor could turn the capitalist state into a "neutral umpire," reconciling the struggle between capital and labour. It is a very right-wing bourgeois workers party whose leadership is pro-capitalist and whose base is predominantly working class. In governmental power, the Labor Party employs not only the corporatist mechanisms of Arbitration to derail and betray the struggles of the working people, but also naked military force against the unions and all the oppressed. (Recall for instance the Chifley Labor government which in 1949 sent in the troops to crush the miners strike.) In the accompanying article, "No Vote to Labor!" we underline our struggle for the complete, unconditional independence of the unions from the capitalist state.

Ideologically, the social democracy chains the working people to their oppressors with the myth that economic and social justice can be delivered by parliamentary pressure on the bosses' state. But the bourgeois state, irrespective of which party rules, consists of armed bodies of men committed to the exploitation of the many by the few, to the system of profit and bourgeois privilege. We stand with comrade Lenin who noted in *The State and Revolution*, written in 1917 to prepare the working class for the seizure of state power, that the struggle to free the working people from the influence of the bourgeoisie was "impossible without a struggle against opportunist prejudices concerning the 'state'."

While defending Langer, we have over the years had sufficient experience with him to know that whatever he is,

a "revolutionary communist" isn't one of them. (Victorian Supreme Court justice Beach pronounced Langer to be just that.) Langer's present political incarnation is the culmination of a long, torturous and treacherous political career. Beginning as a Maoist student leader during the days of the Vietnam War, Langer was to later embrace the alliance between the Mao bureaucracy in Beijing and U.S. imperialism. (This resulted in his *de facto* apology for the Pinochet coup in Chile in 1973 and to siding with apartheid South Africa's invasion of Angola against the petty-bourgeois nationalist MPLA regime and its Cuban fighting allies.) Breaking with official Maoism after the arrest of the "Gang of Four" in China, and writing off the Chinese deformed workers state as a "fascist, feudal, capitalist state," Langer ended up in the early 1990s urging support to the U.S.-led NATO slaughter of the Iraqi people during the Gulf War. Langer is a pro-imperialist renegade, a horrible and pathetic example of the political consequences of Mao-Stalinism.

Now, having discovered a possible loophole in the laws, Langer's campaign in fact advocates by way of protest a preference for outright bourgeois parties such as the Greens and the Democrats. This position is counterposed to a proletarian opposition to the ALP and the struggle to forge a revolutionary, internationalist workers party. In a letter to the *Weekend Australian* (24-25 February) Langer wrote: "I disagree with the many people who are now calling for civil disobedience to defy the electoral laws. The law of this country requires free elections. [Sic] The people who put me in prison are breaking that law. People who defy their arbitrary and unconstitutional orders are upholding the rule of law."

We do not share this touching faith in the bosses' "rule of law." As revolutionary Trotskyists, we have fought down the line within the left and workers movement against Langer's politics. We are committed to the revolutionary overthrow of the whole rotting capitalist system; on that road we will also jealously protect elementary democratic rights, including those of Albert Langer. Those democratic rights that can be wrested from and defended against the attacks of the bourgeois state are part of the arsenal of our struggle. Free Albert! An injury to one is an injury to all!

soever to Labor loyalism, but rather a cross-class bloc against the Tories.

Standing in the elections as "left" alternatives to the ALP are the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) and the Socialist Labour League (SLL). The DSP's campaign slogan is: "People Before Profits!" Their program contains a laundry list of demands on the Australian capitalist state to reform itself, such as: "Require a referendum before Australian forces are committed to war," "place police forces and prison administrations under democratically elected boards," *ad nauseam*. While backing the victory of Labor over the Liberals as a "lesser evil," these petty-bourgeois "green leftists" also have no qualms about offering electoral support to bourgeois parties. The DSP were among those fake leftists who denounced the Chinese deformed workers state for nuclear testing. In this, they echo the hostility and fear of the Australian bourgeoisie over the continued existence of China as a non-capitalist state.

The DSP peddles chauvinist illusions that Australian government "pressure"

on Indonesia is the answer to the struggle of the East Timorese people against Indonesian military occupation. At the same time, it acts as a press agent for the bourgeois, popular-frontist PRD (*Persatuan Rakyat Demokratik*—the People's Democratic Union) in Indonesia which offers not emancipation from the brutal "New Order" local bourgeoisie and imperialist domination but a repeat of the disastrous policies which led to the 1965 massacre of over half a million Communists, workers and peasants in the bloodthirsty beheading of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Aided and abetted not only by the CIA but by the Australian secret service ASIS, this massacre was prepared by the PKI's policy of subordinating the struggle of the workers and peasants to a class-collaborationist alliance with the "democratic" bourgeois nationalist Sukarno. In opposition to this social-patriotism "at home" and class-collaboration abroad we wrote in *ASp* No. 154 ("Down with Suharto's 'New Order'—Workers to Power!" Spring 1994):

"Concretely, what is posed is a fight by the working masses of Indonesia and their allies in the region for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of Indonesian troops and for the military defence of Fretilin in their struggle against Jakarta's occupation. The fight against the oppression of the myriad peoples within the archipelago—and thus the brutal occupation of East Timor—is a crucial component to any successful revolutionary struggle by the Indonesian workers and peasants. Prey to neo-colonial domination, East Timor's genuine emancipation requires breaking the grip of imperialism through proletarian revolution from Canberra to Jakarta, from Tokyo to Manila and will be realised in the framework of a socialist federation of the region."

Our perspective is that of *permanent revolution*. In the epoch of capitalism's decay, the native bourgeoisies of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, beholden to and junior partners of the imperialists, are incapable of carrying out the historic tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution. In order to complete the democratic tasks—in particular agrarian revolution to abolish the feudal-derived servitude of the peasantry, national emancipation and

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No to Keating's Reactionary "One Nation"! For a Workers Republic of Australia, Part of a Socialist Asia!

As an integral part of our dedication to human progress and social liberation, revolutionary Marxists oppose the reactionary institution of the monarchy wherever it persists: from the English Crown (including in its Commonwealth former colonies, such as Australia) to the Japanese Emperor. In so doing, we stand on the tradition of Cromwell's bourgeois revolutionary forces who for a time abolished the English monarchy—including with the headman's axe, of the French Revolution which swept away the rule of the king and clergy, offering citizenship to all drawn to its promise of "liberté, égalité, fraternité" and abolished slavery, of the two American revolutions (in 1776 and the Civil War of 1861-65) which respectively rid the former colonies of the rule of George III and through blood and iron broke the rule of the Southern slavocracy.

We are the party of the Russian Revolution! The Russian Revolution of October 1917 not only consolidated the victory of the February overthrow of the Tsarist autocracy, but established the first workers state on the face of the planet, dispensing with the rule of the landlords and capitalists—tied by a million threads to the old order as well as to the larger imperialist powers. Any progressive role of the bourgeoisie had long since been exhausted: only the proletarian seizure of power could accomplish even the most elementary democratic tasks. Today, British capitalism maintains the expensive anachronism of the monarchy which serves as a deeply ideological assertion of social privilege and rigid social hierarchy, a rallying point for reaction. The French bourgeoisie have long since turned Bastille Day into a celebration of the imperialist "gloire" of France, not the anniversary of the day that the exploited

Down With the Monarchy!

and oppressed masses opened the prison doors. In the U.S., the promise of black freedom was betrayed over a century ago with the quashing of radical Reconstruction; the unfinished tasks of the Civil War can only be accomplished by a third American revolution, a proletarian revolution. It is no accident that in their triumphalism over the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state, the imperialist ruling classes seek to eradicate as well every vestige of the bourgeois revolutionary tradition.

