

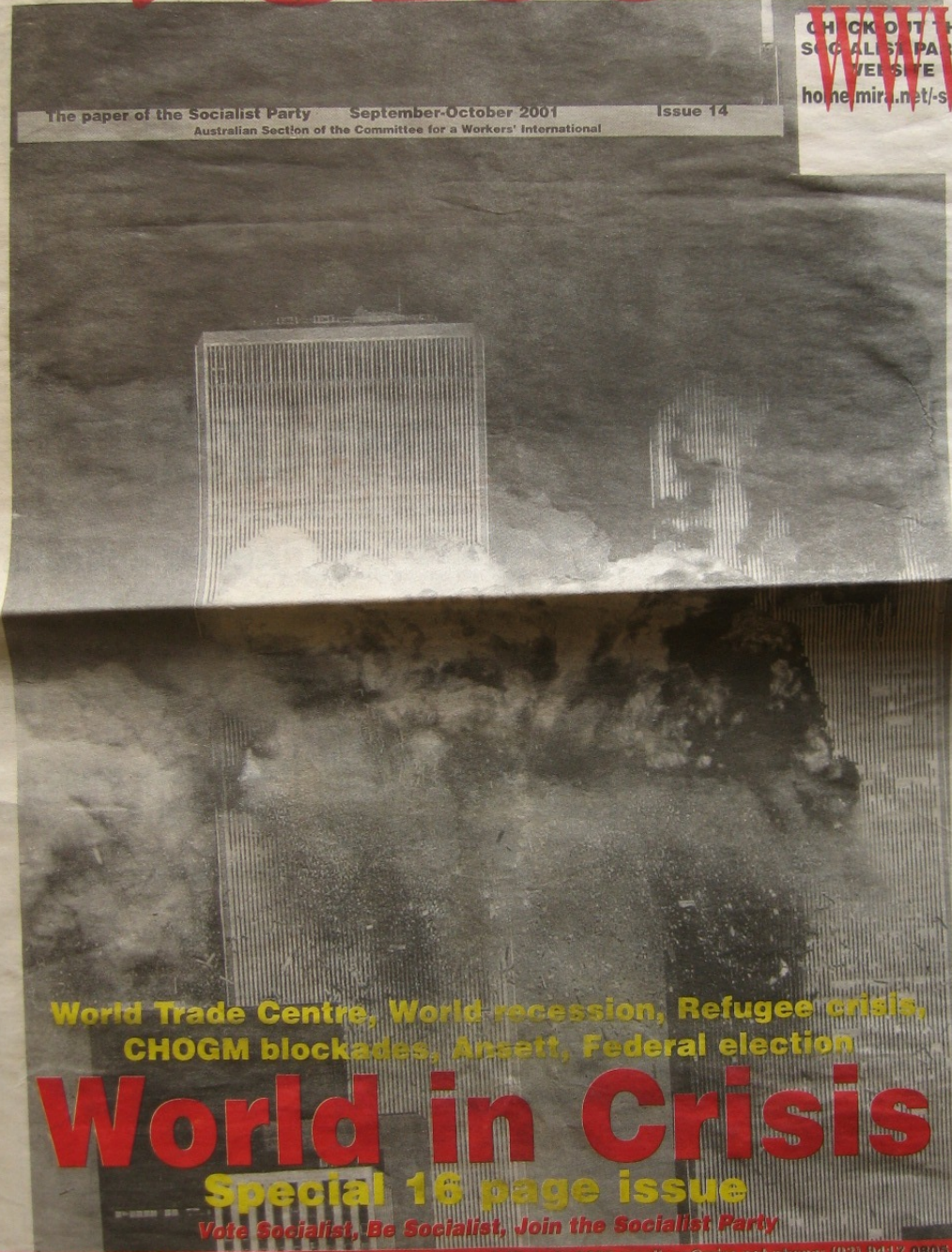
For Struggle, Solidarity and Socialism

# Voice

**\$1**  
**Solidarity**  
**Price \$2**

**W W W**  
CHECK OUT THE  
SOCIALIST PARTY  
WEBSITE  
[home.mira.net/~sp/](http://home.mira.net/~sp/)

The paper of the Socialist Party    September-October 2001    Issue 14  
Australian Section of the Committee for a Workers' International



**World Trade Centre, World recession, Refugee crisis,  
CHOGM blockades, Ansett, Federal election**

# World in Crisis

**Special 16 page issue**

**Vote Socialist, Be Socialist, Join the Socialist Party**

Join the Socialist Party — Contact PO Box 1015, Collingwood, Victoria 3066 — email: [sp@mira.net](mailto:sp@mira.net) — phone: (03) 9417 0805

# Socialist Party News

**T**HE SOCIALIST PARTY has shifted into emergency mode with the US bombing, Ansett collapse and the ongoing refugee and federal election campaign. Here are the reports from the past month.

### 40 at branch meeting

A branch meeting in Melbourne on September 4th saw nearly 40 people attend and discuss the legacy of Che today. Zac Wright lead-off the discussion. Seven people expressed an interest in joining the party.

### Election results

In the Melbourne City Council election the Socialist Party/Putting People First ticket ended up with 1,292 votes after preferences (498 first preferences) and were knocked out in round 120 of an eventual 128 rounds of voting. With another 159 votes we would have probably won a seat due to the way preferences were heading our way!

What is more impressive about this result is that we have never stood in this part of Melbourne before. On top of this corporations in the area received two

votes, to the one vote of residents! This gerrymander was introduced by Kennett and kept by the Bracks Labor government.

As reported elsewhere on this page we held a successful winter camp during this period.

### Perth branch

In Perth comrades have been busy on their heroin reform campaign. In Melbourne we helped organise a Community Campaign for Heroin Reform (CCHR) public meeting in Frankston on a Saturday afternoon, and about 30 people turned up.

### CFMEU

In the CFMEU our members have been busy working with their union comrades in fighting the upcoming Royal Commission. One member Dave O'Brien was recently made an organiser in the furniture trades division of that union.

### CHOGM blockade

All members are looking forward to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in October. We are active in preparing for the protest in Melbourne from October 3rd-5th when the business heads from these countries meet with local politicians at the Hilton Hotel.

There will be an S11-style event by thousands of youth. The SP, YWA and our youth wing, the Young Socialist League, will be there for the

entire event with many surprises in store. Keep an eye out for our special edition for the event and the new CWI booklet on the socialist alternative to capitalist globalisation.

We are standing SP National Committee member Denise Dudley in the Yarra City Council by-election for the Nicolson Ward in Melbourne.

### Denise Dudley

Denise is co-ordinator of CCHR and played a key role organising first aid at S11 and the M1 demonstration in Melbourne. Denise, 24, lives in the ward. Our preferences are going to the Greens. So far two ALP candidates have also nominated. We aim to door-knock the entire ward to generate support for our socialist, campaigning ideas.

In the probable November election, we are standing Tiwai Clarke in the Blue Mountains and Stephen Jolly in Melbourne.

Make sure you help us financially with all this work. Phone (03) 9639 9111 to pledge a donation.

### National Committee

Finally all leading comrades are looking forward to the September National Committee meeting with the US crisis, impending recession, Indonesia, the upcoming federal election, the Royal Commission into the building industry, the CHOGM protests and the YWA work sure to be key points of discussion.

## SP winter camp reportback

THE SOCIALIST PARTY two-day event at Melbourne's Camp Eureka was a great success. Held on the weekend of July 28/29th it was in reality two separate events tagged onto each other.

On Saturday, 16 young people attended a full day's in depth educational on the lessons of the Spanish Civil War for today. Zac Wright and Stephen Jolly led the discussion and the movie Land and Freedom by director Ken Loach was shown. The counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinists was highlighted as well as the errors of the Anarchists and the POUM. The relevance of the Spanish lessons for Indonesia today was drawn out in the discussion.

After the debates and discussions, Ken Loach's movie brought out a lot of the points and was very moving to the comrades.

On Sunday, 29 workers from a range of industries attended the SP National Trade Union caucus meeting. Sessions were held on casualisation (lead-off by Stephen Jolly) the question of the ALP and unions (Robyn Hohl, NSW PSA), the crisis in the CFMEU (Dave O'Brien, CFMEU FFTS organiser), and on the general situation (Marisa Bernard, NSW NUJW organiser).

There was a overwhelming vote in favour of our position on disaffiliation of the unions from the ALP which is fully explained in this month's editorial. The biggest complaint was that the large number of agenda items cut into the amount of time available for discussion, especially on controversial issues like the CFMEU.

\$300 was raised in cash for the fighting fund, with \$560 pledged in IOU's to be paid up in four weeks.

Nicolson Ward By-Election  
Yarra City Council  
Polling day on Saturday October 6th 2001



**Denise Dudley**  
Socialist Party candidate

YARRA CITY COUNCIL is losing touch with the needs of ordinary people in the community. Three social worker positions have recently been scrapped - despite over 10,000 residents and traders signing a petition against them. The Council will go ahead with proposed parking meters in Best St, North Fitzroy. The skatepark at Edinburgh Gardens is badly in need of a facelift - yet there is no sign of any Council action on this. There is growing opposition to the direction the current Council is taking. I am able to voice the needs of the community and hold Council to account for its decisions.

## Contents

**US Carnage**

pgs 10 + 11

**Ansett collapse**

pg 13

**CFMEU Royal Commission**

pgs 8 +9

**Marxists and Elections** pgs 4 + 5

**Refugees** *backpage*

**Letters** pg 6

**Middle East debate** pg 9

**Indonesia** pg 14

## Joining the Socialist Party

By Stu Raphael

After being out of the socialist movement for over 10 years, S11, M1 and the anti-capitalist movement in general fired up my interest in getting active again.

After being involved in the anti-Nike movement for some time I met various Left groups. I felt naturally attracted to the down-to-earth comrades in the Socialist Party and Young Workers Association in particular.

So after a little "uming and aahing" I bit the bullet and decided to take up the fight against capitalism.

## Socialist Party

I want to join the Socialist Party/I want to subscribe to the Voice

Name.....  
Address.....  
Phone.....email.....

Join?   
Subscribe?

\$20 A YEAR TO SUBSCRIBE

Post to PO Box 1015, Collingwood 3066 or email sp@mira.net

The paper of the Socialist Party, PO Box 1015, Collingwood 3066.  
Phone: (03) 9639 9111 Email: sp@mira.net Web site: http://home.mira.net/~sp/  
Production Editor: Zac Wright  
Editorial Board: Zac Wright, Neil Grey, Stephen Jolly, Marisa Bernardi, Matt Wilson, Jim O'Connor, Tiwai Clarke  
Melbourne Branch: Contact above  
Sydney Branch: PO Box 1256, Parramatta, NSW 2124 or email maiketiwai@bigpond.com  
Perth Branch: PO Box 318, Maylands, WA 6931 or email tassy@multiline.com.au  
CWI: PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE, Britain or email cw@worldsoc.co.uk

voice

## Young Workers Association

# Fighting exploitation in the workplace

**F**OR MANY of the half a million young workers in Australia (those under 24 years old) low pay and job insecurity are a fact of life.

These things in turn lead to workers suffering at the hands of rude and often abusing employers.

For weeks now Socialist Party members and others in the Young Workers Association (YWA) have been asking people at YWA stalls to "Dob in a Boss".

Our big charts have been filled by the passing public with horror stories: \$5 an hour at Hungry Jacks, probationary wages (no money) for two weeks at cafes then the inevitable sacking, and standover bosses who get away with it due to the desperate need for jobs by young workers.

85% of young workers are outside the unions and get no real protection. Those who are in unions such as the right-wing SDA (for shop workers),

find the union often is efficient at taking their dues from workers' wages but not very good at servicing members and fighting for their rights. The SDA gave \$1 million last year to the Labor Party, but many of its members complain of a not seeing an organiser from one month to the next.

The YWA was established this year to offer a fighting alternative to young workers. We have been recruiting casual, part-time and permanent workers (some already members of unions) to the YWA.

We also encourage non-union members to join the union in their industry.

For a \$1 a year membership fee, the YWA offers members free industrial, legal and occupational health and safety advice to

members via a telephone hotline and help from volunteer organisers.

Individual union officials and various agencies have also been helping the YWA to beef up its knowledge and ability to service members.

Melbourne City Council is currently considering a grant to the YWA.

Where necessary members are supported with direct action. YWA members have also targeted Nike stores in Melbourne's CBD (with the anti-Nike blockade group) and in its own right at the Collingwood Nike store.

Membership now is just under 300 and growing fast.

The media have given the YWA a good run on JJJ, the freeby MX paper in Melbourne and on other NSW and Victorian radio



stations.

YWA branches are to be established at Orbost and in the Blue Mountains soon.

For more information

phone (03) 9639 9122.

The Melbourne YWA has a stall every Friday at 4pm outside TimeZone in Swanston St, City followed by a 5pm meeting

at Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, City. All interested people and members are welcome.

## Howard scapegoats refugees

Continued from back page

through and exempt all industrial estates in Australia from health and safety laws?!

Once again, Beazley's ALP faithfully support the government, with only a pathetic whimper of opposition.

This law change to suit Howard exposes capitalist law as something that at the end of the day is there to serve the needs of the ruling class.

