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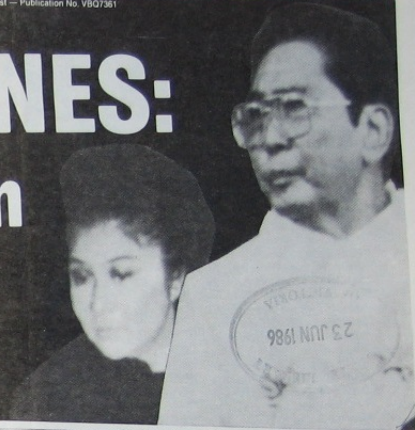
SOCIALIST ACTION



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PHILIPPINES: The election solves nothing



• Hartley : behind the purge

• The politics of AIDS

• The debate over US bases

LESOTHO

Pretoria pulls a coup

SOUTH African backed troops have overthrown the autocratic Prime Minister of Lesotho, Chief Leabua Jonathan.

With the success of the coup, the apartheid regime, which completely surrounds the small poverty-ridden country, partially lifted its three week blockade of Lesotho.

After supporting Chief Jonathan for more than twenty years, the South African Government moved against him when he refused to hand over African National Congress members.

The coup is a clear warning to other states to end support for the ANC. On December 20, South Africa's State Security Council warned that "all of southern Africa would have a heavy price to pay" if ANC members continued to operate from countries bordering on South Africa.

The coup is also another nail in the coffin of the ANC's guerrilla strategy. It appears that the new Lesotho Government, headed by General Justin Lekhanya, will give the South African police the power to monitor refugees in Lesotho.

But there is a new threat to apartheid, more powerful than any guerrilla strategy. It is the Congress of South African Trade Unions, or COSATU, formed in December from 33 affiliated unions, including the powerful National Union of Miners.

COSATU has demanded the release of Nelson Mandela, and has given the regime six months to abolish the pass laws.

Elija Barayi, president of COSATU, said that COSATU would aim at building socialism.

But to do that, revolutionaries in South Africa have to join together in a political party to push their ideas inside the unions, and to challenge the passive support the nationalist ANC has among black workers. That would be the first step along the road to a successful workers' revolution in South Africa.

REBEL TOUR

A fitting anti-climax

GIVEN that it went ahead, the "rebel" cricket tour of South Africa had the best possible result for opponents of apartheid.

The so-called champions of



South African police: now to monitor refugees in Lesotho

(white) South Africa struggled to beat an Australian Second XI. Kim Hughes' mercenaries collapsed miserably in the last Test, fluffing their chance for press glorification. Attendances were abysmal, the tour was a financial debacle, and a tax scandal erupted in South Africa over rebates given to the tour's sponsors.

Meanwhile, the *Sydney Morning Herald* claimed that Hughes' mercenaries created employment for blacks. But for the tour, we were told, black man David Mayekiso would not have had three days' work as a sight-screen pusher and rubbish collector at St Georges Park, Port Elizabeth.

For three days of dawn to dusk work, David Mayekiso was paid \$13.50.

RSI 1

Lucire takes the lucre

A SYDNEY psychiatrist has found an easy way to make money, touting half-baked theories about RSI to insurance companies faced with huge



Lucire: popular with insurers

compensation payouts.

Dr Yolande Lucire makes between 350 and 500 dollars for her 'assessment' of RSI sufferers. For this fee, Dr Lucire submits her 'patients', referred by the insurance company, to psychoanalysis. Her 'theory' is that she can tell the difference between real victims of Repetitive Strain Injury and 'malingerers'.

Why is Dr Lucire so popular with the insurers? It's simple. If they can get courts to accept that RSI is a psychosis caused by factors other than work, they stand to save plenty in unpaid compensation claims.

Manufacturers Mutual Insurance, a large compensation insurer, has gone a step further. They have established a 'clinic' for RSI sufferers.

No doubt they hope for further 'proof' that people with RSI are psychotic and really part of some mass hysteria, not victims of the system's disregard for our health in the pursuit of profits.

RSI 2

It's an old, old story

APART from shonky psychiatrists, RSI has had some bad press lately. One doctor suggests that it is only found in Australia, because we're a nation of 'bludgers'. RSI is even called 'Kangaroo Paw'.

Let's set the record straight. Overuse injuries have been around for centuries.

Monks who wrote 'illuminated' texts were crippled by what they called Writer's Cramp. During the Industrial Revolution, Lancashire workers complained of 'Cotton Spinner's

Wrist'. Even Michelangelo seems to have suffered persistent aching arms and a sore neck after he painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Repetitive Strain Injury has been well documented in the US, Japan and Scandinavia. It is known variously as Tenosynovitis, Carpel Tunnel Syndrome, Epicondylitis and Occupational Overuse Syndrome overseas. The latter term, which originated in Japan, is perhaps the most apt, as it signifies the injury is caused by overwork.

If you're still unconvinced, a microsurgeon who regularly visits China told Cat's Eye that Chinese workers get RSI too.

NSW COPS

Roger the dodger

DETECTIVE Sergeant Roger Rogerson leads a charmed life.

Rogerson was last month acquitted on charges of assaulting a Kings Cross (Sydney) restaurant owner, when the woman failed to identify Rogerson in court. This is despite her remembering that Rogerson had ordered a Scotch, a Tea Maria and two schooners of beer while in her restaurant.

A few weeks earlier, the lucky copper had another let off in the courts. He had been charged with attempting to bribe another police officer on behalf of a friend.

The charge arose when the policeman concerned was shot while in the kitchen of his North Shore home. The officer thought he was going to die. He told other police that Rogerson had attempted to give him \$1500 to alter his evidence in a drug case involving the son of a friend of Rogerson.

The well-known detective has also recently been cleared of all suspicion in respect of large sums of money held in bank accounts that he operates. Not all of them are in his real name.

He told investigating police that over \$100,000 was from the sale of a rare Bentley motor car, and that most of it belonged to another friend. This credibility stretching story was apparently believed.

Another NSW detective, Bill Duff, must be wishing for some of Rogerson's luck to rub off on him. Poor old Bill has been caught out. His involvement in multi-million dollar heroin importations from Niugini has come to light.

A copper's life certainly is full of hazards.

Burke ditches Labor voters to woo the middle class

A FULL-PAGE advertisement in a Perth daily newspaper had a clear message from Premier Brian Burke. A Labor government would not introduce aboriginal land rights.

Such was the standard of the Labor election campaign in Western Australia.

While blacks are to be left landless and homeless, Burke wooed the farmers in the swinging country seats with a promise of fertiliser subsidies.

In the safe Labor seat of Fremantle, tenants are being squeezed out of their homes to make room for America's Cup speculation. They are not being promised any housing relief. But in the mortgage belt of Perth's northern suburbs, Burke offered the swinging voters the promise of interest rate relief.

The campaign formula was typical of ALP thinking nowadays. Sell out the traditional Labor voter, buy the swinging middle class vote with a couple of hand-outs, and keep on ruling for big business.

Burke, an ex-television journalist, himself engineered much of Labor's media hoop-la. The Burwood Casino opening, farmers' concessions, and his opposition to the gold (tax to the woe the Kalgoorlie vote) set the tone.

While Burke used the media with ease and skill, he had the backing of business to ensure him an easy run. Burke has supported the South African interests in the Argyle Diamond venture, and welcomed the American dollars that arrive with every visiting American nuclear warship.

Burke used the bogey of the Opposition privatising public utilities and dismantling Arbitration to bolster waning trade union support. The unions proposed a series of commercials warning against the Liberals' privatisation plans.

Yet it has been Labor's own right-wing policies that have created the political space for the Liberals to float such plans for an outright assault on workers' conditions.

As *Socialist Action* goes to press, Burke appears certain to be returned in the February 8 poll. Opposition leader Bill Hassell is a poor match both on



Burke: backed by business

and off the campaign trail.

But more than ever, Burke's election campaign has demonstrated the crying need to build a real, socialist alternative as Labor betrays its working class supporters.

— Sue Donnelly

BRISBANE

Abortion MDs cleared

THE SHOCKING police raid on the Greenslopes Fertility Clinic last May, which seized 47,000 personal medical files, has now had its aftermath.

Doctors Peter Bayliss and Dawn Cullen have been cleared in Brisbane's District Court, on charges of using force to procure a miscarriage. Bayliss was

further cleared of causing grievous bodily harm.

A woman aged 21 was seeking financial compensation through the court. After obtaining an abortion at the Greenslopes Clinic, she haemorrhaged and had to have a hysterectomy.

The woman, who has three children now aged six, three and 18 months, sought an abortion in December 1984 when her youngest child was four months old. She felt she could not cope physically, financially or emotionally with another child.

Mr Justice McGuire followed the more liberal precedents set in NSW and Victorian courts that other factors apart from the severe detrimental effects on the woman's health, and including emotional and social reasons, could be considered legitimate grounds for performing an abortion.

Socialists naturally support the woman's right to compensation for injuries resulting from her abortion. But in this case, the injuries were being used as a pretext to attack doctors who perform abortions. The state should pay the compensation, and the Greenslopes doctors should be governed by the same malpractice standards that apply to all doctors performing operations.

On the first morning of the trial, thirty men and women picketed peacefully outside the Supreme Court to point up the real issues — women's right to autonomy over their own bodies, and the demand for free, safe abortion when required.

McGuire ruled that the picket was an attempt to influence the jury, and that any people taking

part in further demonstrations during the trial would be charged with contempt of court.

While the doctors are in the clear, it is obvious that abortion is still a right that will have to be fought for in Queensland.

— Jenny Trevino

MELBOURNE

Cops raid gay bars

POLICE in Melbourne have launched a campaign of harassment against gay venues.