In Australia, our communist, internationalist call for a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia is counterposed to Keating's reactionary, nationalist "aggressively Australian" parliamentarianist hoopla over establishing a "republic" by the year 2000. The ties that bind Australia to the English monarchy are an outrageous affront to the working class and to elementary democratic sentiment. The monarchy remains integral to the apparatus of the Australian state, conferring "legitimacy" on the powers-that-be. The Queen's Governor General can dismiss an elected government at will and has the power to impose martial law in the event of a social crisis. We are certainly in favour of severing Australia's ties with this nodal point for reaction. As we noted in *Australasian Spartacist* No. 144 ("The English Queen...and the Lizard of Oz," Autumn 1992):

"In 1975 Labor prime minister Gough Whitlam, his government the object of a concerted CIA destabilisation campaign, threatened to expose the role of the top secret U.S. spy bases. The Queen's man and

more importantly the CIA's man, Governor General John Kerr, dismissed the elected government. Utterly committed to the institutions of the capitalist state, including the constitutional powers invested in the Queen, the ALP tops preached loyalty to the parliamentary process rather than let an enraged working class get 'out of hand.' The events of 1975 illustrated how the constitutional monarchy in Britain and here could be used in some future crisis to bestow 'legitimacy' on the establishment of a reactionary, possibly military regime to defend the capitalist order."

Keating & Co.'s "republic" posturing expresses the strategic interests of jackal Australian imperialism—which in 1942 when Japan's armies took Singapore, switched its alliance from London to Washington—and the gut white racism that is the one true article of Laborite faith. It is designed in part for international consumption, to further "enmeshing with Asia" (where the English Crown is not flavour of the century), part of the drive for Australian capitalism to engage more directly in the superexploitation of the Asian masses. Domestically it represents a cynical ploy to distract workers and the oppressed from the depredations of thirteen years of Labor's union-busting austerity. It would promise the working masses the opportunity to stand in a wholly "proudly made in Australia" dole queue or have their picket lines attacked by "all-Australian" cops; Asian refugees languishing in hell-hole concentration camps and Aboriginal youth subjected to murderous state terror would be the victims of armed bodies of men whose allegiance is no longer sworn to the Queen.

Where Australian troops were once

dispatched to fight Britain's colonial wars from South Africa to the Sudan, they have since been sent to serve under U.S. imperialism from North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia to Iraq, Somalia and Haiti. *Down with the U.S./Australian alliance! U.S. bases out now!* Canberra's strategic realignment required no break from the English Crown, even if traditional ties to the "mother country" have been attenuated. Indeed, Buckingham Palace and Langley, Virginia have long worked in tandem, the Kerr coup against the Whitlam government being one case in point.

In Britain, our comrades demand the abolition of the monarchy, the House of Lords and the established churches as part of the struggle for a federation of workers republics in the British Isles. Tony Blair's "New" British Labour Party—who look to the electoral "success" of Keating's ALP for inspiration—will not lay a finger on the property and privileges of the Windsors. This prostration before the monarchy, too, takes place at a time of demonstrable popular disaffection with the "royals" amongst the British working people. We are reminded of Trotsky's acidic observation that those who would not deprive the Prince of Wales his pocket money will surely never expropriate the British ruling class.

Here, in the former British penal colony to which many were transported for their radical activity in sympathy with the French Revolution and struggles against the bloody English domination of Ireland, we fight to sweep away racist White Australian capitalism through socialist revolution. In so doing, the vestiges of the English monarchy will be crushed. This is an integral part of the struggle of the International Communist League for proletarian revolutions across the globe. ■

Elections...

(continued from page 9)

freedom from bonapartist/military repression—the proletariat in power, led by its communist party, will expropriate the bourgeoisie and large landowners and establish workers state rule.

As for the Socialist Labour League (SLL), Australian affiliates of David North's "International Committee of the Fourth International" (ICFI): the SLL are *political bandits*—able to wield Trotskyist orthodoxy when that suits their purposes and equally capable of having been the bought-and-paid-for press agents for a variety of Middle Eastern regimes. The scandalous financial "arrangements" of this outfit have

been documented not only by our tendency and others, but in fact in the records of their own internal implosion. Thus, SLL national secretary and candidate in Keating's Sydney seat of Blaxland, Nick Beams, was censured by the Central Committee of the SLL in February 1986 for failing to report the receipt of monies from Arab regimes to the IC (*Socialist Labour League Internal Bulletin*, February 1986).

The SLL's election platform calls "For a workers' government & social equality," for "Decent jobs, wages, housing, health & education for all" and "Unite workers of all countries against the profit system." It could be mistakenly read as some version of a socialist alternative to the ALP but it is not any such thing. The SLL's campaign platform is centred on their grotesque

position that the unions are dead, that they are nothing but "direct instruments of imperialism." The SLL manifesto reads in part:

"The long list of betrayals is not simply the work of treacherous individuals—the unions themselves have undergone a fundamental transformation...."

"In every workplace, the unions function as a second arm of management, driving up productivity through cuts to jobs and conditions, longer hours and speed-up."

North & Co. have taken their position on the unions out of the realm of theory and shown it for what it really is: an open prescription for strikebreaking. Thus, as dock workers unions from Australia to North America announced their refusal to handle scab-loaded goods during the recent Liverpool dockers strike, North's followers in Britain wrote a scurrilous article "Dockers Must Reject Fake Internationalism" calling this basic declaration of solidarity a "fraud." Far from promoting working-class struggle, the Northites' appeals for the workers to junk their unions neatly dovetail with the interests of the union-busting bosses. (There are so-called "unions" which fit North's description as "direct agents of imperialism." Polish Solidarność was one and the Northites' forerunners in the ICFI then led by one Gerry Healy supported it down the line.)

In their election propaganda, the SLL do not breathe a word of opposition to the U.S.-led NATO military intervention against the Bosnian Serbs. Nor is there anything about the need to defend China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea against imperialism. In fact, the SLL itself joined the chorus of fake-left condemnation of Chinese nuclear testing. In

its major editorial on French nuclear testing, the SLL baldly stated: "The resumption of testing by France, as well as by China, has provoked widespread and legitimate concern among working people and youth in many parts of the world, including the Pacific region and Australia" (*Workers News*, 22 September 1995). Beware these political bandits masquerading as socialists!

Reforge the Fourth International!

In the founding document of the Fourth International, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* (The Transitional Program, 1938), Leon Trotsky wrote:

"All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet 'ripened' for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened'; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership."

This crisis is ever more acute today. Struggling within and against the imperialist "New World Disorder" we know that the victory of workers revolution can only be achieved through sharp political struggle against the social democratic servants of capital and their "left" tails. The construction of an authentic communist international is the aim of the International Communist League, its Australian section and the Spartacus Youth Clubs. No vote to Labor! The main enemy is at home! Long live proletarian internationalism! ■

Women and Revolution Forums

Marxism Versus Laborism and Feminism Sex, Race and Class in "New World Order" Australia

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Thursday, 21 March, 7 pm
AMWU Council Room
136-140 Chalmers St.,
Surry Hills

Further information (02) 281 2181

Melbourne

Saturday, 23 March, 2 pm
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Lygon St., Carlton
(Opposite Trades Hall)

Further information (03) 9654 4315

Racist Reaction...

(continued from page 1)

banks, the financiers, the corporate bosses. Through the wage-cutting Accord with the union bureaucracy, the ALP in power delivered a dramatic increase in corporate profit levels. In the name of "national unity" and increasing the competitiveness of the Australian economy in the world market, Labor presided over massive structural unemployment, officially reaching at one point above eleven percent, the worst since the Great Depression, and currently at 8.7 percent and rising again. Those sections of the union movement such as the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) and pilots who fought back against the Accord's diktats were ruthlessly crushed.

Hell-bent on "downsizing" state enterprises, Labor in power implemented union-busting privatisation of industries and set in train the same for basic utilities such as power. The percentage of the workforce in unions has collapsed from 50 percent in 1982 (as Labor came to power) to under 35 percent and still falling. In the private sector the rate of unionisation is just 25 percent. The introduction of enterprise bargaining was an additional weapon in the bosses' arsenal, seeking to atomise the struggle of the working class on a production unit-by-unit basis. Alongside the conversion of industries such as clothing and textile into that of an army of slave-labour outworkers, overwhelmingly immigrant women and children working for as little as \$2.00 an hour and up to 20 hours a day, young workers in general are taking a beating with the sub-minimum "training" wage designed to throw them off unemployment and to bring down union-level rates of pay. Youth unemployment skyrocketed to over 28 percent under Labor while higher education increasingly became the privilege of the privileged. According to Keating, this was "as good as it gets."