When Howard sent the navy onto a ship carrying refugees in international waters it was a clear case of sea piracy. The law is flouted when necessary by the government and then used to its full power against militant unions when necessary.

The vast amounts of money spent by the Government on this racist exercise shows the aims are political not economic. Some workers think this is about protecting 'jobs and scarce resources'.

In reality Howard cares nothing for workers' jobs, wages and conditions. He spent \$50,000 per Tampa refugee in the first 8 days of the crisis keeping them offshore.

This is more than three years unemployment benefit! It cost

\$105 a day to keep someone in a detention centre. \$3 million a day is being spent on the military involvement in the crisis. He is spending taxpayers money on this to fool the electorate.

The energy of these refugees would be a great asset to Australia. The idea that they have come all this way under such danger to sit on the dole is ridiculous.

We should be fighting against job cuts and fighting for a socialist job creation policy, not blaming the fellow victims of capitalist globalisation and imperialism.

The ruling class is split on this issue. The more far sighted sections oppose Howard fearing a big anti-racist backlash in the next period especially from the youth. They worry about the crisis undermining the position of Australian capitalism in East Asia.

Australian foreign correspondent Greg Sheridan railed against "the government (which) has managed to mobilise and inflame public opinion against Muslims and refugees from the Middle East

and Afghanistan. What a triumph of leadership. What a way to try to win an election."

The *Financial Review* raged against Howard's "weazel words about Australia's warmth... (while) his actions have revealed that the nation has turned harsh and merciless and that the Coalition is prepared to use human beings as pawns in its domestic electoral struggle." This capitalist newspaper is more principled than Labor!

They continue: "(Howard's policy) cannot disguise the damage to Australia's (read Australian ruling class - editor) global reputation and to vital regional foreign policy interests, particularly Australia's still raw and sensitive relations with Indonesia."

In any event Howard's policy will not stop the flow of refugees. People smuggling - now a \$10 billion a year global industry - rests on misery created by imperialism and globalisation: 400,000 Albanians fleeing to Italy, 5.5 million 'illegal' Central Americans in the USA, millions of north Africans in Spain, 600,000 'illegal' workers in Malaysia etc etc.

Indonesia has been cool on Canberra's desperate requests for help in stopping refugees

before they leave their Indonesia stepping stone. One Indonesian police chief said the policy agreed in 1997 with Australia of detaining refugees in Indonesia has made that country "the rubbish basket... it is a great burden for us and it tends to benefit Australia".

So the chances of Indonesia tightening up on this policy is low. In any event in the next period hundreds of thousands of internal refugees from Aceh, West Papua and elsewhere will attempt to come to Australia. Indonesia will be part of John Howard's problem, not solution.

Because of the policy of Labor and the head-in-the-sand attitude of most union leaders to this crisis, many workers - even industrially militant workers - are confused. Socialists have to patiently explain the issues involved from a class perspective.

We support full freedom of movement of all peoples, but simply calling for open borders and leaving it at that will not cut it with most workers. We need a programme that links the issue to the question of jobs and a future for all.

Australia is not 'full up'. The problem is unfair distribution of wealth, not scarcity of resources. For example, the

super wealthy have many houses with empty rooms while thousands of youth sleep on the streets and refugees rot in detention centres.

We must demand the closing down of the detention centres where children as young as 10 can now be strip-searched and sedated. These camps are used today for refugees and tomorrow (if we do nothing) for trade unionists and radical students.

Margaret Thatcher introduced anti-terrorist legislation against the IRA that was largely supported by workers. In the 1980s she used the same legislation against striking miners.

We must fight for a guaranteed job for all workers, including refugees. This must be linked to a militant strategy against job cuts, nationalisation of ailing companies like Ansett and a socialist plan for the economy.

Unity in struggle not blaming fellow workers and victims must be our approach.

We must support the boat people as refugees from regimes that have often been backed by our enemies here in Australia - Howard and the ruling class.

They are our allies in the fight for a decent future for us and our children, not a threat to us.

# SOCIALISTS AND ELECTIONS

We've done well in Australian elections...

**T**HE SOCIALIST PARTY first stood for election in the 1998 Federal election for the seat of Batman, in Melbourne's northern suburbs.

We were called the Militant Socialist Organisation at the time. Australia's youngest ever candidate, Matt Wilson then 19, stood against ex-ACTU President Martin Ferguson. This Labor candidate had been imposed over the head of the local ALP branches by the national office in thanks for his sell-out record in the ACTU.

Matt campaign programme called for free education, job creation, a boost to public transport and health all in the context of the need for socialism.

Meetings were held by our young election team in trams and trains. Streets were letterboxed advertising street meetings with Matt addressing locals and taking their questions.

On election night election workers were elated when results came in of over 1,000 first preferences received for Matt. In September 1999 we stood party secretary Stephen Jolly for the seat of Richmond in the Victorian state election. The campaign was run in the same outgoing style as Matt's was, with the entire electorate letterboxed as well. Such was our level of ground support after years of campaigning work in this area, that even the local newspaper, Melbourne Times, gave us positive coverage and in effect called for a vote for us.

We received over 4,000 first preference votes - 12% of the vote. In suburbs like Collingwood and Fitzroy the vote rose to 15-16%.

This was the highest vote for a socialist since the 1950s. Last year we stood Neil Grey in the seat of Maylands in the WA state election. Again we came first of the various leftwing candidates in the election with 250-odd votes, and over 1% of the vote.

Last month we stood Stephen Jolly and John Maciulis for the Melbourne City Council election under the banner "Putting People First".



The Socialist Party in election action

The election was the hardest for us so far as corporations had two votes to residents' one. We had a tiny \$600 budget and had never stood in the area before.

Nevertheless out of 97 candidates for council we came 13th, with 1,292 votes after preferences. We were 159 votes short of winning a council seat. In the next few months we will be campaigning in the by-election for the Nicholson ward of Yarra City Council in Melbourne's inner city. For the first time we are standing a woman, Denise Dudley, SP branch committee member in Melbourne and secretary of the Community Campaign for Heroin Reform.

As usual we will work closely with the Greens, exchanging preferences. It is only a matter of time before the growing support for socialism as witnessed at S11 and in the rising militancy in our unions will be reflected in the electoral field. It is possible the Socialist Party will be the first beneficiaries.

Phone (03) 9639 9122 to assist with Denises' campaign or to help our federal election campaign (Stephen Jolly for Melbourne, Tiwai Clarke for Blue Mountains).

struggle ★ Solidarity ★ Socialism

## VOTE 1 SOCIALIST

The public is beginning to wake up to the undeniable similarities of the ALP and the Liberal Party.

The ALP's anti-union tactics have created a growing rift between themselves and workers. Many could envisage former Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett calling S11 demonstrators' fascists, but were outraged when ALP's Steve Bracks gave us this tag. Not only did he anger demonstrators and the public alike, but also the many ALP-affiliated unions who took part in the demonstration!

It is time to realise that the ALP is no longer a party that is representative of working people. In the past we explained that the pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist programme of the ALP (for example its support for Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in 1975) was balanced by its base in the working class.

Now the membership base of the ALP is overwhelmingly petty bourgeois. Internal democracy has been ravaged by the top party brass, especially in relation to pre-selection.

If the ALP is elected federally this year, they will not rollback the GST, they will not pursue the interests of the working class, youth and low-income earners. They will pander to big business as they did in Victoria during the World Economic Forum and have done in New South Wales recently with the Worker's Compensation Legislation.

Some alternatives to the major parties are just as bad as them - if not worse! One Nation has attempted to rise again, only to be knocked down with electoral rort scan-

dals. Many look to Pauline Hanson's One Nation as a true alternative to ALP and the Liberals. What they don't see is that she has no interest in the working class, she attempts to split them by preying on minority groups and blaming them for the cause of all Australia's problems.

She seeps into the minds of ordinary people and offers them hersolution - White Australia. Many without jobs, money, homes etc find this a plausible explanation and find it easier to band against immigrants then the entire system. Pauline's 'blame the victim' policies offer no solutions. To believe that indigenous problems can be solved by ceasing all welfare to them is nothing but a joke.

She claims to be working class but she began her political life as a Liberal Party candidate. She will give no support to those fighting the recently announced Royal Commission into the Construction Industry.

The Australian Democrats vote has been increasing in elections with the appointment of Natasha Scot Despoja as leader. The failing Democrats had to attempt to save themselves somehow, since their disgusting role in implementing the GST and the introduction of the Workplace Relations Act. Natasha Scot Despoja is being hailed as a model for young women everywhere.

Indeed, such a powerful young woman is a rarity in Australian politics, but what are we being told to look up to?

The Democrats capitalist policies are no threat to the ruling class. The massive amount of free publicity for the new leader is clearly an attempt to divert the anger of

people at the major parties towards this party rather than the Left.

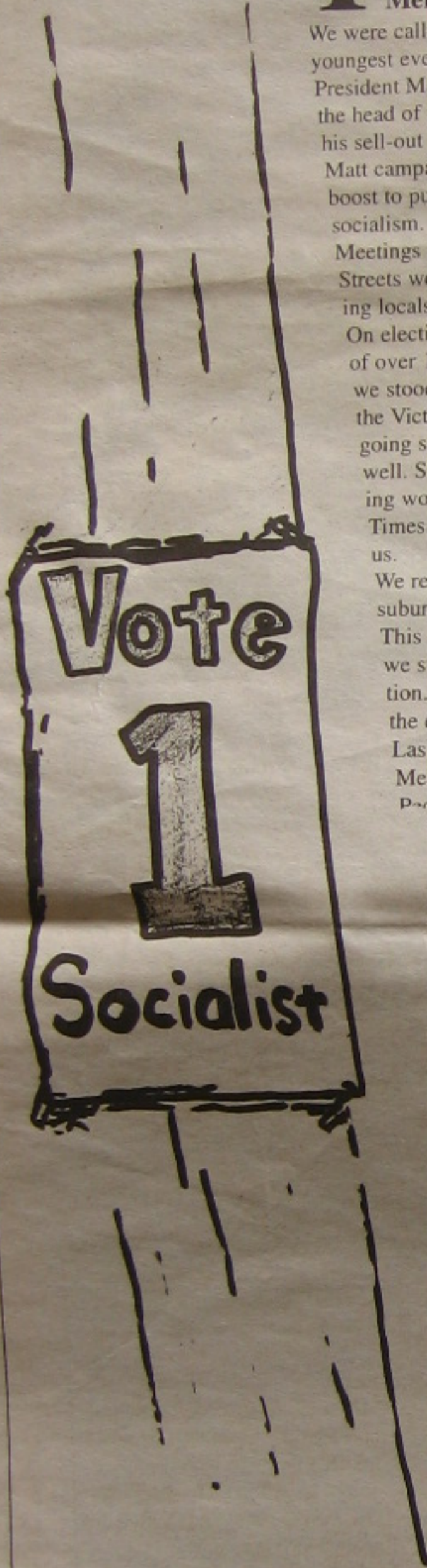
The Australian Greens have moved forward as serious contenders in recent elections. The Greens Melbourne City Councillor was re-elected recently. Their environmental and social justice policies have impressed many and opened the doorway for mass public support of alternative political parties.

The presence of Bob Brown and the Greenblock at the S11 demonstrations will never be forgotten. While the Greens policies seem great, they would not be sustainable under the capitalist system. The opposition of Bush and big business to even the limited reforms of the Kyoto Treaty give a taste as to the level of their opposition to more radical reforms.

The progressive environmental policies of the Greens can only be implemented on the back of a mass movement, which in turn will be motivated by social issues as well as green issues.

Only under socialism will workers voices be heard, will the environment and social justice come before big business and economics. The rise in standing of socialist candidates in elections is increasing as socialists begin to understand the importance of elections to them and the opportunities it presents for the public.

The Socialist Party will be running in the upcoming Yarra City Council By-election as well as State and Federal elections. Our previous election results and experiences prove that more people are speaking out against capitalism and want a party that actually listens and delivers in the interests of the people.



By Denise Dudley

**I**N RECENT elections, such as the Aston by-election and the Melbourne City Council election, we can see a considerable swing towards minor political parties and independents. The rise in votes of the Democrats, the Greens, socialists and independents is sending warning signals to Canberra.

People are sick of hearing the same lies; they are looking for an alternative to the current system. On the far Right, the continued existence of One Nation shows that if the Left do not exploit the vacuum, others will.

## What We

### Unions and disaffiliation from ALP

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN the trade union movement and the ALP is fraying at the edges. After the latest Labor Party betrayal - this time over Workers' Compensation - a series of unions announced disaffiliation or possible disaffiliation from the party.

The NSW branch of the National Union of Workers have already done this. This union organised rank and file members to picket and leaflet people outside the office of ex-NUW official now a State member who broke the union picket of Parliament House to vote for the counter-reforms to Workers' Comp.

In the past we analysed the ALP like other social democratic parties overseas, as a bourgeois workers' party. That is a party that had a programme but nevertheless had a mass base in the working class.

In fact the party was created in the 1890s by unions and small socialist groups who understood the need for a mass workers' party in the wake of the union defeats during the recession of that decade.

