

# Australasian SPARTACIST



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## Australian, All Imperialist Troops Out of Rwanda!

# U.S./UN: Hands off Haiti!

With the 31 July United Nations rubber-stamp resolution, the invasion of Haiti threatened by U.S. President Clinton was brought a step closer. To ensure the resolution's passage, deposed Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who has been very coy about calling for a U.S. invasion, submitted a letter calling on the international community to take "swift and definitive" action. This letter was requested by Latin American bourgeois rulers, fearful of popular unrest against *yanqui* aggression, as a cover for their capitulation to the U.S. diktat.

Over the last month, 17 warships carrying 2,800 Marines and nearly 6,000 naval personnel have been massing in the area just north of the blockaded country, conducting mock raids and "rescue" scenarios. This is in addition to 17 Coast Guard vessels seizing refugees in the Windward Passage. In charge of this flotilla is the high-tech USS *Mount Whitney*, with the commander of the U.S. Navy's Second Fleet on board.

"The administration's pre-invasion checklist is virtually complete," noted *U.S. News & World Report* (1 August). Plans call for an invasion force of 15,000, followed up by a "multinational" occupation force of 25,000. Grotesquely, Washington asked Israel to participate as "peacekeepers"—no doubt based on their years of experience bloodily "pacifying" the Palestinian people. Already a multimillion-dollar "reconstruction plan" has been drawn up, under which Haiti would again become a protectorate of the United States as it was from 1915 to 1934. *U.S./UN Hands Off!*

Meanwhile, only days before, the White House announced the dispatch of up to 4,000 U.S. troops to deliver "humanitarian aid" to Rwandan refugees on the Zaire border. Labor prime minister Keating had already dispatched a military contingent including some 200 doctors and nurses accompanied by over 100 infantry in late July. We say: *Australian and all imperialist troops out of Rwanda!*

### The Rwanda Horror: Bitter Legacy of Colonialism

Behind the truly genocidal bloodshed in Rwanda is a history of imperialist rivalry and "divide and rule." The Hutu majority militias which slaughtered hundreds of thousands of the Tutsi minority earlier this year were armed and backed by France. The Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), which has now taken over the country, driving out well over a million Hutus, has the support of Belgium, the former colonial overlord, and the blessing of the United States and its Australian junior partner. Thus, Tutsi commander Paul Kagame was



Workers Vanguard



Der Spiegel

**Left: Spartacist League/U.S. In 28 July New York protest against threatened U.S. invasion of Haiti. Right: A quarter million desperate refugees fleeing ethnic slaughter in Rwanda streamed across border to Tanzania in a single day. From Haiti to Rwanda, "UN" interventions serve imperialist aggression.**

being trained at the U.S. military college at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas when he was named head of the FPR military forces.

As over Somalia, television and newspapers have been filled with heart-rending images of starving Rwandan children and victims of massacres. But by now it's notorious how this propaganda served as a cover for the murderous racist occupation of Mogadishu. The UN fig leaf provides the imperialists with a modern "humanitarian" cover for a very old game: imperial domination of poor black nations.

The genocidal violence which swept Rwanda is not, as the capitalist press would have it, the result of "centuries-old tribal hatred." The Hutu and Tutsi peoples, who share a common language, culture and territory, are not tribes. The seeds of explosive ethnic conflict in Rwanda and Burundi were sown by the racist colonial powers—Germany, followed by Belgium—who transformed the precolonial feudal society, one of the most developed in Africa, into a vicious machine of colonial oppression based on hardened ethnic divisions. The Tutsi minority, who had constituted most of the nobility, became the overseers of indirect colonial rule, while the primarily Hutu peasants were obliged to submit to forced labour, severe taxes and beatings.

With "independence," two parallel states were set up. But although the

population mix was comparable, in Burundi the Tutsi minority continued to constitute the ruling elite, while in Rwanda, following a peasant rebellion in 1959-62, a Hutu-based regime arose and has remained in power to this day. As throughout Africa, the former colonialists sought to continue their domination, but now through neocolonial front men. However, the situation has been complicated here by the attempt of France to replace the Belgians as the overlords of the region. In recent years, Paris has shored up—financially and militarily—the governments of both Burundi and Rwanda. And now these imperialist manipulators of genocidal violence pose as "humanitarian" saviours!

During the Cold War, the imperialist powers maintained their blood-drenched killers in power as a bulwark against Soviet influence in Africa. For example the bloody Rwandan military has been armed by France, South Africa and the U.S. With the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and East Europe, the imperialists began pressuring Africa's dictatorial "Big Men" to head off potential social explosions by allowing their opponents a share of power. But the imperialists' push for "democracy" has in fact led to a series of largely ethnic civil wars across the continent.

Nowhere has the failure of peacefully "reforming" the blood-drenched African regimes been more evident than in

Rwanda and Burundi, where "power sharing" agreements, held up last year as models for the rest of the continent, have been swept away in waves of ethnic bloodshed. Elections last June brought to office Burundi's first Hutu president; his murder in a failed coup by the Tutsi-dominated military set off ethnic massacres last October in which some 100,000 people perished. In Rwanda, a peace accord signed in August last year between the government and the FPR, which called for a "transitional" government; broke down into the recent ethnic holocaust.

For its part the FPR is in reality thoroughly subordinate to the harsh Ugandan regime of Yoweri Museveni. Formed from among Rwandan refugees in Uganda, the FPR helped Museveni's guerilla force seize power in Uganda in 1986 and then joined his army. According to a report by the Human Rights Watch Arms Project (*Arming Rwanda*, January 1994), when the FPR attacked into northern Rwanda in 1990 many soldiers were still wearing Ugandan army uniforms and most of their arms were supplied by Museveni.

As we wrote in *Workers Vanguard* No. 601, 27 May ("The Rwanda Horror/Bitter Legacy of Colonialism"):

"Under imperialism, in which the development of a vigorous national bourgeoisie is prevented by the economic weight of the

*continued on page 2*

## As Militant Strike Wave Hits South Africa ANC's Fake-Left Cheerleaders Squirm

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# Defend Bangladeshi Writer Taslima Nasrin!

## Islamic Fundamentalists Vow to Kill Her

The following is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 604, 5 August 1994 and is based on an article prepared by Women and Revolution. At the end of July, several hundred copies of the article were distributed to participants at the Sixth International Feminist Book Fair held in Melbourne. It was also printed in the August 1994 newsletter of the International Feminists of Japan. Since the writing of the article, on 3 August, Taslima Nasrin came out of hiding to appear before a Bangladeshi court where she was granted bail after being charged with "offending Muslim religious feeling." On 9 August, Nasrin fled Bangladesh and is now somewhere in Sweden.

The courageous Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin is in hiding in fear for her life. She is the target of a religious *fatwa* (condemnation to death) by Islamic clerics, and at their instigation the government of prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia has launched a police hunt threatening imprisonment and hard labor on charges of "deliberately and maliciously outraging the religious feelings of Muslims." But Taslima Nasrin's "crime" is to speak out against anti-woman bigotry and to denounce the bloody communalism of both Muslim and Hindu chauvinists in Bangladesh and India. For this, according to the clerics, she must be hanged.

On June 30 the fundamentalists raged through Dhaka, chanting "death to Taslima Nasrin," as they tried to enforce a one-day shutdown of the city touching off a month-long campaign for Nasrin's death. In spite of this crusade and the mobilization of some 8,000 police and paramilitary troops, secular students, cultural organizations and artists carried out their own demonstration in defense of Nasrin. The fundamentalist frenzy against Nasrin has continued to escalate: on July 26, six people were killed in Chittagong in clashes between students and Jamaat Islami, which has led the campaign against her. Two days later nearly 200,000 Muslims reportedly demonstrated in Dhaka demanding that Nasrin be hanged and all anti-Islamic activity banned.

The murderous witchhunt has been whipped up by clerics who formed a "Taslima Nasrin Peshan Committee" ("Committee to grind down Taslima Nasrin"). "She is worse than a prostitute," fulminated Maulana Azizul Haque, the mullah who has called for her execution. "She demands 'freedom of the vagina'... This is against the Koran and Allah, it's blasphemy" (*Guardian* [London], 10 December 1993). These are the same forces that viciously repudiated and cast out the thousands of their own womenfolk raped by the Pakistani army during the 1971 war for independence.

Nasrin remains defiant. Before going into hiding she told the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, "I am never going to stop writing and I am determined not to compromise with fundamentalists or a government which tolerates Islam as a state religion. I fight with a pen, yet they are trying to hit me with a sword. I am expressing my thoughts and they want to kill me" (quoted in the *Vancouver Sun*, 9 July).

Noted writers such as Allen Ginsburg, Günter Grass, John Irving, Norman Mailer and Amy Tan have come out in support of Nasrin. So too has noted Bombay-born writer Salman Rushdie who is himself targeted for death since 1988 under a *fatwa* issued by the fundamentalist regime in Iran. Indian women's organizations and cultural figures have protested the government's attacks on Nasrin. Some 27 Indian writers condemned the warrant of arrest, saying her "only crime is to have spoken out boldly against religious bigotry, obscurantism and oppression as a liberated modern citizen and an emancipated woman" (*The Link* [Vancouver], 9 July).

It is the duty of the international working class to rally to Nasrin's defense. Our colleagues of the Partisan Defence Committee in Britain and Australia have registered a protest with the Bangladesh High Commission demanding: Drop all the charges against Taslima Nasrin! For safe passage to the country of her choice! In the U.S., the Partisan Defense Committee has written to Attorney General Janet Reno demanding political asylum for Nasrin.

Taslima Nasrin first attracted the hatred of the fundamentalists in 1991 with her essay anthology, *Selected*

**Taslima Nasrin leaves a Dhaka court after being granted bail. The international working class has a duty to rally to her defence.**



AP/PTI

*Columns*. In it she criticizes the Koran, quoting from it to prove that religion "discriminates against women and treats them like sexual commodities." The immediate focus of the mullahs' vituperative wrath is her recent novel *Lajja* (*Shame*). *Lajja* depicts a Hindu family attacked by Muslim communalists in Bangladesh, following the razing of the mosque at Ayodhya in India by Hindu chauvinists and fascists. By the time the Bangladeshi government banned it last July, 60,000 copies had been sold.

In India the Hindu communalists and fascists of the Bharatiya Janata Party/Vishwa Hindu Parishad (BJP/VHP) have attempted to utilize *Lajja* for their vile communalist ends. Their only concern is to stoke the fires of anti-Muslim pogroms, in particular against Muslim Bangladeshi immigrant "infiltrators" who have fled from the horrendous poverty of Bangladesh to the slums of West Bengal and to cities like Delhi. Nasrin herself says, "I am very pained at what is happening with my book in India. I condemn the politics of the BJP and the Jamaat-e-Islami equally" (*India Today*, 31 October 1993).

It takes more than just obvious, elementary decency for any individual to take a stand like Nasrin has done in situations like Bangladesh today: it takes courage, especially if you are a woman, expected—in Nasrin's words—to remain

"veiled, illiterate and in the kitchen." The attacks on Nasrin are the focal point of a generalized assault on women's rights throughout Bangladesh. Since the reactionary Islamic clergy pronounced her death sentence, *fatwabazi* (issuing of *fatwas*) has spread through rural Bangladesh as women are buried, stoned, caned, set ablaze for running afoul of the local mullahs. Between January and March, 110 schools where girls are taught were burned down in a campaign orchestrated by mullahs.

The deadly campaign directed at Taslima Nasrin highlights the fact that the struggle for women's liberation on the Indian subcontinent is inseparably tied to the fight against religious obscurantism, caste-based bigotry and bloody communalism which could plunge the masses into horrors surpassing those of the 1947-49 Partition, which was a direct product of British imperialism's divide-and-rule policies. The emancipation of women will only succeed through a struggle for *permanent revolution*—the revolutionary seizure of power and overthrow of capitalism by the working class, at the head of the peasantry, the masses of downtrodden women and all the oppressed, and led by a genuinely communist (Leninist-Trotskyist) party. **Defend Taslima Nasrin! For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For a socialist federation of South Asia!** ■

## Haiti...

(continued from page 1)

advanced industrial countries, it is impossible to reproduce the dynamic of the bourgeois revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries. In the classic French Revolution of 1789, peasant revolt was the driving force in destroying the reactionary feudal order, putting the land in the hands of the tiller, and opening the road to (capitalist) development. But in the imperialist epoch, the raw force of peasant insurrection in the colonial and semi-colonial countries—if it is not to be dissipated or even turned in a reactionary direction, as in the continuing cycle of ethnic slaughter in Rwanda and Burundi—must be harnessed to the international struggle of the working class for socialist revolution.

"Barely one hundred years ago, before the scourge of colonialism was inflicted on Africa, the region of Rwanda and Burundi was one of the most advanced on the con-

continent. Today these are among the most poverty-stricken countries in the world, buried in debt to the imperialist governments and international bankers and squeezed by the giant trusts which dominate the market—and inexorably drive down the price—of their only significant export, coffee. On top of everything else, an estimated 40 percent of the population of Kigali and other Rwandan cities is infected with the AIDS virus.

"Having done everything imaginable to turn Rwanda into a living hell, the imperialists have now seized on the country's tragedy to establish their credentials as 'humanitarians'."

## New World Disorder and Imperialist Barbarism

An opinion piece in Rupert Murdoch's *Australian* (17 August) by Kenyan intellectual Dr Ali A. Mazuri, a leading light of the Organisation of African States (OAS), actually suggests "a once unthinkable solution: recolonisation." It goes on to argue: "In tandem with the efforts of the UN to establish a peaceful world order, Africans need an African peace enforced by Africans, from Angola to Rwanda and Burundi." From Somalia to Haiti the world that "UN" interventions serve has nothing to do with "peace" and everything to do with imperialist aggression.

It's a sign of the times when *Newsweek* (18 July) presents "The Case for Kind Colonialism"! In a debate titled, "Should We Invade Haiti?" the racist "pro" side echoes Clinton's classic Yankee imperialist "it's in our backyard" rationale, while the racist "con" side argues that Haiti represents no vital U.S. interests and besides it's a "snake pit." In the "New World Order," the doves of yester-

year have become rabid interventionists in Bosnia, Haiti and Rwanda, while old-time hawks have gone "isolationist"—in good part because they love Haitian strongman General Cedras.