Part and parcel of the anti-working-class economic "restructuring" presided over by Hawke/Keating was a merciless offensive against Aboriginal people, women, immigrants and all the oppressed. The capitalist state has carried out de facto executions of Aborigines on the streets and in the lockups on a massive scale, internationally notorious. Increasing violence against women in the home and on the streets has been combined with judicial rulings sanctifying rape within marriage and of prostitutes. The Labor government presided over the further erosion of the tenuous existence of legal abortion. Reactionary age-of-consent laws target youth and in particular homosexuals. Anti-gay bashings on the streets have been reinforced by state attacks such as the 1994 cop raid on the Commerce Club in Melbourne.

Among the first acts of the Howard government was to extend to two years the "waiting period" for immigrants to access the welfare system from the already draconian six months enacted by the Labor government. This literally means starvation for immigrant workers and their families, a vicious attack which follows the Labor government's throwing immigrant students off Ausstudy benefits. The Labor Party and ACTU tops have not breathed a word in opposition to Howard's racist assault. We say: the trade-union movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations—close the hell-hole concentration camps!

As Howard, Reith and Costello plan their offensive against the working people, an offensive well-paved by the Labor government's economic "restructuring" and the limitless givebacks of the ACTU tops, it's high time for the



No credit



No credit

Left: super-exploited immigrant women factory workers. Right: South Korean Westpac workers strike for union rights, 1990. Revolutionary leadership must mobilise power of proletariat at head of all oppressed in struggle for socialist revolution.

unions and their allies to play hardball. It is necessary to unite the workers in a concerted and coordinated struggle against the bosses, to draw in, under the workers leadership, other sectors of the population who are also fighting against the all-sided attacks. A class-struggle program would include the call to organise the unorganised, for jobs for all—for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay! For a sliding scale of wages to defend against the ravages of inflation! The necessary hard class battle will require a hard political fight against the Labor traitors and the give-back policies of the union officialdom and the replacement of these hidebound bureaucrats with a revolutionary leadership.

While the servile Labor loyalists of the reformist and centrist fake left duly signed on to return Keating & Co. to the treasury benches, we said in our special elections supplement (see page 7): "If today (some of) the bosses consider dispensing with Keating's services, it is because the Labor government, along with the ACTU tops, has laid the groundwork to enable an all-out capitalist offensive to be launched in the raw." To advocate a return of these traitors to office was itself an act of class treason for any avowed revolutionary socialist organisation. The task before us is the forging of a revolutionary workers party on the model of Lenin's Bolsheviks, a party dedicated to nothing less than the smashing of the whole rotten capitalist system. That requires the splitting of the working-class base from the pro-capitalist tops of the ALP, a very right-wing bourgeois workers party. It requires a political fight within the mass organisations of the organised working class, the trade unions—for internationalism as against the nationalist, chauvinist policies of the trade-union bureaucrats. A revolutionary party struggling for a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia, must be the tribune of the people.

The Legacy of Keating's "One Nation": White Australia Racists Score Big

The parliamentary circus exposed how very thin the veneer was of Labor talk about "Aboriginal reconciliation," the "republic" and other social issues. More than any other in recent memory, the elections were marked by a bi-partisan explosion of white racism targeting Asians, immigrants and Aborigines. In this European settler country (nee penal colony) shaped by the near-genocide of the indigenous population and until very recently the exclusion of Asian and other "non-white" immigrants, only victorious workers revolution will destroy root and branch the nasty racist reaction embedded in this society. The sinister Australians Against Further Immigration Party (AAFIP) was spawned under Labor rule; in Gough Whitlam's old seat of Werriwa, the AAFIP and its allies got nearly ten percent of the vote. Graham Campbell—who the Labor tops embraced as an ALP MP for over ten years—is a vile, racist demagogue who

not only endorsed AAFIP candidates but has regularly addressed the meetings of the fascistic "League of Rights." Disendorsed by Keating just before the election, Campbell was easily re-elected in Kalgoorlie as an "independent." Queensland National Party reactionaries like Bob Katter and Bob Burgess spewed forth vile racist epithets throughout the campaign; they both dramatically increased their vote. In the Brisbane seat of Oxley, Labor was beaten by the open racist Pauline Hanson whose one campaign theme was vile racist filth aimed at the Aboriginal people. In this climate of bi-partisan racist reaction, the National Action fascists, who have staged repeated provocations in Melbourne and Adelaide, will be further emboldened. We fight for mass, militant union/minority mobilisations to crush the fascist scum in the egg!

Rampant racism was the story on the elections for the bourgeois media in the region. The *Japan Times* (19 March)

two Asian nations [Malaysia and Indonesia] with which Australia has tended to have the bumpiest ride."

Labor assiduously maintained the military alliance with U.S. imperialism and Howard too aims to serve his senior imperialist partners with gusto. We say: U.S. bases out! Down with the U.S./Australia alliance! Australian troops have been dispatched to Somalia, Rwanda and Haiti—not a man or woman, not a penny to the imperialist armed forces! The recent imperialist provocations against China were supported as well by Canberra. As the Stalinist bureaucrats in Beijing open the floodgates to capitalist restoration within the Chinese deformed workers state, the prospect of counterrevolution in China is now stoking the fires of inter-imperialist rivalry as the U.S. and Japanese imperialists position themselves to grab the anticipated spoils. We Trotskyists fight for the unconditional military defence of China against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution.



Anthony Weate

Cops brutalise Aboriginal protester, Brisbane, 1 February. Labor government presided over increased racist state repression.

headlined: "Did Australia elect racists?" In Malaysia, the *New Straits Times* (4 March) headlined: "Disquiet as 'racialists' triumph." The post-election call of ALP president Barry Jones to get back the votes of "male anglos" testifies to the fact that the one real article of Laborite faith is White Australian chauvinism. Keating's "reconciliation," the "republic" and "enmeshing with Asia" were so much window-dressing for the government's goal of getting Australian imperialism's cut from the superexploitation of the peoples of the Asia Pacific region. And the avowed monarchist Howard's policy will be in all essentials identical to that of Labor. In an editorial entitled "Looking to Asia" the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1 April) debunked Keating's claim that only Labor could pitch jacked Australian imperialism's tent in Asia, noting that: "In less than a month, Mr Howard seems to have laid the groundwork for continuing smooth relations with the

For proletarian political revolution against the sclerotic, nationalist Beijing bureaucracy! (See "Down with U.S. Gunboat Diplomacy!" page 1.)

As Class Battles Loom: It is Desperately Necessary to Fight!