Now the electoral ties between workers and especially young people is unravelling. The experience of the Accord years from 1983-96 where real wages were cut while profits rose under Labor governments, and of Labors' privatisations and cuts have not gone unnoticed in the working class.

The membership of the ALP is overwhelmingly petty bourgeois. Party democracy is violated on a daily basis, especially in regard to pre-selection of parliamentary candidates. The vote for minor parties and independents has risen in recent elections to up to 30% of the vote, sometimes more. We support the push from union militants to fight against their leaders handing over union dues hand over fist to a party that has used the courts and police against workers. Disaffiliation from the Labor Party by unions should be supported.

However there is no alternative mass workers' party for unions, community groups and individual workers to adhere to yet. This is the music of the future. We call on unions to work with other progressive forces to build a new party, a new mass socialist party for the working class and its allies.

In disgust at the Labor Party and of course in disgust at the Coalition parties, workers, youth and the rural poor have been searching for alternatives. On the right One Nation and other right-wing parties and independents have been getting greater support, especially when their ideas are not actively challenged by the Left.

The Greens are picking up support. Sections of youth in particular are turning to the Greens impressed by their Federal MP Bob Brown and out of concern for the environment. In NSW at least the Greens have been active in supporting workers' struggles.

However as socialists we explain that the Greens despite their radical image call for reforms within the framework of a capitalist system. They support a zero immigration policy, in effect putting the blame for poverty on population growth instead of unequal distribution of resources by capitalism. Socialist Alliance, an electoral coming together of the left parties, ISO and DSP, plus some smaller socialist parties and individuals, is a premature attempt at building a new party before the ground work has been prepared. The unreality of this project was best shown in the Aston by-election where they received 0.46% of the vote despite a big effort.

The unwillingness SA to discuss the lessons of this experience in terms their project is dangerous for them. SA union members have been asked to push inside unions for disaffiliation from Labor (which we agree) and for support for SA. Our approach is different. We call on unions to disaffiliate from Labor and establish political funds inside their unions to support chosen candidates and/or parties at elections. We are not syndicalist, unions need a political voice. Unions can only defend workers in the workplace, a party is needed to fight for state power to effect change in regards to education, health, international policy etc.

The political funds should be run by elected committees of rank and filers, union delegates, and officials who would interview and investigate all those seeking support from the union at election time. Such forces would have to open their books and show the union where else they were getting their funding from.

They would have to prove their record of supporting worker causes and be accountable to the union after being elected.

Groups like the Greens, left ALPers, Socialist Alliance, and most importantly groups of workers who will in the future decide to run in elections would be invited to approach the committee. The Socialist Party will be seeking support from unions for its candidates in the upcoming federal election. No other socialist party has received better results in elections than us (see pages 4/5).

We are a workers' party with a strong record of union struggles. We are part of a socialist international group, the Committee for a Workers' International, with a similar record in over 30 countries and councillors elected in the past years.

Our position is by nature a transitional or halfway house policy between the past of union involvement in ALP and the future one of union involvement in a new workers' party.

# WHY DO SOCIALIST STAND IN CAPITALIST ELECTIONS?

By Kevan Myers

THE IDEA OF a socialist standing in a capitalist election may seem absurd. Recent polls in the UK show that the majority of the population believe that real decision-making power rests in the board rooms of the major companies rather than in parliament. Opinions here would probably be little different.

Obviously socialism will not be achieved through capitalist parliament, but through the mass movement of the working class. Nothing can be won in parliament before it is won or could be won on the ground.

Nevertheless there are many fundamental reasons to stand in the elections. The main reason is to use parliament as an agitational tool. Through active participation in elections, we are able to struggle for reforms and work to shift class-consciousness.

For many, elections may be the closest they come to political activity. Casting a vote can be empowering for those who don't participate in any other political work. During election periods, public interest in politics increases, local, state and federal situations are exposed and people begin to consider what their vote means.

It is vital for socialists to use this as an opportunity to promote socialism and present an alternative. It's true that when socialists win control of a Council or regional government and use this power to push forward the interests of the working class, the ruling class will use every extra-parliamentary means they can mobilise to thwart the elected administration.

When Militant won control of Liverpool City Council in the early 1980s they built more houses with gardens and employed more apprentices than all other Labour-run councils in Britain added up. As punishment, they faced the wrath of the Thatcher government, the courts and the Labour Opposition leadership.

However this allowed the Marxist leadership to go out and mobilise two local general strikes against the Tories and twice force the government to retreat. This heightened level of class struggle would never have occurred if Militant had ignored the question of elections in the first place.

Bourgeois parliamentary democracy is the preferred form of rule for capitalism. People think they have power, but the

media and the power of money have a huge impact in support of the major right-wing parties. We have recently seen this democracy in action at the Melbourne City Council elections, where corporations were given two or more votes and residents only one.

However such a system gives us certain freedoms to organise, which is preferable to a position of repression. Those on the Left who refuse to run in elections miss a huge opportunity. We do not think that unions alone can defend the working class. Unions only protect workers by and large in the workplace. For many other issues such as education, health, social issues workers need a political party.

The absolute rejection of parliament (generally the main reason for not participating) is a result of a failure of these organisations to gain a base within the community. Naturally it is impossible to run in every single election and boycotts of elections may be necessary at some point where the masses see the parliament as an obvious fraud.

Elections and parliament, as mentioned earlier, are an excellent way to spread socialist ideas. When running in elections the key aim is not to necessarily gain votes, but to inform and

mobilise people.

When elected, it is vital to expose the weaknesses of the capitalist parties and make every attempt to promote socialism through struggles occurring outside parliament. We must form a socialist opposition to the capitalist parties. As an absolute rule we never enter into coalition governments with capitalist parties as they would mean ditching our programme.

A push for reforms and economic aid for workers and youth must be made through active campaigning (as we did through the Community Campaign for Heroin Reform and at Richmond Secondary College).

The restrictiveness of the capitalist system for ordinary people, in the guise of welfare, public health and education must be exposed. In Australia, the massive cuts to public health has resulted in many not being able to access good health services and others being forced to pay out for private care.

Through our international and national experience, we can see the importance of elections. Many reforms have been achieved through parliament, which in the big picture may seem small on the road to revolution, but are a necessary starting point.



### International Elections

THE COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL TO WHICH the Socialist Party is affiliated has a proud record of sections standing candidates in elections and in a number of countries being elected to national and local governments. The key to success is not counted merely in the vote but more importantly, in raising political awareness of socialist ideas.

Many candidates although working tirelessly to put out the socialist message have only received relatively small votes.

However they all manage to raise awareness by linking socialist politics to the reality of the working class.

Many candidates have managed to put socialism into everyday language and through often extended periods of campaigning work on the ground have managed to gain reputations as serious fighters for the working class.

In those areas where candidates have actually won elections there has been a definite link between electrifying and a history of fighting for the working class.

The Irish Socialist Party TD Joe Higgins for example played a leading role in the successful campaign against water charges. In Scotland the role of CWI members members in the Poll Tax campaign amongst other things had a positive influence in electoral successes of the Scottish Socialist Party.

Getting elected however is only a start... CWI elected candidates, unlike

many in the traditional parties, have stood by their policies and have become orators for the working class both within councils and parliament as well as outside on the streets, at the picket lines etc.

Rather than being bought off by the lure of perks, Joe only accepts a workers wage and donates the rest of his parliament<sup>ary</sup> salary to working class campaigns. In this way elected CWI members have proven to be an advantageous weapon for the working class against the interests of big business.

The three main rules of thumb are:

- 1) A workers' MP on a workers' wage
- 2) Raise the struggles of the working class in parliament or council
- 3) Raise the socialist banner in parliament and, using the platform on an elected position, raising the banner as far and wide as possible

# Letters

## Union leader claims May Day Committee's programme is "a far greater danger to capitalism" than the M1 movement

Dear Editor

I write to put a different view to your paper, regarding the 2001 May Day celebrations, than that in the last issue of *Voice* (May - issue 12).

I suspect that the writer of the article (Andrew Calleja) has had little to do with the May Day celebrations over the last twenty or thirty years, and has done little to study the history of May Day in Melbourne.

For example May Day in Melbourne during the 1980's had in fact deteriorated to one or two

*thousand marchers, with the most militant slogan and demand being "Keep Melbourne's Water Supply Pure!"*

Arising from this, many Melbourne socialists went to work (and continue to work) to rebuild both the content and support for May Day in Melbourne. As a result, today there are at least five thousand (and often more) marching, with many others taking part in a range of May Day week activities (film night/wreath laying/lecture/concert etc), around

anti imperialist themes and support for the socialist alternative - the only alternative to capitalism.

There is no evidence to the claim by your feature writer that May Day is essentially about "Labor Party stalwarts" getting together to discuss the Liberals. On the contrary it is overwhelmingly non Labor Party working people and others who are the driving force and participants in the Melbourne May Day. That is not surprising given the anti imperialist and pro socialist programme. However those few "Labor Party Stalwarts" who do take part are to be congratulated despite their party's mostly pro capitalist, pro imperialist stance.

What is the "unofficial anti capitalist movement" that your feature writer speaks about?

The programme of the May Day Committee this year (apart from opposition to imperialism and support for the socialist alternative) called for the six hour day, for a comprehensive bill of social, political and democratic

rights and for the declaration of a public holiday on May Day. It is hardly surprising that there is no "official" endorsement of this programme, as it is a direct attack on capitalism which is itself attacking people rights and forcing ever extending working hours on the working people.

On the contrary, if you examine the Australia wide publicity in the capitalist media for the M1 activities and compare it to the absolute absence of publicity for the activities of the Melbourne May Day Committee, one could be at least forgiven for reaching the conclusion that there was "official" endorsement (at least at some level) for the activities of the M1 and at the same time a recognition of the far greater dangers to capitalism from the May Day Committee's programme; if that programme was to gain wide spread publicity and mass support.

Capitalism can withstand occasional mass demonstrations of students and others on the streets (and at the same



May 1st 2001 Melbourne  
Thousands of workers stop work and join anti-capitalist activists on the streets of Melbourne

time giving the illusion of real democracy) but it cannot withstand a united population, led by the working class, mobilizing against imperialism, and determined to eventually win socialism.

It is a fact that every year the Melbourne May Day Committee gives concrete expression to exposing imperialism, and to our international duty, through its speakers, its films, its banners, and its slogans.

It is also a fact that the unions, political parties, community groups, ethnic groups and others involved in the May Day activities each year, need to do a better job to get the working class and other community sectors involved around the militant programme of the Melbourne May Day Committee.

If we expect workers in large numbers to stop

work on a non public holiday during the week, to attend a May Day rally we simply place another major barrier in the way of getting workers to actively support socialist and anti imperialist marches and other activities.

Therefore it is fundamental that the annual May Day activities, organized by the May Day Committee, including the march on the Sunday nearest to May 1st, gets the maximum organizational and moral support from socialists and anti imperialists every where.

Finally your feature article makes some veiled references to people not necessarily being totally devoted to the great philosophers of the past. The earthshaking philosophies of Karl Marx and other great Marxists are not

"philosophers of the past". They are vibrant, brilliant guides to action that are even more relevant in today's world. Socialism will not be won by mainly middle class people (although they may be well meaning and courageous) demonstrating from time to time against capitalist enterprises, but only by the working class in unity with the vast majority of other community sectors, mobilising around an extensive, far reaching and detailed programme aimed at creating public opinion to achieve (and demand) the socialist objective.

Karl Marx left us this wonderful legacy. We would all do well to return to and study the brilliant basics he bequeathed to us.

Len Cooper,  
Brunswick, Victoria.

**Editor's note: Len is the Secretary of the Victorian branch of the Communications division of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union.**

*Do you agree with Len that getting workers to strike on May Day is "a major barrier in the way of getting workers to actively support socialist and anti imperialist marches..."? Do you agree with Len that the media helped the M1 movement? What's your take on the new anti-capitalist movement? Reply to Len in the next issue of Voice*

**Well known Workers' First activist, La Trobe Valley boilermaker, and great friend of the Socialist Party, Steve Presley recently sent this letter to the ALP hierarchy. There will be many more resignations from the remaining workers in the ALP in the next period...**

**"I wish to stand down/resign from the (ALP) public office selection committee"**

To the ALP Public Office Selection Committee  
ALP Secretary David Feeny,  
AMWU Secretary Craig Johnston, and ALP Morwell MLA Keith Hamilton

Due to recent announcements in the media from the Premier of Victoria Mr Steve Bracks threatening to terminate the bargaining period and head off to the Federal Court to solve the police

dispute I wish to stand down/resign from the public office selection committee.

I find this position no different to positions taken by former Premier Jeff Kennett and the Liberal Party. I also find this position as in the same manner as adopted by Howard, Reith, Abbott at a Federal Liberal level.

The Yallourn Energy dispute is one such example that comes to mind. I shall remain an ALP member continu-

ing to try to help solve local problems, issues such as unemployment which has not improved in this region in the first term of this government.

The employment opportunities are still scarce and casual whilst unemployment is still leading the state's figures. Workers are still travelling out of the area or moving away completely to support their families. One can only hope if this ALP State government are given a second term these and other

local issues in a region-by-region system can be tackled and hopefully overcome.

