



*The 1992 Left Directory*

**East Timor Burning**

**Latin America: 500 Years of Resistance**

*Editor*  
**Lachlan Hurse**  
*Leftpress*

## Seven Marched

Unfurl the banner,  
Move onto the street.  
Only Seven,  
But seven marched

It was a time of rage  
Rage forgotten  
People forgotten

Students had been there  
Seen the people mass  
Their eyes were alight  
Hundreds of years of poverty  
The shackles broken  
Independence the banner  
Revolution so near  
Our own Cuba, our own Castro  
Our own Guevara.

Posters banners to all unions  
Australia's Union of Students last  
act  
A last call.  
Workers Students Unite!  
Solidarity across the sea.  
Darwin's wharf unions were firm.  
The tyrant must be stopped,  
Black ban his country,  
Stop our country's folly  
Whitlam's last, Fraser's first  
Not for Oil, Diplomacy, Security

But we were not organised  
Most students had gone home,  
Christmas holidays were near.  
It was only spontaneous action.  
Only seven there  
Why not the street?

The monster would invade a small country  
Eat its people  
Let us take this Brisbane Street  
Just for a moment.  
For the people of East Timor.

Unfurl the banner  
Onto the street  
Only seven  
But seven marched  
For a peoples freedom.

# ***The 1992 Left Directory***

**East Timor Burning**  
**Latin America: 500 Years of Resistance**

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## Foreword

Welcome to the 1992 Left Directory. This is the second year of production with quite a few new entries. We also have articles on two major issues for activists in Australia. The first is on the pressing issue of East Timor, the second on the 500 year anniversary of European contact with the Americas and its significance for Australia.

Leftpress has committed itself to the production of the Left Directory to be released on May Day each year. The primary aim is to provide a directory of worker and progressive groups in order to improve co-ordination between them. We also aim to include feature articles on topical issues. Unfortunately our invitation to contribute this year was not taken up by other groups. The two articles included are from Leftpress.

Some people have asked who is eligible to be included in the Left Directory. Our basic criterion is that groups must not espouse aims that contradict socialist principles. Most organisations should be able to deduce how that applies to them.

Leftpress also invites participation in the production of the Left Directory, from people who are interested in any aspect of printing and publication. We can be contacted by correspondence addressed to:

LEFTPRESS  
PO Box 5093  
West End Q 4101.

Lachlan Hurse  
Editor.

## Directory of Worker and Left Groups

### *Association for Communist Unity*

Room 9  
Trades Hall  
4 Goulbourn Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000

**Contact Person:** 1) Stan Sharkey (President)  
2) Bruce Toms (Admin. Secretary)  
3) Pat Carr (Assistant Secretary)  
Telephone: 02 264 7478

**Postal Address:** PO Box A215,  
Sydney South NSW 2000

**Publications:** *Peoples Cause* (3 monthly) and *Socialism Today* (3 monthly)

**Aims and Brief History:** The A.C.U. was formed in the mid-1980's because it was concerned about splits in the Australian Communist movement. The A.C.U. aims to bring Communists together to work towards an Australian socialism in harmony with Australia's democratic traditions - along with working for social, political and economic reforms. Internationally, the A.C.U. maintains solidarity with working class and peace movements. In Australia it seeks co-operation with other left forces for immediate reforms and for a longer range aim of one united workers party of scientific socialism.

**Important days for the Organization:**

May Day  
International Womens Day  
Anniversary of the Russian Revolution (Nov. 7)  
Labour Day.

### ***Australia - Cuba Friendship Society***

PO Box 727  
West End Q 4101

Contact Person: Gay Pittam  
Telephone: 07 844 9963

**Publications:** Newsletter (about four times per year)

**Aims and Brief History:** To promote friendship, cultural and trade ties with Cuba.  
Formed in the early 80's.

**Important Days for the Organization:**

Playa Giron [Bay of Pigs] invasion by the US (15-18th April)  
Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution (1st January)  
Anniversary of Che Guevara's death (October 8th)

### ***Australian Aid for Ireland***

PO Box 246  
Chermside Q 4032

Contact Person: Sean Whelan  
Telephone: 07 359 6135

**Publications:** *Irish People* (Quarterly)

**Aims and Brief History:** Established in 1981 by combining all major Irish Solidarity Groups in Australia and quickly grew to have branches in all States.

**Aims:** 1) To give all people in Australia an opportunity to hear an alternative view on Ireland's British "problem", hence videos, discussions, *Irish People* etc

2) To raise charitable funds for the humanitarian relief of Irish political prisoners and their families.