Australia's "New World Order" elections were a reflection of an international shift to the right under the impact of capitalist counterrevolution throughout the Soviet bloc. Much of the world's ruling classes, intoxicated with conjunctural class triumphalism, have been seized with an ideological passion to return to the imagined halcyon days of unfettered capitalist freebooting. Irrationally even from their own class standpoint, they are busy dismantling or privatising everything from government bureaus of scientific standards to transport, communications and other basic

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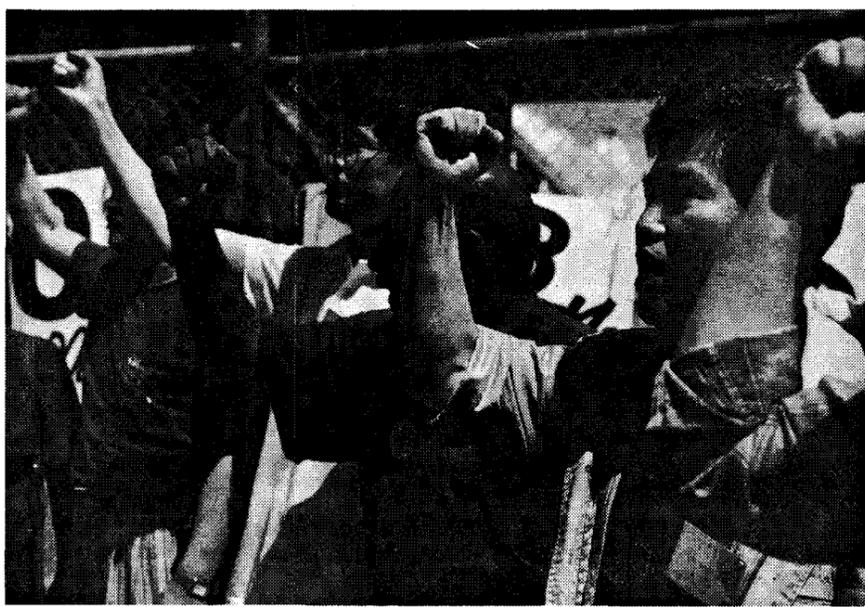
Racist Reaction...

(continued from page 11)

economic and social infrastructure. Imagining the "red menace" behind them they are also dumping the intermediaries and brokers (parliamentarist and trade union), such as the ALP, which they had previously maintained and cultivated, the better to contain and control the working class.

It is one thing for the bourgeoisie to put in place a right-wing regime but it is another thing to carry out what Howard & Co. are claiming as their mandate. In November of last year, powerful joint strike action by the miners and wharfies against CRA's union-busting at Weipa led to a fragile standoff, with the bosses granting some limited concessions. The ACTU bureaucrats called the MUA and miners back to work and knifed the Weipa strikers in order to boost Labor's electoral stocks. But within days of Howard's election, the Weipa unionists downed tools again. And late last year, French public sector workers fought off a governmental assault on the social security system as dramatic strike actions pitted the workers, women, immigrants, youth, students and pensioners against the Chirac/Juppé government and the bourgeoisie.

Howard seeks to break the power of the MUA by getting rid of the cabotage arrangements (Australian crews for coastal shipping) while banning the closed shop and preferential hiring of unionists. The Tories also seek to ban secondary boycotts to make solidarity strike action illegal. New legislation is on the drawing board to sequester union funds of any "illegal" industrial action. Incoming Treasurer Costello has found the inevitable "black hole" in the budget



Zoe Reynolds

Visiting South Korean unionists join wharfies' picket line, Sydney 1994.

reaucrats promote not class struggle but reactionary nationalist protectionism, designed to pit Australian workers against their class brothers and sisters internationally. Maritime workers need to build a fighting unity with overseas crews by demanding full union rates, conditions and protection for all seamen working in Australian ports and shipping. As part of the struggle against the bosses' attacks, we call for the expropriation without compensation of the greedy shipping/stevedoring bosses. Among the immediate demands of a working-class fight would be: Smash enterprise bargaining! Enforce the closed shop! Down with union-busting privatisations! In order to prevent bureaucratic sabotage and coordinate the struggle, for elected strike committees and picket lines that nothing and no one crosses! Dump the give-back bureaucrats! Rip up the anti-union legislation through hard class struggle—bury Arbi-

beyond the confines of decaying capitalism, to the struggle for state power. That is the key lesson of the miners' strike, the most important class battle in Europe for decades.

Now, as waterfront workers and miners face an all-out bosses' assault, the question of leadership is posed point-blank. In the absence of that revolutionary leadership, embodied in the Marxist program and the Leninist vanguard party, the working class can only succeed in frustrating the bourgeoisie, not conquering it. At the time of the French strikes, our comrades in the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF) wrote: "The question which is increasingly posed is: who will rule? The bourgeoisie is united in its determination to wage war on the workers and oppressed. To fight back, to win, the working class needs a general staff, a revolutionary leadership based on a program that those who labour must rule.... Today, the eyes of workers around the world are riveted on France, where the combative workers have demonstrated that the class struggle lives. But what is necessary for the workers to move on to victory is that Marxism live, in the form of an internationalist, Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party which fights for the proletarian conquest of power—a party of revolutionary action, not of parliamentary sellouts and trade-union bureaucrats."

Virulent social reaction is the handmaiden of the escalating drive against the whole working people. In their second election debate, Howard and Keating spoke as one against abortion, homosexual marriages and even condoms in schools. There is now an orchestrated attempt by the rulers and their Labor servants to mobilise white "middle class," traditional "family values" reactionary resentment against all sections of the oppressed as they seek scapegoats for the growing miseries produced by the profit system. To this end, Howard & Co. have lambasted so-called "political correctness" (PC)—which in their mouths means a green light for unabashed racist, sexist and homophobic vilification.

Meanwhile, led by Labor Premier Bob Carr, the NSW Royal Commission supposedly investigating the corrupt NSW police force has been transformed into a demented, nightmarish witchhunt against paedophilia and supposed "child abuse." Reeking of anti-homosexual bigotry, this witchhunt has been extended to the public service workers, dovetailing with union-busting attacks on that heavily unionised sector. What a convenient "distraction" from the bottomless pit of exposures of the criminal standard operating procedure of the cops. And what a handy club to use against all those who do not conform to the reactionary status quo. Marxists say the state should get out of the bedrooms! And we insist that sex involving young people is not *a priori* a crime. We call for radically lowering the legal age of adulthood and favour replacing

the whole network of "age of consent" legislation with the principle of effective consent, applicable to people of all ages. Similarly, as the grim toll of Aboriginal deaths at the hands of the cops and prison screws grows ever higher, the media have launched a campaign blaming the massively underfunded Aboriginal Legal Services for these crimes of the racist bourgeois state.

Capitalist attacks targeting in the first place the organised working class, a minority of the proletariat, will hit especially hard women, the youth and minorities. As the tribune of the people, a revolutionary Marxist party must fight for: Free, quality health care for all! Free abortion on demand! For effective and freely available contraception, fully-paid maternity leave and free 24-hour childcare! For free higher education for all, open admissions and a living stipend for students, including those from overseas! Abolish the administrations—for worker-student-staff control of the universities!

Labor's Fake-Left Waterboys After Keating

The defeat of Labor at the polls put the whole spectrum of the reformist and centrist left into frenzy and despair. The Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), which maintains some influence in the organised working class, is a classic case. In an editorial entitled "Why Labor lost" (*The Guardian*, 6 March) the SPA denounced ACTU head Kelty's wage breakout talk from the right, bemoaned Bob Carr's downgrading of the functions of state governor which they claim had only inflamed conservative voters and attacked Labor for not working more closely with open bourgeois parties like the Australian Democrats and the Greens in the Senate.

For their part the right-centrists of Workers Power (WP)—now infamous for their refusal to take a military side with the Bosnian Serbs against the NATO imperialist onslaught—produced an identikit post-elections headline that could have been lifted from *Socialist Worker*, *Militant* or *Socialist Alternative*: "Mass Strike Action can stop Howard." WP writes: "From now on every union activist, in every struggle, has to work towards one goal: statewide and nationwide general strike action against Howard's first big anti-union legislation." In the mouths of Labor loyalists like WP (who called for a vote to Labor, along with the rest) the call to prepare a general strike is intended to be at best a pressure tactic on the existing labour bureaucracy, a call to encourage it to adopt more militant tactics on the economic level. WP's call for a "general strike" (against a Tory government, always!) is a species of economism which negates the need for a revolutionary vanguard party. (For more on this outfit, see article page 5.)