These days, the phrase on every liberal ideologue's lips is "saving failed states"—under the aegis of UN "multilateralism." UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali has long been among the advocates of this "new" colonialism, arguing that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty... has passed" (*An Agenda for Peace*, June 1992). For Clinton and the American ruling class, the end of the Cold War means the U.S. should be global gendarme of the "New World Order," certainly within the Western hemisphere. The U.S. made its bloody intentions clear with the barbaric "Desert Slaughter" war on Iraq in 1990-91, joined by Australian jackal imperialism and made possible by the collapsing Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy under Gorbachev.

Then the U.S. with Australian troops of course in tow moved on to invading Somalia. But the Somalia adventure became a debacle, mostly because recalcitrant Somali clans inflicted some casualties against U.S. troops in retribution for large-scale UN/U.S. massacres. In selling the Rwanda intervention, the Clinton administration claims to have learned the "lessons of Somalia." The lesson is that the U.S. still hasn't overcome the "Vietnam syndrome"—fear of a losing dirty imperialist war. And since the American population won't stand for casualties in imperialist adventures, this leads to repeated invasions of tiny

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Australasian

**SPARTACIST**



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

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# The Fight Against the Fianna Fail/Labour Coalition's Assault on the Unions

We reprint below a 10 July leaflet produced by our comrades in the Dublin Spartacist Group (DSG). For the past two months, workers at TEAM Aer Lingus, the maintenance subsidiary of the Irish state-owned airline, have been subjected to an escalating series of layoffs. Over 4,000 copies of the leaflet have been distributed to air transport and other semi-state industry workers.

**TEAM Aer Lingus:**  
An attack on the whole labour movement

**Shut Down the Airports!**  
**All-Out Strike by Air Transport Unions!**  
**Build Mass Picket Lines:**  
**Nobody and Nothing Should Pass!**

The gloves are off on the government side. In the wake of the sellout Cahill deal, the ruling class is back for more. The outrageous demands made on TEAM [aircraft maintenance] Aer Lingus workers—hundreds of redundancies, 48-hour working week in the winters, ripping up hard-won union conditions—are an attack on the whole union movement.

Everyone knows that the rest of the semi-state companies are threatened, like a line of dominoes: Telecom Eireann, ESB [Electricity Supply Board], CIE [bus and rail transport] and B&I. The threatened closure of Irish Steel makes it perfectly clear. This is class war! And so far it's all happening from one side—the bosses and their Labour Party friends in the Dail are on the offensive.

But the union leadership is stalling and talking, drawing up phoney "alternative strategies" for TEAM management, and trying to put a word in the ear of the LRC [Labour Relations Commission] and the Labour Party ministers in the coalition. Militant Labour sums up this whole losing perspective when it calls for exerting "maximum pressure" on the government. This is a recipe for defeat. The government is out to cripple the unions throughout the semi-state sector, it will have to be *beaten* by real trade union action. The government figures it can shut down Irish Steel—but it can't run this country without air transport. The fight back has to start at the airports.

The only way to save the jobs and conditions, and defend union organisation is to strike now, and strike hard! Aer Lingus and Servisair workers are already in dispute: all the air transport unions should be out, with the shop stewards reporting to regular joint mass meetings. Shut down the airports! Put up mass picket lines that nobody and nothing will pass! Other sections of the workers will then be able to act in solidarity by joining the pickets. An airport strike would open the way for solidarity strikes by ESB and other workers.

There is talk now from the trade union councils in Dublin and elsewhere of a national half-day stoppage in support of TEAM. All well and good—but a one-off protest action is not enough. (And if we wait for the ICTU [Irish Congress of Trade Unions] to organise a stoppage as the Socialist Workers Movement recommends, we'll be waiting till Christmas!) The heart of this fight must be strike action and picketing to shut down the airports. The Irish Workers Group calls for occupying the TEAM workshops, but that would leave the airport itself open and the other airport workers on the sidelines. Shut down the airports, full stop!

Stop the government-employer offensive in its tracks! Follow the lead of the militant Air France workers last October: they reminded Europe what class struggle looks like, and showed that *class struggle is the only way to win!*

**Smash the PCW! No to Privatisation!**  
**For a Shorter Working Week,**  
**With No Loss of Pay!**

This is a political dispute from the beginning. The Maastricht Treaty "convergence targets" mean vicious austerity for workers in every member country: fewer services, fewer jobs, higher taxes, lower wages.

With the victory of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc, the idea of the "welfare state" is being thrown out the window, and the European governments are gearing up for trade war with the US and Japan (when they're not falling out among themselves).

Dog-eat-dog competition threatens to take the world into a third inter-imperialist war. Protectionist poison like SIPTU's [Services Industrial Professional Technical Union] campaign to "save Irish jobs" doesn't save a single job. Instead it fuels racism and anti-immigrant hatred and helps the capitalist rulers to spread national chauvinism which only serves to split the working class.

That is why it is vital to fight against the position in a TEAM union leaflet against so-called "Eastern European/Third World cheap labour". This sounds like some right-wing British union leader sounding off about "cheap Irish labour" in the building trades, as a job-trusting excuse for failing to unionise and fight for the interests of *all workers*. We are for *organising the unorganised*, whatever country they come from or work in, on the basis of international workers' solidarity and common struggle. The capitalist class wants the workers to pay for bigger profits: that means breaking the unions, and there is no better weapon for splitting and weakening the working class than racism.

The Reynolds/Spring capitalist government want to get the kind of victory that Margaret Thatcher won over the British miners ten years ago. Since then the British unions have been badly weakened, losing hundreds of thousands of members. The bosses have got away with murder in every department: slashing jobs, imposing draconian anti-strike laws, derecognising unions, freezing public-sector pay. The British miners lost because their strike was attacked by the TUC/Labour right wing, and the so-called "left" leaders were content to leave the miners to fight alone, despite their verbal "support". These weak-kneed reformists were terrified of a general strike, which would have posed the question, "who rules: the capitalists or the working class?" Instead they advised the workers to put their faith in a future Labour government.

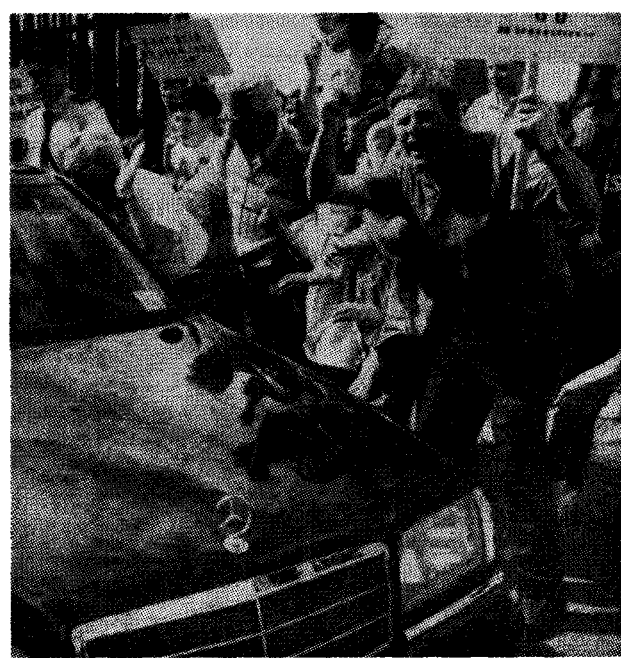
The official leadership tied the British miners' hands behind their backs. Don't let Labour and ICTU do this to the TEAM workers. Now is the time to *put an end to class collaboration!* There is nothing "neutral" about the Labour Relations Commission's "arbitration", or the bosses' courts or the entire capitalist state for that matter. They are there to ensure the domination of the bosses. The only language the ruling class will understand is *class struggle!* Smash the PCW [Programme for Competitiveness and Work] austerity pact: the government and the employers aren't "social partners"—they're social vultures. They cream off a fat living, while the unemployed see their lives wasted year by year, and workers and their families face a future ruined by sackings, speed up and grinding wage control. No to union-busting privatisations! Fight for jobs for all: for a sliding scale of hours to divide the available work among workers (including the unemployed) at full union rates.

**Labour Party: Which Side Are You On?**  
**Get Out of the Coalition! Down with**  
**Labour Party Class Collaboration!**

TEAM workers and their supporters have a right to know: which side is the Labour Party on? The Labour Party claims to defend the interests of the working class. But its participation in the coalition government is a *betrayal!* That's why we (unlike most of the rest of the left) refused to call for a vote to Labour in November 1992: on principle we will not support a coalition with the bosses' parties. Back then our leaflet (entitled 'No vote to Labour, Workers Party, Democratic Left!') pointed out:

"For years the trade union and labour misleaders have tied the hands of the working class by brokering class-collaborationist deals with the bosses. First it was the PNR [Programme for National Recovery] and the PESP [Programme for Economic and Social Progress], both explicitly designed to prevent class-struggle opposition to capitalist austerity. Then it was the Labour Party/Workers Party orchestrated deal with Fine Gael to put Mary Robinson in Aras an Uachtarain [the Presidential Palace] to head off the growing pressure for change. Now it is the 'Rainbow coalition' where Spring is just waiting to see if he will have enough TDs [MPs] to trade off for the Tanaiste's [Deputy Prime Minister] chair."

Today we say that the Labour Party should *get out of the coalition!* What we've had so far is worse than useless—whining complaints about the government being "unreasonable", applying a bit of pressure to the LRC, or a parliamentary vote here or there by TDs who just want to save their own electoral skin, and let



Irish Times

**June: Aer Lingus workers jeer Labour Party leader and deputy prime minister, Dick Spring.**

off steam. It's time to demand that Labour break with Fianna Fail and get out of this government, now!

The Labour Party, from top to bottom, has a choice. Labour Party supporters have a choice. Either you back Dick Spring, with his precious cabinet posts, sucking up to the bosses and enforcing their anti-working class rule, or you're with the working class, in struggle, on the picket lines and fighting for the strike action that's needed, right now. And to make a real, united fight against the government means having no truck with Labour traitors: repudiate every single misleader who knifes the TEAM and semi-state workers (whether they be open right wingers or one-time lefts who've swallowed the coalition line). Lenin called parties like the Labour Party "bourgeois workers parties": what's needed is a real working-class party that  *fights*  the capitalists, not on a reformist platform, but on a *revolutionary* programme. In other words, a party in the working-class struggle traditions of Connolly, Larkin and Lenin.

**Repudiate the Labour Traitors!**  
**For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!**  
**For an Irish Workers' Republic, within a**  
**Socialist Federation of the British Isles!**

Labour and Democratic Left both put out the lie that the working class and women and all the poor and oppressed can find justice and satisfaction through elections to the Dail, through negotiating for a few crumbs from the capitalist table.

No: A *genuine workers government* will be based on workers councils (soviets), like the Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky in Russia 1917.

An *Irish workers republic* will not give concessions to boost the bosses' profits: it will expropriate the Smurfits and O'Reillys and Intels without a penny of compensation, and build towards a socialist economy, using a central plan to produce for human need, and not for profit.

An *Irish workers republic* will stand foursquare for the rights of the oppressed and especially for the interests of women. Defend Travellers against persecution! Defend the rights of gays and lesbians! For the right of divorce, and for free abortion and contraception on demand. We are for the separation of church and state: nationalise the schools and hospitals owned by the Church. For free, high-quality health care for all! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!

The struggle of workers in the Republic cannot be separated from the fight to overthrow British imperialism, hand in hand with the workers of England, Scotland and Wales and of Northern Ireland. Not least among Dick Spring's betrayals is his attempt to broker a deal with British imperialism at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority in the North. *British troops out of Northern Ireland! Not Orange against Green but class against class! No to forced reunification—for a Socialist Federation of the British Isles!* ■

# Smash Tasmania's Anti-Gay Barbarism

## Full Democratic Rights for Homosexuals!

Official discrimination and police violence against homosexuals, "gay bashing" on the street and the unleashing of vile anti-gay bigotry is on the rise in Keating's Australia. It flows today from the general reactionary climate engendered by a bourgeoisie triumphant in its assaults on the working people—from the attacks against the trade-union movement to the destruction of the former Soviet Union. Keating's Labor government presides, on behalf of its capitalist masters, over the widespread and systemic oppression of homosexuals just as it presides over escalating racist cop terror against Aboriginal people, attacks on abortion rights for women, the union-busting austerity aimed at further grinding down the wages and conditions of all the working people.

The recent furore over Tasmania's barbaric anti-gay laws has thrown a spotlight on the deeply entrenched anti-homosexual nature of White Australia capitalism. A man charged with having sex with a male partner seven years ago has been committed for trial in the state Supreme Court on six counts of "unnatural intercourse," "indecent practices" and "indecent assault." Charges have also been brought against two other men for allegedly having sex in a Hobart park toilet block. Tasmania's draconian anti-"sodomy" laws proscribe not only male homosexual acts but also oral and anal sex between consenting heterosexuals (read: basically anything except one legally married penis penetrating its spousal vagina). On the books of the Criminal Code since 1924, these obscene laws can carry a sentence of up to 21 years imprisonment for those convicted!

An article by Bruce Montgomery in the *Australian* (9-10 April) put it: "if you go down in Tasmania, you might stay down for 21 years." We say: *Down with Tasmania's anti-sex, anti-gay laws! State out of the bedroom!*

In the early morning hours of Sunday, 7 August, a 60-strong police force raided the Commerce Club in Melbourne, a night spot frequented by gay men and lesbians. The cops strip-searched 463 people in an ordeal which lasted over three hours. Physical abuse and verbal anti-homosexual filth were meted out by the cops as patrons and staff were forced to line up, drop their trousers and underwear while cops wearing rubber gloves shone torches on them during the humiliating search. In the aftermath of this Gestapo-like police operation the names and addresses of everyone present were taken before they were allowed to leave. Eight people were charged—six for possessing a drug of dependence (including Valium), one for being drunk in a public place (in a private nightclub!) and one for hindering police. (See Partisan Defence Committee statement, opposite.) *Drop all the charges! Stop the cop terror against the homosexual population!*

The police raid on the Commerce Club follows a long list of "strong state" repression against working people, students and minorities in Victoria. Last December baton-wielding police beat picketers bloody at Richmond Secondary College. In April, cops charged with mounted forces and batons against student demonstrators marching in Melbourne against proposed Voluntary Student Union legislation. A series of fatal shootings by police in Victoria, in some cases slaying mentally ill people in crisis, were "addressed" by issuing the cops extendable batons and chemical weapons (capsicum spray guns).