**Important days for the Organization:**

Easter Sunday Uprising 1916 Commemoration  
Bobby Sands Anniversary (May 5th)  
National Conference (Queens Birthday Weekend)

### *Australian Independence Movement (A.I.M.)*

GPO Box 2362  
Brisbane Q 4001

**Contact Person:** Ross Gwyther  
**Telephone:** 07 366 5318

**Aims and Brief History:** To promote and further the struggle for political, cultural and economic independence for the Australian people, including Land Rights and National Sovereignty for the Aboriginal people.

A.I.M. developed out of the struggles around the sacking of the Australian Government in 1975 and the growing realisation of the British and US interests involved in the overthrow of a democratically elected government.

**Important Days for the Organization:**

Kerr Coup and the Hanging of Ned Kelly (November 11th)  
Eureka Stockade Say (December 2nd)

### *Campaign for Women's Reproductive Rights*

PO Box 141  
Carlton South, Vic. 3053

**Contact Person:** Fiona Blackburn  
**Telephone:** 03 480 4201

**Publications:** CWRR Newsletter (monthly)

**Aims and Brief History:** The Campaign for Womens Reproductive Rights believes that access to abortion is a fundamental right. It is about the right of women to biological and sexual self determination, to be economically independent and being able to make the choice if and when to bear children. It is central in the fight for womens liberation. Because abortion is such a fundamental issue it is one of the first targets picked out by the right wing.

The right wing's agenda is to shore up the institution of the nuclear family through compulsory pregnancy for able-bodied white women but forced celibacy, or sterilisation or DepoProvera for Aboriginal women, disabled women and women in institutions.

We believe the right wing cannot be ignored. The economic crisis of capitalism emboldens the ultraright and one of their particular targets is women's rights. The ultraright must not be allowed to grow.

We use a range of methods in our organising. We stand for defence of abortion clinics, organising on the streets, organising in the trade union movement, on campuses and in the community, getting pro-choice arguments heard in the media and putting the political heat under politicians through mass mobilisation.

### ***The Celtic Club***

Kevin Barry House  
264 Barry Parade  
Fortitude Valley Q 4006

**Contact:** Sean Whelan  
**Telephone:** 07 252 8141 (club)  
07 359 6135 (home)

**Aims and Brief History:** Opened in February 1991. It provides a popular alternative venue. The club provides a venue for people to listen to, play or learn Irish folk and traditional music. It also provides a venue for solidarity and progressive groups for benefit nights and other functions. It is also a social venue where like minded people can relax, chat and have a drink in our own club.

**Important days for the Organization:**

St Patrick Day Function (March 17)  
May Day Festivities  
Kevin Barry Anniversary

### ***Committee for Human Rights in Guatemala***

PO Box 337  
Fortitude Valley Q 4006

**Contact:** Karla Orellana  
**Telephone:** 07 205 5527

**Aims and Brief History:** The committee was formed in 1988 with the aim of promoting human rights in Guatemala.



***Committee in Solidarity with Latin America and the Caribbean  
(CISLAC)***

PO Box 96  
West End Q 4101

**Contact Person:** Coral Wynter  
**Telephone:** 07 358 2668

**Publications:** CISLAC News (quarterly)  
Venceremos (quarterly)

**Aims and brief History:** CISLAC is an Australian non-profit solidarity and aid organization which works to:

- 1) Educate and inform the Australian community about the regions struggle for human rights and self determination
- 2) Raise funds for aid projects in Central America
- 3) Build links between the Australian community and the people of Latin America

**Important days for the Organization:** Celebration of the Overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua (July 19th)

***Community Radio Federation***

21 Smith Street,  
Fitzroy Vic 3065

**Contact Person:** Susan Duffy (secretary)  
**Telephone:** 03 417 8377  
**Fax:** 03 417 4472

**Aims and Brief History:** Aims to achieve radio time for community groups, organizations and progressive unions denied access to mainstream media.

***Democratic Socialist Party***

29 Terrace Street,  
New Farm Q

**Contact Person:** Maurice Sibelle  
**Telephone:** 07 358 4875

**Publications:** *Democratic Socialism* Quarterly Theoretical Journal of the DSP

**Aims and Brief History:** Founded in 1972. Aims to organize people on the struggle for social change. Meetings and Forums every Wednesday at 7 pm at the Resistance Centre (above address)

### ***Freedom Socialist Party (Australian Section)***

PO Box 266,  
West Brunswick, Vic 3055

**Contact Person:** Alison Thorne  
**Telephone:** 03 386 5065

**Publications:** *Australian Freedom Socialist Bulletin* (Six monthly),  
*The Freedom Socialist* (annually)

**Aims and Brief History:** Formed in Seattle, USA, in 1966 the FSP was a split from the Socialist Workers Party. Questions of difference were feminism and black liberation. The FSP describes ourselves as a Trotskyist Feminist Party. We've had branches in Australia since 1980.