It began in late November when cops visited gay saunas, claiming they were unlicensed brothels. In mid-December, two male strippers at a gay pub were arrested for indecent exposure.

Then on December 29, a dozen cops wielding sledgehammers raided Club 30 in Collingwood. They smashed their way into private cubicles, searched 140 men and demanded names and addresses before leaving after an hour and a half. They were, they said, looking for drugs.

But that goes on all the saunas is not prostitution, and that drug use in the venues is almost nonexistent. So what are they up to?

Two theories are around. The first is that the new head of the Vice Squad is a gay-hater. The second is that it is all part of the cops' campaign against the government for a better retirement scheme. The idea is that gays have the clout with the Union ALP to get it to make concessions on superannuation, in order to get the heat off the venues.

If either of these is true, the response of the gay business community and its friends looks pretty pointless. Calling for a police/gay community liaison committee assumes that the cops are acting from ignorance. But clearly the harassment has been decided on by the new command, it is deliberate policy and not particularly open to reasoned discussion.

Alternatively, what good is appealing to the government to control the police while they are at each other's throats?

The cops will stop when they are ready or when it becomes too costly for them to go on. In that light, it is a pity that the early talk of demos against the harassment came to nothing.

— Graham Willett



Police guard Greenslopes clinic while seizing 47,000 files last May

Debate over the American bases takes on a new urgency

DEBATE over the US bases in Australia has taken on a special urgency for the peace movement.

Last month saw American defence strategists reveal a naval policy that could escalate non-nuclear conflicts into nuclear exchanges, by attacking Russian nuclear submarines. Such a strategy may well make the North-West Cape communications base in Western Australia a prime nuclear target.

And from October this year, Australia has 12 months in which to renegotiate, or decide to end, the US tenancy of the Pine Gap base outside Alice Springs. Otherwise, the American tenancy continues automatically for another ten years. The US tenancy at North-West Cape comes up for special review in 1988.

Labor intends to allow the agreements to continue. This was made very clear at a peace movement forum on the US bases in Melbourne recently by Labor MHR Peter Staples.

That Staples, a left-winger, had to present Government policy to the forum was telling in itself. No fewer than six right-wing Labor MPs — Senators Gareth Evans, Robert Ray and Kerry Sibraa, and MHRs Joan Child, David Charles and Alan Griffiths — turned down invitations from organisers to explain the position they help to carry in the ALP.

The forum provided a valuable summary of the key issues that opponents of the bases will have to address this year.

Staples admitted that the popular conception that the US bases somehow protected Australia against attack was nonsense. "The American bases



Alan Roberts: Pine Gap like a sight on a rifle



North-West Cape: part of a dangerous new US naval policy

in Greece did not stop the Turkish invasion of Cyprus," he said.

But Labor saw three arguments for the bases, according to Staples.

First, early warning of a nuclear attack, provided by Nurrungar base in South Australia which detects missile launches, was crucial to the US, as it allowed more time to respond. Second, Pine Gap's satellites were vital in verifying Russian arms, since Russia allowed no full on-site inspection.

Thirdly, "Removing the bases at this stage would arouse hostility from both the electorate and the United States."

TWO OTHER speakers at the forum, anti-nuclear activists Belinda Probert and Alan Roberts, pointed out the flaws in Staples' argument.

"We must reject utterly the notion that the US needs 30 minutes warning rather than 15 in order to respond to a nuclear attack," replied Probert. Wiping out Russia's cities in retaliation was not a moral response, she said.

Alan Roberts pointed out that Pine Gap's satellites did far more than just check up on Russian arms. "Pine Gap can detect the holes in the Soviet radar defence cover at any given time. It can calculate the missile trajectories required to get through that defence."

"Pine Gap is like the sight on a rifle," Roberts went on. Without bases like it, nuclear missiles themselves are of limited strategic value.

Furthermore, Pine Gap's satellites can pick up all STD and overseas telephone calls in Australia and the region. It was "naïve", Roberts argued, to assume that governments who had that surveillance power would not use it.

Staples' fear of voter hostility to an anti-base policy is odd. Labor's pro-nuclear position lost 600,000 Senate votes to the NDP last election. The reality is more likely that Labor is now so wedded to the US alliance as a strategy for Australian capitalism, that it is ready to lose votes to defend it.

Another pro-base argument came from Liberal senator David Hamer. A former Director of Naval Intelligence and ex-Chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Hamer's speech at the forum aroused considerable criticism.

Hamer frankly admitted that a limited nuclear war was "not on". If it broke out, it would be full-scale. Australia had to do what it could to deter this, and "at this stage, that means hosting the US bases."

America was not a nuclear aggressor, Hamer claimed. "It had nuclear dominance for ten years or so after the War and didn't use it."

HAMER'S argument rested largely on the concept of nuclear deterrence, a concept that Belinda Probert debunked.

"The superpowers are intent not just on deterrence, but on winning. Why else would they target military targets, which have no deterrent value, as well as cities?"

"... And why are we seeing greater and greater deployment of nuclear weapons by the superpowers. That is completely unnecessary if your strategy is just for deterrence."

Probert queried America's non-aggressive intentions. "The US has never renounced first use of nuclear weapons, and Reagan reserves the right to a first strike." As for US nuclear deterrence keeping the peace after World War Two, Probert pointed to the numerous wars fought by proxy by the superpowers in the Third World.

Alan Roberts argued that the bases in Australia were, in fact, now a political rather than a military necessity for the US.

"The technology now exists to replace the bases, either with mobile ground bases or with satellite-to-satellite signals, beaming direct to a satellite linked to a ground station in the US." That cuts out the need for bases in Australia altogether, he said.

But, argued Roberts, the bases played a political role in tying Western allies like Australia to the US.

Canberra hardly needs its arm twisted, though Hamer revealed that the Australian military saw great advantage in the bases, since in return, through ANZUS, they could maintain joint operational preparedness with the US and keep up with military intelligence and techniques. (This will doubtless be handy in any future Vietnam — a consoling thought when we are cucking

THE ARGUMENTS against the US bases are going to be vital ones for the peace movement to win in the political arena.

The US has made its bases in Australia virtually immune from union bans or other forms of direct action. They are in remote locations and self-contained. Pine Gap, for example, has its own power and water supplies, and US military aircraft fly in provisions every week.

So the campaign against the bases will stand or fall on the political pressure that can be brought to bear on the Hawke government in the streets, in the unions, and inside the ALP itself.

The major first step comes on Palm Sunday, March 23, when the mass peace marches will demand, "Close Pine Gap".

— Alec Kahn

REFUGEES? What refugees? Did someone mention refugees?

Imperialists the world over like to pretend that they are not really there.

When eight West Papuan refugees arrived in Northern Queensland last year, the Australian government's blinkers firmly went on.

The Hawke Government has shed a few crocodile tears over West Papuan refugees in Papua-Niugini in the past. But suddenly, Immigration Minister Chris Hurford was more concerned about the policy implications of accepting the eight. It was Papua-Niugini's problem, not ours, thought Bill Hayden. Only "genuine" refugees need apply, added Bob Hawke.

At the time of writing, the Immigration Department was still looking for a third country which would accept the eight West Papuans.

This reaction not only smacks of racism. It is also a corollary of Australian support for the Indonesian occupation of West Papua.

The Indonesian army, which has driven ten thousand West Papuan refugees into Papua-Niugini, receives a A\$10m annual subsidy from Australia. Its ten year old invasion of Timor was approved by Hawke this year, encouraging it to step up its operations in West Papua.

From the viewpoint of the refugees, Australia is not part of the solution but part of the problem.

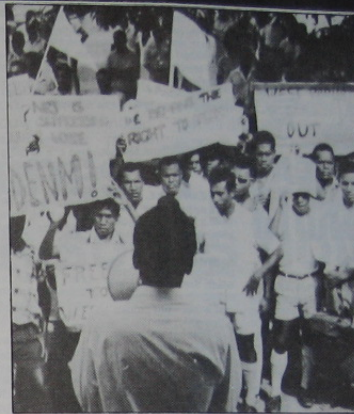
INDONESIA is not so much a nation as a former estate of Dutch colonialism. It is held together, not by geography or language, but by armed force.

Its army has much experience in suppressing centrifugal forces within the Indonesian archipelago. The present commander of Indonesian forces in West Papua, General Kahpi, has led several other military operations to crush separatist movements elsewhere in Indonesia.

Australia and America support the ruling centre in Jakarta because a centralised Indonesian archipelago, ruled by a co-operative regime, suits their imperialist interests in the region.

Indonesia lies at the cross roads between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and between Australia and Asia. To protect their trade routes and naval lanes, America and Australia want a reliable regime to control all the islands in the region. This includes West Papua.

When Holland de-colonised West Papua in 1959, the Jakarta-



OPM supporters rally for West Papuan independence

West Papua: Indonesia's killing fields

based government of Indonesia claimed the territory, even though its Melanesian population was ethnically distinct from Indonesia's predominantly Malay population. Its claims were backed by the USA.

Australia, which at first liked the idea of uniting West Papua with its own Papua-New Guinea colony, soon fell in behind the American position. Their combined pressure on Holland and the United Nations assisted Jakarta to annex West Papua in 1962.

The current military dictator of Indonesia, General Suharto, commanded Indonesian paratroops which fought the Melanesian resistance to the annexation.

The main resistance organisation, the Free West Papua Movement (OPM), was founded in 1965.

It has always been based in the mountains and countryside where its few thousand guerrillas can operate. The Indonesian army has fought it with search and destroy operations which OPM representatives say have killed tens of thousands.

This is the terror that has put ten thousand refugees to flight and that the OPM is fighting.

In all the areas of resettlement, the land is forcibly converted from tribal property to capitalist private property. Fences go up across lands traditionally used by nomadic hunter-gatherers. Villages that resist are terrorised by the army and violently emptied to make room for transmigration.