Tasmania—where for instance there are still laws on the books proscribing citizens of the former Van Diemen's Land from screwing the crown prince's consort and against men dressing as women anytime between sunset and sunrise—has grabbed the headlines. But the raid at the Commerce Club in Melbourne is as much a part of the picture. And in Western Australia, anti-"sodomy" laws were on the books until 1989—dropped only in exchange for putting into place the current reactionary "age-of-consent" laws which criminalise homosexuality before the age of 21 (for heterosexual males the age of consent stands at 18, for women it is 16). While homosexuality is "decriminalised" in all states save Tasmania, "age-of-consent" laws are in fact the state weapon used to target gays and especially youth nationwide.

Within the framework of fighting for socialist revolution to lay the basis for a new society in which the full expression of the individual (sexual and otherwise) will be possible, we stand against all state interference in private matters of sexuality. Advocating the concept of effective consent in sexual matters, we denounce the reactionary "age-of-consent" laws which seek to straitjacket the sexuality of young people.

The state's legal "gay bashing" is accompanied by ocker-redneck violence on the street. A report published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (30 June) stated that in New South Wales alone, two-thirds of gays in school face verbal abuse, 30 percent have been threatened with violence and fully 27 percent assaulted. A survey of 1,000 Victorian gay men and lesbians released in May found that 70 percent had been bashed, verbally abused or threatened in public. Discrimination, harassment and sackings at the workplace affected 45 percent (*Australian*, 17 May).

Tasmania's victimisation of homosexuals gained international notoriety following the United Nations Human Rights Commission finding in March that the "apple isle's" laws were in breach of "international human rights." In response, "states rights" yahoos railed against outside "interference." On 8 June, anti-gay bigots in the recession-ridden north-west Tasmanian town of Burnie mobilised for a menacing "Say No to Sodomy" rally which was protested outside by some 100 pro-gay supporters seeking to "resist the local 'rabid and hateful public slander'" (*Capital Q Weekly*, 10 June). Tasmanian premier Groom gave the green light for further bigot-fests when he declared: "Australians are sick and tired of noisy minorities attempting to impose their views and behaviour on the mainstream majority" (*Capital Q Weekly*, 29 July).

As when they fought tooth and nail against the extremely limited and minimal recognition of land rights accorded to Aborigines under the *Mabo* ruling, the "states rights" reactionaries have been conciliated by Labor. At the same time, for the federal ALP government the United Nations condemnation was highly inconvenient. Keating is trying to "enmesh" with Asia, throwing Australia's "democratic" weight around the region and bidding, pathetically, for a seat on the UN Security Council. The government's proposed "Human Rights (Sexual

Conduct) Bill" announced on 22 August by the federal attorney general, Lavarch, in fact leaves Tasmania's anti-gay laws intact. It simply lays a legal basis for prosecutions to be challenged as the state law now conflicts with the federal legislation which gives "adult" homosexuals the right to sex in private. Law professor George Zdenkowski put it: "There is still a lot of work to be done for those who advocate full equality for all people whatever their sexual orientation" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 August).

The recent "Buy Right" boycott of Tasmanian products—a liberal pressure tactic aimed at "stiffening the will" of the federal Labor government to call the Tasmanian government to heel and rescind the laws—has been called off. For the Sydney-based gay activists who organised the boycott, the announcement of the federal government legislation was sufficient "victory." But the fight for full democratic rights for homosexuals is necessarily part of the broader fight against capitalist exploitation and oppression; it cannot and will not be won within the framework of bourgeois parliamentarism.

### Marxism and the Fight for Homosexual Rights

The oppression of women and homosexuals in capitalist society stems fundamentally from the institution of the family. Enslaving women to endless domestic drudgery, the family serves the vital role of tying sex to private property rights. Its roots lie in the early division of human society into classes, as Frederick Engels wrote in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. In order for the patriarch to bequeath "his" property to "his" children, enforced monogamy for women was a pillar of the bourgeois family. In bourgeois society, the moral code of "one man on one woman for life" is triply reinforced by the authority of the family, the fear of god instilled by organised religion and the armed fist of the state, including its labyrinthine legal codes damning "adultery" and "sodomy" (and not just for homosexuals).

The oppression of homosexuals under capitalism is a corollary to the social institution of the family; anti-gay bigotry on the part of the "man in the street" flows from the stereotyping decreed by the sexual division of labour in the family and its resultant, hypocritical "morality." The destruction of capitalism through workers revolution will lay the basis for replacing the family by providing the material means to socialise and collectivise its present functions, including childcare.

In this country the deep-seated roots of misogyny and anti-gay bigotry go back to the British colonial establishment of an overwhelmingly male penal colony. Women convicts were forced into prostitution. Central to the transformation from penal colony to a modern capitalist society was the bolstering and glorification of the family. Women were now to be "God's police," and gays were not to be at all. Alongside its foundations as a penal colony of the British Empire, Australian capitalist society was based upon the attempted extermination of the Abor-



ASP Photo

**Sydney, 28 May: Spartacist League raises defence of homosexual rights at abortion rights demo.**

iginal people, the driving out of Chinese immigrants and subsequent racial exclusion of all deemed "non-white."

Bigoted attacks on vulnerable sections of the population are intended to strengthen the repressive and intrusive powers of the state against the working people as a whole, and to thwart united class struggle by dividing the workers along ethnic and sexual lines. For revolutionary Marxists, democratic rights are indivisible—an injury to one is an injury to all! In its own defence, the labour movement must vigorously oppose all bigotry and discriminatory attacks on homosexuals and every oppressed sector. The mobilisation of the immense social power of the organised working class necessarily means a political struggle against the nationalist, chauvinist Labor Party, its trade-union lieutenants and for the construction of a revolutionary leadership.

### Break with the ALP! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

When the Democratic Socialist Party's *Green Left Weekly* (20 April) headlined: "Gay Rights Global Breakthrough" over the United Nations ruling, even as imperialist carnage and starvation embargoes from Somalia to Iraq took place under UN auspices, we replied:

"Getting rid of [the Tasmanian] laws would be a good thing, but reliance on the 'good offices' of either that imperialist creature, the United Nations, or the Keating government charged with running Australian capitalism is a dangerous illusion. These are not the agencies to fight for the elementary democratic rights of homosexuals—in Tasmania, or anywhere else! They are responsible for crimes against humanity throughout the world."

—ASP No. 153, Winter 1994

Over the last decade the Hawke/Keating Labor government has driven women out of work and back into the home as double-digit unemployment and union-busting austerity especially targets working women. Successive Labor and Tory governments alike have refused to remove anti-abortion laws from the books. Labor in fact allows its members a "conscience" vote on abortion—as on homosexual rights—not least to give a free hand to the reactionaries of the ALP right-wing machine heavily influenced by the Catholic Church hierarchy. In Queensland, the Goss Labor government has maintained that state's notoriously reactionary anti-abortion laws. We call for *free abortion on demand*, as part of



free quality health care, including contraception, for all.

The federal government is also "committed" to special legislation to prosecute Australians accused of having sex with minors overseas. Under the legislation, those convicted would face up to 17 years jail while those "encouraging or benefiting" would face up to ten years. Furthermore, the proposed bill "provides that if there were insufficient evidence to prove the age of the alleged victim, the jury would be forced to make an estimate based on factors such as the child's appearance on video link" (*Australian*, 20 May)!

The announcement of this Orwellian bill was accompanied by a hypocritical posture of "concern" for poverty-stricken young people in Asian countries forced to sell themselves on the streets. Coming from Canberra, this is truly nauseating. From the Korean War to Vietnam to the incarceration of Asian immigrants and refugees in concentration-camp hell holes, murderous anti-Asian racism has been and remains a bedrock of Australian jacked imperialism. What this law is about is a further assault on the civil liberties of everyone and especially gays.

It is no accident that a prominent backer of the bill, one Richard Read QC, also wants to dictate what people of any age can read or watch. Against "sexually offensive" television, videos and glossy magazines, Read railed: "This type of material is particularly dangerous in the hands of adults with poor judgement or poor impulse control" (*Australian*, 16 June). As they further grind down and impoverish the working class and oppressed, the rulers cannot tolerate the "liberties" of a restive population. In the "New World Disorder" the imperialists' campaign against "godless Communism" has been replaced by an ideological drive for conformity backed up by vicious state witchhunting against all those who "deviate." This is what the "family values" crusade, "child abuse" hysteria, anti-drug "offensive," anti-smoking and anti-pornography campaigns are all about.

In defending the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA)—an organisation which supports the sexual rights of gays and especially youth—from slander and exclusionism by the official organisers of the "Stonewall 25 Steering Committee," our comrades in the U.S. explained that in so doing the Committee:

"...fuels a reactionary climate where pregnant teenagers need 'parental consent' for abortion while hysterical charges of 'sex abuse' result in the persecution of day-care workers and teachers—a campaign which began with the witchhunting of homosexual teachers....

"The Steering Committee's despicable action can only encourage the very forces responsible for the repression and oppression of gay people and youth, and those forces are sinister indeed."

—*Workers Vanguard*, No. 602, 10 June

At the behest of reactionary U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, who threatened to cut U.S. funding to the United Nations if

groups such as NAMBLA were represented in the UN-affiliated International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), the ILGA expelled NAMBLA. Key Australian ILGA organiser, Jennifer Wilson, justifying this action, put it: "If the ILGA is not in the UN, there is no international voice for lesbians and gays" (*Sydney Star Observer*, 15 July). Thus the ILGA has done its bit to aid and abet the very real bourgeois state persecution of NAMBLA.

In late 1983, under the Cain Labor government in Victoria, a vicious witchhunt was unleashed against nine supporters of the Paedophile Support Group (PSG), a grouping similar to NAMBLA which took up the issue of consensual cross-generational sexual relations between adults and "under-age" youth. Cops smashed their way into a meeting of the group, ransacked the house, arrested all those present, laying obscene charges attempting to smear the small organisation of homosexuals as child molesters and sex criminals. We wrote then in defence of the PSG: "The case is also a test of elementary political decency, as most feminists and the reformist left are washing their hands of the small and vulnerable group, if they are not actively egging on the witchhunters. Down with Cain's puritanical witchhunt! Drop the charges!" (*ASp* No. 105, March/April 1984).

Democratic rights are not an abstract ideal but the *product of social struggle*. In divorcing the goal of full rights for homosexuals from the liberation of the working class from capitalist exploitation, gay sectoralist politics can only end up as a tail on the very forces who administer the system (e.g., the Australian Labor Party), including lending aid and comfort to its witchhunting repression in a bid for bourgeois "respectability." The defence of basic rights under capitalism requires a class-struggle mobilisation, but only the overthrow of that system once and for all will secure our rights and lay the foundation for a new world.

### The Bolshevik Legacy

From its inception the Marxist movement has championed the rights of homosexuals; Oscar Wilde was defended against persecution for his homosexuality by the most authoritative journal of the Second International, *Die Neue Zeit*. Upon coming to power in 1917, in the first workers revolution in history, the Bolshevik party began immediately to undercut the old bourgeois prejudices and social institutions responsible for the oppression of women and homosexuals. Within the limits of their capacity in backward Russia, the outbreak of civil war soon after the Revolution and the immense pressure from hostile imperialism, the Russian communists sought to create alternatives to the family—socialised eating places, laundries, childcare. Abolishing all legal impediments to women's equality, the Bolsheviks also abolished all laws against homosexuality.

Grigori Batkis, director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene, wrote in "The Sexual Revolution in Russia," published in the USSR in 1923:

"Soviet legislation bases itself on the following principle:

"It declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters so long as nobody is injured and no one's interests are encroached upon....

"Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters." [emphasis in original]

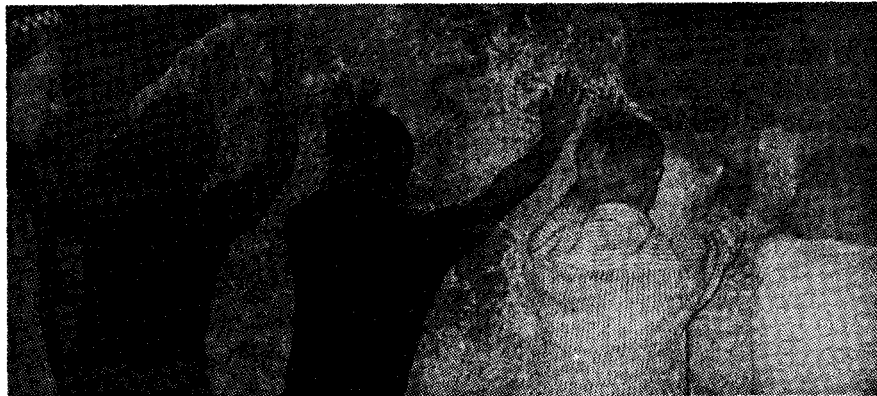
—quoted in John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement 1864-1935*

The young Soviet state's economic backwardness and its international isolation meant that the Bolsheviks could only hint at the large-scale allocation of social resources necessary to achieve equality for women. With the Stalinist usurpation of political power in 1923-24, the Bolshevik program itself was abandoned. The Stalinist bureaucracy

rehabilitated the reactionary ideology of bourgeois society, not least glorifying the family unit. In 1934 a law making homosexual acts punishable by imprisonment was introduced, and mass arrests of homosexuals took place. Unconditionally militarily defending the socialised property forms of the USSR against capitalist attack and counterrevolution, we Trotskyists fought for political revolution in the ex-USSR to oust the parasitic bureaucracy and restore the liberating program and goals of the party of Lenin and Trotsky.

Seeking to construct an authentic revolutionary party which acts as the tribune of the whole people and the vanguard of proletarian revolution, we fight all the manifestations of capitalist-imperialist rule from the mass murder of semi-colonial people abroad to the brutal, all-sided victimisation of homosexuals "at home." We look forward to a classless society, one in which social and economic constraints over sexual relations will be non-existent, and in the words of Frederick Engels, "there is no other motive left except mutual inclination." ■

## Down With Victorian Cops' Anti-Gay Rampage!



Melbourne, 7 August: Patrons of the Commerce Club forced to line up against a wall during vicious cop raid.

The following letter of protest by the Partisan Defence Committee (PDC) was sent to Premier Jeff Kennett and Police Minister Pat McNamara. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people.

18 August 1994

Dear Sir,

In the early morning hours of Sunday, 7 August, a 60-strong police raid took place at the Commerce Club in Melbourne, under the direction of Mr. McNamara's office. Some 463 patrons of the club frequented by gay men and lesbians were humiliated and intimidated by group strip searches conducted throughout the premises. Eight were arrested in this blatantly anti-homosexual, Gestapo-like operation. According to eyewitness accounts carried in the press, patrons were struck and subjected to the most abusive anti-homosexual vitriol. People were forced to strip in front of others and stand on cold floors without shoes or socks. The Partisan Defence Committee condemns this outrage as an affront not only to the homosexual population but to all decent people and defenders of elementary democratic rights! We demand that all charges be dropped against the Commerce Club patrons rounded up as a result of this grotesque and brutal raid!