**Important Days for the Organization:**

International Womens Day (March)  
May Day (May)  
Stonewall Lesbian and Gay Pride Week (June)  
NADOC (September)

### ***Group Against Rainforest Destruction***

10 Jane St  
West End Q 4101.

**Contact:** Stan Thompson  
**Telephone:** 07 844 5011(Office)  
07 844 6287(Hm)  
07 840 8259(Wk)

**Publications:** Fortnightly

**Aims and Brief History:** To protect Rainforest and indigenous peoples thereof. We have been a Wilderness Society Action Group that has branched out and moved to the Australian Conservation Office. Our main success has been a Council Lobby for a ban on tropical timbers. A draft policy has been circulated.

Meets on Fridays 6pm at the Australian Conservation Foundation  
1st May 1992 - Constitution Meeting

## ***International Socialist Organization***

99 Elizabeth St.,  
Brisbane Q 4000  
Postal Address: PO Box 329  
Woolloongabba 4102

**Contact:** Ian Rintoul  
**Telephone:** 07 229 8832

**Publications:** The Socialist - monthly newspaper  
Socialist Review - theoretical journal

**Aims and Brief History:** The origins of the ISO lie with the formation of the International Socialists in Australia in 1975. The Brisbane Branch was formed in 1977 and initially grew substantially from its involvement in the Right to March campaign and the campaign to defend abortion rights against the Bjelke-Petersen National/Liberal Coalition Government.

Since then it has been involved in the various struggles over the years for workers, women and gay rights and the fights for democratic rights like the right to assemble and speak in the Mall.

The ISO is linked internationally to International Socialist groups in the UK, US, Germany, Holland, Greece, France, Denmark, Canada, Belgium, Norway and Ireland.

The ISO has been distinguished by its resolute opposition to Stalinism of all stripes and its commitment to a vision of socialism based on the self emancipation of the working class.

The ISO seeks to build a revolutionary socialist workers' party in Australia, working alongside workers and activists, fighting everywhere to extend the confidence and consciousness of those in struggle against the capitalist system. Such a party is crucial for the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system and to build a socialist society which produces for human need and not for profit.

**Important Days for the Organisation:** May Day,  
International Women's Day

### ***Left Book Club Co-operative***

Box 22  
Trades Hall,  
4 Goulbourn Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

**Contact Person:** David Hudson  
**Telephone:** 02 283 3724

**Publications:** Approximately 4-5 books per year, plus newsletter to members

**Aims and Brief History:** Set up in 1988 to challenge the New Right thinktanks and advance alternative policies for Australia. We have now published ten books with more to come.

### ***Pablo Neruda Cultural Centre***

PO Box 360  
Inala Q 4077

**Contact:** Rodolfo Allemand  
**Telephone:** 07 844 5369

**Aims and Brief History:** Formed in Brisbane in 1988. Aims to provide solidarity with Chile

**Important Days for the Organisation:** 11th September (Military Coup Against the Allende Socialist Government)

### ***Queensland Pride***

PO Box 591  
Mt Gravatt, Q 4122

**Contact Person:** Wally Cowin  
**Telephone:** 07 349 1613

**Publications:** *Queensland Pride* (six weekly)

**Aims and Brief History:**

- 1) To provide Queensland gay/lesbian communities a positive voice without being patronizing,
- 2) Keep publication free,
- 3) Increase distribution through subscription.

### ***Radical Women***

PO Box 266  
West Brunswick Vic 3055

**Contact Person:** Alison Thorne  
**Telephone:** 03 386 5065

**Publications:** *Radical Women's Calendar* (Approximately 10 times per year)

**Aims and Brief History:** Radical Women is an international socialist feminist organization in the front line fo the fight against sexism, racism, homophobia and class exploitation. New members welcome. Send \$6 for a copy of the *Radical Womens Manifesto*

**Important days for the Organization:**  
International Womens Day (March 8th)

### ***Resistance***

29 Terrace Street  
New Farm Q 4005

**Contact Person:** Natasha Simmons  
**Telephone:** 07 358 4875

**Publication:** *Resistance* (quarterly magazine)

**Aims and Brief History:** Founded 1967, organise young people in the struggle to change society. Meets every Saturday at the Resistance Centre (above address) 3pm