AUSTRALIA'S Department of Foreign Affairs is peddling the line that the refugees are put to flight by the OPM. Hence the attempt to differentiate between "genuine" and (presumably) "fake" refugees.

We have yet to hear why anyone becomes a fake refugee and voluntarily suffers the malnutrition and disease of the refugee camps.

The refugees themselves have increased in number to be a fiction. When twelve OPM leaders were flown by the PNG government back to Indonesian jails in West Papua, one hundred refugees in the Blackwater camp rioted.

Many of these refugees were from the West Papuan capital of Jayapura and fled to escape Indonesian repression after a failed uprising in February 1984. They are solidly behind the OPM.

For the moment, Indonesia demands that PNG bottle up the refugees. PNG so far is co-operating. In the future, however, Indonesia may launch a major attack on the refugee camps in PNG, just as the Zionist armies chased the PLO into Lebanon.

West Papua is a hot spot that will stay hot as long as Indonesia is in occupation.

The rising labour movement in Jakarta is the one glimmer of hope for the West Papuans that the regime may be undermined from within eventually. But it is still desperately young and weak.

Until then, the best help we can give the refugees and the OPM is to increase the pressure on Suharto from outside. That means forcing Labor to withdraw its support for the occupation of West Papua.

— Eric Petersen

Suharto: the leading annexing agent of West Papua



RUMANIA'S state capitalist regime runs its crisis-ridden economy with a notoriously heavy hand. It also, apparently, regards cleanliness as being literally next to godliness.

An American evangelical organisation, the World Reformed Alliance, sent 20,000 bibles to Rumania for the Hungarian christian minority in the country.

But the regime tightly controls food, energy and other consumption. Workers even need permission to use electric lighting in their homes.

It also has little regard for religious freedom. When the bibles arrived, the regime promptly recycled them into toilet paper!

AT LAST, some good news about that millionaire's plaything, the America's Cup.

Leading Perth lawyers Parker and Parker have run into trouble registering the boxing kangaroo symbol overseas. Three weeks before their application, look-alikes popped up everywhere, including one as a trademark for a new Spanish brand of underpants.

Alan Bond has lost his silly symbol... let's hope he loses the bloody Cup as well.

THE FESTIVE season meant the usual conspicuous consumption for the idle rich.

The Skase family celebrated its shift of business to Brisbane with a party fetting Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

The Skases flew in hundreds of interstate guests, lodged them at



CHEAP SHOTS

the Sheraton, transported them in a fleet of forty white limousines, dined them regally in a chifon marquee, put on a \$25,000 fireworks show, and gave individual gifts worth at least \$100 to every guest. No doubt it



Bond and Cup: let's hope he loses it

• **ARE YOU a knuckle-headed nutritionist? Then CSR's Sugar Division has a job for you. It recently advertised, "An opportunity exists for a nutrition professional to join an established and respected team in managing the nutrition information program on behalf of the Australian Sugar Industry. The position primarily requires sound nutritional knowledge.**

Admiration for the doctors who argue that smoking is harmless would also be desirable.

all goes on the company expense account for the taxpayer to subsidise.

MEANWHILE, Perth's upper crust paid \$140 a ticket for Lyndon Lewis' invitation-only "Gone With The Wind" party, re-enacting the privileges of the Deep South. Some party-goers boasted that their dresses cost a thousand dollars.

Lewis, 48, made a fortune from real estate ten years ago. He retired and now spends each year planning one party for

his fellow-parasites. He had the Sinking Of The Titanic, complete with deck orchestra and heavy room as the ship went down. Gone With The Wind had Tara, black slaves and a Confederate battle.

Lewis defends his extravagance, saying he gives his rich friends a fantasy to remember. We have a fantasy too—socialism without Lyndon Lewises.

WE HEAR a lot about US imperialism. But Australian imperialism does very nicely for itself too.

Australian interests made four of the top 25 foreign investments in American companies last year. BHP's \$2.4 billion takeover of Utah ranked number one, more than four times the \$550 million takeover of the Harris Bank by the Bank of Montreal.

Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation ranked fifth with its \$350 million purchase of Ziff-

• **DONT Raise The Bridge, Lower The Water department. Deputy director Judith Sloane of the National Institute of Labour Studies at Flinders University admits that the unemployment rate of 7.9% is high by historical standards.**

Her answer appears in the Insitututes's December bulletin. The government should recognise this level as the new benchmark for "full employment"



John: guest of honour

Davis publications. Its \$90 million purchase of the Chicago Sun-Times ranked sixteenth.

NEW CONCEPTS in social change the boxes' *Financial Review* ran an Australia Day editorial talking about "the status quo alternative".

PRIORITIES... In 1976, American companies allocated 5.6% of capital spending to pollution control. In 1985, the allocation was down to 2.7%, according to *Harper's Magazine*.

Meanwhile, American business spends more each year on advertising than the US Government spends on health and education, according to *The Image Makers*, a survey of the advertising industry by expert William Meyers.

OIL PRICES

OPEC runs out of gas

THE Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has run out of gas.

In December, it met but failed to set a minimum oil price.

In January, the unilateral actions of Saudi Arabia frustrated any hopes of other OPEC members to set a maximum production level.

Clearly, a cartel that can set neither a minimum price nor a maximum output is not really a cartel. OPEC is dead, and continues, like an asset-stripped

company, in name only. As with many a capitalist enterprise, OPEC's success was the cause of its decline. Its large share of world trade in oil allowed it to raise oil prices, and raise the rate of profit of its members. This, however, encouraged other producers to chase the higher profit.

Mexico borrowed heavily to finance its expansion of production. British capital received state assistance to move into North Sea Oil. Minor producers like Australian oil companies decided there was gold in them that OPEC price levels.

Meanwhile, oil consumers turned to substitute forms of energy — coal, natural gas, uranium, alcohol. The demand for oil dropped.

In ten years, OPEC's share of world oil production fell from

60% to 30%. Its share of the international oil trade plummeted.

OPEC lost its marketplace muscle. It couldn't stop the competition from undercutting. OPEC members started wondering aloud in 1985 what they paid their dues for. Saudi Arabia, the largest OPEC producer (second only to Russia amongst all producers), has clearly decided

to go it alone.

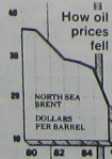
OPEC's decline has incidentally exposed the silliness of our modern economic "experts".

Whatever happened to the Australian dream? "Blame the Arabs," they said in 1974. Higher oil prices were wrecking "our" economy. Since then, the Australian government has made megabucks out of the crude oil levy. Australian handouts got the benefit in huge amounts.

But now the levy is falling, the deficit is rising, and oil producers are losing export income. "Blame the Arabs," they say in 1986. Lower oil prices are wrecking "our" economy.

In a sense, they are right. Whether oil prices rise, fall, or stand still, the capitalist economy is a wreck.

— Rick Kuhn



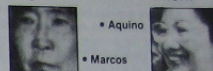
COVER STORY

WHETHER American-backed strongman Ferdinand Marcos, wracked by scandals over his phoney war record and his overseas properties, survives this month's election or not, the crisis in the Philippines will deepen.

Both the legal opposition, represented by candidate Cory Aquino, widow of assassinated

Senator Benigno Aquino, and the extra-parliamentary opposition — which is boycotting the elections as fraudulent — are the strongest they have been in two decades of Marcos rule.

CHRISTENE ROSE looks at the line-up of forces and the background to the election.



• Aquino

• Marcos

Philippines: The election solves nothing

IN JULY 1982, an Australian businessman named Richard Fowler Jr retired to the sunny, palm-lined beaches of Hawaii. It marked the end of a successful career for Fowler, manager of the Manila fish canning plant for the Australian multi-national company Safcol.

In the bank, Fowler had \$4.8 million, the proceeds from the sale of his 80 percent personal share in the Manila cannery.

The Filipino workers whom Fowler managed at the cannery were not quite so fortunate, however.

They worked a 12-hour day, six days a week. In return, Fowler paid them thirty pesos (\$3.80) a day, half of the poverty line for a family with four kids. Most were classed as casuals and had to queue from 4 am in the hope of starting at six.

The union president had to adopt one child, so poor were the wages. The union organiser at the plant was picked up by plain clothes army men and tortured with electric shocks. He quit. His successor, a woman, used an alias, and lived at a different address each day, carrying her toothbrush in her back pocket, in order to avoid a similar fate.

Other Australian companies, too, cashed in on the low-wage bonanza provided by President Ferdinand Marcos' military regime. Subsidiaries of Dunlop, Grosby, Berlei-Hestia, ACI, ANI and BHP all paid similar wages.

In 1983, Safcol's workers had had enough. With a campaign of bans (including a vital solidarity ban from Australian storemen and packers), they won a string of concessions from Richard Fowler's successors.

It was just one more sign of the times in the Philippines. Workers in the "non-yellow" unions, demonstrators in the streets, New People's Army guerrillas in the hills, have been gathering numbers and strength steadily in the last five years.

THE FEBRUARY 7 election should be seen as an exercise in US control rather than as one of democracy.

The US has plenty to lose in the growing tide of revolt. It has enormous investments and two key military bases, Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base.

The suspension of future loans by the US-dominated International Monetary Fund is believed to have prompted Marcos



Marchers in the cities, cops lay into strikers: an intractable crisis

to call the election last November.

The obvious aim is to stop the radicalisation of the Filipino middle class, undercut the guerrilla insurgency, and buy the US more time.

Primarily, the election is a short term manoeuvre aimed at the immediate threat — the legal opposition and their army, the parliament of the streets. Their has been a leftward shift in the legal

opposition, weakening the position of centre-right opposites like vice-presidential candidate Salvador Laurel.