There can be no doubt that this police rampage was specifically aimed at terrorising gay men and lesbians. For the Victorian government and its boot boys in blue it has apparently become a "criminal" offence for homosexuals to enjoy a drink on a

Saturday night. This recalls the way anti-drinking laws are selectively used to justify the systematic racist brutality against Aboriginal people. The intended message of the police raid is clear: there are no rights for homosexuals your government is bound to respect.

We note, too, that this attack on the rights of homosexuals follows a long list of "strong state" repression against working people and students. Just last December the whole country saw footage of baton-wielding police charging picketers at Richmond Secondary College (RSC), beating many bloody. In April, police charged with mounted forces and batons against student demonstrators marching in Melbourne over proposed Voluntary Student Unionism legislation. Following a series of fatal shootings by police in Victoria, in some cases slaying mentally ill people in crisis, police have now been issued with new extendable batons and chemical weapons in the form of capsicum spray guns. And student protesters rounded up in dawn raids under the Kirner Labor government still face frame-up charges. We demand: Drop all the charges against the Austudy Five now!

The attempts by the Victorian government (and its Labor forebears) to use brute force against the rights of workers, students, homosexuals and other minorities will not go unanswered. The Partisan Defence Committee demands: Drop all charges against those arrested at the Commerce Club on 7 August! Stop police terror against the homosexual population!

Sincerely,  
Neil Florrimell  
for the Partisan Defence Committee

### Spartacist Pamphlet — Just Out!

## Militant Labour's Touching Faith in the Capitalist State

This pamphlet counterposes the revolutionary politics of the International Communist League to the reformism of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) led by the Militant Labour organisation in Britain.

Includes the entire text of Gauche révolutionnaire/Jeunesses communistes révolutionnaires pamphlet, "The International and the State," with a reply by the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

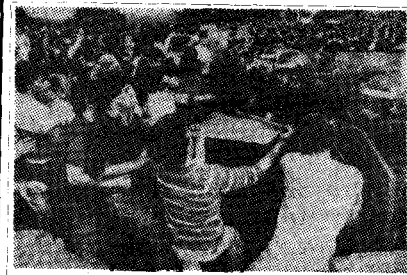
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### Spartacist Pamphlet

## Militant Labour's touching faith in the capitalist state



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# Indonesia...

(continued from page 12)

Australia's relationship with the Indonesian regime. But the broader imperialist strategic interest in "stability" in the archipelago is key to Canberra's policies. That "stability" was secured by the 1965 massacre of over half a million Communists, workers and peasants in the bloodthirsty beheading of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI)—the largest Communist Party outside the Sino-Soviet bloc.

1965 was also the year in which the U.S. massively escalated its dirty, losing war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants. The containment and isolation of China, as well as stemming the tide of peasant-based revolutions which threatened to sweep Asia, was a central aim of the Washington imperialists; to that end the Indonesian massacre was key. A death list of thousands of names was compiled by the American CIA, turned over to the Indonesian army and "checked off" once they had been killed. Aided and abetted not only by the CIA but by the Australian secret service ASIS, this massacre was an historic defeat for the Asian toiling masses. Its way 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.

The post-1965 "stability" underpins the lucrative business and trade between Australia and Indonesia, now second to Papua New Guinea as the largest recipient of Australian "aid" and its tenth largest export market. The spectre of mass upsurge following the inevitable departure of the aging Suharto from the scene conditions the (sometimes varying) diplomatic policies pursued by Canberra and its Washington big brother, including over the butchery carried out by Jakarta's generals in East Timor.

For the Australian Laborite left, the scenario is that small East Timor—where tribal subsistence agriculture exists side-by-side with the major mining, petrochemical, timber operations and plantations run by the imperialist multinationals and their Indonesian compradors—will be "liberated" from the Indonesian yoke under the auspices of "democratic" Australian imperialism and thus achieve independence over a prolonged period of peaceful capitalist development. At bottom, this serves only to alibi the jackal imperialist designs of their "own" bourgeoisie.

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.

## Rumblings in the New World Disorder...

The unravelling of the post-World War II anti-Soviet alliance following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state has laid bare the permanent rivalry between the various imperialist powers. Southeast Asia is a cockpit of these heightened rivalries, especially the savage economic competition between the United States and Japan. The U.S. seeks to prevent Japan's consolidation of its trade bloc, a new East Asian Co-Prospereity Sphere.

Washington has used a combination of small arms sales sanctions against Indonesia over the East Timor question

and pressure on Suharto's regime to make some concessions to workers' demands for the minimum wage in an effort to quash burgeoning militancy. But at least as important is the fact that its rival, Japan, invests heavily—and reaps the profits from superexploited labour—in the automotive, electronics and textile industries. Similarly the U.S. threat to withdraw tariff privileges from Indonesian exports over "international labour standards" reflects not only a protectionist policy in the narrow sense but is aimed at Tokyo's substantial vested interests. And they are substantial: the massive foreign investment in Indonesia is led by the Japanese.

For their part, the junior Australian imperialists, in the drive to "enmesh with Asia" (i.e., to further exploit the labour, resources and markets of the region), are caught in the crossfire between their major trading partner, Japan, and their U.S. ally. Since World War II, they've been junior partners for the latter. Keating has signed up as U.S. president Clinton's "ally" in order "to launch another assault on international trade barriers using the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum as a springboard" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September):

"Key government officials and politicians in the US and Australia would like to see a united APEC—whose 18 members comprise half the world's wealth—use its potential economic weight to force the Europeans into the next round of trade liberalising talks."

Keating has been sent to Tokyo to talk up Clinton's bid for a cease-fire in hostilities between the major APEC players (including China, Japan, the U.S. and the ASEAN countries) in order to go after the Europeans. APEC is to meet in Indonesia in November. As they maneuver amongst themselves, the imperialist powers are nervously aware that the post-1965 "New Order" Indonesia could well become a flash-point of massive social struggle, throwing one hell of a wrench into the New World Disorder.

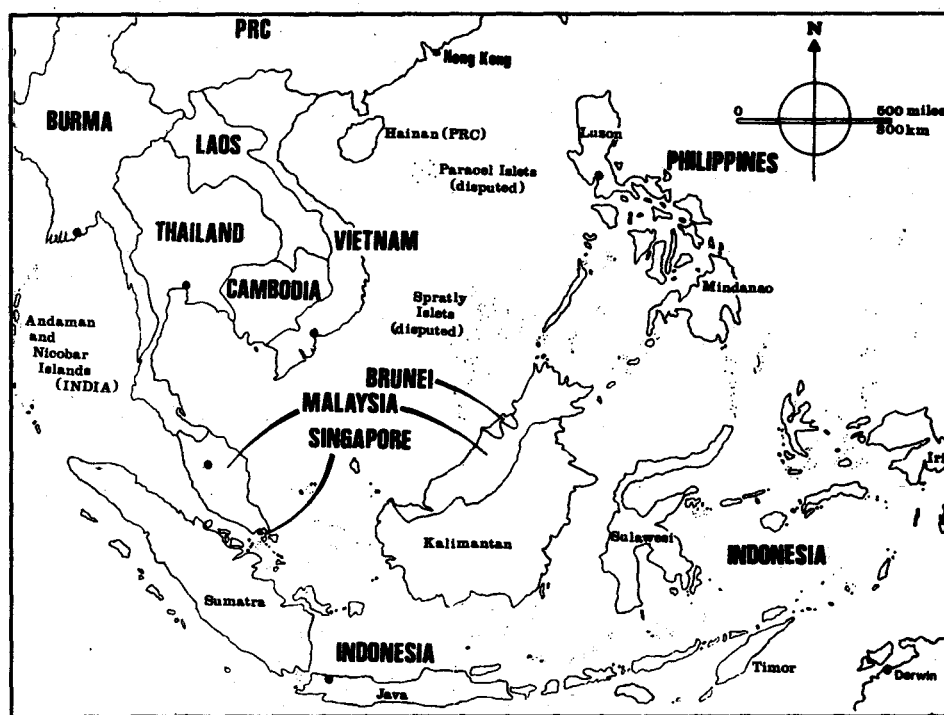
## ... and Indonesia Powderkeg

The corrupt, rigid, bonapartist Suharto regime sits atop a cauldron of seething and widespread discontent. The working class has been engaged in strikes and other struggles on a scale not seen since 1965. In the face of official repression of all but the state-run SPSI "trade union," outright murder of and terror against labour organisers, large-scale army operations aimed at quashing strikes and demonstrations, the explosion of militancy has been dramatic.

A rapid expansion of Indonesia's industrial working class accompanied the growth of particularly the export-based manufacturing industry—based on poverty-level wage rates significantly lower than those of Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand or even the Philippines. A 1990 census indicated that approximately 8.2 million people work in manufacturing compared to 3.5 million in 1980; some 20 million workers now reside in urban centres such as the so-called JABOTABEK region (Jakarta-Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasik). The proletariat is not only much stronger in numbers, but younger and better educated.

As the number of strikes has escalated so has the degree of military "intervention." A statement released by the Surabaya office of the Legal Aid Institute on East Java reported that of "the 59 strikes which took place there in 1991, intervention by the military occurred in as many as 61% of cases. The following year this increased to 73%" (*Inside Indonesia*, September 1993). Opposition to the brutal suppression of labour struggles has become a workers' rallying cry over the widely-publicised case of the martyred Marsinah. A 25-year-old factory worker from East Java, Marsinah was savagely beaten, raped and murdered five days after she and other workers had gone on strike in May last year over wages and union rights.

Strikers demanded the wristwatch company PT Catur Putra Surya accept a



Adapted from Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter

minimum wage equivalent to A\$1.50 per day, the dissolution of the official state-sponsored SPSI and the right to form an independent union. After demands on wages were accepted (and for trade-union rights rejected), work resumed and 16 workers received a summons to report to the local military headquarters. Thirteen responded; they were forced to sign letters of resignation, including admission of attending illegal meetings, and an apology to the company:

"Marsinah, not one of the 13 who had submitted forced letters of resignation, sought out her fellow activists following the end of her shift on the same day. Obtaining a copy of the agreement signed between management and workers of 4 May, she finally set out alone at 9.30 at night on May 5 to find an evening meal. These were her last known movements."

Subsequently, forced confessions to the murder were extracted by the military. According to a report by the Legal Aid Foundation issued in March, 1994 (*Weekend Australian*, 16-17 April) techniques used on the accused included: "...detainees having cables attached to their ears and genitals and electric shocks being administered; toes being placed under the leg of a chair upon which the investigator would sit; being forced to mop the floor with the tongue..." The prosecution's "case" is that Marsinah was killed in her boss' house; it is widely believed that she died under interrogation at the local military intelligence post in Sidoarjo.

Marsinah's death is an example of the hideous oppression and superexploitation of women workers in Indonesia, who comprise a majority of the workforce in the prison-like manufacturing factories. Concrete walls, barbed wire and "ex"-military guards surround the huge factory complexes in Tangerang; workers are housed within the compound, three or four to a cell, and are not allowed to leave without permission. In the countryside, conditions are even worse: some 80 percent of pregnant women and children under five years of age are undernourished. As in the Russian Revolution of 1917, women are and will be in the forefront of the fight against the chains of capitalist and semi-feudal enslavement. Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote of the Muslim women in the Soviet East in 1924:

"...the Eastern woman who is the most paralyzed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress.... And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the Revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker."

—*Perspectives and Tasks in the East, 1924*

In April this year, thousands of workers in Medan, northern Sumatra, struck over wages and conditions as well as in protest over the authorities' suspected killing of Rusli, a rubber factory worker whose body was found in a river following a demonstration the month before which was broken up by riot

police. Strikes shut down the city; the mass outpouring may have been the largest in the country since 1965. Workers took to the streets in their thousands. The military, with tanks standing by, was called out. Shops owned by Indonesian Chinese were looted and a Chinese chemical factory owner was beaten to death. Rumours have been rife that provocateurs hired by the bosses and/or the state circulated anti-Chinese material in order to derail the palpable class anger.

The bourgeois press seized on stories of "anti-Chinese rioting" and Muchtar Pakpahan, leader of the banned SBSI (Indonesia Workers Welfare Union) was arrested months later for, among other charges, inciting anti-Chinese violence in Medan. But an article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* ("A Class Act", 16 June) noted:

"Certainly the Medan riots targeted ethnic Chinese. But to explain them exclusively in terms of race is to miss the fact that in sharp contrast to most anti-Chinese riots of the past, these targeted only businessmen and their property. Other ethnic Chinese appear to have been left alone."

In imitation of the imperialists' "divide-and-conquer" tactics, the Suharto government of the generals certainly manipulates ethnic/religious divisions amongst the population. The late, attenuated and incomplete character of Indonesian national consolidation is a legacy of colonial rule. The only social force capable of cutting across these divisions on the road to shattering the rule of the Indonesian comprador capitalists and landlords is the multi-ethnic Indonesian proletariat. In the absence of a proletarian solution, communalist slaughter of the working people could be another outcome of "destabilisation" in the Indonesian powderkeg.

The ethnic Chinese component of the Indonesian bourgeoisie is estimated to control some three-quarters of Indonesian private capital, although the ethnic Chinese population as a whole constitute a minority of six million, some 2-3 percent of the population. Official discrimination against this minority has been pervasive. Large numbers of Chinese were massacred in Java and Sumatra during the 1965-66 bloodbath against the pro-Beijing PKI. Chinese organisations affiliated with Beijing were proscribed and all Chinese language schools closed down. "The 'Chinese problem' became a key preoccupation of the New Order Government" (*Australian*, 4 August). Since the re-establishment of relations between Beijing and Jakarta in 1990, and as trade and tourism links with Chinese-speaking countries have expanded, Jakarta has been compelled to make some small concessions. Only in August this year did the regime announce it would ease the existing ban on the teaching of Chinese and publication of tourist material in the language.

Throughout Southeast Asia there are significant Chinese minorities, predominantly concentrated in urban, commercial and trading communities. The wealthy elite of this stratum have often been intertwined with the venal, bonapartist



regimes in the region (e.g., in the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand). At the same time, important sections of the proletariat are also comprised of Chinese workers, for instance in Singapore. Anti-Chinese communalism has and will victimise the more plebian Chinese masses, serving only the interests of the oppressors and their imperialist masters, the same who today seek to reverse the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution and return the multi-millioned masses to untrammelled exploitation and deprivation. Every manifestation of anti-Chinese chauvinism must be fought down the line by class-conscious workers throughout Indonesia!