***Women's Abortion Campaign, Brisbane***

PO Box 5226  
West End Q 4101

Contact Person: Anna McCormack  
Debbie McLoughlin  
Telephone: 07 844 4523 (h)  
07 369 6393

**Publications:** Leaflets, submissions from time to time

**Aims and Brief History:**

Aims: 1) Repeal Abortion Laws  
2) Free safe abortion on demand

Formed mid-70s as a political group for activists. Has never been able to sustain ongoing structure and activism because of small numbers of women prepared to be involved. At particular times WAC has been intensely active, eg. 1979-80, 1985-86, 1991-

**Important days for the Organization:**

International Women's Day (March 8th)  
International Day of Action for Women's Health (May 28th)  
International Abortion Rights Day (September 28).

***Women Against Media Sexism***

C/- Karen Fletcher,  
105 Moreton St.  
New Farm Q 4005

Contact : Karen Fletcher  
Telephone: 07 358 5815

**Aims and Brief History:** Direct Action on Sexism in Media. Alternative Women's Art. Founded February 1992.

## East Timor Burning

The question of East Timor has burnt for 16 years with resolution seeming as distant as ever, perhaps even more distant than was envisaged by those involved in the campaign for an independent East Timor in 1975-76. The intransigence of the Indonesian government and the preparedness of the military to use whatever force necessary to crush the population is met by the indomitable spirit of the East Timorese, who have waged an unremitting guerilla war against the invasion.

Since the massacre of November 12, 1991, when Indonesian troops opened fire on a funeral procession, East Timor has again come into focus in Australia. There has been a series of demonstrations in most of the capital cities, forums and cultural events. As well, in international forums East Timor has received renewed attention, there is action pending in the International Court of Justice, the Netherlands has suspended aid to Indonesia, and the European Parliament is also considering action. However the Australian Government remains unmoved by the widespread condemnation of the Indonesian action, rather it has chosen to describe the internal investigation by the Indonesian military as 'credible'. Essentially the issue of sovereignty is regarded as *fait-accompli*, reaffirming the joint Australian - Indonesian position agreed to in the Whitlam - Suharto talks of September, 1974. (At this meeting Whitlam described an independent East Timor as 'unviable'. Indonesia who a month earlier had given written assurance to FRETILIN representatives that they would support an independent state began claiming East Timor to be an integral part of Indonesia, and put into place plans for the annexation of the territory.)

For many in Australia the position of their government seems surprising if not beyond reason. It is not reason however that drives the foreign policy of Australia and Indonesia but the political and economic interests of a small group of people in each country. As history has shown, these people have been more than willing to sacrifice the rights of East Timorese in pursuit of their interests.

### Indonesian Interest in East Timor

It's worth restating what, for the East Timorese, is a truism: Indonesia has no historic claim to East Timor. This is clearly evident: even with strong nationalist sentiment inside the Indonesian military it expressed no interest in East Timor during the thirty years prior to the annexation. This is in spite of the fact that

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Portugal had been driven from Goa by India in 1961, a signal that, should Indonesia have viewed East Timor as an integral part of its territory, it could have followed suit with little opposition. But it was only when this tiny colony was about to gain its independence that Indonesia acted. What, then was the motivating force?

Military regimes rule by fear, it is their language.

It is a strange irony that large and powerful military machines are driven by their own fears, fear of subversion, fear of their own population rising up against them, fear of neighbours undermining their own power. There can be no doubt that in the climate of 1975, after the fall of Saigon the Indonesians feared an independent and possibly socialist East Timor. They did their best to avert the latter possibility by actively supporting a pro-Indonesian political grouping inside East Timor - APODETI - but must have been dismayed to see how little support it could muster, and the overwhelming support for socialist FRETILIN. So, in spite of the fact that Indonesia had a population of 100 million, the largest army in South East Asia, and the fact that East Timor had a population of less than one million they were obsessed by their fears. (It compares with the situation Cuba finds itself in with relation to the U.S.) It does not matter how irrational one may view this, there can be few other explanations for the invasion other than the perceived threat that an independent East Timor posed to Indonesia's security.

There was another fear that the regime had - would they risk their position in the world community by launching an invasion? Two countries played key roles in giving Indonesia the green light: Australia in the talks between Suharto and Whitlam, and the U.S. (President Ford left Indonesia just hours before the invasion.) Thus this fear was allayed.