Standing in the elections were the Socialist Labour League (SLL), Australian affiliates of David North's "International Committee of the Fourth International" (ICFI), posturing as opponents of Labor in power. As our elections supplement pointed out about these political bandits: "The SLL's campaign platform is centred on their grotesque position that the unions are



Townsville Bulletin

1993: Stuart Creek meatworkers strike defeated bosses' racist attack on Aboriginal unionist Eddie Alley.

and is planning cuts to the public sector on the order of \$8 billion over two years. Up to twenty thousand public sector jobs are on the chopping block. When Industrial Relations Minister Reith announced his "IR" taskforce, including a professional CRA union-busting specialist, the miners union president John Maitland expressed the union tops' dilemma:

"It suggests that they are planning to take a very hard line and I think that is quite foolish at this stage because everyone is waiting for some signals about how the Government is going to go in this area, whether or not people can go on with business as usual, and the appointment of a CRA apparatchik is a bad signal."

—Age, 25 March

But, despite the fervent wishes of the bureaucrats, "business as usual" is not what the bosses have in mind.

As we noted at the time of the attempt to privatise the Australian National Line (ANL), the union bu-

tration! For the complete independence of the unions from the capitalist state!

Comparisons are being made in the media between Howard's threat to crush the MUA on the waterfront and Thatcher's onslaught against the British miners. The miners' heroic year-long strike in 1984-85, which took militant trade unionism about as far as it could go, galvanised all sections of the oppressed in the British Isles: the Irish people, the women, inner-city minority youth, homosexuals, pensioners. But, up against the entire force of the bourgeois state, the miners were knifed by the Labour Party and TUC tops, left isolated by the "left" Labourite bureaucrats who time and again pulled their ranks back from joint strike action. The British miners were defeated. The missing element was a revolutionary leadership capable of breaking the Labourite stranglehold throughout the working class and leading the struggle

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dead, that they are nothing but 'direct instruments of imperialism'.... Far from promoting working-class struggle, the Northites' appeals for the workers to junk their unions neatly dovetail with the interests of the union-busting bosses." Furthermore, nowhere in their election propaganda was there a word of opposition to the U.S.-led NATO attack on the Bosnian Serbs, nor anything about the need to defend China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea against imperialism. In fact, the SLL joined the chorus of imperialist and fake-left condemnation of Chinese nuclear testing.

While life in John Howard's Australia promises to be increasingly nasty, brutal, weird, oppressive and repressive, major class battles and explosions of anger amongst oppressed layers loom. Against these Labor-loyal reformists, centrists and the likes of the Northites, we in the Spartacist League, Australian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) seek to construct a multiracial revolutionary workers party that fights to lead the working class in the seizure of the productive wealth of this society from the greedy, incompetent rulers through victorious workers revolution. Strategic to this task is the splitting of the working-class base from the pro-capitalist ALP tops. That will not and cannot be accomplished by those "socialists" in the syphilitic chain which binds the workers and the oppressed to the ALP tops, but only by the communists intervening into the upcoming struggles with a revolutionary, internationalist program. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■

Workers Power...

(continued from page 6)

for working-class struggle in Canada are deeply poisoned by chauvinism and nationalism, spawned by the historic oppression of the Quebec nation under the heel of a unitary Canadian state and fuelled by the bourgeois nationalists of the PQ who seek to be the exploiters of their "own" working class. Against the chauvinist divide which sets worker against worker, Marxists call for an independent Quebec, thus we called for a "Yes" vote in the referendum.

Hand-in-hand with Laborite nationalism, "colour-blindness" and economism goes a touching faith in the capitalist state. Thus, while unlike Militant, WP does not claim that cops are "workers

in uniform," it arrives at the same reformist programmatic conclusion: support to cop strikes. As we noted in our *Rabelais* defence statement (see page 3): "Students recently on the receiving end of Victorian police attacks should know that, along with the likes of Militant, Workers Power 'demand[s] the right of rank and file soldiers and police to organise unions and political organisations, to circulate political literature and to strike'" (*The Trotskyist Manifesto*, emphasis ours). As Leninists, we know that cop "strikes" are aimed at getting better weapons and a freer hand for these thugs to carry out state terror against Aboriginal people, youth and workers. Support to such "strikes" is nothing less than strike-breaking class treason.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

The betrayals of Workers Power's LRCI are symptomatic of the general rightward lurch of the centrist left under the impact of the New World Disorder. It expresses their own programmatic despair over the prospect of proletarian revolution. Indeed, LRCI made its repudiation of revolutionary Trotskyism explicit in its founding document (*The Trotskyist Manifesto*). Against Trotsky's assertion in the founding document of the Fourth International that the "crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership" WP proclaimed: "However, today it would be wrong simply to repeat that all contemporary crises are 'reduced to a crisis of leadership'. The proletariat worldwide does not yet face the stark alternative of either taking power or seeing the destruction of all its past gains." This was written on the eve of the social counter-revolutions in Eastern Europe and the USSR—world-historic defeats for the world working class in which Workers Power took the side of "democratic" imperialism. In so doing, WP revealed itself as a running dog for the "Third Camp" from which it sprang as a split from Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party (affiliates of the Australian International Socialist Organisation). Cliff & Co. were expelled from the Trotskyist Fourth International in 1950 for their refusal to militarily defend North Korea against British/U.S. imperialism during the Korean War.

The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state has released a wave of imperialist frenzy against the poor, the dark-skinned, the oppressed and the working people of every continent. The

unending absolute decline of the African continent under IMF tyranny, the "neoliberal" attacks throughout Latin America, the capitalist encroachment into China and Vietnam, the catastrophic collapse of the ex-Soviet economy, the steady, if unfinished, assault on the "welfare state" in Western Europe as well as in Australia and New Zealand—all this drives home with renewed impact Trotsky's insistence on the centrality of revolutionary leadership.

A necessary task in resolving the crisis of leadership is the fight for revolutionary regroupment through a process of splits and fusions, seeking to break subjectively revolutionary elements from reformist class collaboration and centrist wavering. The right centrists of Workers Power are an obstacle to this task. That has long been the case in Britain and elsewhere LRCI lurks, and it is the case here as Workers Power seeks to shore up the hold of the wretched Labor Party on the struggles of the exploited and oppressed and thus tie them to Australian imperialism. We seek rather to forge the Leninist party which can mobilise these forces in the struggle for its smashing from within. Trotsky's statement in "Centrism and the Fourth International" retains its full validity today: "the revolutionary International cannot form itself otherwise than in a consistent struggle against centrism." ■

Scargill...

(continued from page 4)

fascistic Ulster Volunteer Force. One of Hutchinson's henchmen, Lindsay Robb, recently jailed in Scotland, was caught in the act of gun-running to the Loyalist death squads. Militant refuses to raise the call for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of the British Army from Northern Ireland and needless to say this demand is absent from the draft programme of the Scottish Socialist Alliance, which echoes the line of the Blairites in calling for an imperialist-sponsored "negotiated solution".

This seems to cause little dissension from the "Communist Party of Great Britain", formerly the "Leninist". A small group, which appropriated the name of the CPGB when it collapsed, they are simultaneously unconditional cheerleaders for the IRA and part of the Scottish Socialist Alliance. And, mum's the word on Militant's chauvinist position on Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile the self-proclaimed "Inter-

national Bolshevik Tendency" (IBT) is currently taking us to task for not giving critical support to Militant, when after being purged from the Labour Party, they did a brief stint of running their own "independent" candidates, like Leslie Mahmood in the 1991 Walton by-election. As we noted at the time, "while claiming to challenge Kinnock's puppet in Liverpool, the Militant/Broad Left have not broken in any fashion from support to the puppeteer Kinnock. So much for their 'independent' campaign—the tooth bites down on nothing" ("Labourites fall out in Liverpool", *Workers Hammer* no 124, July/August 1991).

Against social democracy the IBT has not much in the way of teeth, while against us this organisation, which was founded by embittered ex-members of our international, surely has a lot of venom. For our part, we can only say that we are not surprised by the fact that IBT feels more comfortable sharing the sheets with Militant even as an after-the-fact fantasy. The IBT's own sneering at any question of special oppression—from the Catholics in Northern Ireland, to the Maoris of New Zealand, to opposing independence for Quebec—certainly makes them suitable bed partners. In this regard, it is also notable that in their various "critiques" of Scargill's SLP none of the fake left takes the least exception to the fact that the SLP has nothing to say against anti-immigrant racism and anti-Irish chauvinism.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party that Fights For All the Oppressed!