The growth of Bayan (meaning "nation") epitomizes this shift. Bayan has grown to a national movement out of the Coalition for the Restoration of Democracy, which emerged after the Aquino killing with the aim of keeping issues other than Aquino and Marcos (such as the US bases) alive.

Bayan now encompasses elements of the marxist left, both Christian and Communist Party, as well as cause-oriented groups, academics, traditional nationalist politicians and event businessmen. Leftward drift is probably responsible for Bayan's loss of important populist figures like lawyer Jose Diokno and Aquino's brother Agapito ("Butz").

Bayan is most militant outside Manila, recently sponsoring a three day strike in Mindanao and Cebu. Bayan is boycotting the election, having posed a set of demands to Marcos over its conduct that he would not dream of granting.

DESPITE Bayan's leftward drift, the legal opposition has still focussed on presidential candidate Cory Aquino, and her running mate, ex-Senator Salvador Laurel.

The Social Democrats, who include the Aquino family, have set up a rival organisation to Bayan called Benrilo. A majority of legal opposition groups still rally around the Union of Nationalist and Democratic Organisations, UNIDO, headed by Laurel.

Laurel himself is slippery in the extreme. Until 1978, he was a member of Marcos' party, the KBL. In the wake of the Aquino assassination, Laurel resigned from his seat in the rubber stamp National Assembly and called for Marcos to resign. Laurel is still probably to the right of Marcos' running mate, Torentino.

Cory Aquino, for her part, says that she will renew the US bases agreement in 1991. She is seen as something of a spiritual leader, and is patronised as being "engagingly" but not very convincing" politically. Party, but not very convincing" politically. Party, but not very convincing" politically. Party, but not very convincing" politically.

Laurel's resignation from his cabinet in an effort to curb made part of her campaign in an effort to curb communist rebellion.

Laurel's resignation from his cabinet in an effort to curb communist rebellion. Laurel's resignation from his cabinet in an effort to curb communist rebellion.

(continued page 8)

COVER STORY

Aquino's backers (aligned with the Social Democrats) who were plugging for a joint organisational ticket, and Laurel's UNIDO who wanted it all their own way and got it.

IRONICALLY, the Benigno Aquino saga, which began with the assassination of a unifying force in the opposition, could end in defeat for his widow in her electoral debut.

Aquino's judicial burial and the white-washed of General Ver took so long, largely because of the popular involvement in the Agrava Commission hearings. These were as popular as any soap opera.

The inadmissibility of the Commission's evidence to the ombudsman's court, the Tandobayan, the subsequent consistent refusal to admit a range of prosecution evidence, and the bribing of key witnesses, all reflect the corruption of the court system and the regime.

But it was such a foregone conclusion, reached by such a tortuous process, that Marcos managed to minimize the political impact.

However, the Aquino events have definitely affected army morale, discipline and corruption — never strong points in the Philippines.

The young officers are disaffected by time-serving generals, and heads will roll in Marcos' reorganisation of the armed forces. Marcos will also use a shakeup to neutralise the competing power bases of Generals Ramos and Ver.

It appears their positions as Chief of Staff and Deputy will be filled by Brigadier-General Roland Pattugalan and Brigadier-General Edon Y. Pattugalan is a cousin of the President and Yap is Imelda Marcos' brother-in-law. Whatever his worries, it seems that Marcos' talent for political patronage is unimpaired.



NPA guerrillas on patrol, demonstrators burn a US flag: the tide of revolt is growing



WHAT, THEN, of the extra-parliamentary opposition to Marcos?

In the working class, the most exciting force to emerge is the "non-yellow" trade union federation, the May First Movement (KMU).

The KMU grew out of an upsurge in trade union militancy between 1980-82. It has seized the leadership of the union movement from the "yellow" Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

The KMU has had to stand up to a staggering degree of repression, despite being legal. In the first half of 1985, for example, seven members of KMU unions were killed during strikes; twenty-seven KMU militants were assassinated for activities on the job; and seven others "disappeared". Numerous unionists are in jail, many being held despite court orders for their release.

Picket lines are frequently violent, as strikers resist dispersal by police and company "goons". In the space of one month in Manila last year, police line shot four workers outside Guilmar Marble, forcibly broke up a picket at American Hospital Supplies four times, and allowed hundreds of security guards and scabs to attack picketers at Stanford Micro-systems with steel pipes, rocks and guns.

In the countryside, the best-known force is the Maoist-line New People's Army (NPA), formed by the Communist Party in 1969, a year after it split from Moscow.

The New People's Army has expanded its direct influence in more isolated regions, from northern Luzon down to the backwaters of Mindanao. It now claims effective influence over 39 guerrilla fronts in 56 provinces (of 73 in the Philippines), with active support of six million people. More conservative estimates of support are around a million.

BUT IT IS the growth of Communist Party political fronts encroaching on urban centres in the provinces which is causing the Marcos regime bigger headaches.

Parallel with the growth of the KMU and working class militancy, the Communist Party-led National Democratic Front (NDF) has been a driving political force in the urban areas.

The NDF is an illegal umbrella organisation which co-ordinates the activities of

different cause-oriented leftist bodies. The NDF has used the Aquino assassination, military abuses, corruption and the economic crisis to create a solid leftist bloc in the opposition.

In 1981, the NDF led a boycott of the sham presidential elections which was joined by a majority of the legal opposition. This time, it is being joined in the boycott by Bavan, the KMU trade union federation, and the League of Filipino Students.

The NDF argues, quite justifiably, that the elections will be subject to vote-rigging and that Aquino and Laurel will make no difference to American domination and the exploitation of ordinary Filipinos. It believes that if Aquino and Laurel win, they will delay the revolution a few weeks or months, at most.

UNDERPINNING the rising movement against Marcos is an economic crisis that is one of the worst in Asia.

The figures make staggering reading. Export earnings are on course to decline 15% this year. Industrial output has plunged 13%. Agricultural output, which was supposed to lead an economic recovery, grew by only 1% in the first half of 1985.

A budget deficit, which was supposed to be held to 1% of GNP, is now expected to widen to nearly 2.6% of GNP. A crash programme launched last year to sell off more than 150 government-owned corporations to raise extra revenue is getting nowhere. Hundreds of capitalists have gone bust.

The problems of those who survive are compounded by the local banks. Although awash with cash, they dare lend to none save the multi-nationals. Little wonder many businessmen are turning against Marcos.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, with Ronald Reagan's support, are currently turning the screw on Marcos too. After two years of contraction in the Filipino economy, the IMF has suspended loans and may be prepared to scuttle a \$14 billion debt rescheduling agreement, to force Marcos to break up the sugar and coconut monopolies of his cronies.

Apart from providing the government with large revenues, these monopolies constitute formidable political machines for Marcos, covering about one-third of the population. They are crucial to the KBL election campaign, and Marcos is hardly likely to attack them.

Instead, Marcos accuses the IMF of imposing policies that do little to ease the debt problem. The IMF replies that the Philippines has consistently over-valued its currency and refused to devalue (although the peso has sunk from 11 to 18.7 to the dollar in the past two years). The administration currently has difficulty even meeting the interest repayments on its debts. If it defaults, the rescheduling agreements will be automatically abrogated.

NONE of this means that either the Marcos government itself or Filipino capitalism is on the verge of collapse.

The armed forces remain a formidable military bulwark. Filipinos by and large still have illusions in the democratic forms the Americans taught them — even though almost a whole generation has grown up without a democratic presidential choice.

It is Marcos' stubborn hold on power, his degenerative disease notwithstanding, that is dividing the anti-communist opposition and helping the development of the front structure on which the Communist Party, still a relatively small and elitist group, relies.

It is the non-Marcos Right and Centre, the moderate Left, the Americans (Congress in particular), and the ruling classes of the ASEAN nations who worry most about the Communist Party. Marcos plays down the military threat of the New People's Army. His recent projections of another Kampuchea come the revolution are mere election scare-mongering. . . the NPA does not have the political hegemony, even if it was that way inclined.

As for the Communist Party, tearing

down the "US-Marcos dictatorship" remains its basic slogan. Through organisations, it focuses on local issues ranging from sporadic military abuses and regional war-lordism to the effects of the economic crisis and environmental opposition to the Bataan nuclear power plant.

Despite the growth of the "non-yellow" KMU trade unions and increasing worker militancy, the Communist Party maintains a strong nationalistic rather than socialist colour to this agitation.

So the weariness of the young with twenty years of Marcos, and anger at specific abuses by the military or local political bosses, are the basis of the NPA's bumper recruitment, rather than dissatisfaction with the social order.

The Filipino left attributes the economic crisis almost exclusively to the inequities of the Marcos regime and the International Monetary Fund.

The fact that the bottom has fallen out of the market in sugar and coconut is not addressed. The tyranny of the capitalist market is not something that the Communist Party would like to tackle at the moment, because they know they will have to live with it after their Maoist-style "patriotic" revolution.

WHATEVER the election result, the Philippines will remain the economic basket case of Asia. It will have more college graduates per head of population than any nation outside the US, yet some of the lowest wage rates in Asia.

The combination of low wage levels and an authoritarian state have failed to produce the growth rates now common in the Third World. Its GNP is currently falling 2% a year.

Neither Ferdinand Marcos nor Cory Aquino have any answer to this crisis. So despite the weaknesses in the Communist Party's politics, the mass resistance will continue to grow. As it does, the chances will emerge for a working-class current to increase for its own, socialist interests.

Meanwhile, US ground troops have been sighted in Mindanao, and the Air Force equivalent of the Green Berets have been transferred to Clark Air Base.

The New People's Army expects more US intervention soon, as Ronald Reagan tries to save the Philippines for the World Bank and the American power bloc.

To most Filipino militants, this adds up to imperialism and that is what they are fighting. We in the west must support them.