Later, with the rise of a national bourgeoisie inside Indonesia and the exploitation of the wealth of East Timor - oil and coffee, economic considerations became enmeshed with Indonesia's security fears, reasons for continued occupation became more compelling. By this time there could be no going back. The ultimate humiliation for a military regime is failing to do what they were trained to do, that is, win wars. The fate of the Argentinian junta after the Falkland/Malvinas War bears testimony to this. To this day the military remains intransigent, driven by greed and fear.



## Australia's Role

In his recent visit to Indonesia, Australia's Prime Minister Keating declared his support for the Suharto regime praising it for the stability it has brought to the region. How was it possible for him to turn a blind eye to the terrible human rights record that so concerns many other countries and organisations? Far from being an honest broker on this question, the Australian government is pursuing its own vested interests.

Some have suggested that individual interests have also contributed to the present situation. Certainly some individuals have stood out as apologists for the Indonesian regime - it seems to be part of the job for the Foreign Affairs Minister. The present one, Gareth Evans has amazed many with his mental somersaults and contortions. His stance on Kampuchea had put him in the limelight of the world stage, his utterings on East Timor showed that he failed the audition.

The argument he makes: that it is not realistic to talk up the prospects of independence for East Timor reduces to the Foreign Affairs position (held since 1975) that Australia's national interest (read business interest) would be threatened by supporting independence. Doesn't he realise that it is equally unrealistic to ask a people to accept genocide? (Estimates suggest that the population of East Timor has declined by one-third since annexation.) Each day that he went to the parliament he was reminded of Australia's complicity in deaths caused by the Indonesian military by rows of crosses erected by supporters of the East Timorese. Now he is attempting to have the crosses removed. Do they also represent a serious threat to the 'national interest' or is it that he suffers from an attack of bad conscience each time he sees them?

It would be wrong of course to suggest, as some have, that Australia's foreign policy is the result of a minister's overblown ego. In fact it is quite interesting that the Australian position on East Timor has remained virtually unchanged during the last four governments, suggesting the pro-Indonesian lobby wields considerable power. In fact this group has held total sway when it comes to Australian policy. There are two components to this policy, regional security and economic considerations, which overlap but are not identical.

### Regional Security

Prior to the invasion, sections of Australia's Defence Department expressed opposition to integration of East Timor into Indonesia, fearing a militarily strong neighbour. They also recalled the significant role East Timor played in World War II as part of Australia's defence. However other sections of Australian policy makers prevailed, including the Joint Intelligence Organisation and the Foreign Affairs Department. Their primary concern was the protection of Australian business interests in Indonesia and the prospect of a socialist neighbour must have been particularly galling.

### Economic factors

It is only necessary to reprint a statement by the Australian-Indonesia Business Co-operation Committee following the killing of five Australian journalists in East Timor by Indonesian troops prior to the full-scale invasion to see the attitude of Australian business. It reads as follows:

*On behalf of 160 Australian member companies of the Australia-Indonesia Business Cooperation committee I urge you to have regard for strong commercial and investment links existing between Australia and Indonesia as the basis on which future cordial relations must be built. AIBCC regards Indonesian response to date in Timor as most tolerant and responsible and abhors actions and attitudes of minorities in both countries aimed at prejudicing Australia-Indonesia relations. AIBCC urges government to resist pressures for any form of censure by Australia. (from Indonesian Newsletter November 7 1975)*

Now it is true that the Australian government need not have been swayed by this group to the extent that the human rights considerations were all but forgotten. However it has been seen by a series of governments as:-

- a) progressive to form regional trading links, and
- b) a measure to reduce the security threat from Indonesia by establishing common interest between the two countries.

Under the Labor Party it has become government strategy to build up the Australian bourgeoisie, in order, using the language of Keating, to end the branch office mentality inside Australia, and so strengthen Australia as a regional power. The Keating trip and the prior agreement reached between Australia and Indonesia over the Timor Gap and the division of profits from oil in the region brought to fruition many years of politicking. Nowhere in all

this do the aspirations of the East Timorese figure, the right of a people to self-determination is cast aside in the pursuit of economic gain.