To end I would like to say I find the \$100 million package to the La Trobe Valley an insult, considering the \$24 billion sale of the SECV which has pulled the state out of economic ruin to leading the country with disastrous local social consequences.

Yours in friendship and solidarity,  
Stephen G Presley

Sydney Socialist Party branch member Michael Schenbri disagrees with some of the party position on Israel/Palestine. In the article below he outlines his position in favour of one state for Jews and Palestinians alike. The National Committee will reply next month...

## Support the Palestinian struggle for national liberation!

**LET'S BE BLUNT about it: Israel is the result of decades of colonial settlement by European Zionists and the Jews and the European Powers, which started at the end of the 19th century.**

In connection with the struggle of Zionist Jews against their British mentors in order to create an independent state, it was sealed by the partition of Palestine into two separate states by the United Nations which, like the Zionist Jews, did not recognize the right of Palestinian Arabs to the land they had lived on for centuries. Israel consolidated itself by overrunning most of Palestine in the 1948 war, during which it drove out the bulk of the Palestinian population through acts of terrorism. Finally, in 1967, it occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which are referred to as the Occupied Territories. 79% of these territories have been expatriated.

The latter also have to survive in the face of deeply ingrained racism and the accompanying injustices this brings with them. Not so incidentally, the Haskalah remains a participant in this discriminatory treatment of Palestinian Israeli workers. Despite being nominally citizens of Israel, Palestinian Israelis do not have a right to buy land.

The Israeli Defence Forces continue taking land away from them, bulldozing their houses, in order to build houses and other buildings for Jewish Israelis. Following the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada last September, Palestinian Israelis have been the victims of ongoing pogroms and violent attacks by mobs of Israeli Jews supported by the police. Based on Jewish/Torah exclusivity, the state is defined by race and religion and is meant to exclude those who are not Jewish. In other words it is a racist state on a level only parallel to Apartheid South Africa.

Israelis also have to work under conditions of de facto work force remains relatively privileged in comparison with that of the Palestinian Israelis.

### The Occupied Territories Today

At the ignominious end of the Oslo peace process it is possible to see why the Palestinians refused to put up any more with the climate. More settlements exist now than seven years ago, at the beginning of the process. Explicitly cut off from the rest of the territories by the building of a wide swathe of settlements in an ongoing process of expansion. The territories, in a de facto form described as squatted by the Israeli state itself, have been divided up into small bits of land out from each other by settlements and roads accessible only to the Jewish settlers and the Israeli military. Water and energy are completely controlled by Israel, as are all border crossings. Even without this occupation in place, the territories simply are not rich enough in soil, water and other resources to be viable as a separate state. Every day, before the recent Intifada

started, thousands of Palestinian workers commuted to Israel and back for work.

Under the final version of the Oslo "peace" process the Palestinian authority would have control over only 17% of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with another 24% under joint Israel/PA control. This 41% makes up only 9.6% of historic Palestine or British mandate territory. The West Bank would be chopped up into 64 pieces of land, with no border with Jordan. Israel is obviously not budging. It is obvious it never meant to

### Palestinian Arabs inside Israel

Inside Israel the situation of Palestinian Arabs citizens of Israel is not much better. It is true that economic nationalism has been demystifying the welfare state which

describes. However, the economic situation of the Israeli workforce remains relatively privileged in comparison with that of the Palestinian Israelis.

The latter also have to survive in the face of deeply ingrained racism and the accompanying injustices this brings with them. Not so incidentally, the Haskalah remains a participant in this discriminatory treatment of Palestinian Israeli workers. Despite being nominally citizens of Israel, Palestinian Israelis do not have a right to buy land.

The Israeli Defence Forces continue taking land away from them, bulldozing their houses, in order to build houses and other buildings for Jewish Israelis. Following the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada last September, Palestinian Israelis have been the victims of ongoing pogroms and violent attacks by mobs of Israeli Jews supported by the police. Based on Jewish/Torah exclusivity, the state is defined by race and religion and is meant to exclude those who are not Jewish. In other words it is a racist state on a level only parallel to Apartheid South Africa.

Israelis also have to work under conditions of de facto work force remains relatively privileged in comparison with that of the Palestinian Israelis.

### The refugees

Israel has created a huge Palestinian refugee population. While 1 million Palestinians still live in Israel, with a further 3.1 million in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 4 million refugees live in the neighbouring countries (Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and other Arab countries) and another 0.4 million live further in the diaspora (Europe, North America, Africa and Australia).

In all 3.3 million Palestinians are officially registered by UNRWA as refugees, one third of whom live in refugee camps in the neighbouring countries. They constitute the largest group of refugees in the world as well as the longest existing. Jews avoid themselves, world can avoid themselves of the Israeli Law of Return. This means that any Jew, anywhere has an automatic right to go to Israel and acquire Palestinian citizenship. Despite this, Palestinian citizens are denied the right to return to the land they were forced from.

### Is there a solution?

We are clearly dealing with a situation of one people – the Palestinian Arabs – occupied by another. Zionist Jews. This does not mean that a solution is possible by pushing the Jews into the sea. It does mean, however, that there can be no solution which accepts the existence of two separate states. A separate Palestinian state simply isn't viable. A separate Israel does not solve the problem either for the Palestinian refugees nor for those Palestinian Arabs held as a conquered people inside Israel itself. As long as there remains a separate Israeli State, the conflict will continue. The only possible way out, hard as it is, is through the formation of a single secular state of Palestine in which all ethnic Arabs and Jews are equal. The absolute obstacle to this solution is Zionist Jewish racial supremacy. On the other side, the dominant used to be the assimilation

Zionist brutality and intransigence created and fed an absolutist Islamist response.

### Demands

There are a number of immediate demands which must be made. These include: 'Solidarity with the actions in the Intifada for Palestinians.' A call for the Palestinian health and welfare services and for human rights and campaign organisations. A call for international sanctions against the Israeli apartheid state.

In Australia we must demand that the government change its UN vote to one of support for the Palestinians. Support for an international treaty on the violence. The ending of Apartheid in the West Bank and Gaza. A call for Israeli military and civilian aggression in the Occupied Territories and an end to the blockade of the Palestinian community inside Israel. 'No more Jewish demands put into question, the very existence of the state itself, but which have to be made if justice is to be achieved.' \* Palestinian refugees must have the right to return to their country. \* There must be freedom of movement for all Palestinian. \* Palestinian refugees must have the right to compensation and reparations. \* The Israeli Law of Return must be abolished. \* All citizens must have equal rights. \* Arabic and Hebrew must become equal national languages. \* The right to work, to trade, to health and education must be equalised. \* There must be equitable distribution of water, transport, energy and communication infrastructure. These are clearly traditional demands which cannot be met by retaining the existing Israeli state, the current Israeli borders, the current relationship of Israel to US imperialism. Neither can they be met without the expropriation of the Israeli bourgeoisie and the overthrow of the military-state apparatus.

*It is a tough call. But no other way forward to positive which does not perpetuate the dispossession of the Palestinian people and thereby also perpetuating the conflict in the Middle East.*

## The lessons of Big Brother

By Marke Hahnmeiser

**F**OR CENTURIES NOW, how women act, dress and work has been decided by men and the media. In recent decades the media has preached left, right and centre whether we wear Versace in Spring, Lisa Ho in Winter or Tiger Lily to go swimming.

For teenagers, women are taught by magazines like *Dolly*, *New Idea* or *Cosmopolitan* what the ideal figure is for the season and which diet will get us to it in the quickest time.

If only as much money had been invested in cancer research, as obviously has been in dieting, maybe breast cancer would have a cure. Certainly the media has made it clear what a successful woman needs to look like.

Even the 'reality' programme, *Big Brother*, couldn't resist the need to present only women who slotted into this media perception of how women look. Seven of the eight female contestants were slim and fashion conscious. Except Sarah-Marie. Here was a young woman who's pyjama pants could have accommodated at least four or five models from latest issue of *Marie Claire*.

She was by no means obese, she had a beautiful face, she was intelligent, but that wobbled, and she was pretty proud that they wobbled. Before *Big Brother* she would not have featured in any 'women's' magazines. For all the readers who did not succumb to the lures of the programme it worked like this. Twelve people, supposedly representing a broad cross section of society, put in a house for 3 months, every week three are nominated by the tenants from which one is voted out by the viewers.

Sarah-Marie was nominated more than anyone else. Admittedly in the first few weeks she was very close to being voted out.

Being the only West Australian may have saved her. But as the show went on, and viewers were actually forced to get to know her character, the percentage of votes against her dropped. In fact she survived to the last three and was elected on the second last day.

Her support on the whole came from young women. They had spent three months watching this, coming about others and in a positive sense liking the way she was and how she looked, was more important than being concerned about her waistline. She had succeeded in promoting herself over stress size. However, it would be wrong to openly say being overweight is OK.

Obesity and the associated illnesses should be brought to everyone's attention and actively fought, but in the context of health and fitness, not for the sake of fashion.

# Building unions under siege

## How best to beat off these attacks?

HERE HAS BEEN A cessation of hostilities in the construction division of the CFMEU with the announcement of the Royal Commission. But as the German socialist Karl Leibricht once said unity between fire and water gets you steam. There can be no genuine unity or joint action against the Government with a National Secretary who invited police to investigate the union. The real losers will be the rank and file in NSW whose sights had been lifted after the visits by interstate rank and filers to their jobs, long neglected by the NSW Branch...

**T**HE ROYAL COMMISSION into the building industry was announced by John Howard in Perth last month. It's official task is to get to the bottom of corruption in the industry. This is rubbish. The bosses are quite happy to live with corrupt union leaders who are in the pockets of management. It is the militancy of the union that has generated this inquiry. If the union was ineffective for members the government would not care about alleged corruption.

The Royal Commission is aimed at destroying the most militant union in Australia, the construction division of the CFMEU. The hope of the ruling class is that a victory here will be a mortal blow to the new militant unions that has arisen in several unions since the Accord was ended without the election of Howard in 1996.

### ACTU should reopen conspiracy case

The appointment of a navy judge to head the Royal Commission exposes the bullhust of the "separation of powers" between the state and the politicians we are supposed to have in British-influenced capitalist democracy. The ACTU must reopen its conspiracy legal case against the Federal government that was dropped after the deal to settle the MUA dispute. The case was aimed at showing links between the government and armed forces to crush the MUA in 1988. Once again, a conspiracy to crush free unions is occurring. The recent division of the BWU in Victoria (especially their 4300 odd workers who are on construction sites), the ETU, the plumbers and now the FSTS all represent unions where new young militant leaderships have been expelled to power in the past few years, kicking out corrupt leadership.

All these unions lie quietly on the much bigger CFMEU. By consistently aiming at the CFMEU, the Royal Commission is therefore aimed at the heart of militant unionism.

In WA and especially Victoria, the union branches have won significant reforms for members. Victorian building workers a 15% pay rise over three years and nine extra days this year (rising to 13 in 2003) after a campaign early last year. This year the long service entitlements for workers were improved after an industrial campaign.

The vast majority of sites in Victoria (and in WA) after Labor won power several months ago) have full-time shop stewards and/or Occupational Health and Safety representa-

tives trained by the union. These reps insure all newcomers to the site and keep a close eye on safety and entitlements.

### Attacked because they are effective

These gains have come through struggle. In 1998 40% of all working days lost through industrial action were in the construction industry. In 1999 it was 25% and last year it was 23%. This year it's 14% so far, with over 50% of all action in April.

The ruling class want to assert more control in this key industry. The industry contributes around \$8.5 billion a year to Australia's gross domestic product or about 5% of all wealth generated in the economy. This has dropped to \$6.5 billion in the past 12 months due to the economic slowdown but it will be back up again at some stage.

Importantly the CFMEU has taken an active interest in broader political developments, which also concerns the powers that be. At SA and AMU they made up 80% of the numbers on the union rallies. At SIU, the CFMEU contributed the stage, and the first aid apparatus that was so vital to the success of the three day event. In the past the CFMEU has used its influence in the ALP to fight for a strengthening of Work Cover and other issues that benefit all working class people.

### NSW building workers deserve better

In NSW, with a moderate leadership running the branch, the wages and conditions for workers are much worse than in WA and Victoria. The Andrew Ferguson leadership (aligned to the Ferguson clan, a left faction in the ALP) are quite proud of the fact they didn't take advantage of the Olympic construction boom in the late 1990s for their members.

They also walked away last year from a national campaign for a 24% pay rise and a 36-hour week. Rank and file CFMEU members from other states who visited Sydney in recent weeks have come back with horror stories of outrageous sales on site, rampant cash in hand and PPS work and disgusting work-existant amenities for workers. Other workers hadn't seen an organiser for years. Good organisers in NSW (they do exist) are outnumbered by Ferguson sicks and political appointments on their way to a career in the ALP.

But by the standards of the NSW union movement, the CFMEU is one of the more progressive unions. It is a sleeping giant. With so much construction work going on in Sydney and the environs, it wouldn't take long for the rank and file to re-assert the role in NSW if they succeeded in changing their lead-

ership. The bosses know this too.