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

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We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the futility of attempts to tinker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country, it must be spread to other countries or it will fail. These reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through ending capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world; the point is to change it. Marxist theory and propaganda are only meaningful if they are a guide to action. In the unions, social movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. If that's where you want to be, join us today!



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SEXUAL POLITICS

NO DISEASE in history has attracted more political response than AIDS. It is a subject on which everybody feels they can express an opinion, no matter how fanciful.

For example, anti-nuclear activist Rosalie Bertell says:

"If you say where is the AIDS epidemic occurring, it's in the States where 700 nuclear bombs have been set off. If you look at Europe, it's in France and Germany. West Germany and Britain are the most affected countries. They are also the most nuclear countries. If you say where AIDS started, it apparently started in Zaire, part of the Belgian Congo, and that's the uranium mining area."

Other bizarre theories are equally common, especially from the Right. What are the real politics of AIDS?

The press bills AIDS as the disease of the sexual seventies and enlightened eighties. In other words, it is a sexually transmitted disease, the price we pay for liberation. But is it?

The first thing that must be said is that AIDS is *not*, primarily, a sexually transmitted disease. Like Hepatitis B, it is a blood-borne disease. And like Hepatitis B, impoverished living conditions are the major risk factor. (AIDS first took hold in Zaire and Haiti.)

The analogy between AIDS and Hepatitis B goes further. Like AIDS, Hepatitis B enjoyed a certain notoriety in the 1970s as a sexually transmitted disease. After hundreds of years in which the medical profession observed its spread through the world, essentially through non-sexual contact, a single study linking the incidence of Hepatitis B and homosexuality turned the tables.

Certainly, in gay men, sexual contact was spreading the disease. But like AIDS, the Hepatitis B virus still had to get into the bloodstream to be infective. Sexual contact alone could not spread it. The skin had to be broken, a blood vessel burst, before it was caught.

Suddenly, Hepatitis B patients were quizzed about their sexuality and assumed to be "promiscuous" as a matter of course. The whole attitude towards them altered overnight.

But Buttrorse: fitted the bill

The hidden politics of AIDS



The disease hadn't changed, the treatment hadn't changed, but society's moral judgement had.

Fortunately, over time, the noble notion faded. Hepatitis B patients, by and large, returned to being ordinary people deserving of society's care and concern.

WHETHER a disease is sexually transmitted or not should have no bearing on the response to it.

But capitalism's ideology enshrines the nuclear family, and the monogamous sexual relations at the heart of it.

Sexually transmitted diseases meant that this model is being flouted. While the shared environment of work can lead to all manner of socially transmitted diseases — gastroenteritis, flu, etc. — with no suggestion of a threat to social mores, the shared environment of bed leading to *other* socially spread diseases such as syphilis or gonorrhoea is "immoral". Capitalist ideology is being defied, by "promiscuity".

The advent of gay liberation was an even more direct threat to the nuclear family model. So a "gay", "sexually transmitted" disease like AIDS is doubly a cause for moral outrage and hysteria.

In Australia, Queensland and NSW have enacted fairly re-

US gays hold up numbers in memory of AIDS victims

pressed health legislation and have threatened to close down gay bars. The police in some states have used AIDS as an excuse for bar raids. Gay-baiting AIDS jokes of the most inane variety have entered the popular culture.

Elements of the Right have demanded the isolation of AIDS victims from the rest of society, and even, on the principle of "user pays", an end to public spending on the care and cure of AIDS. (If the patient has no money, they are to sue the person they caught it from!)

While equality of treatment is enshrined by one law, another takes it away. The police can, and often do, take the law into their own hands, as in the recent bar raids. Labor promises inclusion in anti-discrimination legislation are as hollow as all their other promises.

As many activists argued during the height of gay liberation, the only guarantee for gays, for women, for all oppressed groups, is getting rid of the system whose morality is built upon inequality at every level.

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YET COMPARED to the expected backlash, the attempt to turn the clock back on gays has been comparatively mild.

Nobody much is listening to the Fred Niles of the "looney" right.

This is partly due to the gay movement's campaign over AIDS, which has marked an important turning point for gay activism.

For many gays, the achievement of legal equality — not liberation — meant the end of the struggle. Although when faced with overt police attacks, the gay groups could still call on a sizeable activist base which could organize a militant response, the level of struggle

dropped. As the political links loosened, the activists maintained a residual network through single-issue groups and publications. Gay Teachers and Students, Gay Community News, Gay Liberation Radio and Young Gays are typical examples.

This network, with its media, lobbying and organisational skills, responded when the AIDS issue broke. And those have been the tactics in the AIDS action and support groups.

These tactics have proved successful in gaining access to government and the health bureaucracy, and mounting the highly public AIDS "safe sex" campaign.

To avoid mass hysteria, and simply to stop the disease running amok, the health bureaucracy realised it needed the cooperation of gays and their organisations.

It also needed a public figurehead who would depoliticise the issue. It Buttrorse, a woman completely identified with respectability and the family through years of editing the "Women's Weekly", fitted the bill perfectly.

For their part, gays too wanted government support. To organise that, they built an alliance of political activists and gay business. The basis of the alliance was survival, personal and commercial (the gay saunas and bars faced extinction), and a shared "gay community building" politics.

The AIDS force has made it clear, however, that the gains won by gays are by no means secure within capitalism.

INDUSTRIAL POLITICS

Dollar Sweets verdict menaces right to picket

FIRST Mudginberri, now Dollar Sweets. The right to picket is coming under increasing legal attack in Bob Hawke's Australia.

The recent judgement in the Victorian Supreme Court against the Dollar Sweets picketers has disturbing implications for all supporters of trade unionism.

The Dollar Sweets picket in Melbourne last year began over a claim for a 36 hour week. When the Federated Confectioners Association (the FCA) made the claim, the owner of Dollar Sweets, Alfred Stauder, got twelve of his 27 workers to sign a no-strike agreement to work a 38 hour week. Stauder then sacked the majority, the other fifteen, who refused to sign or lift the picket.

About ninety per cent of the 2600 members of the FCA already work a 36 hour week. The union's argument is simple: confectioners make big profits and those profits should be distributed to FCA members.

After Stauder dug his heels in over the 36 hour week, the union dropped its claim. But it maintained the picket, demanding the re-employment of the fifteen sacked workers. Stauder said he would never re-employ them.



Hawke: teleaxed support to Stauder

turned into an \$80,000 loss for the corresponding quarter in 1985.

So in November the company went to court, with the backing of the Confectionary Manufacturers Association and the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce. Dollar Sweets sought damages of more than \$150,000 for trading losses and extra freight and security expenses. Stauder sought an injunction to stop the union picketing the factory and trying to prevent the delivery of materials.

In December the Victorian Supreme Court granted the injunction. Justice Peter Murphy called the picket "anarchy" and "militistic". The judge stressed that if the picket was not lifted the picketers could be jailed for contempt. Murphy also banned the picketers from following vehicles, taking photographs of people or vehicles, or using words or gestures to threaten people going to and from the factory. Justice Murphy said the picket could not be considered lawful. Pickets used obstruction and harassment, and these actions were "an interference with the rights of others trying to make deliveries."

At stake for the workers, however, was a far more important right. The right of a majority in a workplace to take a decision to strike and then to shut down production is fundamental to trade unionism, and the best weapon that workers have in contesting the employers' control. The picket line is essential to defending that right.

Murphy's judgement followed a long legal tradition of protecting the bosses' rights ahead of the workers'. But the FCA had no support at all from the ACTU during the dispute.

The claim for a 36 hour week is outside the Accord, so Simon Crean and Bill Kelly abandoned the strikers with the threat of jail, if the strikers lifted the picket.

The ruling class was quick to grasp the significance of the decision. Shadow industrial affairs minister, Neil Brown from the Liberal Party, claimed that the case opened a new era in the use of the general law as a means of stopping union action. Brown urged other employers to use similar tactics.

Bob Hawke's position was also clear. During the dispute, he



Dollar boss Alfred Stauder: court backed his strike-busting

teleaxed the company giving his wholehearted support and urging it not to give in to the workers' demands.

The Dollar Sweets decision was one of a number of attacks made on unions during 1985. Public servants came up against the Accord in their pay claim and lost. Bjeike-Petersen sacked over a thousand power workers and the ACTU did nothing. The Federal and State Labor Governments moved against the BLE. And the Federal Court ordered the Abbotton lifted, in the process fining the meatworkers union \$44,000 for contempt, imposing costs of \$100,000 on it and freezing its assets.

Economic conditions force employers to attack workers. But the Accord, by destroying rank and file organisation and militancy, had created the climate in which the bosses can get away with these attacks.

In Britain the Social Contract, the UK version of the Accord, laid the groundwork for Thatcher's victory by smashing shop steward organisation. Even then Thatcher played a careful

game, at first attacking only weaker or more isolated unions. It was only after she had successfully defeated these unions that she felt she had the strength to take on a major union, the miners, and win.

That process is being repeated in Australia today. But it is a Labor Government which is openly attacking workers. And significant sections of the union movement have been co-opted by the Accord to accept these attacks.

The decision in Dollar Sweets has opened up the possibility of a major employer offensive in the near future, by giving the bosses an important weapon with which to break strikes.

— John Passant

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GRASS ROOTS ACTION



Parents, staff and children from Mitchell St Child Care Centre rally after invading Bob Hawke's office

Childcare cuts: Labor hit

PROPOSED cuts in childcare subsidies last November provoked more protests letters to Bob Hawke than any other subject except kangaroos.

Initially, the government intended to reduce funding by \$30 million. But reaction against the cuts was very strong.