## The opposition within Australia

Because of Australia's critical role in the future of East Timor, the Australian Left wing and supporters of East Timor had (and continue to have) a particularly onerous responsibility in attempting to shift Australia's foreign policy. It has been an unfortunate fact that in spite of widespread anti-Indonesian sentiment the Left could not rise to the occasion. The original campaign in 1975-76 came in the wake of the defeat of the Whitlam government. At this time the Left had suffered a big reduction in strength since the mass mobilisations which occurred during the Vietnam War. However, when one considers the letters, pamphlets and minutes of meetings from that era and compares them with the current situation one would have to suspect that the Left has suffered even a greater reduction in capacity. We can judge this by the level of worker action in support of the East Timorese. Immediately following the invasion numerous bans were put in place by various unions, including bans by waterside workers on all cargo for Indonesia, some bans by transport workers on *Garuda* flights, and bans by meat workers on meat and livestock for Indonesia. The steady decline in union membership and militancy and the alienation of the membership from the hierarchy during the intervening period meant that very little action by trade unions was possible following the November 12 (1991) massacre. It is also an indication that the Left wing is increasingly removed from worker organisations. The comparison is even more dramatic when one considers that bans by Australian waterside workers in 1949 hastened Indonesia's own independence.

One problem is that solidarity campaigns are invariably formed as a response to an urgent situation, a sense of immediacy drives the campaign and there are few places for discussion of deeper issues. One can't help but wonder if those participating in the 1975-76 campaign would have known that 16 years later Indonesia would still be committing atrocities under the complicit gaze of Australian government and business, they would have done things differently. Will the people in the present campaign still be organising in another 16 years time? We know the East Timorese will still be fighting, or, if successful in driving out the Indonesians, building a new society which will need international support. The answer to these questions necessarily involves debates on a different level than focusing on the immediate situation. It is not intended to cast aspersions on the present solidarity grouping organising around the East

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Timor issue nor to preach any glib prescriptions, but to raise serious questions about the whole style of functioning of Leftist political groupings, solidarity organisations and their relation with the rest of Australian society, particularly the workers movement. The first step in the process is to recognise that there is a problem, in order to solve it.

### Sources.

*East Timor, Betrayed But Not Beaten* Australia-East Timor Association: 1983.

Benedict Anderson, *East Timor. Ten Years After Integration*. In: *Inside Indonesia* No. 9, 1986.

Helen Hill, *The Timor Story*, Timor Information Service: 1976.

Bruce Grant, *Indonesia*, Pelican: 1967.

William Minter, *Portuguese Africa and the West*, Penguin: 1972

plus: numerous pamphlets, correspondence and minutes of meetings from the Campaign for an Independent East Timor and Australia - East Timor Association.

## Not In 200, Not in 500.

### Latin America: Half a Millenium of Popular, Indigenous and Black Resistance.

Nineteen ninety-two marks an historic anniversary; 500 years since the first Europeans landed in the Americas. The Europeans with their own particular history of development and expansion unleashed a conquest noted for unbridled savagery on the indigenous people of the Americas (erroneously called Indians) a continent with a rich and deep heritage, a whole range of civilizations including the Inca, Maya, Aztec people and other groups, who are all struggling to maintain their identity today.

During the colonial epoch, the resources of Latin America provided Europe with the wealth to embark upon an unprecedented epoch of human history, with the development of hitherto unknown productive forces. Yet this process did not mean universal enrichment, but in a strange and contradictory manner, the impoverishment of millions, the enslavement of people from both Latin America and the continent of Africa, and the rise of new social elites in Europe (and the Americas) who wielded enormous wealth and power.

The impact on the Americas was dramatic, with the destruction of whole civilizations through a campaign of extraordinary barbarity: cruelty was refined to an art form by the 'civilized' European. The population was decimated through armed conflict, disease and slavery; where genocidal practices virtually eliminated the original inhabitants, Europeans traded in the flesh of Africa in order to continue their ever expanding exploits, robbing the land of gold and silver, and stripping the soil of its fertility through monocultures of sugar, coffee and cotton. Latin America was a paradise for the masters of plunder, but a living inferno for the indigenous people and the enslaved Africans.

In Europe the effect was equally dramatic. When the old social order could not contain the new wealth and the rise of a class of bankers, merchants and industrialists—the bourgeoisie,—the 'Old World' was torn asunder by a series of revolutions. Thus emerged the modern capitalist era. Yet the remnants of feudalism remained and impinged upon the new social order, and the Europeans, thriving on a culture of conquest and expansion, transported their methods, in waves of migration to the Americas hoping to build new states free from the constraint of the old feudal order. In a truly great irony the modern

face of North America was born with the emergence of the United States, which fed its new found industrial capacity with a significant quantity of its agricultural and mineral resources extracted from the south. Old colonialism gave way to imperialism. To ensure the flourishing of the 'democratic' north, dictatorship, exploitation and oppression was imposed upon the south without shame.