Those who claim to be "revolutionary socialists" are so tied to the Labour Party that Scargill often comes off sounding far to their left. At a recent rally for the SLP in Glasgow, the NUM leader castigated "segments of the left arguing that we should support the election of a Labour government, on the basis that that is the unity purpose of our movement... to get rid of the Tories after 17 years". Of course, such "unity" was precisely the purpose which Scargill himself served for so many years. While currently arguing that it stands in opposition to Blair's "New" Labour Party, the SLP stands in the mould of Labourite parliamentarism. That is precisely the mould that we as communists seek to break in order to build a revolutionary internationalist party of the working class that fights as a tribune of all the oppressed. ■

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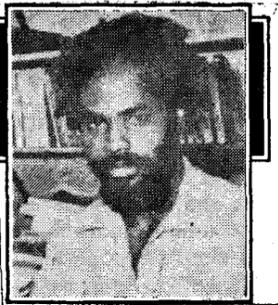
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From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal



Police: Part of, or Enemies of, Labor?

"Authority is never without hate."
—Euripides

In the large nation-state of Brazil, the lion's share of South America, the question of the function of the police is at the heart of the labor struggle for the power to better the life of working people.

In Volta Redonda, an industrial center near Rio de Janeiro, that question has emerged as a central one in the middle of an internal power struggle among leading municipal workers.

On March 13, 1996, a meeting of the Municipal Workers Union was invaded by the globally infamous and murderous Military Police, who, heavily armed, attempted to "settle" a workers dispute with shotguns. People at the scene reported their surprise response came only moments after a premeditated physical assault on MWU president Geraldo Ribeiro, a militant trade unionist, by MWU secretary Arthur Bonizetti Fernandes' key operative, known as "Motorzinho."

What is dangerous and unprecedented here, is the calling in of the cops: Who did it?; and, why?

What is clear, from all reports, is union president Ribeiro didn't call them, and upon their arrival, informed them that everything was under control. Later, some workers heard plainclothes police say Arthur (union secretary) owed them 10 reais (\$11 U.S.) apiece, but feared they might not be paid, as they were "late" (late for what, one wonders?).

At any rate, the invitation of police, and more ominously, *this* police force, into the heart of an internal union dispute, is a truly dire development. *This* force, the Military Police, is known as a death squad, who have practiced their murderous expertise on the black, brown and poor slum children of the *favelas* and streets of Rio. They (like the Philadelphia police) are experts in babykilling.

Central to the Luta Metalúrgica (LM—Metalworkers Struggle) and Municipal Workers Union conflict is a question that now has global implications—what is the role of the police? Are they simply workers, like glass blowers, garbage collectors, or clerks? Or are they agents of the wealthy and propertied classes—those who rule?

It is tempting to go with the former question, for do they not work, like others, for pay?

Only when one looks at the nature of that work, from the standpoint of history and current events, does the latter point score.

Throughout history, police have protected the *status quo*, even when that "status" has been evil and repressive. During the civil rights era, it was the police who beat, bloodied and arrested those who fought—peacefully!—for civil rights. Federal police followed, phone-tapped, sabotaged and, in the words of the FBI, "neutralized" those who today are honored veterans of that struggle, like Reverend Martin Luther King (Jr. & Sr.), nationalist Malcolm X, and Black Panther founder Dr. Huey P.

Newton. Police aided white supremacists in many of their racist campaigns.

Similarly, police in Brazil have been engineers of repression, from the crushing of popular and labor unions in the past, to the ruthless, shopkeeper-contracted slaughter of Brazilian street children. If the *status quo* is unjust, inequitable and repressive, how can anyone protect it?

It is in this context that one must truly "see" the introduction of the nefarious Military Police into the affairs of a union for the bad omen that it is, and once seeing this, condemn and protest it forcefully.

Presidente Ribeiro and his Luta Metalúrgica (Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil) ally, Alexandre Honorato "Cerezo," are calling for protests against police presence and provocations in union affairs.

Protests should be directed at: Marcello Alencar, Governor, Rio de Janeiro State, Palácio Guanabara, Rua Pinheiro Machado s/n, Laranjeiras, CEP 22238-900, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. Fax No. (55-21) 553-6090.

Solidarity statements can be sent to: Geraldo Ribeiro, Rua União No. 147, Bairro Santo Agostinho, CEP 27290-000, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil.

The central principle: police hands off the unions!

31 March 1996

©1996 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia black journalist, is on death row in Pennsylvania, U.S. Framed up because of his political views, Jamal faces death for his defiance of the racist, capitalist order. His columns appear periodically in *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., and other newspapers.

To get involved in the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the death penalty, contact the Partisan Defence Committee, P.O. Box Q217, QVB, Sydney NSW 2000. If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090, U.S.A.

Brazil...

(continued from page 16)

but expressed concern that because they arrived late according to Arthur, they might not be paid.

This attack comes at a time when the federal government and Congress are preparing a constitutional change to eliminate public employees' gains, rights and civil service job protection, preparing the way for massive layoffs. It is part of an effort to destroy the Municipal Workers Union, which has ceaselessly fought against firings by the Volta Redonda city administration. The SFPMVR has carried out seven strikes in recent years, successfully preventing 2,800 threatened layoffs. Union president Geraldo played a leading role in those strikes. The timing of the police assault is particularly ominous, given that in recent weeks Geraldo has been working to separate the municipal police from the union, because the police are

not part of the workers movement. The job of the police is to break strikes and carry out the racist attacks which are the everyday reality of capitalist "law and order" in Brazil.

Geraldo was elected president of the SFPMVR on the MEL slate, with an overwhelming 62 percent majority against the slate backed by the company union federation Força Sindical, the Popular Front government of the municipality of Volta Redonda, and Lima Netto, a federal deputy for the PFL [a right-wing party], who earlier carried out 10,000 layoffs in the National Steel Company (CSN) plant, as well as being the author of the *parceria* scheme ["partnership"—joint union-management committees] and is campaigning to eliminate job security for government workers. The local bourgeois press, such as *Diário do Vale*, was particularly dismayed by the ties of the MEL slate to Luta Metalúrgica, well known in Brazil for its principled struggle for the class independence of the workers and its political opposition to the class-

collaborationist Popular Front headed by the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT—Workers Party) of Lula.

Behind Arthur Fernandes and his cohorts are powerful forces. Already during the election campaign last year, the MEL was the object of government attacks. The local bourgeois press virulently attacked Ribeiro, Alexandre Honorato "Cerezo" and Luta Metalúrgica as "radicals." Cerezo, a fired steel worker, had run for president of the union of metal workers of the Sul Fluminense region (which includes the now-privatized CSN plant) a few months earlier, also in opposition to Força Sindical and a popular-front slate, and is now an advisor to the SFPMVR. Geraldo is secretary of the regional CUT union federation, and Cerezo is vice president of the regional CUT; they were elected to these posts in November 1993.

A Pattern of Provocation

In an orchestrated campaign involving physical provocations, secret

meetings and smear articles in the bosses' press, Arthur Fernandes and his camarilla have sought to usurp control of the union from president Geraldo Ribeiro. An initial leaflet demanding his ouster was issued by the plotters just two days before scheduled wage negotiations with the mayor. The result: the mayor postponed the negotiating session with the spurious argument that there was an internal dispute in the union. Next came another leaflet from the plotters accusing Geraldo of "treason" for mobilizing the workers and rejecting secret meetings with the mayor.

The March 13 meeting was intended to be the crowning piece of the attempted coup to remove the union president. In a scandal-sheet flyer, after reproducing the section of the program of the MEL slate—which Arthur was part of!—explaining that all levels of the police and armed forces, including municipal police, are "the armed fist of the bourgeoisie," the would-be usurpers then called provocatively to come to the meeting to "defend the police." This was a clear attempt to provoke a physical confrontation with the police at the meeting. However, the workers at the meeting overwhelmingly supported Geraldo and reaffirmed him as president. Seeing that their plans had backfired, the plotters resorted to physical provocation.