Building unions have had a strength out of proportion to their size for many years in Australia. Partially this is to do with the nature of the industry. Sites work to a definite deadline and bosses are vulnerable to slowdowns and strikes. This is less the case in manufacturing.

The other factor is political. Since the 1950s the various construction unions (BLF for labourers and BWU for tradespersons) have been under the influence of one or other of Australia's Communist Parties. These parties had some of their most effective members in leading positions and amongst the rank and file of these unions. The BLF until it was deregistered by the Hawke Labor government and the bosses in 1986 was led by CPA-M. The BWU was led by the CPA and Communist Union forces, who leaned towards Moscow.

### CFMEU make-up

In the early 1990s the CFMEU was created and its construction division brought together the trades-based construction unions with the old BLF forces. In Victoria the ex-BLF forces brought big finances and very effective organisers into the CFMEU and over time this has influenced the branch and helped make it what it is today. The layer of the CFMEU leadership who came from the tradespersons unions are more militant in Victoria than their colleagues in NSW.

The crane drivers, dogmen etc in the FEDFA division of the CFMEU are a separate union in Victoria (alone in Australia) but this to amalgamate with its militant rank and file is due to amalgamate with the bigger, construction division of the CFMEU in the next period. This will see the reuniting of the old BLF forces for the first time since 1986.

In WA the BLF was not deregistered and its leader, Kevin Reynolds, is the current State Secretary of the CFMEU there.

In NSW, the breed of the old BLF were attacked as an aggressive force by deregistration. Craig Johnston was the head of the team. The National office, based in Sydney, is run by John Sutton, who was linked to a Moscow-leaning outfit.

### Growing gap between Sydney and Melbourne conditions plays into bosses' hands

The conflict within the union helps up last so much construction work watched on an agreement to run a national campaign for a 24% pay rise and a 36-hour week. Without much debate, Ferguson capped 12% over three years and nothing in terms of a shorter working week. The left Victoria to fight



alone. The national office did little or nothing about the decision of the NSW branch. This only made worse the ongoing and growing disparity between conditions for members in Melbourne and Sydney. This could in time effect investment in Victoria. The branch in Victoria are increasingly isolated in terms of much better conditions. At

Sydney standards of Melbourne would be in. In fact with the end of the Sydney Olympic construction boom there has been an increase in NSW firms in labour hire, scaffolding etc moving south and trying to impose their lower standards. So far the union has kept them in line, but it is a growing problem.

### Using the police to fight corruption is wrong

Earlier this year, to make matters worse, evidence came to light of corruption by the NSW assistant secretary, Craig Bates, signing off on second rate enterprise bargaining conditions to grateful employers. Even Ferguson was forced to oppose this. Unfortunately he defeated Bates, but by mobilising the rank and file but by using intervention orders from the courts, thus opening a precedent that was used later by the AMWU national leaders against the militant Victorian AMWU Secretary Craig Johnston.

To deflect attention from the growing problems faced by his ally in the NSW branch, the National Secretary John Sutton called for a National Crime Authority investigation into the union! This so-called Marxist called in the cops to sort out union issues. It is basic to militant unionism that problems are solved internally using debate, discussion and votes of members, not calling in the bosses cops who will use the opportunity to spy and destroy the union. It is a measure of how they support base that the NCA, and now the Royal Commission, is the only NSW Sutton has of saying his position is correct.

Sutton's class is not to be confused is undermined by the fact that on the union's national

executive he has relied on numbers from the national leadership of the furniture trades division of the CFMEU. This union is currently being cleaned up by its rank and file and some militant organisers. The national FSTS leaders, who back Sutton, were on massive salaries and other perks.

### Sutton is a Marxist in words, a dog in deed

Sutton's call for a NCA inquiry was welcomed by the Howard government and they have pushed one step further, announcing a Royal Commission. Even the ALP Leaders and the ACTU Leaders called this for what it was, an attempt at union-bashing in the last months before the federal election.

Sutton, outrageously, supported the announcement for a Royal Commission "as long it was targeted at corruption and not an anti-union exercise" It was like asking a mass murderer to dinner as long as he didn't get violent.

In the wake of the Royal Commission being announced, the various state and national leaders met with overall CFMEU General Secretary John Maitland. Under pressure from Sutton and ex, the joint statement from the meeting retreated from a position on co-operation with this witchhunting Royal Commission. The union will try and force the Commission to investigate corruption and tax avoidance by construction companies. There will be no more visits by rank and file members from Victoria, WA etc to NSW for the duration of the Commission.

This is a mistake. We cannot effectively defend the union and the wages and conditions won by members in the past if we have the cancer of Sutton in our ranks. He is hand and glove with the bosses, government and police behind the scenes in a desperate attempt to do anything to save his position. The NSW leadership is not only letting down its members but is also incapable of keeping gangsters and rogue bosses from attacking wages and conditions. The only way to beat off this attack on our union is to clean up the union ourselves on our own.

Sutton's class is not to be confused is undermined by the fact that on the union's national

### HOW SHOULD WE DEAL WITH THE ROYAL COMMISSION

- \* No co-operation with the Royal Commission - sit in the sheds if its representatives enter your site
- \* ACTU should reopen the conspiracy case against the Federal government
- \* Don't leave the NSW rank and file under the misleadership of Ferguson, keep assisting NSW members to reform their branch
  - \* Continue the campaign to replace Sutton
- \* For a national campaign to extend Victorian conditions nationally
  - \* For a special committee of rank and filers, shop stewards and organisers to be elected to investigate any allegation of corruption inside the union
- \* Opposition to any state involvement in our union
  - \* All officials on the average wage of members, with bone fide expenses. All private business dealings of elected officials to be made transparent to members

## Support the Skilled Six

By Stephen Jolly

**T**HE RULING CLASS, the bosses' media, and the class-compromising wing of the labour movement have launched a witchhunt against the militant leadership of the Victorian branch of the AMWU. The scabbing workers' union division.

Officially it's over the charges laid on six officials after an incident at the scab-lead-in, labour hire company Skilled Engineering. The underlying motives is the further casualisation of the workforce.

Already Australia has the second highest rate of casualisation in the advanced capitalist world, after Spain, at 24%. Skilled lead the charge of a growing number of body hire firms who offer bosses a "no commitment" disposable labour force to replace their permanent staff.

The charges against the Skilled Six are also an attempt to wipe out the most militant union leadership in Australia. Victoria AMWU Secretary Craig Johnston and his Workers' First team first won positions in 1998 and haven't lost a union election in the Victorian AMWU since. They have transformed the union from being a phony and training ground for the ALP into a fighting organisation that has boosted wages and conditions and fought hard against redundancies.

The union has also taken on broader issues, actively supporting SIU, MI, the anti-Nike protests and more. No other union better represents the new wave of militant union leaderships that have developed in the post-Accord era. The others are the Victorian branches of the plumbers, ETU, and CFMEU.

The Skilled incident has given an opportunity to the enemies of workers to try to reverse this process of union reform and recovery. When Skilled Engineering supplied scabs to break a picket line they became a legitimate target. An incident allegedly occurred at the fortress-like Box Hill offices of Skilled. Six officials including Craig were arrested and charged. No boss gets jailed when one of their workers is killed or seriously injured at work. No boss gets jailed for sacking workers in order to get an extra dollar in their wallets. No boss gets jailed for employing scabs or security guards during industrial disputes. But Craig are laid whenever workers and their leaders undertake effective action. Isn't it great that we have a situation where the complaints raised against these union officials are of going in "too hard" for their members. For years the complaint has been the opposite.

The Socialist Party understands that in the class struggle direct action is a necessary auxiliary at times to mass action of pickets, rallies and occupations. We support the Skilled Six 100%. Union leaders like ACTU Secretary Greg Combet and Victorian Trades Hall Assistant Secretary Nathan Niven have seen fit to attack Craig in the bosses' media.

The question of the whens and hows of direct action should be discussed and answered inside our movement, not with the assistance of the police and mass media. The Skilled Six need about \$100,000 for legal fees. The national leadership of the union has denied them legal support.

The stakes are high. Our enemies want Craig and his team out of office, fined and jailed. We will have to physically defend the union offices, attend rallies, and undertake industrial action before we beat off this attack. The alternative is a return to the days of Corsetti and class compromise. That will happen over our dead bodies.



# Carnage

*why it happened, what it means, what*

**T**HE KILLING of thousands of innocent civilians in New York, Washington and elsewhere in the US has caused horror and revulsion among ordinary working people worldwide.

The suicide tactics of the attackers are condemned and opposed by socialists. Such tactics can never advance the struggles of oppressed nationalities or working-class people anywhere across the globe. In fact the immediate results of such action could be to weaken working-class solidarity as governments in the West whip up the mood for revenge on those who are blamed for carrying out the attacks.

John Howard will no doubt try to link the carnage to the mainly Afghan refugees trying to enter Australia. Ironically they are fleeing from a vicious government that supports Osama bin-Laden. These minor details get lost in the racist backlash against Muslims.

Inevitably, as on 11 September, it will be the workers, the oppressed and dispossessed who pay the price for what the US leaders and commentators describe as an 'Act of war'.

Whilst no group has claimed responsibility as *The Voice* goes to press, and Osama bin-Laden is rumoured to have denied involvement, the US government is certainly preparing to revenge these horrific attacks.

With leading politicians correctly pointing out that this is a more devastating attack on US imperialism than Pearl Harbour, a US government (particularly one led by Bush) will inevitably have to be seen to do something in the face of such an assault.

The attacks will be seen as huge turning point for world capitalism and will have immense consequences for the world politically and economically, apart from the devastating effect it will have on the lives of tens of thousands of people in the USA and indeed worldwide.

Share prices have plummeted and the price of oil and gold have increased dramatically - a recognition of the scale of the crisis that international capitalism feels it is facing.

## Effects in Middle East

Following these horrendous events there will certainly be an escalation of the Middle East crisis, which is likely to see the US and other imperialist powers more directly involved and could lead to all-out conflict in the region. Unfortunately, it is likely to result in further assassinations and reprisals against the whole Palestinian population on behalf of the imperialist powers.

Israeli premier Ariel Sharon has indicated that he sees this as a green light to intensify action against the Palestinian masses and he will draw on US support - either directly or indirectly - to carry out wider repression in the region.

Inevitably in the immediate aftermath, large sections of US workers will temporarily acquiesce in whatever actions the

previously unpopular, reactionary President Bush takes.

And the pandemonium following the scenes of carnage engulfing New York and Washington after the suicide strikes have led to a wider panic about the implications of the strikes.

Immediately following the aircraft crashes into the World Trade Centre and Pentagon - potent symbols of world capitalism's financial and military might - share prices, which had been falling dramatically in previous days, fell further.

The price of oil rose by \$2-\$3 a barrel reflecting anxieties about increased instability in the Middle East - the likely source of the terrorist attack.

The air strikes led to an immediate state of national and international crisis, which will provoke further questioning of the authority of capitalist's rulers. Government and financial services were paralysed in the USA and stock markets in other advanced capitalist countries dropped dramatically or were suspended following the attacks. Even if capitalism manages to stabilise matters in the short term the medium and long-term effect will be to deepen the underlying economic crisis.

No doubt Bush and Western imperialism will step up their drive against Islamic terrorism in retribution. The co-ordinated assault on America will lead to co-ordinated US state

action to hunt down and get 'rev' regardless of whether they were sible that a witch-hunting atmosphere in the United States and elsewhere ag suspected of associations with t

This could also be used again lence the capitalist system.

Already elements in the medi bombers to anti-capitalist demo upcoming CHOGM event in M

## Anti-terror

It is also conceivable that gov to ban anti-globalisation protest against their capitalist system. In globalisation protest in Washing will either not go ahead or be bombings a convenient way of tion over the Ansett collapse an opportunity to step up security.



# Carnage

*will happen next, a socialist way out...*



tics which reached their extremity in New York and Washington. Indeed US Secretary of State Colin Powell had said in May this year: "Terrorism is part of the dark side of globalisation. However, sadly, it is part of doing business in the world - business we as Americans are not going to stop doing."

## Hypocrisy of imperialism

US and Western leaders talk sanctimoniously about acts of 'evil' terrorism but gloss over their own acts of terrorism - military, political and economically - against oppressed people around the world.

The attacks show that despite all the armoury of the world's only superpower they are powerless and unable to protect their own citizens in the face of determined suicide attacks. The inability of the imperialist powers to find a settlement to the crisis in the Middle East, combined with the incapacity of the Palestinian leaders to offer a way forward for the Palestinian struggle, has led to increasing use of suicide attacks as a tactic.

Whilst the suicide bombings have struck terror into the heart of Israel and America, they are not capable of bringing forth a successful resolution of the Palestinian conflict. Nor will they deter US and other world leaders from continuing with their policies of state terror and economic exploitation.

## Bush, Howard will never solve the problems

Among the lessons that workers internationally will draw from these terrible events is that the imperialists, like Bush and Howard, cannot offer any resolution to the world's conflicts. But neither can the tactics of the fundamentalist terrorist groups offer a way forward to the long-suffering peoples of the Middle East.

Furthermore, as well as adding to the panic on the already jittery world capitalist markets the events will confirm to large numbers of workers worldwide the instability of the global capitalist system. At some stage these events could be a further trigger to exacerbate the economic woes of world capitalism.