Europe and the U.S.A. fostered the growth of a new class of rulers in Latin America, characterised by powerful wealthy families whose economic and political interests almost always coincided with their foreign masters. These oligarchies, aided by their military strongmen, ensured that the wealth of the Americas was served up cheaply and reliably to the imperialist powers.

This pattern of social development in Latin America, which had a knack of regenerating itself over and over, faced challenges from within, from people who could never enjoy the fruits of their labour and suffered the humiliation of serving at the feet of others who blatantly expropriated and flouted wealth.

Firstly was the defiant resistance of the indigenous people against the conquistadors, the defence of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan against the plunder of Cortes, and the epic defence of Cuzco by a 100,000 strong Inca army against Pizarro and his small army. In the end the Europeans succeeded but not before the blood of the original inhabitants flowed in rivers across the continent. Yet it was not only superior weapons which defeated the Incas, Aztecs and the Maya; but fear, treachery and deception. However all these weapons could not eliminate the threat of uprising. Later the threat to European rule also came from the African slaves; Haiti became the first independent black state, but not before a terrible price was paid that continues to this day to overshadow this remarkable achievement.

Eventually the colonial settlers, having built their own economic power, sought independence from Spain and Portugal. People such as Bolivar, Artigas and Martí waged heroic wars of liberation which finally gave way to nominal political independence for Latin American States. Yet the plunder continued and entrenched deep class divisions within Latin America. New rounds of popular resistance arose, modern wars of national liberation fuelled by Socialist ideals raged throughout the sub-continent during much of this century. Rebels came to power in Cuba and Nicaragua and socialists were elected in Chile but more often than not came the defeats, the popular forces overcome by a combination of sophisticated weapons and crude methods — torture, coup d'états and disappearances. To this day the United States blockade of Cuba

continues. Western commentators are still ready to criticise the Cuban government without any reference to the circumstances that led to its isolation.

In spite of setbacks the popular struggles continue on many fronts, in mass campaigns and in guerrilla warfare. In recent times the facets of resistance are numerous — there are campaigns for land for peasants and indigenous people, industrial conflict, and human rights struggles. These include struggles by women's organisations and cultural groups.

Around the world supporters continue to organise in solidarity, confronting the injustice and oppression that continues to this day. The 500 year anniversary provides a focus for Latin Americans to review their history and to analyse past successes and failures. Through this process we may see organisations built which will offer a new sense of hope for the future, which, as they develop, may offer a real possibility for the eradication of the bitter taste of injustice and oppression and point to the sweet scent of victory and liberation.

## **The Significance for Australia**

The settlement of Australia by Europeans was a result of the same expansionist forces that shaped Latin America. The penal colonies of Port Jackson, Van Diemens Land and Moreton Bay were established to relieve pressure on overflowing English jails, a direct result of the contradictions of European capitalist development. Later the discovery of gold and robber-baron agriculture laid the economic foundation for the new colony. (Today it is much the same; mining and agriculture remain prime economic activities). The indigenous people paid a heavy price for this development, widespread killing, their land stolen and culture shattered. It is a heritage which continues to plague Australian society.

The 500 year anniversary in Latin America will bring questions facing indigenous people to the fore, just as the Australian bicentennial saw the largest ever mobilisation of Aboriginal people and their supporters. The Latin American situation can be related to Australia in the following way.

We have seen that 200 years of racism and oppression has not, as some once believed would occur, eliminated the indigenous people of Australia, nor has 500 years in Latin America and it can be safely predicted that it won't happen in either continent in 1000 years. In fact in spite of genocidal practices, deprivation of land, imprisonment and introduced diseases the indigenous

people of Australia and Latin America have resisted tenaciously, never forsaking their claims for land and their cultural heritage.

The oppression of Aboriginal people strikes at the heart of Australia. The continual occupation of land without recognition of original ownership and the negotiation of a formal settlement will mean that all attempts to combat racism and inequality will come to naught. Without resolution of this burning issue, Australia will remain a colonial settler state, tied to the past and unable to build a future.