For the workers and oppressed of the Indonesian archipelago the situation cries out for the revolutionary overthrow not simply of the corrupt, repressive regime of the generals, but of all the local capitalists and landlords who in turn serve imperialism. This is the historic mission of the proletariat—leading the land-hungry toiling masses of the countryside, the women, the restive youth, the multitude of religious and ethnic minorities. Such a class solution will avenge the bloody 1965 defeat and provide an immense impulse to revolutionary struggle throughout Asia.

This is the perspective of the *permanent revolution*, confirmed by the October Revolution of 1917 which brought the workers to state power in backward Russia, itself a prisonhouse of oppressed peoples and emerging from the chains of the tsarist autocracy. 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 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, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat.

### Enter the Popular Front

It is not only the rising wave of proletarian struggle within Indonesia which threatens Suharto's "stability." International investors and elements of the local bourgeoisie are fed up with the "hidden business costs" of rampant corruption. Sections of the growing middle class have been clamouring for a loosening of the draconian and expensive military rule. Student protesters have taken to the streets against the Suharto regime's "excesses." In August, the banning of three prominent publications, including the current-affairs magazine *Tempo* (seen as an Indonesian equivalent to *Time* magazine), prompted a demonstration by some 100 journalists in Jakarta. Threats of banning were also subsequently received by a number of other bourgeois publications including the English-language *Jakarta Post* for their "frank reporting of the media bans and for articles on military violence against protesters in the East Timorese capital of Dili" (*Financial Times*, 5 August).

With foreign investors jittery, the imperialists concerned over Indonesia's long-term "stability" and bourgeois circles increasingly disaffected, a new popular-frontist (i.e., class-collaborationist) formation is in the making. Liberal bourgeois opponents of the present regime now seek to harness workers struggles in a fight for "democracy" (for them) and to head off revolutionary explosions threatening the rule of capital.

In his recent tome, "Winning Democracy in Indonesia" (*LINKS* No. 2, July-September 1994), the Australian Democratic Socialist Party (DSP)'s Max Lane hails the formation in May this year of the People's Democratic Union (PRD—*Persatuan Rakyat Demokratik*), a lash up including the liberal Indonesian Legal

Aid Institute and the SBSI's leader Pakpahan among others. The PRD is explicit: "And even the demands for democracy by the middle class will not succeed unless supported by other classes, and especially the working class, which is the most oppressed class under capitalism in the New Order.... Long live democracy!" To this "most oppressed class" the PRD offers not emancipation from the capitalist system and imperialist domination but a repeat of the disastrous policies which led to the 1965 slaughter.

On East Timor, the PRD does not demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Indonesian troops, but declares: "Support the peaceful resolution of the East Timor problem (without military intervention) recognising the human rights and democratic rights of the East Timorese nation." The PRD declaration calls for the application of a progressive tax on the conglomerates and giant capital and "the distribution of these economic assets to cooperatives, and small and medium business." As for the land question, the PRD is outright national-chauvinist, calling to "Protect the products of the people's agriculture and *ban imports* of agricultural produce" (emphasis ours). The PRD's call to "return supremacy to civilians with a review...of all aspects of the 'security approach'" is a pitch to disaffected, "democratic"-minded officers in the blood-drenched Indonesian military. SBSI leader Pakpahan put it: "My struggle is to build a strong civil society through a strong trade union.... Only a strong trade union can balance the domination of the military" (*Financial Times*, 24 June). As the armed bodies of men serving as the repressive force for the rule of capital, the Indonesian military cannot be "reformed" or "balanced" out of its class function. Workers revolution is necessary to smash the existing state apparatus.

Would-be revolutionists in Indonesia need only look next door to the Philippines and Cory Aquino's replacement of the butcher Marcos in the name of "democracy" in 1986. There, too, the imperialists foresaw the sunset of their old puppet regime. When popular hatred for Marcos' corrupt and brutal rule threatened to get totally out of hand, as hundreds of thousands took to the streets of Manila, Washington engineered the rebellion by top military leaders and removed Marcos at the crucial moment. The "liberal" Corazon Aquino—widow of Benigno Aquino, a millionaire bourgeois politician assassinated by the Marcos regime who spent practically his entire career working for the American CIA and herself belonging to the landlord/capitalist oligarchy—was installed. At the time, the fake-left hailed Aquino's ascension to office as a victory for "people power."

But Aquino's "February revolution" in 1986 achieved neither democracy nor agrarian reform (much less revolution) and talk of national emancipation was a hoax. U.S. bases at Subic Bay and Clark Air Force Base remained until the U.S. decided to dismantle them. Payment of immense foreign debt continued to be extracted from the Filipino workers and peasants. Death-squad terror against Communist insurgents went apace. (As a recent footnote: Philippine president Ramos, under pressure from Suharto, banned foreign participation in a Manila "Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor" in May.)

That the hoary hand of those well-known "democrats," the blood-soaked U.S. imperialists, has shown itself as an element in the PRD/SBSI lash-up should serve as a dire warning:

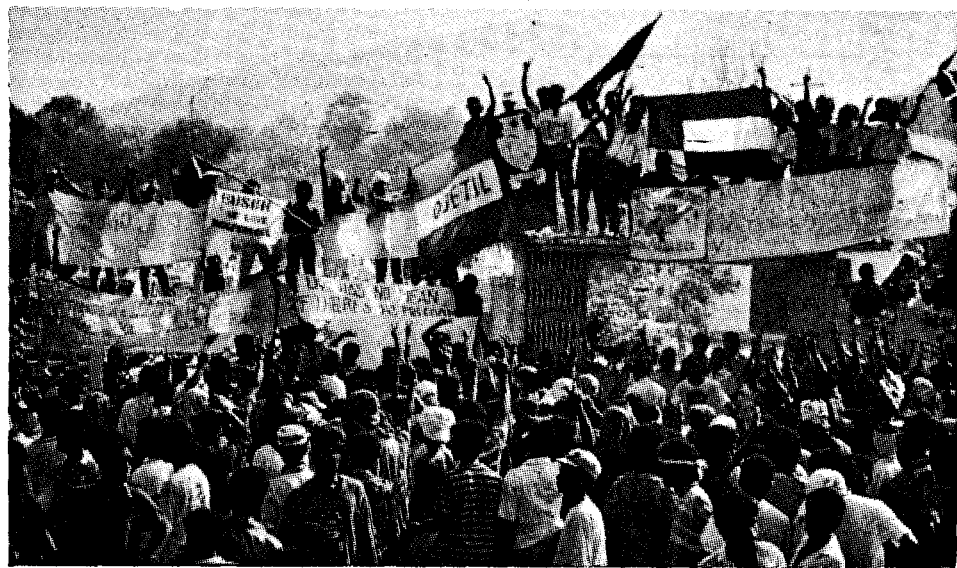
"On October 28, 1992, police in Tangerang, West Java, broke up a meeting in which nine members of SBSI, headed by their General Chairman, Mochtar Pakpahan, were discussing how to open a branch office in Tangerang. Greg Talcott, the US embassy's labour attache, was present as an observer. All ten men were taken to the Tangerang police station. Talcott was released after an hour. The others were interrogated overnight and released the following morning." [emphasis ours]

—Inside Indonesia, June 1993

When the U.S. embassy's "labour attache" shows up at a workers organising meeting in the key industrial region of West Java, it is not to further the struggle for workers rights!

From Chiang Kai-shek's China in the 1920s to Allende's Chile in the 1970s, the anti-Marxist call for "democracy now, socialism later" has led to bloody defeat. Many a Third World nationalist regime, tied by a million threads to imperialism, has sought to protect its left flank by bringing leftists into a "democratic" coalition, only to set them up for a massacre on the morrow. The 1965 slaughter was the bloody tab for the PKI's participation in the Sukarno regime.

The missing ingredient in Indonesia today is an authentic communist, internationalist vanguard party of the working class. On the model of the Bolshevik experience, such a party would act as a tribune of the whole people while fighting to expropriate the bourgeoisie and landowners, thereby laying the material basis for the emancipation of the women, the peasants and the downtrodden ethnic minorities. It would oppose in principle and in action any popular-front alliance subordinating the workers to their



Community Aid Abroad

Dili protesters, 1991, just before troops attacked, killing over one hundred.

"liberal" bourgeois enemies. Forward to a workers and peasants government in Indonesia! Forward to a Leninist-Trotskyist party, Indonesian section of a reborn Fourth International!

### "Democratic" Imperialism and the Fake Left

It is in keeping with the politics of the DSP that it promotes the formation of a new popular front in Indonesia. These "death of Communism" green lefts imbibe deeply of the lie of "democratic" imperialism as a guarantor of peace and prosperity at home as well as abroad. The *Green Left Weekly* (27 July), newspaper of the DSP, in an editorial entitled "End support for thugs" wrote:

"Trade and commerce between neighbouring countries is inevitable. But this should not be promoted at the cost of remaining silent about, and even defending, the Suharto dictatorship's record. Rather than spend millions on trade promotions, military cooperation and economic aid to a self-enriching and corrupt regime, the Australian government should channel these funds to non-government and community organisations who are the closest to the East Timorese and Indonesian people."

With Australia's "democratic" credentials tarnished in the region over East Timor, the DSP offers a "solution" to its "own" bourgeois and Labor government: channel funds to "non-government" and community organisations. There is a history of funds being channelled to "non-government" and even "oppositional" organisations by the imperialists in order to head off revolutionary struggle: witness the attention lavished by the American CIA on the Aquino option in the Philippines.

The International Socialist Organisation (ISO), which worked so tirelessly for Labor's re-election, whined in *Socialist Worker* (8 July): "Keating's trip to Indonesia disgusted most Labor voters. They want Labor to stand up for the rights of the workers—in Australia, in

Asia, wherever there is oppression." On the ground, the ISO has circulated yet another of its stream of endless petitions—this one calling directly on the federal Labor government to clean up its "human rights" act and "condemn" Indonesia over East Timor. This is nothing but a "softly-softly" call on Australian imperialism to play more of a police role in the region.

Future revolutionary developments in Indonesia could, at the behest of and only in collaboration with stronger powers, invite direct military intervention by the Australian jackal imperialists (including under the cover of "liberating" East Timor). There is precedent for that, too: in the late 1950s, revolts in the outer islands, centred on Sumatra and Celebes (Sulawesi), were backed by the CIA and British intelligence in efforts to destabilise the Sukarno regime (and the growing influence of the PKI). Today, the logic of the ISO and DSP's line on East Timor would be to line up behind an imperialist intervention in the name of "democracy." In counterposition to this wretched social chauvinism, we wrote in *ASp* No. 109 (Summer 1984/85): "Any Australian war against Indonesia would be reactionary and revolutionists would

fight for the defeat of Australian imperialism, using these reverses to facilitate its overthrow."

While parochial Laborite reformism has long been a hallmark of both the virulently anti-communist ISO and the DSP, their respective appeals to Australian imperialism to "act" over East Timor take place in a broader context. Both the ISO and DSP sided with rapacious imperialism against the ex-deformed and degenerated workers states from the Afghanistan battlefield to Poland to Yeltsin's U.S.-backed countercoup in August 1991. In appealing to the "democratic" pretensions of their "own" bourgeoisie today, they not only betray the struggle for a proletarian solution throughout the Indonesian archipelago, but the fight to smash Australian jackal imperialism from within.

Against the chauvinism and neo-colonial designs of the Australian Labor Party government, against the ALP's "socialist" hangers-on, we fight for a revolutionary internationalist party dedicated to the destruction of capitalism "at home," in Indonesia and throughout the region, not least within the industrial powerhouse of Japan. Integral to that fight is the unconditional military defence of the Chinese, North Korean and Vietnamese deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution and for proletarian political revolution against the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies which sit atop and undermine the defence of those states. It will be the establishment of workers rule throughout the region that puts an end to the imperialist designs to reverse the gains of the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the Vietnamese Revolution and the North Korean workers state and to further subject the peoples of Asia to super-exploitation and immiseration. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia! ■

# As Militant Strike Wave Hits South Africa

## ANC's Fake-Left Cheerleaders Squirm

"South Africa's Election: A victory for us all"  
—*Socialist Worker*, 29 April 1994

"The victory of the ANC is a victory for all humanity"  
—*Green Left Weekly*, 4 May 1994

"South African Elections: ANC/De Klerk Deal Is Betrayal of Black Freedom. For a Bolshevik Workers Party! For a Black-Centred Workers Republic!"  
—*Australasian Spartacist*, Winter [May] 1994

In a little over two months after the "power sharing" coalition government of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) and the white ruling National Party of F.W. De Klerk took office, South Africa has been gripped by an upsurge of militant class struggle. Almost 50 separate workers actions—involving gold and platinum mining, steel, car workers, textiles and apparel, telecommunications, postal service, municipal and even court workers—have swept the country. Days lost due to strikes in the second quarter of this year—that is, right before and right after Mandela's election as the country's first black president in late April—are up 70 percent over the same period last year. Already there have been more strikes this year than in any since 1987, the year of the great gold strike, the largest in South African history.

When more than 35,000 car workers from Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz, BMW, Delta and Nissan plants in Port Elizabeth and East London downed tools and joined over 50,000 other workers on strike, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (3 August 1994) noted: "Analysts have said that behind the strikes lie pent-up frustrations of workers who believed Mr Nelson Mandela's Government would usher in an era of wage rises and a more pliant management." The [London] *Guardian Weekly* (31 July) likewise noted that:

"In the two months since South Africa completed its journey from white-minority to black-majority rule, racial incidents have flared in many of the country's mines, with blacks pressing to purge all vestiges of apartheid from the work site and whites clinging to old ways. Meanwhile, a broader wave of

labor unrest, sparked by both economic and racial grievances, has hit several above-ground industries, leading to a surge in strikes and picket-line militancy around the country."

And black workers have, as we warned, quickly come up against the repressive apparatus of the "new" South Africa—essentially the same police/army/security forces of the old apartheid regime. Police fired rubber bullets, used tear gas, stun grenades and dogs against strikers at the Pick 'n Pay grocery store chain.

The *Australian Financial Review* (29 July 1994) observed:

"With several labour disputes simmering and Cosatu threatening to launch a general strike next month in support of affiliates involved in wage disputes, the prospect of an increase in strike action is high.

"Mr Mandela has warned that industrial unrest could frighten overseas investors, setting back hopes for accelerated economic growth...."