Who called the Military Police? Arthur himself admitted the following morning, 14 March, on the "Diário de Paula" radio program on FM-88 that he had done so. He claimed that union president Geraldo supposedly attacked Motorzinho, the exact opposite of the facts. In reality, after Motorzinho's attacks, Arthur had told him to apologize. This shows that Arthur is lying. Also on this radio program, Arthur accused Luta Metalúrgica of threatening him with death, using this as his excuse for calling the Military Police and contracting municipal police as "security." This is another, deadly lie! In fact, it is Arthur who is setting up the leaders



Luta Metalúrgica leader Alexandre Honorato "Cerezo" (above), speaking at rally last August in Volta Redonda to save life of American death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Municipal Workers union co-sponsored rally.

Rabelais...

(continued from page 3)

least of the Laborite variety, who use the sandpit of student politics to train for the big time" ("Victorian Cops Brutally Attack Student Demo," *Australasian Spartacist* (ASp) No. 153, Winter 1994).

Finking on student activists to the state by Laborite student bureaucrats does not fall from the sky. Nor does the hostility to our communist-initiated campaign to defend immigrant students from the bosses' and Labor government attack. The fake left is organically, loyally linked to the Labor Party. A cursory look at the newspapers of Workers Power, the ISO, the Militant, et al. will reveal that they want everyone out to "defeat Kennett" (read: elect Brumby) and have continually put down the attack on *Rabelais* to the VSU legislation. Leftist students and youth can look forward to these toadies supporting Labor in opposition, where—as the ALP did in government—it will continue to loyally serve the interests of the bosses. Beazley

& Co. have already announced where they stand: "the Opposition is not anxious to align itself with militant unions in expected conflict zones such as the waterfront" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 March).

It is no accident that the ISO and elements within LA have betrayed the elementary principle that "picket lines mean don't cross," waltzing across the picket lines of striking campus workers at La Trobe University in October 1993. In simple terms, this is *scabbing*. It is also the antithesis to the necessary struggle to unite the working class as a whole, including on the campuses, with the fight of students against the attacks by the government. But it is very much in line with the union-busting austerity meted out to the working people by the Labor government.

The right-centrist outfit Workers Power, (newly-formed Australian section of the "League for a Revolutionary Communist International" [LRCI]) which lays a very bogus claim to revolutionary Trotskyism, has been working within Left Alliance, arguing assiduously (if unsuccessfully) for "critical support" to the

of the MEL and LM for violence from the state, as he tried to provoke on March 13.

Never before in the history of the SFPMVR have union members brought the Military Police to intervene in union meetings. In Volta Redonda, workers are tragically familiar with the murderous violence of the military. Under the military dictatorship of 1964-1985, this was a "national security zone," due to the importance of the CSN steel plant, the largest in Latin America. During the 1988 steel strike three workers—William, Valmir and Barroso—were killed by the army.

The Military Police are notorious for the racist murders of hundreds of street children, most of them black, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, including the infamous massacres of Candelária and Vigário Geral, as well as the murder of two leaders of the black movement in November 1994, the "disappearance" of black trade-unionist Rufino, and the murder of various other leftists. In the Volta Redonda area, the newspaper *O Globo* (13 September 1991) reported that from January to August of 1991, at least 113 children were killed by military police, and the municipal *guardas* as well are suspected of involvement in these crimes. The Military Police together with the army are also responsible for the massacre of peasants in the state of Rondônia last August, in which "officially" eleven people were murdered. Recently, they attacked a land occupation by more than 3,000 peasant families in the state of Pará.

We call on the workers movement and members of democratic rights organizations around Brazil and internationally to protest this outrageous attack on the municipal workers of Volta Redonda, demanding: *Stop the*

dangerous police provocations against union militants in Volta Redonda! Police hands off the unions!

Thank you for your support. Workers' greetings,

Luta Metalúrgica/Liga Quarta-internacionalista do Brasil

20 March 1996

We urge that protest messages be sent to: Marcello Alencar, Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Palácio Guanabara, Rua Pinheiro Machado s/n, Laranjeiras, CEP 22238-900, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. Fax No. (55-21) 553-6090. And to: Paulo César Baltazar, Mayor of the City of Volta Redonda, Prefeitura Municipal, Praça Sávio Gama 53, Aterrado, CEP 27180-000, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil. Fax No. (55-243) 46-4954.

Messages of solidarity can be mailed to: Geraldo Ribeiro, Rua União No. 147, Bairro Santo Agostinho, CEP 27290-000, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil. And to: Luta Metalúrgica/Liga Quarta-internacionalista do Brasil, Av. Lucas Evangelista, n/418 sala 306, Aterrado, CEP 27295-320, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil.

Internationally, copies of solidarity messages can be sent to the Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013, U.S.A. Fax No. (212) 406-2210.

Documentation is available at the Luta Metalúrgica office.

Locally, documentation can be obtained from the PDC. Copies of solidarity statements should be sent to the PDC, PO Box Q217, QVB, Sydney 2000. Fax No. (02) 281 2185.

wretched ALP. In fact, WP announced itself as a political entity in this country first in a leaflet entitled "Vote Labor but Organise to Fight!" This is standard fare for the Labor/Labour-loyalists in both Australia and Britain: it is a recipe for the shackling of the working class and oppressed to the bourgeois workers party, not as a Leninist tactic of splitting the working-class base from the pro-capitalist tops, but as an article of faith. As the Spartacist League noted in our special supplement on the elections [see page seven], there was no basis for such a tactic of critical support in these elections whatsoever:

"Revolutionary Marxists fighting for the emancipation of the working people can offer no support, however critical, to any of the candidates standing in the federal election. The Tories of John Howard are clearly the representatives of the bosses; the ALP of Paul Keating has amply demonstrated during some thirteen years in governmental power its servility to the bosses, its hostility to and contempt for the working class and oppressed it claims to represent.... To advocate a return of these traitors to office would itself be an act of class treason for any avowed revolutionary socialist organisation."

—"No Vote To Labor! Build a Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Party," *ASp* Special Supplement, 29 February 1996

Workers Power's support to Labor is integrally linked to its touching faith in the bourgeois state. Students recently on the receiving end of Victorian police attacks should know that, along with the likes of Militant, Workers Power "demand[s] the right of rank and file soldiers and police to organise unions and political organisations, to circulate political literature and to strike" (*Trotskyist Manifesto*, founding document of the LRCI, emphasis ours). Further, according to WP, "we do support the struggles of the rank and file where these bring them into progressive conflict with the capitalist state." We are 100 percent opposed to the struggles of the "rank and file" of the police whose strikes are aimed at getting better weapons, protection, hours, wages and a freer hand in order to carry out state terror against Aboriginal people, youth, students, workers and all the oppressed.

For revolutionaries, the capitalist state—of which the cops are an essential part—exists to protect the wealth and power of a tiny minority who exploit and live off the labour of the overwhelming majority. As Lenin noted in *The State and Revolution*, "the state is an organ of class domination, an organ of oppression of one class by another." The bourgeois state cannot be pressured nor reformed into acting on behalf of the working people; it must be smashed by workers revolution.

WP's support to the Labor lackeys of capitalism "at home" means support to

imperialism abroad. Throughout Cold War II, WP more and more consistently sided with the forces of "democratic" imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution against the remaining gains of the anti-capitalist revolutions in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. WP was to be found literally on the barricades of Boris Yeltsin's imperialist-backed counterrevolution in Moscow, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the yuppies, priests and fascist scum who constituted Yeltsin's base. WP's rightward lurch led it recently to open capitulation to imperialism as NATO bombs rained down on the Bosnian Serbs. WP/LRCI's refusal to take a stand on the side of military defence of the Bosnian Serbs—facing the heaviest imperialist onslaught since the 1990-91 Gulf War slaughter—blew apart their phoney "international" as their New Zealand group split wide open and all their Latin American supporters decamped (see "Chickens Come Home to Roost Over Balkans Betrayal," *ASp* No. 157, Summer 1995-96).