Parents and workers from local creches in my own area met regularly. Parents and children from around Victoria attended a protest meeting at Collingwood Town Hall. There was a demonstration at the opening of the new Raleigh Street centre in Northcote, and at the opening of a refuge in Reservoir.

As a result, the government was forced to back down and only \$10 million will now be cut.

However, parents are still worried. The reduction in subsidies, which go to pay wages, will mean fees will have to rise from next April to cover the gap.

The government has dropped its requirement for public centres to hire trained staff. Many centres are now faced with a decision to either close down, or sack trained child-care workers and employ low paid, untrained and inexperienced young women to replace them.

The government also wants parents who work part-time to get restricted access to child-care. This would further limit child-care for low income families.

By now, many parents think the government's promises on child-care sound very hollow. Their current action is in contradiction with their election promise of 20,000 new places over the next three years.

Quality will deteriorate if public centres are forced to close, sack their qualified staff, or severely downgrade educational facilities and services such as providing lunches for the kids.

So much, then, for the Accord increasing the social wage.

When I was part of a recent delegation to the Minister of Social Security, Brian Howe, he claimed that he often raised the issue of the poverty of single parent families in parliament. In fact, he said, other members' eyes tended to glaze over!

But Howe's real position is shown by his vote in favour of the cuts.

Parents and child-care workers plan to stage a protest at the Office of Child Care soon. For further information, phone Melbourne 484-1461.

— Beth Jones

ON THE JOB



Organising in the canteen

WE HEAR plenty about the Builders Labourers and the Metal Workers, the Accord and superannuation. Big

unions, big issues.

But for socialist workers, unionism is far more about organising on the job. Building up the militancy and solidarity of one's fellow rank-and-file unionists is the first step towards, one day, challenging the employers for the very ownership of the workplaces. It means fighting the "hide" issues to build up the muscle for the big ones.

Marie McFarlane is a shop steward for Telecom canteen workers in Brisbane. Canteen work is a high pressure job, Marie says, and you are on your feet all day.

The day in Marie's canteen recently found her had to assert themselves against management. The boilers broke down, and they had to fill tea trolley urns with buckets of boiling water. After a month, they decided the task was too dangerous and black-banned it.

Two days without tea or coffee brought management to their knees. The boiler is being replaced. In the meantime, the bosses are trekking to the coffee machine in the canteen to get their drinks.

Marie's co-workers have learned the value of trade unionism over the years. For instance, despite working for Telecom, they had no access to a telephone, something clerical workers take for granted. Marie called a meeting which demanded and won a free phone in their locker room.

Sexual harassment has been an ongoing issue.

Some years ago, they had a particular problem with special functions for upper level management. The waitresses often had their bottoms pinched. Drunken bosses tried to kiss them or

proposition them.

The phrase "sexual harassment" wasn't in common use then, but the women knew what the problem was. They held a stopwork meeting and complained to management.

That problem was resolved. But their own boss is still notorious. He is a constant problem, especially to the younger women. For instance, although there is a special uniform for functions, the boss often asks them to wear something low-cut and sexy.

Often, the younger women don't have the confidence to stand up to this. If casuals resist, they find they are out of a job the next day.

Marie emphasises that it is experience of taking on these issues that lead to a better understanding of trade unionism.

For example, one young woman was very pro-management when she started. She used to do in co-workers for being too slow. But when she got into trouble herself, her attitude started to change. Since the hot water action, she has become very pro-union.

Some of the women are impatient with the union. They feel the officials do nothing for them. As Marie says, though, "The important thing is that they see themselves as the union and learn the importance of sticking together."

— Janey Stone

Soc. Action goes to camp

FORTY EIGHT Socialist Action members and supporters spent the Australia Day weekend at our first ever summer camp — a mixture of politics and relaxation.

The relaxation was provided by the surroundings. The camp was held at Bundeena, in the middle of the national park and right next to the beach.

On the political side, Graham Willett pointed out the significance of the current rural crisis. Tom O'Lincoln summed up the state of the Left. And in his talk William Morris, David Lockwood discussed the similarities between the problems of early British socialists and our own.

The camp ended with a hilarious 'debate' on the pros and cons of the Accord. Guest appearances were made by well-known Accord supporters — like Laurie Carmichael and Simon Crean (or at least by people who sounded very much like them).

Make your booking for next year's even bigger and better camp now!

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Those super deals are not so super after all

SUPERANNUATION, it seems, is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow for Australian workers.

ACTU leaders Simon Crean and Bill Kelly portray recent improvements as the major achievement of the Accord Mark II package concluded with the Government last September. Australian Chamber of Manufacturers president Brian Powell paints it as a disaster for employers: "When rape is inevitable, one tends to suggest that one ought to lie back and enjoy it."

Both sides exaggerate, of course. The original Accord promised a wage rise in 1985 in line with increased productivity. That should have been at least five per cent. Instead, we will get a three per cent rise in the form of employers' superannuation contributions from next July.

The Transport Workers already had a campaign going for a union controlled super fund before the ACTU deal. Some companies have agreed to contribute to it before July. The Metal Workers have persuaded some employers to contribute to their fund from the start of last month.

Most superannuation has strings attached. If workers quit before retirement age, all they often get are their own contributions to a super fund and, if they are lucky, a little interest. Even at retirement, there is no guaranteed level of payout. It depends on how well the super fund's investment managers have invested the money.

Most super schemes started during the long post-war boom, when there was a labour shortage. Firms introduced superannuation to hold on to their workers. Super is not an insurmountable obstacle to job mobility. But it makes workers, especially those with years of contributions to a fund, think twice about changing jobs if they can't claim their old boss's contribution towards their payout.

Current attempts to set up industry-wide, union sponsored funds will overcome this problem, so long as a worker doesn't move to a job outside "the industry". Unions also want workers to be able to collect their own and their employer's contributions and the interest when they change



Powell: bosses cry "rape"

to implement its promise of a national super scheme in the 1930s. Improved superannuation is not the world's most radical reform.

There are three ways of getting financial security after retirement. One, being independently wealthy. It is not open to most of us. The other two are the pension and superannuation.

At present, most superannuation has strings attached. If workers quit before retirement age, all they often get are their own contributions to a super fund and, if they are lucky, a little interest. Even at retirement, there is no guaranteed level of payout. It depends on how well the super fund's investment managers have invested the money.

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jobs. This is called vesting. The advantage of the pension is that it has no strings attached. It is a right for all workers, and is unaffected by the bankruptcy of a company or a super fund. The pension's disadvantage is its low level.

SO WHY don't union officials campaign about the pathetic level of pensions.

First, they don't want to take on Labor. Keating and Hawke are prepared to make a few concessions on super, especially as a trade-off against wage rises. Paul Keating had said that he regards the super campaign as a safety valve, taking pressure off wages and the Accord.

Labor is conceding on super, rather than on pensions, for a reason. Expansion of super schemes to cover the whole workforce will allow the real level of pensions to be lowered in future. The argument will be, "Why worry about the pension when you have super?"

With an aging population, the Government faces a rising pensions bill. Super solves the problem by putting the onus for supporting their old age onto workers themselves. Remember that the employers' contributions will be instead of a wage rise.

For union officials, a second attraction is that the new super schemes will end their own powers. The campaign has focussed on getting funds that are union-run or have union reps on their boards.

The trust has not been to ensure workers' security by getting pensions (or Canberra, through pensions) to guarantee a retirement benefit equivalent to some proportion of current wages or some other real income standard. The old system, when benefits depend on the profits from a scheme's investments, remains.

CERTAINLY, employers will be less able to use company-run super funds as sources of cheap capital for themselves. And there is less scope for the schemes to become slush funds for corrupt union officials than in the USA (though this is possible).

A bigger worry is a more subtle form of corruption. Existing super funds are already very large institutional investors. In 1982, their assets were probably worth around \$25 billion. They account for 40% of the capitalisation of the current Australian share market.

But these have been achieved at the expense of our wages, as an alternative to better pensions, and as a safety valve for an Accord whose aim is to improve company profits above all.

— Rick Kuhn.



Kelly: exaggerating gains

Economist Greg Crough, a proponent of union super schemes, admits, "Unions will probably find that to preserve benefits they will have to become the managers of investment for the business community itself in order to provide a higher level of benefits in times of inflation."

Far from giving workers more say in how the economy is run, as some union officials suggest, this pressure to keep their funds' profits high will only make union leaders more conservative in outlook.

The first major scheme backed by the ACTU supports the point. The ACTU has engaged the Jacques Martin company to manage the Building Industry Superannuation Scheme, because it offered the best deal. Jacques Martin is a subsidiary of Colonial Mutual Life, a heavy investor in South Africa. ACTU chief negotiator Gerry Weaven has even been given a seat on the board of Jacques Martin. So much for black-banning Apartheid.

The current superannuation changes are a double edged sword for workers. In forcing some employers to contribute towards super for the first time, and the pressure on existing employer schemes to improve the terms of their pay-outs are all advantages.

But these have been achieved at the expense of our wages, as an alternative to better pensions, and as a safety valve for an Accord whose aim is to improve company profits above all.

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Where do conservative ideas come from?

FOR 150 years, socialists have looked to the working class as the force to usher in socialism.

We have pointed to its strategic location at the heart of capitalist production, to its organisation and history of struggle. We have said that this is the class that can and must lead a revolution for socialism, if we are to avoid the barbarism of nuclear war or fascism.

Yet working class struggles rarely move towards revolution. Here in Australia, capitalism is barely questioned at all by most people, and is openly challenged by a mere handful. The open repression of socialists and their ideas, resorted to in many other countries in the past, is not necessary here or in much of the West.

Unless Marxists can explain these facts, our theory comes to nothing.

AT THE most obvious level, we can point to the vast effort and resources that the ruling class pours into convincing people that society is organised in the way it should be.