It goes on to cite "three main reasons" for the increase in strike action and worker militancy: "heightened expectations," "slight improvement in the economy" and lastly: "The exodus of Cosatu leaders to Parliament. The depletion of Cosatu's front ranks has left second-line leaders in important positions. They have been unable to control or channel worker militancy."

Contrary to the claims of the reformist International Socialist Organisation (ISO) and Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), the installation of the ANC/National Party coalition government was no "victory" for the working class and oppressed. It was—and was seen by the bourgeoisie internationally to be—a necessary move to stabilise South African capitalism by chaining the combative black unions, township youth, landless masses and all the oppressed to their enemies. The white capitalist rulers know that the ANC's vast political authority is the strongest tool at their disposal for suppressing and denying the hopes and demands of the black masses.

Today, the fate of the "new" South Africa will *not* be determined by constitutional clauses and agreements between the ANC/SACP leaders and the masters of the Johannesburg stock exchange. Rather, just as the struggles of the black toilers for freedom and equality broke down the old apartheid system, so they will break down the neo-apartheid "power sharing" deal between the Rand-

**Socialist Worker** South Africa: The struggle will go on  
**SOUTH AFRICA'S ELECTION:**  
**A victory for us all**

**Green LEFT**  
**HISTORY IN THE MAKING**

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 23 The struggle during 1 and 2

**Historic victory**  
 This week Green Left Weekly devotes eight pages to reports and analysis of the historic first democratic election in South Africa. The eight pages will give you background, history and interviews that you won't read anywhere else.  
 The victory of the ANC is a victory for all humanity. It is a unique world event — history in the making. Green Left's coverage of the election, and of the mass movement that made it possible, is the longest in any national newspaper in Australia. It covers the election results in South Africa from the point of view of the African masses — amongst Green Left Weekly's 100,000 readers. Our reports and interviews also provide ongoing reports of all aspects of the transition of power, not just the politicians.  
 Green Left will be the most...  
 For those who want to see the struggle in South Africa presented without a bourgeois media bias, there's a need to read Green Left Weekly. In celebration of the ANC election victory, Green Left is offering a special subscription offer. Use the code on page 16 to receive a 30% discount on Green Left (only \$20/\$10 off the regular price).  
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**Reformists echo imperialist cries of "victory" as ANC brought in to help run neo-apartheid capitalism.**

Paul Keating, an enemy of the workers and oppressed "at home" who these reformists supported in the last election—described the ANC victory as a "vindication of the many years of struggle in South Africa and a triumph of the democratic process."

The co-thinkers of the ISO in South Africa, the International Socialists of South Africa (ISSA), in calling for a vote to the ANC attempted to put a "workers" face on their line:

"In this particular battle, the working class is lined up behind the ANC alliance against the NP [De Klerk's National Party].... Since revolutionary socialists stand for the self-emancipation of the working class, the Left should argue that we vote—without illusions in party or parliament—with the class on April 27."

What cynical rubbish! Advocating a vote for the bourgeois nationalist ANC in coalition with the Nats was an act *against* the working class and all the oppressed, an act *for* the maintenance of neo-apartheid. The outcome of the elections were determined well before they took place: there would be a coalition "government of national unity," leaving intact the entire white racist state repressive apparatus and the wealth of the nation in the hands of the Gavin Rellys and Harry Oppenheims.

At the April elections, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) called for critical support to the Workers List Party (WLP) initiated by the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (see *ASp* No. 153). While sharply critical of the WLP's left-reformist program, we noted that in advocating the building of a workers party and in standing against the nationalist ANC, the WLP's campaign drew a crude class line. (There were other organisations on the left internationally which claimed to oppose a vote to the ANC on the basis of class principle and called for a vote to the WLP. Among them were the British Socialist Organiser and Workers Power groups. But where we fight for a revolutionary party, a Bolshevik opposition to the ANC, these groups are looking to create a South African version of British Labourism, a

**Australasian SPARTACIST**  
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**South Africa Elections**  
**ANC/De Klerk Deal Is Betrayal of Black Freedom**

**Spartacist told the truth. "Power sharing" deal preserves neo-apartheid capitalism, as power of black proletariat is shackled through nationalist popular front.**

**For a Bolshevik Workers Party! For a Black-Centred Workers Republic!**





Salguero/NY Times

Menshevik party to trail after the ANC with a fig leaf of "independence.")

Meanwhile, only months after the election, the ISO gushes that the struggle of South Africa's working class is "inspiring" and that in fact "Its power not only brought the downfall of white rule, it has the ability to go beyond the limited [!] aims of the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Plan.... Workers are coming up against the reality that under capitalism, black leaders are no more able to fulfil their needs than white ones" (*Socialist Worker*, 5 August).

Workers are coming up against this reality, but they will look in vain for answers from the likes of the ISO and its South African co-thinkers who hailed the election of the ANC as a "triumph for the democratic process." Indeed, the Laborite ISO's worship of so-called "democracy" has led it to side with imperialism against the struggle of the workers and peasants globally ever since its international leader Tony Cliff split from Trotskyism in 1950 and lined up with British and American imperialism in the Korean War. Since then, the ISO has cheered the forces of reaction from Afghanistan to Poland to the former USSR in the name of "democracy" against the deformed and degenerated workers states. (As for *workers democracy*, the ISO has a well-earned reputation for gangsterism and exclusionism against its leftist opponents [see Boston ISO leaflet, page 5].) The "New World Disorder" ushered in by the collapse of Stalinism and the triumph of imperialist-backed counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union has meant unbridled imperialist adventures against the neo-colonial countries and the brokering of "negotiated sell-outs" with nationalists from Palestine to South Africa.

The DSP's *Green Left Weekly* (another champion of "democracy" in the service of capitalist counterrevolution in the former USSR) has shown an apparently boundless ability to wash its hands of any political responsibility for its support to the ANC. Having gone apoplectic over the ANC's victory, *Green Left Weekly* carried an article in its 20 July issue entitled "Police union pledges support for workers' rights." With touching faith in the reform of the neo-apartheid state into a progressive, anti-racist, pro-worker tool it said:

"The Police and Prison Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) is committed to building a democratic police service purged of 'Third Force' elements, restructured to reflect South African society and respectful of trade union rights."

This statement is the antithesis of all the teachings of Marx and Lenin on the

state and the historical experience of the international proletariat which proved them correct. For revolutionaries it is ABC that the bourgeois state—the armed bodies of men in the police and army, the courts and state bureaucracy—serves to maintain the rule of capitalist property and to suppress the struggles of the working class and oppressed. It cannot be "reformed" or "restructured" into serving the interests of our class but must be *smashed* through victorious workers revolution and a new proletarian state constructed. This is crystal clear in South Africa today.

Thus, in the very next issue of *Green Left Weekly* (27 July) an article headlined "South African police fire on strikers" opened with the following:

"In the midst of the euphoria and hopes generated by this country's historic first democratic elections, few trade unionists would have believed they would again see police opening fire on strikers with rubber bullets and tear gas, vicious dogs savaging picketers and workers in their hundreds being bundled into police trucks. Two months into the 'new' South Africa, such scenes have been repeated throughout the country as police attacked supermarket workers striking for a living wage."

So much for cops "respectful of trade union rights"! After a journalistic account of vicious police attacks on the strikers, *Green Left Weekly's* Norm Dixon nonetheless manages to say *nothing* about his article a week earlier, let alone the DSP's claims that the ANC/NP coalition government was an "historic victory" which heralded the dawning of a new era of struggle "against poverty, illiteracy, gender oppression and political violence" (*Green Left Weekly*, 4 May).

Meanwhile, the ANC's five-year "Reconstruction and Development Programme" (RDP) which the DSP wanted to "maintain, intensify and direct solidarity towards" has in the event translated into a budget which left even the *Green Left Weekly* (6 July) weakly asking "South African budget: transformation postponed?":

"Hopes that the African National Congress-dominated government of national unity (GNU) will rapidly move to redistribute wealth and economic power have begun to fade with the presentation of its first budget in Cape Town on June 22.... The overall budget fell within the parameters set by the International Monetary Fund and the stated wishes of spokespeople for local and foreign big business...."

In fact, the neo-apartheid constitution guarantees the sanctity of "rights in property." This the ANC is charged with enforcing. Following the occupation of empty private and city-owned land by residents of the huge, overpopulated slum of Seboken in early June—an occupation which was brutally attacked by city council security officers—the ANC provincial government decreed a moratorium on land seizures.

### South Africa and Permanent Revolution

Fundamentally hostile to the perspective of the independent mobilisation of the working class and its allies, the DSP instead looks to a mythical "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie to bring "democ-



Weekly Mail & Guardian

The "new" South Africa: black workers striking Pick 'n Pay grocery store chain in July faced shotgun-wielding racist cops.

racy" and "freedom." This is the case "at home" where in the last Australian federal elections the DSP not only gave electoral support to Keating's ALP as the "lesser evil" but as well called for votes to openly bourgeois parties such as the Democrats and the Greens.

The DSP's perspective is at bottom a version of the hoary Menshevik/Stalinist dogma of two-stage revolution—which in practice means chaining the proletariat to its enemies and paving the way for bloody defeat. Such were the fatal consequences for the proletariat in Indonesia in 1965, for example, where the millions-strong Indonesian Communist Party's (PKI) subordination of the toiling masses to the bourgeois-nationalist Sukarno led to the slaughter of over a half million Communists, workers and peasants. It is no accident that the DSP supports a similar class-collaborationist formation in Indonesia today (see article, page 12).

Genuine universal suffrage, universal schooling, equality of all the peoples of South Africa, full citizenship rights (including the right to vote) for the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers drawn from neighbouring countries and their families, equal pay for equal work, the right of the rural black population (particularly in the barren bantustans) to land stolen over the centuries, equality for women—to realise these elementary democratic demands requires that *capitalist rule* be overthrown by workers revolution.

As we explained in our last issue:

"The understanding that in a country like South Africa it is impossible to satisfy the many unfulfilled revolutionary democratic tasks short of the seizure of power by the socialist proletariat is central to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. This was demonstrated by Lenin's Bolshevik Party as it led the successful struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat in October 1917...."

"South Africa requires a *black-centred workers government*, not the installation of aspiring black exploiters in the ante-chambers of *verligte* [enlightened] apartheid power—which is what the ANC offers and desires."

Mandela has announced on the occasion of his first 100 days in office that the economic programs he will pursue

"are going to require us to tighten our belts." Meanwhile, over 300,000 strategic coal and gold miners threatened to strike over pay. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* (16 August) reported: "The National Union of Mineworkers, whose former leader, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, is now secretary-general of Mr Mandela's ruling African National Congress, said it was balloting its 316,663 members over a final pay offer by the Chamber of Mines, representing the owners."

Today, as a wave of struggle by the powerful black South African working class breaks over the country, the question of the construction of an authentic Bolshevik party is starkly posed. Bourgeois "analysts" are now speculating about the possibility of "a split in the ANC-COSATU alliance" that "could end with the formation of a new workers' party to oppose the ANC in the 1999 election" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August). But what is needed is surely not a trade-union-based parliamentary "opposition" analogous to the treacherous Western social democracies. And given the massive and stark inequalities between the white ruling caste and impoverished black African toilers, so long as the struggle over the redistribution of the country's wealth is defined in national-ethnic terms and limited to a purely South African framework, it could well trigger race war, bloody tribalist conflict and economic collapse.

Only a *proletarian internationalist* perspective, linking the reconstruction of South Africa to a world socialist revolution, can ensure that a just and egalitarian society will be erected on the ruins of the apartheid state. What is urgently necessary is a workers party of the Bolshevik type to lead the struggles of the black, mixed race and Indian masses on the road to workers revolution. The nucleus of this party will be built not by, but *against*, the spineless opportunists of the ISO, DSP and their ilk, by Leninist-Trotskyists determined to break the best elements of the proletariat from their SACP, COSATU and other misleaders to a program for workers power. ■

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No. 8

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## Black History and the Class Struggle

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### South Africa and Permanent Revolution

July 1991 Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1371 GPO, New York, NY 10116

# Stop ISO Gangsterism! For Open Political Debate!

## U.S.: ISO Attacks Death Penalty Abolitionists

We reprint below the leaflet produced by the Spartacus Youth Club (SYC) in Boston following a vicious physical attack by the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) on three SYC activists. Copies of the leaflet were circulated in Sydney at the ISO's "Keep Left" conference over the 20-21 August weekend.

On Wednesday, July 27, a group of three Spartacus Youth Club activists, including a young black woman, was set upon by thugs in the hallway of Boston University's [BU] Marsh Chapel outside a publicly advertised anti-death penalty forum. Literature and petitions to save the life of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal—a former Black Panther Party member and courageous journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless"—were ripped out of our comrades' hands, seized in stacks off our literature table, torn to shreds and thrown out on the street.

Who is responsible for this despicable act of racist violence? Skinhead fascists? Kill-crazy, pro-death penalty, "right-to-life" terrorists? "Off-duty" cops? No, this was the work of self-avowed "socialists," the International Socialist Organization (ISO). This attack took place outside a forum which was publicly advertised in the ISO's July *Socialist Worker* and was led by Boston ISO branch leader Brian Kelly. Like a "grade B" movie bully, Kelly kicked a high school student in the chest and bellowed, "I'm going to kill you." Kelly's supporting cast included ISOers David Whitehouse, Ann Sydor, Kit Cooley, and nameless "extras." The goons "justified" their physical violence to others attending the forum with the lie that we Spartacists are "disrupters."

Violence and slander are the tactics of the capitalist ruling class which seeks to suppress militants and divide the working class and revolutionary movement with COINTELPRO dirty tricks, strike-breakers, gangsters, cops, etc. For these same tactics to be used by the ISO against other leftist organizations can only play into the hands of reactionaries. Such methods poison relations between various sections of the left and block the development of socialist class consciousness by rendering free discussion of ideas impossible. They don't have to consider other theories, they just beat up anyone who raises a dissenting view.

The attack at Boston University is not an isolated incident but an example of the gangsterism for which this tendency is known internationally. The American ISO is a satellite of the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The SWP's thugery prompted another leftist tendency, the Socialist Organiser group, to call for a labor movement inquiry into violent assaults just one year ago at the SWP's "Marxism '93," advertised as a "week of discussion and debate." In August 1992, the ISO's Canadian group launched a brutal attack against our comrades outside a "public" debate, dragging a small woman comrade and bashing her, spread-eagled, against a door divider. This misogynist outrage prompted an independent witness to publish a protest letter. But the ISO continues to substitute the fist for the brain, seeking to draw a blood line to seal off new members from political debate. Organizational loyalty founded on unreasoning hatred instead of political program makes for an inherently unstable group and can

serve to drive honest militants out of left politics altogether.