Fight for a Socialist Future!

From the mass strike wave which recently shook France to the powerful mobilisations here of waterfront workers and miners in defence of CRA strikers at Weipa, it is clear that the working class has the social power to turn back the mounting attacks on all the oppressed. In such a struggle, students can be an important ally. (And a workers contingent joining the protest against the repression of the *Rabelais* editors would have an important impact.) But any such struggle to mobilise the working class will run up against the nationalist, pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, wedded as it is to "class peace."

We fight for the forging of a revolutionary workers party through the badly-needed fight-back by the working class against the bosses' offensive. We know that it will take the expropriation of the greedy capitalists through workers revolution to lay the basis for a socialist society that will guarantee jobs and social equality for all. This capitalist system offers only state repression, racism, social decay, poverty and ultimately imperialist carnage in a third, nuclear, world holocaust. In sharp political struggle against those "socialists" who would disarm young militants in the face of "New World Order" Australia, we in the SYC fight to win youth to the building of an authentic international vanguard party. Join us in the fight for a revolutionary youth organisation and the fight for a socialist future!

Spartacus Youth Clubs
27 March 1996

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

An Introduction to Marxism

SYDNEY

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. The Origins of Marxism:
Dialectical Materialism vs. Idealism | Wed., 24 April |
| 2. The Marxist Program | Thurs., 9 May |
| 3. Marx's View of Economics | Thurs., 23 May |
| 4. The State | Thurs., 6 June |
| 5. The Bolshevik Revolution | Thurs., 20 June |

All classes start at 6.30 pm and are held in The Keg Room Hotel, 20 Broadway, Broadway (opposite UTS). Further info. contact the SYC on (02) 281 2181.

MELBOURNE

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. The State | Wed., 1 May |
| 2. The Bolshevik Revolution | Wed., 15 May |
| 3. The Degeneration of the USSR:
How the Soviet Workers State was Strangled | Wed., 29 May |
| 4. The National and Colonial Questions
in the Age of Imperialism | Wed., 12 June |

All classes start at 6:30 pm and are held in the Meeting Room of the Lincoln Hotel, corner of Queensberry and Cardigan Streets, Carlton. Further info. contact the SYC on (03) 9654 4315.

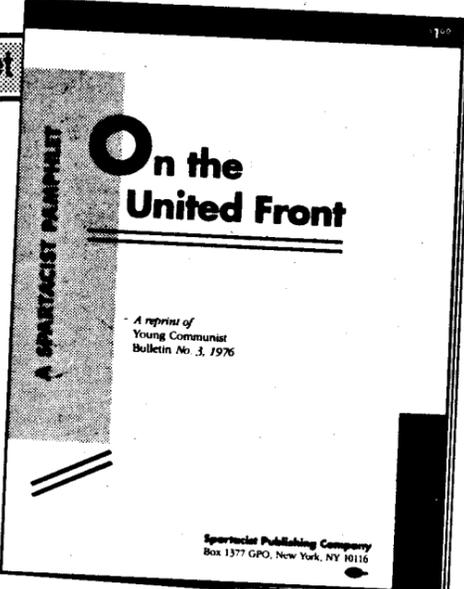
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Military Police Invade Municipal Workers Assembly

Brazil: Police Hands Off Volta Redonda Union!

Labour Alert: Call for International Labour Solidarity

14 APRIL—We print below an urgent appeal from Luta Metalúrgica (LM—Metal Workers Struggle) in the Brazilian industrial centre of Volta Redonda, near Rio de Janeiro. On 13 March, a meeting of the Municipal Workers Union was invaded by the notoriously murderous Military Police. It is vital that the police and the state authorities who give them their orders are sent a message that the labour movement and defenders of democratic rights the world over stand in solidarity against this cop provocation against combative sectors of the Brazilian workers movement.

Luta Metalúrgica, which recently adopted the name of Liga Quarta-internacionalista do Brasil (LQI—Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil), is fraternally linked with the International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the Australian section. Last August, LM organised labour/black rallies in Brazil against the threatened execution of black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row in the U.S. A 10 August protest in Volta Redonda was co-sponsored by the same Municipal Workers Union which is today under attack.

Appeals issued by combative workers in Brazilian steel centre of Volta Redonda protesting Military Police invasion of Municipal Workers union meeting.



The Partisan Defence Committee (PDC) urges readers of *Australasian Spartacist* to take up the defence of these unionists. Protest statements have already been sent by numerous unions and prominent defenders of democratic rights from around the world—from the National Teachers Union of Mexico to Israeli civil rights campaigner Israel Shahak. From Australia protest messages have been sent by the Central NSW Maritime Union of Australia and the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance (NSW).

Fernandês, the secretary of the union, who has carried out a campaign of provocations over the last two months, seeking to stage a coup to oust union president Geraldo Ribeiro and his adviser Alexandre Honorato "Cerezo," leader of Luta Metalúrgica (LM). From the very beginning of the March 13 meeting, one of the members of the Arthur faction, Sebastião de Fátima Batista Passos, known as "Motorzinho," began provoking Geraldo, attempting to prevent the president of the SFPMVR from presiding over the union meeting, which was attended by some 50 people. As the workers present chanted "Geraldo presidente," Motorzinho kept pushing and finally grabbed Ribeiro's arm, ripping the buttons off his shirt. Geraldo was unharmed only because union members intervened energetically to defend him, while Motorzinho kept hurling foul-mouthed curses against him.

In the city of Volta Redonda, Brazil there has been a series of escalating provocations against the leadership of the combative Municipal Workers Union of Volta Redonda (SFPMVR), climaxing in a sinister invasion of a union assembly by the Military Police. On the afternoon of March 13, while an SFPMVR membership meeting was underway outside the city council building, a physical attack, apparently premeditated, was staged against union president Geraldo Ribeiro, who had been elected on the slate of "Municipários em Luta" (MEL—Municipal Workers in Struggle) last November. A bare five minutes after this attack, a squad of four Military Police entered the meeting armed with pistols and shotguns. Ominously, the assistant coroner, known as "Pereira" and currently a candidate for city councilman, showed up as well.

Barely five minutes after this altercation, the four Military Police arrived. There were two sergeants and two privates, the latter armed with shotguns and pistols. Shotguns are generally not used in Brazil in strike situations. Rather, they are used in extremely violent confrontations. These are the preferred weapons of the ROTA, the Military Police of the state of São Paulo, internationally known as one of the most violent police forces in the world.

The Military Police said they came because they were called, and asked if there was a disturbance. Union president Geraldo replied that everything was under control. At this moment, Arthur and Motorzinho rabidly pointed at Cerezo, pointing him out to the Military Police, saying that Cerezo threatened to kill them. Cerezo demonstrated to the police that he was not armed. The Military Police put back their shotguns but came back with riot clubs and positioned themselves strategically around the meeting, placing the assembly under police occupation.

Later, three municipal policemen (*guardas*) arrived, and several plain-clothes policemen were also present in the meeting. One of them was overheard saying that they had been contracted by Arthur for 10 Reais (US\$11) apiece,

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Police Death Squads Murder Street Children

Financial Times



AP

Brazilian police are notorious for murdering black street children in the huge *favelas* (slum areas) around the major cities. Above (top): Military Police patrolling the Rio de Janeiro district of Rocinha. Bottom: Six street children massacred in the shantytown of Duque de Caixas in November 1991.

Recently, on March 15, a police death squad killed three street chil-

dren outside the provincial capital of Belo Horizonte. Calling themselves the "Reaction Group," the cold-blooded murderers left a letter complaining of low wages for civilian cops and threatening that "the blood ritual will not stop."

This is the killer cops' grotesque idea of a "job action." We say: *Police are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie! Cops out of the unions!* ■

The Military Police invasion was orchestrated by one Arthur Bonizetti