The education system, the news media, mass entertainment, and to a lesser extent than in the past, the churches—all serve up the message that in general, capitalism is pretty good, and certainly better than any alternative.

We are not allowed to forget that we live in a society of abundance. In Russia they have food queues, in Ethiopia starvation. Here there is a TV in every house—and a video recorder, likely as not. All this, apparently, is due to the unhindered efforts of entrepreneurs in quest of profits.

Capitalism's apologists are not so stupid as to pretend that the system is perfect. But we are assured that most problems can be solved with a bit of tinkering.

Isn't that why we have civil rights? To speak our minds, to vote, to demonstrate even—to bring our grievances to the attention of our leaders, who



will then remedy them for us.

(Less often, we are told how the working class had to fight for its civil rights, and how the upper classes conceded them only grudgingly.)

Be careful, though, they warn us. It is a dangerous world out there. Daily violence from passing strangers, international terrorism, uncontrollable natural disasters. You start tinkering and there is no telling what you might unleash.

Much better to huddle in our homes, cling to our loved ones (only one each though, please!) and leave it to our leaders to deal with as best they can.

BUT IT IS NOT ENOUGH to point to the ideas that most people have about the world and to the role of the education system and the media in spreading them.

After all, people are not stupid. If the ideas that help sustain capitalism did not fit in with people's experience of the world—or at least part of it—then those ideas would not last five minutes.

In fact, these ideas are still

The fragility of the status quo: the May 1968 revolt in France

Karl Marx first pointed to this phenomenon in *Capital*:

"The advance of capitalist production develops a working class, which by education, tradition, habit looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of nature... the dull compulsion of economic relations compels the subjection of the labourer to the capitalist."

We see this dull compulsion both in the organisation of factory production and in white collar bureaucratic hierarchies. Ordinarily, workers have no control over their workplaces. How the work is organised, what gets produced, who gets the profits—all these are decided by a handful of owners and managers.

The effect of this is that the workplace becomes the bosses'—theirs to do with whatever they like. We just work there. The fact that without us, the factories and offices are just so much useless machinery, is obscured.

IT IS THIS tangible reality that underlies all the ideas that reinforce capitalism's stranglehold. It is as the reality crumbles that opportunities for the realization of socialism open up.

Because, of course, disputes arise at work all the time. Disputes, which when you come right down to it, are about who should make decisions that affect dozens or hundreds of workers or the workers themselves.

It is in the course of these struggles that powerlessness can be replaced by strength, apathy by commitment, isolation by solidarity. In the end, the idea that the workplace is "Theirs" can be challenged, and with it, the reality.

Which is why socialists get so desperately excited even about disputes that seem trivial to outsiders, why we are so keen to participate as fully as possible in struggles at our own workplaces and in others'.

It is because in every struggle we see a ray of hope. Every strike is, potentially, as Lenin put it once, "a school for revolution."

And as France's President DeGaulle discovered in May 1968, when a student grievance over crowded classes blossomed into the biggest General Strike in history, factory seizures and a near-revolution, there is no telling how much that school might teach.

—Graham Willett

Neville Wran, headline hunter

"EVERY day that Neville Wran spent as Leader of the Opposition in the NSW Legislative Assembly he was guided by one principle: to get media coverage."

These words from page 52 are the theme of Brian Dale's *Ascent to Power—Wran and the Media*. The book is, unwittingly, a revealing insight into the mentality of the modern Labor politician.

The author was Wran's press secretary from 1973 to 1980 and writes mainly from personal experience.

His recollection of the daily hunt for headlines is a bit like a returned tourist showing holiday snaps.

There was the day Wran cuddled a ram for the cameras ("the incident showed that Wran knew how to satisfy country media representatives").

Then there was the day Wran demonstrated at a press conference that some imported crash helmets were unsafe ("the story raged for a week").

After 108 pages of this magical trivia tour, Wran wins the 1976 election. As Premier, he proceeds to perfect his TV technique ("he knew where to sit in a studio interview—always camera right").

Fairfax's media was, at first, disapproving of Wran. This caused Wran some concern before the 1976 election. "If we win we should try and defuse their hatred of us," he told Dale. Try he did, by sending his police to attack the picket line of Fairfax printers a few months later.

Murdoch and Packer were more supportive. After the 1978 election, Wran paid his dues to them by giving them control of Lotto.

Such is the servility of Dale's "master media politician". Dale's repeated chorus that "Wran manipulated the media" to gain publicity is like saying that circus animals manipulate their trainer to gain applause.

While Dale enthuses about the medium, what in fact is the message? The key one appears, by accident, when Dale discusses Wran's "masterly use" of the live crowd. "If he regurgitated the live crowd..." Wran would appear in a live cross to put the Government's case succinctly and positively as to why it was right and the strikers' views were not to be supported.

Which strike? Any strike. It's as simple as that. No doubt at some future time, the capitalist press will prefer the

coverage required no special

Ascent to Power
by Brian Dale
(Allen & Unwin)

skills such as sitting camera right. It required only that he rally the Labor Party behind political positions which pleased the capitalists who controlled the editors who controlled the journalists.

Wran was the right man at the right time to do this. The right man was a technocratic lawyer who took money but not orders from the union bureaucracy. The right time was 1974, the end of the post-war economic boom.

As the Australian economy contracted in slump, so Labor and Liberal strategies to manage capitalism converged within one narrowing channel.

Wran received editorial applause by accelerating this convergence. He distanced the state Labor Party from its affiliates, from unions, from Whitlam, and from any policy that upset the status quo. He looked for votes with hot air, moral outrage and baby-kissing.

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Wran promenades with actresses Wendy Hughes and Chantel Contour: publicity stunts as a cover for conservatism

alternative form of union busting offered by the Liberals. Wran (and Hawke) will have spent their usefulness by then, having driven their working class electorate, confused and demoralised, back to the Liberals.

And when "Descent From Power" appears, you'll read that the media were to blame.

—Eric Petersen

FILM 

Sex and the single mother

NONI Hazelhurst fans have been hanging out since *Monkey Grip* for her next feature film. Fran will not disappoint them.

Hazelhurst portrays the main character, Fran, as an immediately likeable, resilient and attractive woman. Fran is also "irresponsible". She stays away from home for days at a time, leaving her friend Marge to look after her kids.

Fran suffers the conflict of being a single mother and an assertively sexual human being. She is unable to reconcile suburban domesticity and forming a relationship with an "eligible" male. The contradiction for Fran is only resolved by a compromise solution—attempting to house-plant a male into the household permanently.

Fran's strength in raising many issues, the individual's responsibility for their children, domestic violence, the role of welfare, and sexual abuse.

Only her on-going fight to maintain herself and her children

without the interference of "welfare" is developed to any degree. "I've had welfare telling me what to do all my life and I'm buggered if Social Security is going to start now..."

Fran responds with anger, railed at social and welfare workers who act as the buffer between state and client. One social worker tells her, "I seem to see you threatening to exterminate every Welfare Officer in the state."

However justified this anger may be, it is misdirected and provides no solution. In contrast, Fran's best friend Marge copes by remaining calm and "doing by remaining calm and "doing the right thing". She picks up the pieces for Fran. The price she pays is the virtual subjugation of her own life (and sexuality) to that of her children.

The film offers no solutions, and does not pretend to. It shows a cross-section of working-class suburban life, and leaves the audience to extract the political message.

In this way, the film is probably "realistic". The conflict between child-rearing responsibilities and one's own personal life is an insoluble one for millions. Yet a potential solution does exist, in the "communalising" of child-rearing. Provision of 24-hour, free and quality childcare is the most immediate reform is worth fighting for. In a socialist society, the possibility for moving away from the two (and often one) parent nuclear family to more communal child-raising would open up.

Fran does not suggest any such solution. But it is a devastating statement of the problem.

—Gillian Whalley

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The purging of Bill Hartley

YOU DON'T have to be a weatherman, sang Bob Dylan, to know which way the wind blows.

In the ALP, it is blowing to the right, and so hard that it has swept Bill Hartley clean out of the party.

The Federal Executive hearing against Hartley was little more than an elaborate charade. Concessions, such as allowing him de facto legal representation, were made to pre-empt Hartley's grounds for a court appeal. But everyone knows the numbers were lined up 11-7 to get rid of him.

The press suggests two motives behind Hartley's purging. One is long-standing: his enmity to Bob Hawke, his stupid support for Libya and Iraq, his far more creditable support for the PLO, and his demands at election time that Labor sticks to principles.

The other is recent: his attacks on Hawke and Cain over their campaign to destroy the BLF.

No doubt these motives are at work. But why has Hartley's position weakened so much that moves against him today can succeed, when they have so often failed before?

THE EROSION in Hartley's base began nearly four years ago, when Victorian ALP secretary Bob Hogg, a leading Socialist Left figure, moved the "compromise" which sold out on uranium policy at the 1982 Federal Conference.

Hogg had to quit the Socialist Left, and moved on to become Bob Hawke's chief advisor. But he retained links and influence in the faction, through his wife Caroline (now a Victorian minister), and numerous other party figures.

Soon after, the Victorian leadership of the Communist Party, under Bernie Taft, walked out on its members and set up the Socialist Forum group. Taft's leadership had often taken stances to the right of the Socialist Left, for example supporting the Newport Power Station.

Taft and his friends used their links in the ALP/union bureaucracy to build influence inside the Labor Party, especially in Hogg's circles. Socialist Forum now has roughly 220 supporters, at least one-third being in the ALP. Most are in the Socialist Left, many are in the labour bureaucracy as well. Former ACTU advocate Bruce Hartnett



is a prominent example.

Taft planned to split the Socialist Left, taking the right of it away from Hartley and into a new Centre-Left faction. It would also draw from the Independents (John Cain's faction) and even from the right (Hawke's Centre Unity faction).