The Partisan Defense Committee and the Spartacists have fought to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal because his case embodies what the death penalty is all about. Capital punishment is racist "legal lynching" by a capitalist state whose whole system of injustice includes the extralegal terror of the KKK and summary executions by the cops on the streets. Our fight for the abolition of the death penalty and to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is an inseparable part of our struggle for black equality in a socialist America.

As a Black Panther, a MOVE supporter and a journalist who spoke out powerfully for all the oppressed, Mumia Abu-Jamal was targeted for death by the Philadelphia police. Framed for killing a cop and sentenced to death for his political views, Jamal fights what would be the first political execution since the government electrocuted Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for being Communists and Jews. Thousands of unionists, students, civil rights activists and death penalty abolitionists around the world have joined the campaign to save Jamal's life.

In response to the growing support for Jamal's case, the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) are on a crusade to silence him and his supporters in order to make it easier to kill him. The ISO, which has maintained a deafening silence on Jamal's case and now assaults his supporters, also supports cop "strikes" and calls for cop "unions" (like the FOP?). Just as Jamal was to begin broadcasting commentaries from death row on National Public Radio's prestigious *All Things Considered*, the FOP succeeded in banning Jamal from the airwaves by marshaling a powerful array of reactionary forces, including Senate Republican leader Robert Dole. The very day NPR caved into the FOP, President Clinton addressed thousands of cops to promote his new "three strikes you're out" crime bill and called for capital punishment for "cop killers."

Anybody who has taken to the streets to walk a picket line to defend their union against the bosses, or defend an abortion clinic against Operation Rescue, or joined a demonstration against racist violence, knows that the cops are there to beat your heads, that they are the hired thugs of the capitalist rulers, the sworn enemies of the working class, minorities, immigrants, women and gays. Yet at anti-fascist demonstrations across the Midwest, the ISO assists the cops by herding leftists through metal detectors into police holding pens for impotent "protests" under the thumb of the cops. When anti-fascist militants surged to sweep the Nazis off the streets of Ottawa in May 1993, the ISO's Canadian comrades served as junior cop auxiliaries, protecting the fascists by linking arms to force the crowd back.

What kind of socialist organization makes common cause with the cops? Find out for yourself—get our special packet, "ISO Truth Kit—Polemics with the Cliff Tendency."

The origins of the ISO date from their international leader Tony Cliff's break with the Trotskyist movement in the 1950s when he lined up with British and American imperialism in the Korean War. That's why we call the ISO and their social-democratic ilk "State Department socialists"; "socialists" whose appetite to pressure and cozy up to the

mythical "liberal" wing of imperialism inevitably leads them to outright anti-Communism. Faced with the hostile domestic climate of Cold War anti-Communism, the Cliff tendency spun out a "theory" of "state capitalism," of some "new class rule," to justify blocking with their own bourgeoisie against the degenerated Soviet workers state.

Throughout the 1980s, wherever American imperialism's anti-Soviet war drive raged hottest, you would find the ISO—lined up with the U.S. ruling class. Behind the Pope and Ronald Reagan, the ISO screamed for solidarity with Polish "Solidarity"—Lech Walesa's company "union" which has brought capitalism back to Poland, impoverishing the working class and especially women who are also the first targets of Solidarność's clerical reaction in outlawing abortion. Behind the CIA-funded and armed *mujahedin* the ISO screamed for the blood of Russian soldiers in Afghanistan and hailed this victory for the forces of reactionary Islamic fundamentalism which has forced women into veils, leftists into jails, and author Taslima Nasrin into hiding in fear for her life.

We Trotskyists fought tooth and nail to defend the Soviet Union from imperialist attack and capitalist counter-revolution, and to return to the liberating program of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks through a political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucrats. But the ISO hailed the capitalist counterrevolution as "the Russian Revolution of 1991." The destruction of the Soviet Union has ushered in a nightmare of nationalist bloodletting, racist pogroms, inequality and poverty. Internationally, U.S. imperialism now sees a green light to strangle the Cuban Revolution and intervene militarily everywhere from Africa to the former Yugoslavia, to Haiti.

Only now that the Soviet Union is gone does the ISO claim to be a party in "the Bolshevik tradition." This is nothing but dirt cheap camouflage for a group trying to carve out its own turf as a "socialist" pressure on mainstream liberals and the Democratic Party White House. For months, these ostensible socialists kept an eye on "their" new president with a regular "Clinton watch"

in *Socialist Worker*. They are still riding Clinton's coattails. The ISO said not one word in opposition to Clinton's NAFTA rape of Mexico and at BU last semester shared a platform with and glad-handed a high-ranking representative of the Mexican government which rained death on the Zapatista Indian rebels in Chiapas. Along with Clinton the ISO hails neo-apartheid, the ANC's swindle of black freedom in a deal with South Africa's racist butchers.

On the domestic front, when Teamster strikers faced off against riot cops, and Spartacus Youth Club members joined the picket lines to help defend the union, the shamefaced ISO stayed away, knowing the reception they'd get as "socialists" who routinely cross picket lines and who campaigned for years for the capitalist government to "clean up" the Teamsters. With Clinton pushing a crime bill that will throw thousands more people on death row, the ISO switches into high gear...to bloody those who fight for the life of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

For the ISO, the only way to resolve the contradiction between their pretensions to socialism and their utterly reformist essence is to resort to violence. In this they follow the example of their political forebears, the German Social Democrats Noske and Scheidemann who drowned the 1919 workers revolution in blood and instigated the killing of the Spartakist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. This is the tradition the ISO springs from like cholera bacteria from a leaking sewer.

The German Spartacists and Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks form our revolutionary heritage. Uniquely on the left we practice what was the norm in the communist movement—before Stalinism wrecked it—the practice of open political debate. Lenin's scathing and often humorous polemics against the Mensheviks, Kautskyan social democrats, and his own Bolshevik comrades stand in sharp contrast to the Stalinists' crushing of dissent and mind-numbing uniformity. It's an irony of history that hysterical anti-Stalinist social democrats like the ISO ape Stalin's methods. We Trotskyists believe that it is only through the clash of opinion and test of action among various forces claiming to be socialists, that political clarity can be achieved and a Leninist party forged to intervene in social struggle.

What kind of "socialism" does the ISO represent if they go around beating up other leftists? If you really want to stop the fascists through powerful labor/black mobilizations such as we have initiated, if you really want to fight against the racist death penalty as we do in practice, if you believe building a society run by the workers who produce the wealth means building picket lines, not crossing them, if you want to fight for an international socialist revolution, then join the Spartacus Youth Clubs! ■

**—Australasian—**

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# Moura...

(continued from page 12)

of the ALP government. Thus, a CSIRO research team set up to investigate explosions in gas-prone collieries after the Appin mine disaster in 1979 was scuttled in 1983 when funds were cut off.

But the statistics of mining fatalities paint only a partial picture. John Braithwaite in *To Punish or Persuade: Enforcement of Coal Mine Safety* (1985) points out that each year in New South Wales mines alone, there are more than 10,000 compensable injuries. Figures are not available for Australian-owned mines in Indonesia, PNG or Fiji where many work under horrendous conditions and are denied even minimal trade union protection. In an attempt to retake CRA's massive Bougainville copper mine 5,000 people on the island have died in this Australian-armed and backed war and blockade by their PNG lackeys against the Bougainville Revolutionary Army.

Disasters such as that at Moura are part and parcel of capitalism. As our British comrades wrote when 45 oil workers were killed aboard a defective Chinook helicopter in the North Sea in November 1986: "For the capitalist bloodsuckers, the bottom line—literally—is their profit statement at the end of the fiscal year; and to that end, human life is expendable" (*Workers Hammer* No. 84, December 1986/January 1987).

## For a Class-Struggle Leadership! Break with the Labor Traitors! Dump the Bureaucrats!

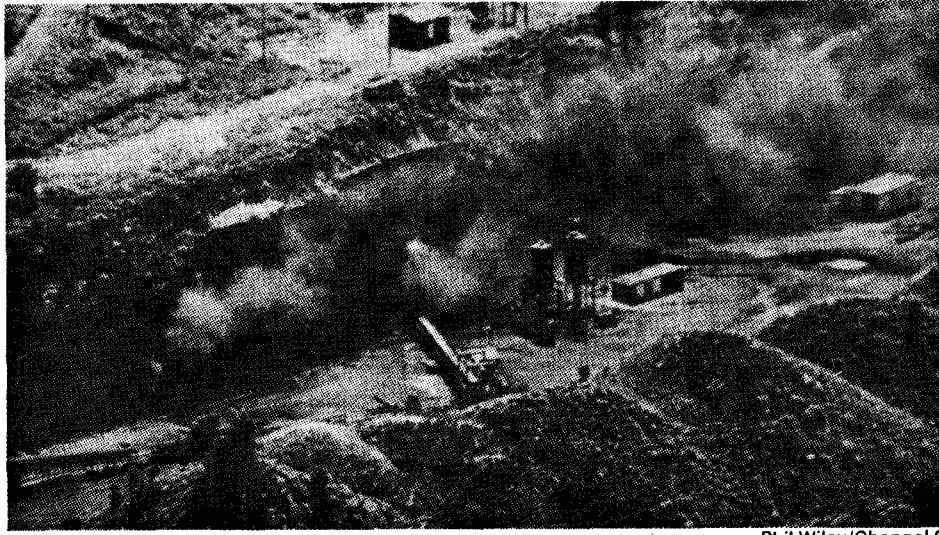
The premise of the government/ACTU Accord hatched by the ALP on its way to federal governmental power eleven years ago was that workers must sacrifice to make the bosses' crisis-ridden economic system more internationally "competitive." With a plummeting standard of living and a vast pool of unemployed exceeding one million, Labor's union-busting austerity has delivered with a vengeance. In doing so, their indispensable tool has been the hidebound, nationalist trade union bureaucracy.

Within two days of the Moura disaster, the bosses were reassuring their stockholders there would be no disruption: "Coal exports safe as BHP fights to reach Moura 11" headlined the business pages of the *Australian* (9 August). The bosses breathed a collective sigh of relief that any threat of a mass walkout had been squelched by mine union officials. We say: to hell with the bosses' profits! Every pit in the country should have been immediately shut down after the criminal Moura slaughter!

The biggest obstacle to the hard class struggle it will take to reverse the bourgeoisie's concerted war on workers and the oppressed is the Laborite trade union misleaders. What's required is a revolutionary leadership of the unions, built in struggle against the Laborites' nationalist lie that capitalism can be made to work in the interests of the workers, and against the bureaucrats who tug their forelocks in the bosses' arbitration courts. *Down with the Accord! Smash Arbitration! For the complete independence of the unions from the capitalist state!*

To reverse the massive job destruction and organise the unemployed, the organised working class must use its immense social power to fight for a sliding scale of hours at no loss in pay to divide the available work amongst all. To fight the erosion of safety, workers on every job need union safety committees, independent from the bosses, with the power to shut down unsafe operations on the spot. This would require using the tactics of hard class struggle: picket lines and occupations to shut down production tight, run by elected strike committees.

But any real fight challenging the bosses' sacred profits will bring workers up against the bosses' state, whether run



Phil Wiley/Channel 9

## Moura No. 2 mine after the second explosion which sealed the fate of eleven trapped miners: Not an "accident" but wanton capitalist murder!

by Labor or the Liberals. Indeed, under the ALP/ACTU Accord virtually every strike becomes a political confrontation with the government. The lessons of the great coal miners strike of 1949 need to be drawn: that strike was broken when the Chifley Labor government sent troops into the mines as scabs. Despite the miners' militancy and defiance of Arbitration no-strike injunctions, the miners were eventually defeated. This defeat was due to their isolation, centrally the responsibility of the CPA-dominated leadership's refusal to broaden the strike and its loyalty to the very ALP government which whipped up anti-communist frenzy against the strike, organised "back to work" movements and finally called in the armed fist of the bosses state. The lesson, then as now, is: break with the ALP—forge a revolutionary leadership of the working class!

Far from mobilising a class-struggle fight against job slashing and the deadly level of safety in the industry, the miners' union leader John Maitland has been busily advising the bosses how better to manage their investment portfolios and trying to pressure the ALP government to establish a national coal industry tribunal. For Maitland "struggle" with the coal bosses means arguing with them to squeeze higher prices from the Japanese steel and power brokers. Such reactionary protectionist schemes, necessarily racist, target the Japanese as the main enemy of Australian miners and amnesty the Australian bosses who brought you Moura. It's no surprise Maitland soft-peddled BHP's culpability for the Moura slaughter.

Protectionist poison serves to set the workers of one country against those of another in the service of their bosses. It's a central adjunct to the capitalists' escalating trade wars which, in the absence of international proletarian revolution, lead to the mass slaughter of shooting wars as the imperialist powers seek to redivide the world for capitalist exploitation.

The Stalinist leftovers of the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA) have acted as virtual press agents for Maitland's gross anti-Japanese chauvinism. In a two-part series entitled "The future of Australian coal," the SPA's *Guardian* (27 July and 3 August) reprinted *in toto* Maitland's 13 July speech to the National Press Club. There he fulminated that "every year the team that represents Japanese coal buyers beats the hell out of our team—the Australian coal sellers." Maitland's "team" is not *our* team, it is not the miners' team, it is the "team" that was complicit in sending the Moura miners to their death. With ever-touching faith in the bosses' state, for the wretched SPA, "The establishment of a National Coal Authority by the Federal Government should be the legacy of the miners killed at Moura" (*Guardian*, 17 August).

In a cynical attempt to sidestep the struggle for decent safety conditions, Maitland's union tops have tried to shift the focus to that of demanding the bosses compensate the victims' families. It is indeed outrageous that some families of the victims of the 1986 mine murders haven't received a cent! *Millions would be too little!* The families of all

mine disaster victims should get every cent they demand—now! To win even this from the rapacious bosses miners need a class-struggle leadership.

For its part, the Queensland Goss Labor government predictably stated it will set up another Mining Warden's inquiry on the Moura disaster. But like the 1986 inquiry and Goss' "inquiry" into the cop killing of Aboriginal youth Daniel Yock last year, this can be nothing but another whitewash. And in the wake of the outcry over the failure of BHP to have settled any legal claims pending from the 1986 disaster, Goss plans to speed up a bill making it *even harder* to obtain court settlements from personal injury cases.