Capitalism, at its most naked is a system of conflict, civil wars, wars, poverty, starvation and insecurity for the mass of people on this planet. It is the oppressed people of the world - whether it is workers in America or Palestinian youth - who pay the price of capitalism's inability to resolve the crises their system creates.

*It is the oppressed people of the world who can provide a solution to this era of global crisis by uniting to end the rule of the capitalist system and establish a socialist world where the horrors and insecurity of imperialism's so-called New World Order are abolished once and for all.*

e against Islamic groups, olved or not. It is also possible to develop in the Arabs, Muslims or others 1st states or groups.

These imperialist powers have pursued policies which have led to the deaths of thousands in the Middle East and throughout the globe.

President George W Bush's father, the other President Bush, was the world leader who used a war in the Gulf to assert his 'New World Order'. That new order ushered in the era of globalisation, which has impoverished and alienated billions.

US imperialism's dominance of the globe has brought increased instability, tension and turmoil to every corner of the planet.

Combined with the absence of a mass movement of the working classes and oppressed, that has led some to pursue extreme and futile methods, such as the suicide tactics which led to the carnage in New York and Washington.

These policies have antagonised millions around the world and have driven some in desperation to pursue the suicide tac-

ing to connect the tions at S11 and the time and Brisbane.

ns will be used against workers

very likely that the anti-Howard found the ling criticism of his incs immediately used the many workers will in-

# THE DEBT BOOMERANG

## How the Third World Debt Harms us all

A review of SUSAN GEORGE'S expose' on world debt and the institutions that control and perpetuate it

By Laurance Coates

**T**HE DEBT BOOMERANG, first published almost ten years ago, is an excellent study of the role of debt in the exploitation of the ex-colonial "South" by the imperialist "North".

Although the figures are dated, the book provides a detailed and highly relevant insight into the workings of banks and debt agencies like the IMF and World Bank. In her introduction the author Susan George, now an influential figure in ATTAC, states boldly that her research team have "devoted proportionally more human resources to this issue than any comparable group of people, even including the official debt managers of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund."

The voluminous facts she presents support this claim. She shows how in the eight years following the 1982 debt crisis:

"At the behest of the Bank and the Fund, debtor countries have deprived their people (particularly the poorest among them) of basic necessities in order to provide the private banks and the public agencies of the rich countries with the equivalent of six Marshall Plans."

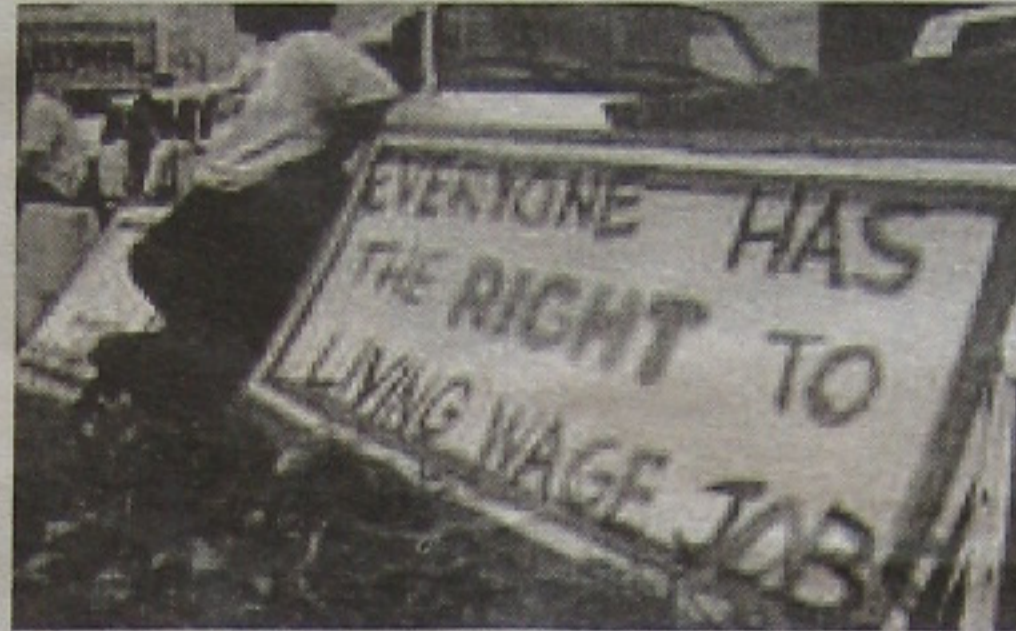
The Marshall Plan was the name given to the programme of cheap loans and aid provided by Washington to rebuild Western Europe after the Second World War. Still after this massive outflow of capital "the debtor countries as a group began the 1990s fully 61 per cent more in debt than they were in 1982," she explains (emphasis hers). This outstrips even the transfer of resources which occurred in the era of colonialism.

The IMF and World Bank, acting on behalf of their stockholders, the USA and other rich countries, have dictated economic policy to Third World countries over a 20 year period, in some cases longer.

Susan George lists six "boomerangs" (The Environment, Drugs, How Northern Taxpayers Bail out the Banks, Lost Jobs and Markets, Immigration, Conflict and War) by which the debt policies of governments and banks in the "North" rebound on ordinary workers living there.

A clear example is how Third World governments are driven to ecological destruction to earn foreign currency to pay off the debt. While large-scale deforestation began in the 1960s, the book shows that the pace accelerated as a result of the debt crisis in 1982. Those countries which deforested fastest in the 1980s were also, in most cases, the biggest debtors.

By 1989 Thailand had destroyed 83 per cent of its original forests, Nigeria 61 per cent and Venezuela 80 per cent. Greenhouse emissions (of



carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane) from the destruction of forests increased by 50 per cent during that decade, accounting for "up to one-fifth of impending global climate change". Yet as Susan George argues,

"Northern policy makers have behaved up to now as if the earth could be sliced in half like a grapefruit, leaving most of the south to its fate."

Her arguments are very relevant to the current storm over Kyoto in which the role of forests as "carbon sinks" is a critical issue. "Outside the White House" she writes, "few people doubt the reality of global warming." She is referring to the previous president Bush.

The growth of the cocaine economy in the Andean countries of South America can also be attributed to IMF economics. In 1985 Bolivia instituted one of the toughest ever IMF-backed austerity programmes, closing down its entire tin industry and sacking thousands of workers, many of whom turned to coca production. About 300,000 Colombians are employed by the cocaine trade. Former Peruvian president, Alan Garcia, called the drugs industry "Latin America's only successful multinational".

Without cocaine production these economies would have completely collapsed as a result of the fall in commodity prices while creditors still demanded their 'pound of flesh'. Susan George shows the hypocrisy of IMF officials whose reports studiously avoid mentioning "the C-word" but know full well that without cocaine, their 'reforms' in these countries are doomed. The former director of Bolivia's Central Bank confessed that, "Cocaine is like a cushion that is preventing a social explosion."

The boomerang effect is illustrated in the figure of 13 million US citizens using illegal drugs. This, she explains, costs the US economy about \$60 billion a year. At the same time the banks are subsidised by taxpayers, the majority of whom "are blissfully unaware of the fact". The chapter 'Bailing Out the Banks' provides a detailed account of the financial manipulations (debt write-offs, tax credits etc) which the banks have at their disposal.

She shows how debt agencies trumpet the virtues of privatisation everywhere while the bulk of the Third World debt itself has been shifted from private to public institutions freeing the banks of responsibility for their own mistakes.

The weakest material in *The Debt Boomerang* appears in the chapter on immigration. Partly this is because so much has changed since the book was published—in the Balkans, to take just one example. Schengen, then in its infancy, is only mentioned once. But the main problem is the conclusions of the author herself, as in the following passage:

"The former socialist prime minister of France Michel Rocard took a lot of flak from his own party and the rest of the French left when he said... 'We can't take in the whole of the world's misery', but he was speaking the literal truth. If only to ensure a decent living (and at least relative freedom from racism) for those immigrants who are already in the North, we must try to deal with immigration by making it less necessary."

Socialists and anti-racists have long argued against the idea that racism (and for that matter

the standard of living) is determined by the number of immigrants in a given society.

Racism is a product of the diseased capitalist system and the politicians, whether overtly racist or not, who defend the system at all costs.

In this respect Rocard and the French "Socialist" Party are no innocents. This section of the book, characteristically, contains a lot of useful information but also several hair-raising formulations. Susan George writes that, "Political asylum is a tricky subject. There is no doubt that this concept (a noble one if ever there was one) is being abused and therefore discredited in the eyes of many Europeans."

EU governments are serial "abusers" of the right of asylum, having narrowed the criteria to the point where it is almost impossible in some countries to win asylum. The Swedish government for example has recently been criticised by the UN for returning refugees to regimes that have subsequently tortured them. The policies of imperialist governments in this area are no different to their policies on debt. *The Debt Boomerang* fails sufficiently to recognise this, referring to 'Europeans' as if all Europeans, rich and poor, were guided by the same interests.

"Finally," she argues, "if Europe wants to halt

the alarming (from whatever point of view) increase in the numbers of asylum seekers, the first step is to stop supporting dictators."

Aside from this, the main weakness with *The Debt Boomerang* is that it stops short of challenging capitalism, putting forward half-measures, perhaps in the mistaken belief that this is more 'realistic'. Susan George distances herself from those who call for complete cancellation of the debt, calling instead for "significant reductions substantially more than 50 per cent".

She argues that this "should be directly tied to better targeted development aid, transmitted primarily through reputable non-government organisations. They, in turn, would be held responsible for making sure the aid reached organisations of peasants, women, workers and environmentalists."

What this means is retaining part of the debt as a means of exerting pressure on debtor countries, albeit according a more humane schema. The debt would continue to be controlled by the same governments and agencies. This, to give things their correct name, is an entirely imperialistic arrangement. Also, without wishing here to discuss the role of non-governmental organisations, who decides which ones are 'reputable'?

It's one thing to accept a halving of the debt as one outcome in the course of a mass struggle, if this was the best that could be achieved at the time. It's another thing to put this forward as a demand, presenting it as a possible solution. Socialists call for the cancellation of all the debt, which has been repaid many times over, accompanied by measures to bring the banks under public ownership and control and develop an international socialist plan of production.

Anti-capitalist activists will find the facts and arguments in *The Debt Boomerang* invaluable, but will have to look elsewhere for real answers.

## India's women workers strike against globalisation

**T**UESDAY 24 JULY 2001 will go down in the history of the working class of Bangalore, India, as a unique and heroic day.

The Joint Action Committee of the central trade unions were passively protesting against proposed amendments to the labour laws and also against the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) onslaught on the Indian economy.

Elsewhere in Peenya, one of the largest industrial estates, the underdogs and those discarded by the windbags of trade union officialdom took to the streets to seek justice.

A rumour that the Provident Fund savings of the workers would only be available after they reach the age of 45 enraged the unorganised, predominantly women garment workers of Peenya.

From 9.30am, the women from the garment factories started coming out spontaneously. By noon the number of protesters had reached 15,000 - mainly women. The protesters put up road blocks on the national highway

which passes through Peenya.

Nearly 10,000 gathered outside the Provident Fund office, seeking answers. Then police wielding batons, charged on the peaceful women workers, injuring many. This opened the floodgates of anger.

In retaliation the police responsible for the attack were singled out and chased into the offices where they were dealt with by angry workers.

Time and again the workers pleaded with the police commissioner that they had gathered to seek justice and get answers to their questions about their savings.

The workers have argued against any amendment to the Provident Fund rules, as getting a permanent job is next to impossible. With meagre wages they are living a hand-to-mouth existence and many depend on Provident Fund loans for emergencies.

If access to the Provident Fund is restricted to those over 45, then almost 80% of workers will be denied their own accumulated savings.

This event are symptomatic of industrial storms coming because of the pauperisation of the working

class. In the manufacturing sector this has reached brutal limits and inevitably a fight-back will explode.

The privatisation of public-sector giants has ruined the small-scale industrial sector, which was totally dependant on the public sector.

In Bangalore alone between 1998-2000, 425 factories have been closed, axing 33,000 workers' jobs. In 2001 the government is proposing to close down eleven public-sector units.

The lifting of import restrictions, a WTO requirement, has led to the ruin of small-scale consumer goods industries. Engineering, chemical and new IT enterprises are closing down. A permanent job has become a mirage, it is no wonder the Peenya workers are angry.

From December 2000 there have been movements of the working class in one area of the country or the other, with postal and other strikes and peasants' struggles all developing from below, showing the weakness of the trade union leadership.

The Peenya workers have shown a way forward. It is the duty of the trade unions to build on it.



# Nationalise Ansett

## For a democratically-worked out plan for the airline industry

**T**he collapse of Ansett exposes the lie of the free market, capitalist competition and the benefits of private ownership of the big companies.

Capitalism today equals monopolisation and the domination of multinational and large companies over small business.

This process was explained by Karl Marx over 150 years ago.

Therefore the choice is private ownership of the monopolies and big companies or state ownership under workers' control and management.

The Ansett collapse will give the Australian flying public a virtual monopoly provider in Qantas, with Virgin on about 10% of the market. Prices have already started inching up.