## Calendar of Left and Workers Struggles

- 1890 May 1** The first international day commemorating workers struggles
- 1916** Easter Uprising led by Irish republicans
- 1917 November 7** Russian (Bolshevik) Revolution
- 1920 September** Australian Communist Party formed
- 1926 May 7** US troops intervention in Nicaragua
- 1926 May 4-12** The British General Strike
- 1949 September 12** Brisbane Waterside Workers Federation impose bans on Dutch ships in support of Indonesian independence
- 1949** Indonesia (including West Timor) wins independence from the Dutch.
- 1950 October 1** US invades North Korea
- 1953 August 19** US coup in Iran
- 1954 June 16** US installs Diem in Saigon
- 1954 June 18-28** US coup in Guatemala
- 1956 July 26** Egyptian resident Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal
- 1958 July 15** US intervention in Lebanon
- 1959 January 1** Victory of the Cuban Revolution
- 1961 April 15** Bay of Pigs US invasion of Cuba
- 1964 May 28** The Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) is founded
- 1965 February 7** US begins continual bombing of North Vietnam
- 1965 April 28** US invasion of the Dominican Republic
- 1965 October 1** Suharto leads military coup in Indonesia - massacre of at least 250,000 communists and supporters
- 1967 June 3** The Six Day Arab-Israeli War Israel begins the military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Desert and the Golan Heights
- 1967 September 4** the Premier of Queensland, Niklin bans political street marches. Subsequently 119 people arrested in first march in opposition
- 1968 May 2** Beginning of student unrest in Paris
- 1968 March 21** The Battle of El Karamah, a refugee camp in Jordan between Palestinian resistance forces and Israel. This marks the commencement of the armed struggle of the Palestinian people under the representation of the PLO
- 1969 January** Palestinians put forward the need for the formation of a democratic secular state in Palestine
- 1970** The largest moratorium demonstrations against the war in Vietnam are held, Over 100 000 people march in Melbourne
- 1970 September 4** Marxist President Allende leads Popular Unity to power in Chile
- 1971 July 14** Queensland Premier Bjelke-Petersen declares a State of Emergency to enable the touring Springbok football team to play. Eight days later

## Calendar of Left and Workers Struggles

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Queensland police charge at 3000 demonstrators injuring many and break into the Trades and Labour Council building

**1973 September 11** US backed coup overthrows Popular Unity Government, tens of thousands massacred, Allende assassinated

**April 1974** Military coup in Lisbon: Armed Forces Movement overthrows fascist Caetano regime; decolonisation process commences; political parties form:- ASDT (later FRETILIN), pro-independence after a short transition, - UDT, pro-Portugual but advocates an eventual transition to Independence, - APODETI, pro-integration with Indonesia. FRETILIN rapidly becomes the most popular and best organised of the three

**1975 May 1** Victory in Vietnam

**1975 June 25** Mozambique wins independence

**1975 November 11** Angola wins independence

**1975 November 11** Kerr coup. Whitlam Labor Government sacked by Governor General Sir John Kerr. Strong suspicion of US involvement

**1975 December 7** Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Australian and US support the invasion

**1976 June 10-16** Soweto massacres, 176 people, mainly students, killed by security forces, 1222 wounded

**1977 September 4** Bjelke-Petersen bans political street marches in Qld

**1977 September - 1979 April** 3000 arrests during anti-government demonstrations in Queensland

**1978 May Day** 10 000 march against Bjelke Petersen

**1979 July 19** Liberation of Nicaragua from Somoza regime by FSLN

**1982 June** The Battle of Beirut. Israel invades Lebanon. The war lasts for three months and ends with the voluntary withdrawal of the PLO from Beirut

**1983 October 19** US invasion of Grenada

**1985 February 12** 1002 SEQEB workers are sacked by Queensland Government when they oppose contract labour into the State power industry

**1987 December 8** four Palestinian workers are killed in the Gaza Strip. This is the spark that gives rise th the longest and most intense uprising (Intifada) against Israeli occupation of Palestine

**1989** US invasion of Panama

**1990 August 2** The beginning of the Gulf crisis. Iraq annexes Kuwait

**1991 January 16** US led alliance commences bombing of Iraq and Kuwait

**1991 April 6** Iraq accepts cease-fire conditions imposed by UN Security Council

**1991 November 12** Indonesian troops massacre more than 100 East Timorese during a funeral procession in Dili. Indonesian military cover-up by killing witnesses subsequently.

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Leftpress is an association to promote workers literature. Our means of production is workers' control. Our organisation is not based on private ownership or profit. It is a non-profit socialist enterprise. Leftpress has built up a comprehensive range of printing facilities.

Membership is open to individuals and organisations who agree with our means of producing literature. Such membership entitles people to use our facilities at cost.

Leftpress will publish a Left Directory on an annual basis. We welcome progressive organisations to participate and contribute to this directory. We aim to improve co-ordination between existing worker and progressive organisations. It is also a forum for discussion of topical issues. It will be published in May of each year.

We also publish workers literature through the Workers Unity Library Series. Our aim is to improve worker solidarity and organisation through the publication of stories from working life. People interested in these aims can contact Leftpress at:  
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