Meanwhile, only days after the Moura disaster, United Mine Workers acting district check inspector Phil Nicholls

# Haiti...

(continued from page 2)

defenceless states, from Reagan's rape of Grenada and Bush's assault on Panama to Rwanda and Haiti.

From the start we have denounced the U.S. economic sanctions against Haiti as an act of war, demanding "Down with the starvation blockade—Yankee imperialists hands off Haiti!" We have also warned of the danger these neocolonial war moves pose to the Cuban deformed workers state, just across the Windward Passage from Haiti, whose economy is being battered by the vindictive U.S. boycott, particularly after Soviet aid was cut off three years ago.

The U.S. blockade of Haiti has massively increased the misery of Haiti's poor; yet some so-called "socialists" actually criticise the imperialists for not squeezing hard enough! The International Socialist Organisation chastises Clinton and the UN for not carrying out "a serious embargo" ([U.S.] *Socialist Worker*, June 1994). This view is shared by... the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute. An SSI paper (March 1994) insists that the "bottom line" is a "world-wide U.N. embargo, enforced by warships of the United States" on "all trade and aid...targeted much more heavily on Haitian military and civilian elites" (emphasis in original).

Meanwhile, the Congressional Black Caucus and liberal white politicians have been demanding that the U.S. "restore democracy"—but some of them are getting cold feet, perhaps mindful that they could be saddled with responsibility for the inevitable racist atrocities which will be committed in the name of "democracy." And these atrocities are already being prepared. The lists of Aristide supporters which have been gathered by U.S. immigration personnel have not, in fact, been used to grant asylum (only 1 in 120 applications were accepted!), but they provide a very useful hit list of "troublemakers" in the event of an occupation.

Reporting on revelations by a source in the U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS), the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* (13 April) quoted Michael

warned of the likelihood of a major fire in the southern NSW mines, saying there had been at least a dozen fires reported in the district mines this year and detailing neglect of checking and maintenance in important areas (*Illawarra Mercury*, 12 August).

A hard class fight by the coal miners would be a beacon for workers and their allies across the country. Miners have recently shown their willingness to struggle; however both the February and April national strikes, in response to massive job cuts and attacks on conditions, were shackled by the union officials' sell-out protectionist program. A program to win is one that starts with *class against class*. Screw the Labor government, its bosses' tribunals, arbitration courts and bans on secondary strikes! Actively drawing in transport and waterfront workers so that no scab coal moves anywhere, a revolutionary leadership would also oppose all nationalism and protectionism down the line, encouraging the solidarity of workers internationally. United action by the strategic sections of the proletariat would rapidly pose the question: which class will rule.

To answer that question with a victorious workers revolution and the destruction of the whole capitalist system means building a revolutionary workers party in irreconcilable political struggle against the Labor traitors. Only when we establish a planned, collectivised economy under workers state power will the bloody industrial carnage of this irrational system become a thing of the past and those who sacrifice the lives of working people on the altar of profit be put out of business once and for all. ■

Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights: "There is a huge information-gathering process going on in Haiti by the INS and by the Coast Guard when it returns all the repatriated Haitians. By this time, U.S. officials and the entire Haitian military know the structure of the Haitian opposition from top to bottom. It's much like what happened 30 years ago in Indonesia when a hundred thousand Indonesians were slaughtered after a CIA-backed coup, in which the CIA apparently fed the names back to the murderers." (In fact, over half a million Communists, workers and peasants were massacred in Indonesia in 1965.)

There are serious divisions within the American ruling class over how to deal with Haiti, in particular given the right wing's deep antipathy to the populist priest Aristide. The racist U.S. government is mainly concerned to slam the doors on desperate black refugees. Washington's irresolution was reflected in the hasty retreat last year by the USS *Harlan County* in the face of a handful of junta thugs. The *New York Times* has been so worried about getting into a quagmire that it has uncharacteristically recalled the bloody history of U.S. colonialism in the Caribbean. A recent article by Larry Rohter notes:

"The Marine commander Smedley Butler, for instance, led forces in Panama, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua, and once likened the American role in the region to that of 'trustees of a huge estate that belonged to minors.' He later repented his actions and in a famous autobiography called himself a 'racketeer for capitalism,' who 'helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street'."

—*New York Times*, 24 July

For the working people of the United States, especially for the oppressed black and Hispanic minorities, it should come as no surprise that the yuppie racists in the White House treat the dark-skinned workers and peasants of Third World countries with contempt and brutality. The international working class must oppose Washington's imperialist adventures, down the line, as part of the struggle against our "own" capitalist exploiters. Australia, U.S. and all imperialists out of Rwanda! U.S./UN: Hands off Haiti!  
**Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 604, 5 August 1994.**



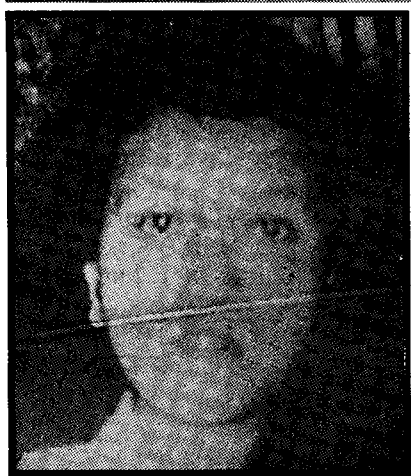
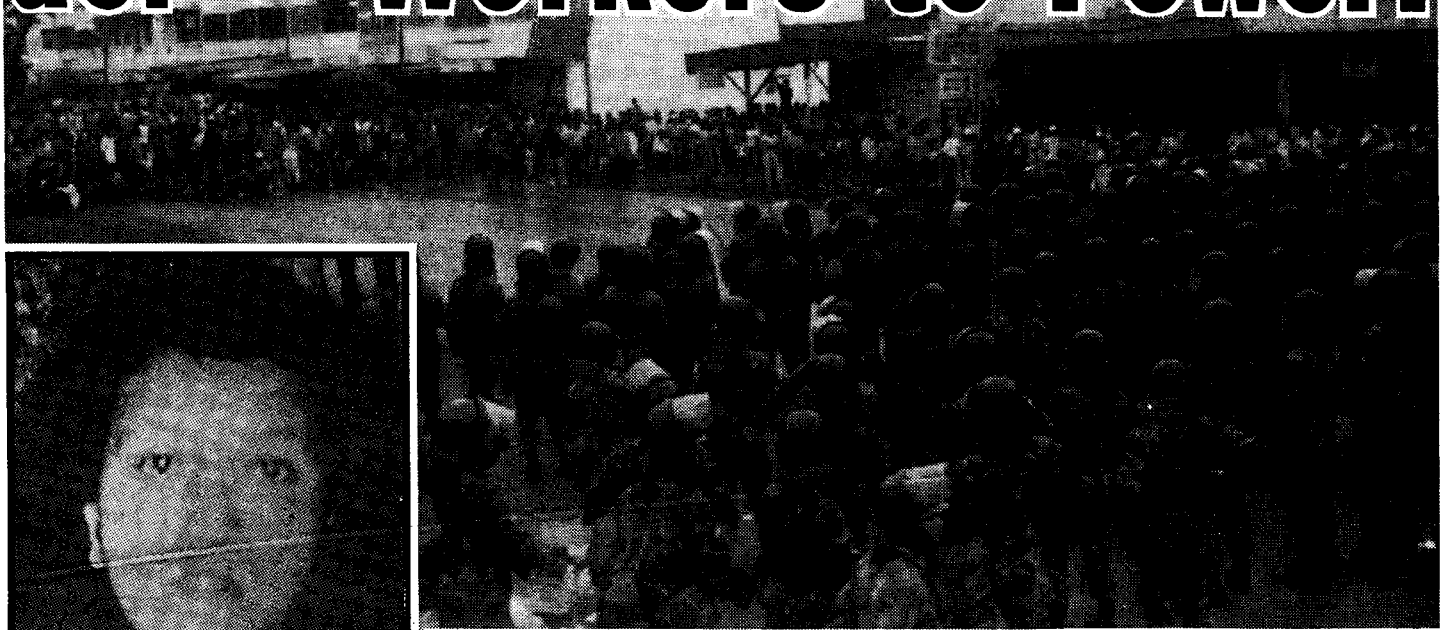
**Indonesian Troops Out of East Timor! Australia Hands Off!**

# Down with Suharto's "New Order"—Workers to-Power!

In the wake of the Suharto regime's military crackdown against student demonstrators in East Timor on 14 July, reportedly killing three, the spectre of the 1991 Dili massacre has again been raised. Then, Indonesian troops fired on 3,000 participants in a march in the Timor capital, killing over one hundred. In Jakarta's nearly two decades of war against the East Timorese resistance movement, along with famine, disease and forced "Indonesianisation" re-settlement schemes, the massive death toll in East Timor has exceeded 200,000—one third of the population.

Between 13 and 15 Indonesian battalions are now engaged in a renewed offensive to wipe out resistance in East Timor. Jakarta's latest moves come at a time of increasing social turmoil within Indonesia itself, especially widespread strike action by the working class. What is needed is protest action centred on the increasingly combative Indonesian proletariat and backed by their class brothers and sisters in Australia and internationally: *Indonesian Troops Get Out of East Timor! Australian Imperialism Hands Off!* Such class-based solidarity action can only be forged in opposition to the Australian imperialist ruling class and its Labor Party lackeys as well as its allies in Jakarta.

It was Washington and the Whitlam government who gave the nod to Suharto's annexation of East Timor in 1975. This coincided with the decisive defeat of



Marsinah (left): martyred labour activist. Above: thousands of workers confront riot cops during strikes and protests, April in Medan, Sumatra.

U.S. and Australian imperialism on the battlefields of Vietnam; for the Pentagon and Canberra the petty-bourgeois Timorese nationalist Fretilin were communists about to launch a mini-Cuba on the doorstep of White Australia imperialism. As John Pilger wrote in the [London] *Guardian Weekend* (12 February 1994):

"Western governments knew in advance details of virtually every move made by Indonesia. The CIA and other US agencies intercepted Indonesia's military and intelligence communications at a top secret base

run by the Australian Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) near Darwin."

"Kissinger and President Ford arrived in Jakarta on December 5, 1975, on a visit which a State Department official described to reporters as 'the big wink,'" Pilger continues. "Two days later, as Air Force One climbed out of Indonesian airspace, the bloodbath in East Timor began."

Men, women and children were executed en masse during the course of the

bloody, imperialist-backed annexation. The first to die were often minorities. Pilger writes: "On the north-west coast, the Chinese population was decimated. The killing of whole families appeared at first to be systematic, then arbitrary. Soldiers were described swinging infants in the air and smashing their heads on rocks."

Renewed bloodshed by Indonesian troops in East Timor has sparked something of a bourgeois "debate" over *continued on page 6*

## Moura Mine Disaster: Capitalist Murder!

At 11.30 p.m. on Sunday 7 August, an explosion ripped through a section of the No. 2 mine at BHP's underground coal mine in Moura, Queensland. Nine miners narrowly escaped the pit. Eleven were trapped. On Tuesday a second explosion, followed by raging underground fires, shattered any possibility of a rescue. That afternoon it was decided to seal the mine, entombing the eleven miners within the pit.

What in-mine equipment there was for detecting danger initially proved useless. And after the first explosion a rescue team of miners waited for 37 excruciating hours—unable to enter the mine because possible damage to this equipment meant it could not be relied upon to accurately establish the underground levels of potentially explosive methane and lethal carbon monoxide. A robotic gas detector recently developed by the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) was sent to Moura but was not ready to go into the mine until it was too late. The second and decisive explosion was inevitable: underground drills continued to drain methane into the mine after the first explosion destroyed the exhaust pipes that pumped the gas out, causing

methane to build up underground. *The eleven men entombed at Moura were the victims of wanton capitalist murder!*

Moura, located in the gaseous Bowen coal basin, was a disaster waiting to happen. In 1975, 12 kilometres away at Kiangra, 13 miners died in an explosion. In 1986, 12 miners died after an explosion in Moura's No. 4 shaft. A Queensland government investigation which blamed the 1986 explosion on a flame safety lamp (FSL) was widely recognised as a cover-up. Testimony by scientists which pointed to the probability of self-combustion by the coal was suppressed from the findings. Commenting on the faulty FSL finding the *Sydney Morning Herald* (10 August) admitted that "not even the mining industry itself believes it."

Only after the threat of a state-wide strike in 1988 did the Queensland government even promise to implement any of the recommendations of their white-wash "inquiry." At least three years after the 1986 explosion, BHP still had refused to install a Computer Assisted Mine Gas Analysis System at Moura, then the only major underground mine in Queensland without one. The multitude of gas prob-

lems at Moura in fact led to its closure for two years; it was only re-opened five months before the latest explosion. Now the sealing of the mine will remove any hope of gathering vital clues as to the cause of the explosion.

The Moura disaster has been portrayed by the bosses' press as an "accident"—the latest in what amounts to a string of inevitable accidents in an innately dangerous business. The *Illawarra Mercury* (9 August) declared: "We would like to think that tragedies, like that at Moura, could pass into the history books, and that miners could do their jobs in the knowledge that they are free from peril. Miners know that will never be possible. That is a shame but it's also reality."

Underground mining is indeed dangerous. Here, however, it is *twice* as dangerous as in the U.S. A mainstay of the Australian economy, coal mining, has reaped fabulous profits for the mining bosses and a grim toll in miners' lives. Australia exports more coal than any other country in the world and is the primary supplier of coal to Japan, the economic powerhouse of Asia. BHP just recorded an annual profit of \$1.28 billion (and now pays five executives more than

one million dollars a year). Today the rapidly escalating inter-imperialist economic competition of the post-Soviet New World Disorder means the capitalists worldwide seek to ratchet up the rate of exploitation. For the Australian mining bosses this has led to a drive to get more work from fewer wage slaves and an assault on union safety standards. Alongside an enormous destruction of mining jobs in the last decade—carried out with the compliance of the sell-out miners union misleadership—seven-day working weeks have been introduced as well as twelve-hour shifts in some mines.

Over a 40-year period the death rate for underground coal miners in Australia was one in 40. And workers in the vast overseas operations of the mining giants, like the eleven killed at an explosion at Pacer Pacific/MIM's gold mine in Porgera, Papua New Guinea (PNG) only one week before Moura, do not even count in the gruesome statistics. In 1992 the Joint Coal Board reported the highest rate of deaths in NSW coal mines for a decade. This coincides with government cutbacks in research funding and a massive rollback of working conditions enforced by the union officialdom on behalf *continued on page 11*