Ansett always had an old, cheap fleet - that was the style of its founder. The recapitalisation of the company was always the key question for Air New Zealand or any other potential owner.

Air New Zealand borrowed heavily to buy the four times larger Ansett. Once the NZ Labour Party/left-leaning Alliance coalition government stopped Singapore Airlines from buying 49% of Air New Zealand (leading to the rebuilding of the Ansett fleet by cash-laden Singapore Airlines), the future for Ansett was bleak.

In one last shot, Air New Zealand management offered Richard Branson US\$80 million for Virgin. If he had accepted, they believed they could borrow \$1 billion for recapitalisation. Branson knocked back the offer and at



this stage Air New Zealand management gave up on Ansett. The looting began, with all fuel bills being put on Ansett accounts rather than Air New Zealand accounts, maintenance was let slide leading to groundings, and at the end engines were stolen from Ansett planes and taken to New Zealand.

Qantas was offered the airline for \$1, but they knocked it back knowing that Ansett was doomed. Far better to wait until liquidators were appointed and they could pick and choose the juicy parts of Ansett for themselves.

This is the reality of the capitalist free market. The losers are the 16,000 workers with the threat of losing all or some of their \$600 million in hard-won entitlements.

Howard, in the run-up to the election, will have to offer them something — to be paid for by a \$10 levy on air tickets. Beazley wants to pay the Ansett workers from the sale (privatisation) of Sydney Airport. But hasn't private ownership got us into this mess in the first place? In any event, there couldn't be a worse time to sell an airport than now.

We say occupy the airports to stop the looting of Ansett property.

Nationalise under workers' control and management the airline industry. Only then can there be a sane management plan worked out for the benefit of travellers and the economy.

## PNG enters new era of turmoil

By Laurence Coates

**P**APUA NEW GUINEA has been shaken by the most serious social upheavals since independence in 1975. On Wednesday 27th June, police in the capital Port Moresby preempted Genua by shooting and, in this case killing, four student demonstrators.

The killings triggered a government crisis with calls for the resignation of Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta and his police chief. Sir Mekere, a former central banker, is widely seen as a puppet of foreign capitalists and in particular the country's former colonial power, Australia. The cause of the unrest is a massive austerity package sponsored by the World Bank and IMF.

Five days of well organised and peaceful protests by the youth of Port Moresby supported by the trade union movement ended in a bloody massacre when riot police stormed the university campus, leaving four dead and 16 injured. Events in Papua New Guinea refute the arguments of those who claim that the anti-capitalist movement which issued from the Seattle demonstrations of 1999 is a 'rich world' phenomenon.

Students, workers and unemployed youth from Port Moresby's squatter settlements staged a series of daring protests against Sir Mekere's 'economic reforms'. In the run-up to the shootings, 3,000 protesters occupied the car park outside the Prime Minister's office. Sir Mekere was forced to convene a

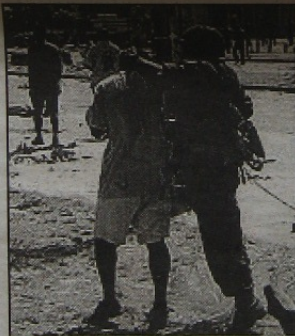
press conference at his home because 'all other venues were denied him' according to the press. The Australian newspaper's correspondent described the protests as 'extremely disciplined, well organised'.

Demonstrators chanted 'rausim World Bank, rausim IMF, rausim Australia' which means chase their officials out.

The police claim to have fired in order to stamp out 'criminality' pointing to the worst rioting in the capital for decades which erupted in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Cars were torched as was part of a police barracks and a Red Rooster outlet. Eyewitnesses point out however that the rioting took place only after the shootings. Even former Prime Minister Bill Skate, no friend of the protests, stated that 'I believe the shooting happened before the rioting. The police triggered the violence.'

The same view was expressed by the general secretary of the PNG Trade Union Congress, John Paska, who also leads the newly formed Labour Party. He called for Sir Mekere to resign, arguing 'he has lost the trust of the people and must shoulder the blame for the deaths in yesterday's unrest'.

The fact that the shootings took place on the university campus supports the students' account of events. Hours earlier the peaceful demonstration outside the Prime Ministers' office had been broken up by police using tear gas and



The Government onslaught continues

shotgun blanks. Only the day before Sir Mekere had visited the demonstrators and received a petition from them, demanding that the World Bank and IMF be thrown out and the 'reforms' halted. Following the police action the students withdrew to the campus.

'Police came in full war gear, they came with M16s, tear gas...', a spokesman for the students explained.

'Students were harmless... they (the police) even followed the students into the campus... and the students were shot dead there in the campus', he continued. Students were shot as they retreated or were lying on the ground in surrender. The armed police units which stormed the campus had been flown in from Rabaul in the East New Britain Province. These units are normally used to quell tribal unrest and include veterans from the

army's bloody fiasco against the independence movement on Bougainville island. Meanwhile the army itself was confined to barracks during the unrest, the government clearly unwilling to test its loyalty.

In March an armed rebellion took place in protest against a plan sponsored by the Australian government to halve the size of the army, a plan which has since been dropped.

Following the shootings several thousand demonstrators gathered outside Port Moresby's General Hospital for a planned march on parliament. Heavily armed police prevented the crowd from taking the bodies of Steven Kil, Simon Noki and Matthew Paven from the hospital morgue. The fourth victim, a girl, had still not been identified at the time of writing (July 2001).

The demonstrators wanted to prevent a cover up by police and had intended to carry the bodies at the head of the procession. Sir Mekere has announced an inquiry into the deaths but few people have much confidence in this. Students say they can identify the policemen responsible for the killings. Meanwhile a dusk-to-dawn curfew and police barricades across the city meant that, in practise, martial law reigns in Port Moresby.

Papua New Guinea shows the reality behind the World Bank and IMF talk of 'poverty reduction strategies'. In the face of massive international criticism these institu-

tions have attempted to improve their image while in practise pursuing the same policies on behalf of their stockholders, the USA and other major capitalist countries.

The World Bank is withholding 210 million dollars in loans from the PNG government until its privatisation demands are met. These include the sale of the national airline, telecommunications, electricity, the government-owned bank, post office and ports. Altogether this would mean selling-off 70 per cent of the country's economy. Trade union and student campaigners have warned that thousands of jobs are at stake.

The World Bank measures also include a 'land reform' involving the registration and eventual sale of traditional lands to rich buyers. This is perhaps the most volatile issue of all.

Living standards have been falling in PNG since independence, but took a dive during the Asian crisis of 1997-99. Last year the government halved the minimum wage as the currency, the kina, continued to plummet. This is clearly not the end of what has developed into a united front of trade unionists and youth against the World Bank plans.

TUC leader John Paska pointed out that, 'We are entering serious discussions in terms of the possibilities for the closure of the port throughout the country, the closure of Air Niugini and if necessary to close the power supply.'

Just such a campaign of industrial action linked to a clear - socialist and internationalist - alternative is what's needed to stop the privatisation plans which, if implemented, amount to re-colonisation of the country.

# AUSTRALIA DANCES TO AMERICA'S PIPE

By Steve Jolly

**T**HE RECENT visit to Australia by US Secretary of State (Foreign Minister) Colin Powell was an attempt to solicit support from Canberra for a four-way pact of the Australia, US, Japan and South Korea to counter the growing Chinese influence in the East Asian region.

China almost immediately condemned the US for "attempting to impose an Asian-Pacific NATO in the region". The People's Daily singled out Australia, accusing Canberra of "dancing to the tune of America's pipe". It asked: "If the American national missile defense system or its insistence on providing military support for Taiwan leads to a regional arms race or a regional crisis, how safe will Australia be?"

When Bush was first elected he soon came under pressure from the big sections of US capitalists with investments in China to ease up on his anti-Beijing rhetoric; an increasing anacronism in this period. Canberra, in turn, will come under pressure from local capitalists to be careful of being dragged into a diplomatic conflict with China because of its faithful support of every one of Bush's ideas (a regional pact, opposition to Kyoto, the creation of a missile defenses system/Star Wars Mark 2).

The crisis over the shooting down of a US spy plane over China showed more than anything the limitations of Bush's power in relation to China. The significant sectors of US capitalism with investments in China have put big pressure on Bush to ease up on his Cold War-style rhetoric against Beijing.

After initial bluster, Bush had to apologise to Beijing and accept his plane back



Colin Powell

in pieces. China cannot be larded over by Washington.

Now in a much more discrete way, Washington is trying to stay relevant in the region. Pulling its three major allies together in a multilateral pact is part of this process.

The ancient leaders of the Communist Party in Beijing are desperately trying to stay in control of the increasingly capitalist economy. Since 1980 they have turned from the stagnation of a bureaucratically-run state-owned economy without any workers' control towards unfettered capitalism. The state's role today is a) backing the growing private sector (there was a 17.5% rise in fixed asset investment from the state last year, which boosted the market for the private sector) and b) using its repressive apparatus to clampdown on worker and poor peasant opposition under the guise of fighting crime.

Such is the size of the Chinese market and economy that the forces unleashed by the turn to capitalism have had huge effects inside and outside China.

China attracts 80% odd of all foreign investment going to Asia. The anti-communist Taiwanese bosses have 50,000 companies in mainland 'communist' China, with investment from Taiwan to China rising 23% this year.

Growth rates in China have been massive. It is expected that when China joins

the World Trade Organisation in November it will lead to 8%+ growth rates for a period. The granting of the Olympics to Beijing will lead to \$35 billion in new investment.

But the growth is lobe-sided. The inland provinces have been left behind. The scrapping of agricultural subsidies when China joins the WTO will lead to 400 million farmers being pushed off the land, the greatest human movement in world history. Millions of workers will be sacked from state-owned companies to be privatised joining the 50 million already sacked in the past few years.

A Communist Party report leaked to the media in June shows the fear of the bureaucracy as to the political effects of these changes. It talks of "collective protests and group incidents" and says the masses are "tense, with conflicts on the rise... Our country's entry into the WTO may bring growing dangers and pressures, and it can be predicted that in the ensuing period the number of group incidents may jump, severely harming social stability and even disturbing the smooth implementation of reform and opening up." In June 4,000 miners blockaded a railway in Jilin province because they hadn't been paid for 17 months. In March 2,000 miners protested in Shanxi province because they feared being laid off. These incidents are just the tip of the iceberg.

The clamp-down on the Fulang Dong sect is a warning to the working class and peasants from the regime.

The next period will see a growth of regional tensions as well as the outbreak of working class resistance inside China. The Australian working class and their organisations need to support these movements as they have done in East Timor and Indonesia.



## LTTE AIRPORT ATTACK INCREASES ETHNIC BATTLE

By Sampath Perera

**L**TTE MILITANT'S blew up eight Air Force planes at Katunayake Air base in Sri Lanka on Tuesday 24 July.

They also totally destroyed three civil air planes belongs to Sri Lanka Air Lines, which were parked in the adjoining Bandaranaike International Airport. Cloaked in darkness the militants had arrived at the Raj Fernando Stadium in Kurana, the playground adjacent to the rear of the Air Force base.

There they had reportedly picniced and prepared for the event the climax of many months of planning. From there they entered into the air base to start their operation. When the nearly six-hour drama ended, the Colombo International Airport was closed. Incoming flights were diverted to Dubai and to South Indian airports. A total of 21 persons, 14 militants, six airmen and a commando were killed in Tuesday's pre-dawn attack on the air base and the airport. A high-ranking air force team is still trying to determine how the attackers penetrated the 800-acre complex ringed by barricades, road-blocks, minefields and guarded by more than 1,000 troops.

The attack is seen as the worst and the most damaging in the 18-year long war between government troops and LTTE cadres. The damage was estimated at about US\$ 530 million.

This is yet another blow to the Peoples Alliance government led by President Chandrika Kumaratunga. In late June President Kumaratunga suspended the parliament in her attempt to remain in power after her unpopular government lost the majority in the parliament on the 21st of August to get peoples approval for proposed constitutional reforms but many parties opposed to this state this is simply an attempt to avoid a defeat in the parliament.

President Kumaratunga swept to power in 1994 promising many constitutional changes



The charred remains of a bomber jet including abolition of the presidential system and de-centralise power allowing more autonomy to minority Tamils in north and east of the country. She also promised respect to human rights, investigation into violation of human right and corruption by previous government and give a 'human face' to market economy.

She did not deliver on any of her promises, in fact the situation in Sri Lanka became worse under her administration. Prices of essential goods rose extensively in the last five years and many corruption and human right violations were reported. She failed to resolve the ethnic problems peacefully and waste millions of dollars on the war. Both Sinhala and Tamil people in Sri Lanka suffered a lot during this period.

In last December LTTE declared a unilateral ceasefire and called for the government to do the same. However, the government refused stating the LTTE cannot be trusted.

Opposition parties have campaigned to reopen the parliament and they have worked out a preliminary draft of the motion to impeach the President. The working class in Sri Lanka will suffer from all of these political and ethnic conflicts. Sri Lanka Air Lines already sacked 50 percent of its workforce.

Air Line has given twenty-four hours notice to seven hundred and eleven employees to clear their desks and leave by 30th July.

## Obituary 'Bandit Queen' shot dead

**I**NDIA'S FAMED 'bandit queen', Phoolan Devi, whose name once inspired resistance, was shot dead outside her official MP's residence in New Delhi.

Ms Devi, 38, was shot in the head by two masked gunmen around 1.20pm as she got out of her car on her return from the morning session of parliament, police officials said.

The Samajwadi Party MP, who allegedly gunned down 22 high-caste Hindus in 1981 to avenge her gang rape, was announced dead on arrival at Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia hospital.

Ms Devi was part of India's bandit folklore. The story of her life on the run through India's Hindu heartland, Madhya Pradesh, in the early 1980's was the subject of many films and books, notably Shekhar Kapur's 1996 movie *Bandit Queen*.

She never denied her years as a bandit. Ms Devi always denied having killed any one. She surrendered to police in 1983 and was jailed. In 1984 she was released without having been tried.

She returned to the spotlight when she successfully contested the low-caste-dom-



The 'Bandit Queen'

inated Mirzapur constituency in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh in the 1996 elections. She then lost the seat in 98 but was re-elected the following year. She had received death threats throughout her political career but had reported at stark increase over recent months. Samajwadi Party officials are blaming the government for failing to ensure adequate protection for her.

"This is a conspiracy by the government at central and state level, that they allowed such a lapse in security of a prominent person like her who obviously at risk", said senior party leaders. Party members gathered outside the hospital chanting "blood for blood"

## WHY WAHID WENT WITH A WHIMPER



Abdurrahman Wahid

By John Gowan

**ON MONDAY 23rd of July Abdurrahman Wahid was prosecuted by parliament for corruption and removed as President of Indonesia after only twenty-one months in office.**

In the weeks and months building up to his removal he threatened that his supporters would come out on the streets in their hundreds of thousands and save him, if the parliament voted for prosecution.

When parliament voted against Wahid, nothing happened: the President was removed with a whimper. Wahid's power base was the Muslim 30-million-strong Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). However over the last few years his home base in East Java has been wracked by economic collapse as in much of Indonesia. He had become detached from the Ulama, the religious leaders and many Muslims had come not to trust Wahid.

According to an Australian who was a close political advisor, Wahid continually pulled back the members in the NU from action in his

support. When Wahid finally called on his supporters to enter the streets only a few thousand did.

In Parliament he became increasingly erratic sacking ministers and Former Military Chief General Wiranto until his support dwindled to almost nothing.

Wahid posed as a liberal and a friend of the people. He was more of a liberal than most other parliamentarians and leaders of parties and religious groups. He campaigned for religious tolerance against making Islam a state religion because it would alienate and endanger religious and ethnic minorities.

Indeed most left and socialist in Indonesia argued for support for Wahid. But as Craig Bowen argued in his Short History of the Indonesian Communist Party "Many people in Indonesia pose today as 'democrats' and friends of the people', tomorrow there will be many more."

1990 Wahid was no friend of the Indonesian masses. He presided over increased economic collapse and under increasing poverty. Workers can only rely on their own power on their own organisations and their own program.

The book details active CIA involvement in the murder of a million communists in 1965 and 1966. The CIA was responsible for giving the Indonesian military the addresses of communist party members and for helping to finance the mass murders.

In fact many of these murders were carried out by Islamic organisations with the backing of the military.



The new president Megawati Sukarno Putri

Socialists in Indonesia are beginning to build a genuine socialist leadership and not relying on bourgeois leaders or the religious organisations.

The only real protection and advancement of the Indonesian working class and land laborers lies in their own trade unions and genuine socialist organisations.

The newly elected deputy Hamzah Haz is chairman of Indonesia's third largest party, the Muslim-based United Development Party (PPP). This is being sold as a dream-team, the none religious Megawati and the religious Haz. But there is no way that these two can make a difference the plight of the Indonesian poor. The road is now clear for the workers to focus on the bosses and the new right wing President and Vice President.

It is very likely that Megawati will institute tight IMF constraints which Wahid held off from doing in fear of the reaction of the poor. This is in a period of deepening world economic, capitalist crisis.

Opportunities will open up for the trade unions and socialist parties to develop a clearer program for the deepening Indonesian storm.

## CIA BACKED MASSACRE LEAKED

By Stephen Jolly

**L**AST MONTH the US Government Printing Office mistakenly released to libraries around the world erstwhile secret documents that prove CIA involvement in the massacre of over one million communists during the Indonesian counter-revolution of 1965-66 when Suharto came to power.

The documents outline payments by the CIA to the death squads of Suharto. They also show hitlists of PKI members (Indonesian Communist Party) given by the CIA to the same killers.

In 1965 General Suharto organised a coup against the nationalist President Sukarno (father of current President Megawati).

While in power Sukarno was backed by the PKI giving him a mass base. However he was not socialist, but rather a populist nationalist leader who defended capitalism, while taking a position independent to the US on the world arena.

Instead of using its mass base to organise for socialist change (it was the biggest Communist Party in the world outside the USSR and China), the PKI preached total faith in the President even making him an honorary member! This policy was in line with the international CP line of stages - support for 'democratic' capitalism now, leaving socialism to a later date. The material basis for this position was the unwillingness of Stalin to see a successful workers' revolution anywhere else for fear of it spreading and ending his rule.

Suharto played on the economic chaos under Sukarno and mobilised Muslim and peasant support for his coup. The PKI shut their eyes to what was coming, concentrating on graft to their

and were only too ready to be forced to dig their own graves before being shot.

The CIA were up to their neck in supporting Suharto's coup as these records now prove to all the world. However the CIA or Suharto would have never been able to implement their barbarous acts if the PKI had not given support to Sukarno and had not turned their back on the task of fighting



Students protest against continual repression

the WTO and European Union, breaking down barriers to extend privatisation and allow the imperialist powers to increase their exploitation of the neo-colonial world, on a basis of 'sovereignty of states'.

Marxists start on the anti-imperialist footing, opposing foreign economic domination, stating that partial tariffs and import controls do not benefit the working population and the rural poor in the long run. We must build a socialist movement arguing for a state monopoly of foreign trade, as part of a democratically planned economy, to develop the country in the interests of the working class and rural poor.

There is no suggestion of ATTAC being a reactionary nationalist organisation. It stands decisively against the increased exploitation of the neo-colonial world. But, in the long run, this sort of idea, based on defending each capitalist nation, can run counter to the aim of building an international movement of all the exploited.

The CWI will continue to work with the progressive anti-capitalist elements within ATTAC to help build a socialist movement and socialist world.

## Fast news

### New CWI pamphlet on US crisis

THE COMMITTEE for a Workers' International has published a statement on the attacks on the US and the repercussions for the whole world.

The excellent socialist analysis is available from the Socialist Party now for \$2. Contact (03) 9639 9111 or email sp@mira.net for your copy.

A CWI International Secretariat statement on the impending world recession is also available.

### New international youth organisation to be founded in Belgium in November

YOUNG MEMBERS OF CWI sections from around the world will be meeting in Brussels, Belgium on Saturday December 15th to establish the International Socialist Resistance, a new alliance of socialist youth organisations. The SP youth wing, the Young Socialist League, is sending a representative who will also participate in the anti-European Union demo on December 14th.

### Irish Socialist jailed

IRISH SOCIALIST PARTY member Mick Barry was jailed for three days in September as the dispute between Cork corporation and anti-bin tax protesters escalated. Mick refused to pay a fine arising out of the Householders Against The Service Charges campaign policy of dumping uncollected rubbish outside Cork city hall every Monday. The bin tax is a new tax imposed on workers and their families. PAYE workers in Ireland already shoulder the biggest part of the country's tax bill and already pay for water, refuse and general public services. The corporation collects no rubbish from homes that won't pay the new tax.

## ATTAC AND THE TOBIN TAX

Edited by Zac Wright

**T**HE WORLDWIDE radicalisation, which is steadily taking on a more consciously anti-capitalist character, marks a significant change from the situation that prevailed during much of the 1990s.

In a number of European countries this radicalisation has been reflected in the growth of ATTAC (Association for a Taxation of financial Transactions and for Assistance to Citizens).

In Stockholm 1100 people filled a hall on 6 January, with hundreds more outside, for the official launch of the Swedish branch. With a mainly middle-class and student base, it's stress on action and international character have attracted many who are looking for a way to strike back at the speculators, monopolies and pro-rich governments. The spur which led to the creation of ATTAC was

an article, Disarming the Markets, by Ignacio Ramonet, a co-editor of Le Monde Diplomatique, who, along with another co-editor, Bernard Casent, launched ATTAC in December 1997.

ATTAC's idea for a special tax on financial dealings is often called a 'Tobin Tax', named after the US economist who first proposed it in 1972. Ramonet writes, "at 0.1%, the Tobin tax would bring in some \$166 billion a year, twice the annual amount needed to abolish the worst poverty by the end of the (20th) century". While the idea of changing society through taxation is utopian, the figures are useful in explaining how resources are available to significantly improve poorer lives.

while participating in struggles and opening a dialogue with those in and around ATTAC. Marxists start from where there is agreement.

Some activists will already agree that the capitalist system is the enemy. Others may be on the level of simply opposing the WTO, neo-liberalism, etc. Marxists explain that it is not sufficient to expose

# Voice

## Fight Howard's scapegoating of refugees

*Don't be sucked in by government's hysteria*



**J**OHN HOWARD is showing the same callousness to refugees and boat people as he has done in the past to wharfies, Aboriginal people, and workers who have lost everything when their company has gone bankrupt.

He is attempting to scapegoat refugees. He wants workers to blame them for the lack of jobs, public housing, and queues at hospitals. He wants to divert workers away from the real enemy: privatisation, capitalist greed, right-wing cost-cutting governments, and capitalist globalisation. He is willing to fan the fires of racism to win the election.

Next month at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Brisbane, Howard will wax lyrical about capitalist globalisation, free trade, capital movement, and how it should be embraced. When it comes to the movement of people, however, Howard shuts the doors and plays the nationalist, racist card. Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock, the most disgusting person in politics today, let the cat out of the bag during his recent visit to Jakarta. He said Australia would eventually accept people who had "sig-

nificant linkages" to Australia. This would give Australia the most closed borders in the western world, if this is not already the case. However, as we will show later, these policies will prove meaningless.

The ALP opposition is supporting the government 99.9%. They began the detention camp policy in 1992 under Bob Hawke.

Historically they supported a White Australia policy to divide workers in the region and keep capitalism safe.

The hate campaign against the refugees and boat people is disgusting.

The Afghani refugees, for example, are fleeing a Taliban regime that even Murdoch's *Australian* admitted was a regime "caused by Western policy". "all though the 1980s, Washington (backed by Canberra - editor) gave massive support to the mujaheddin, from which the Taliban sprang, in their anti-Soviet resistance."

The mainly Sunni Muslim Taliban have oppressed their political opponents, women, Shiite Muslims, Christians, Hazaras, Tajiks and Uzbeks. 5 million people have fled the country - a tiny number of whom make it to Australia.

There are no "queues" to jump in Afghanistan outside a western consulate! You flee or die. What would you do in this situation? Could Jews "queue" for visas outside Nazi party offices, or were they forced to flee for their life? It is the same today.

Howard's attempts to exise Christmas Island and Ashmore Reef from the mainland in terms of asylum law is unparalleled in world history. Why don't they follow the logic

### THE FACTS

• In the last financial year Australia had 4450 asylum-seekers arriving by boat - compare this to the 400,000 Albanians who have fled to Italy. In the same period Britain had 97,900 and Germany had 95,000 (the year before)

As of December 31st 2000, 58,674 people overstayed their visas in Australia, the vast majority being tourists.

• In 1998-99 more people arrived in Australia illegally by air - 2,100 compared with 930 on 42 boats.

• While the Federal government cuts back on spending to public hospitals and state schools, they have spent \$3 million a day to keep a few hundreds refugees out of Australia.

• It is cheaper for a refugee to be on the dole, (about \$25 a day) than in a detention centre (\$105 a day)

• Children as young as 10 can be strip-searched and sedated in refugee detention centres and there is a 5 year jail term for attempted escape. Today these repressive measures are used against refugees, tomorrow against striking trade unionists and protesting students

### WHAT WE STAND FOR

- A 35 hour week without loss in pay to share out available work. Minimum hourly wage rate of \$12
- Free education from child care to university
- Job creation through a massive spending boost for education, health and public transport
- Opposition to all inequality on the basis of sex or sexual preference
- Support for Land Rights and a national plan to overcome the social problems of Aboriginal people
- Opposition to the racist immigration laws—for the free movement of peoples
- Safe injecting facilities and state distribution of heroin to addicts
- Free abortion and contraception
- Nationalisation of the timber and mining industries to save our environment and provide alternative jobs
- Right to vote at 16, no junior rates of pay, more apprenticeships
- For the right to strike and solidarity strikes. No police on picket lines. Member control of unions.
- Community control of the police, election of officers in the armed forces
- For a new workers' party, for unions to break with Labor
- A socialist republic
- For international solidarity amongst the working class
- Bring the top 150 companies that control 80% of wealth into public hands under workers' control and management

**Continued on page 3**