Space for a Centre-Left faction exists in Victoria. When Bill Hayden first formed the Centre-Left, it didn't take off in Victoria. The Socialist Left was hegemonic, and the small independent group covered roughly similar ground.



A Centre-Left faction in Victoria would suit a lot of people. It would give Bill Hayden's people truly national coverage. It would be a vehicle for Taft & Co to gain influence interstate. It would seal Hawke's policies to the party left in Victoria, as it has done elsewhere, and leave Hartley's followers isolated.

For the "new guard" in the Victorian Socialist Left, the Gerry Hands and Caroline Hogg's, it would be an easy route out of the faction's isolation nationally.

Caroline Hogg bluntly called for the Socialist Left to split a few months ago. Significantly, it was the Centre-Left that moved the current charges against Hartley.

SO HARTLEY'S purging is part of a much bigger ballgame. What attitude should socialists take to it?

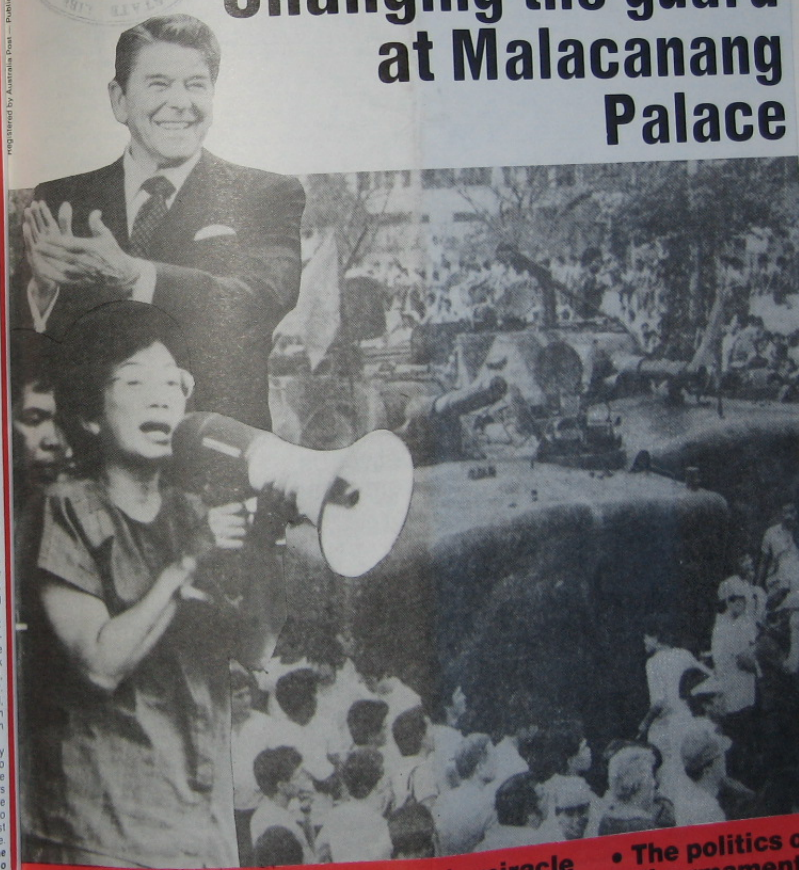
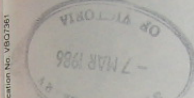
About Hartley himself, our feelings must be mixed. He has fought to defend the PLO and the BLF inside the Labor Party, courageous and unpopular stands to take.

Yet his view of socialism, like that of so many left-Labor figures, is incredibly bureaucratic. He supports the Libyan and Iraqi regimes, defending Iraq's execution of communists in 1979. He regards criticism of Russia as "anti-working class". He even backed Ayatollah Khomeini's regime for a while, seeing his murderous "revolutionary committees" of Islamic fanatics as the basis for "mass participatory" democracy.

But Hartley is not being purged for his pro-Iraq antics. He was on trial as part of a campaign to break up the left of the Party. That is why he must be defended.



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SOCIALIST ACTION

PHILIPPINES: Changing the guard at Malacanang Palace

The charges themselves were sheer trumpetry. Hartley was accused of promoting "divisions" by attacking Hawke and Cain. Hawke, who drove hundreds of thousands of ALP voters into voting NDP, and Cain, who openly boasts of defying the party when he disagrees with it, do not promote divisions, of course.

The Executive heard the charges under its catch-all power to deal with the general welfare of the Labor movement. Since the same Executive has set about smashing the BLF, that is quite a laugh.

HARTLEY'S sentence requires him to get Federal Executive permission before being readmitted. An expelled member can apply immediately for readmission, under Victorian branch rules.

Hartley may try to get the Victorian branch to defy the Executive, by letting him attend meetings. But such a move is unlikely, as it would give Hawke an excuse for federal intervention. The branch would back down, just as it did to readmit the four right-wing unions last year.

Hartley is more likely to fight on through the courts. Such a principled on his part. Socialists should oppose state intervention in the labour movement's internal affairs, a position Hartley himself has argued.

If Hartley's supporters are unable to defend him inside the ALP, they really should ask themselves what they are doing in there anyway.

Yet Hartley's wing will not leave the party. The Food Preservers, the Plumbers and the other unions who back him seek "influence" through the ALP, even if they cannot have power. His cronies George Crawford, Joan Coxsedge and Jean McLean owe their Victorian parliamentary seats to Labor.

The purging of Bill Hartley shows the futility of trying to capture the ALP from within. The real tragedy is that his supporters will keep trying to do it, when the working class movement so desperately needs a socialist alternative built from the outside.

When you know which way the wind is blowing, there's no excuse for pissing into it.

• Lindy: Martyr to what?

• Sweden's miracle just a mirage

• The politics of disarmament

CAT'S EYE

NSW LABOR

An Unsworth successor

BARRY ("No Commies Here") Unsworth is an ambitious man. The former boss of Sydney's Trades Hall is now a senior minister in the Wran government. Though he has only been in parliament a short time, he's already a front runner in the stakes to take over when "Nifty" eventually retires.

Unsworth became the new Health Minister recently and quickly replaced the department head with his own flunky. Two weeks later, he cut the half-million dollar nurses' recruitment campaign, even though NSW hospitals are chronically short of staff.

The Spinal Unit at one large hospital was so short staffed that patients were hiring private nurses.

Next, Unsworth announced he'd withdrawn a series of radio advertisements for condoms as an AIDS prevention ad. The ads were backed by health workers such as those at the Sydney AIDS clinic. Unsworth said the ads were unlikely to reach their target audience. As a staunch Catholic and reported Right to Life, Barry Unsworth is perfectly placed to know.

Not surprisingly, Unsworth is having trouble with his staff. It seems he isn't too popular with some public servants, and they have been leaking departmental mail to the press.

Unsworth said if he caught anyone leaking documents, they'd be "scrubbing out hospital hallways in Tiboburra and points further west." That's if he doesn't close all the hospitals from Tiboburra to the South Australian border first.

PETROL PRICES

Labor pumps up CPI

WHAT goes up need not come down. Take petrol prices under Labor.

When international party pricing came in, the price of petrol rose to world levels. Now that world prices have plunged, Labor is passing only half the benefit back to consumers.

Just another Hawke rip-off? Yes and no.

A rip-off it certainly is. But it also reveals a more basic fraud in the deals Labor stitched up with

the ACTU in Accord Mark II. They promised tax cuts in September, and Accord supporters make much of this. What they didn't stress was that they counted on getting all that back off us, through inflation.

Australia's high inflation would lead to sizeable wage indexation rises, putting us all into higher tax brackets and recycling the "tax cuts" back into government coffers.

But if petrol prices fall too far, inflation would slow significantly. We wouldn't be pushed into higher tax brackets, and the whole trick would come unstuck. We might actually benefit from the tax cuts.

This would never do! So for that reason amongst others, only half the petrol price cut goes to the workers whom Labor allegedly represents.

BLACKS

WA cops at it again

TONY KING died on 29 October, 1985, in police custody.

The cops say he was the Geraldton Rapist. Despite two autopsies and calls for an inquest, a date has not been set to investigate the circumstances surrounding his death.

Tony, a New Zealander, lived with an Aboriginal woman and was active in the black movement, for example around the issue of John Pat's death in a WA prison.

After being chased by police through Geraldton back streets, he died with only a policeman present. Police Commissioner Bull announced that there was an "irresistible inference" that he was the rapist, and police said they had the same "gut feeling".

What a bonanza for the cops: an Aboriginal rights activist and a rapist eliminated at once!

The WA government and the police are very tight-lipped as to why they suspect him of the eight Geraldton rapes. They say any comment would prejudice the inquest. But an inquest investigates the circumstances of death, as distinct from the rape allegations.

Tony's family and the Aboriginal Legal Service are compiling evidence showing he was not the rapist. For example, they have photos of him attending rallies in Perth at the same time as some of the crimes occurred in Geraldton, 450 kilometres to the north.

He was often in the bush at the time the rapes occurred, but the shearing contractor he worked



Unsworth in his union days: now headed for Wran's job?

for will not assist the family.

Relatives claim Tony does not match physical descriptions which have appeared in press reports about the rapist. Victims reportedly mention Asian, Italian or educated Australian accents, but Tony had a New Zealand accent.

While police claim that the number of rapes and break-ins have decreased since his death, plenty are still being reported.

The circumstances of this man's death are incredible. Police claim he ran through a Super-6 fence before he scuffed with them and died. They have not explained why they didn't apply respiratory restoration, or why a fit young man should suddenly succumb to heart failure this way.

AMERICA'S CUP

Deliver us from Bondage

WHERE does Alan Bond get off?

First Labor earmarks a \$10 million hand-out for the America's Cup defence. Then WA Premier Brian Burke appoints a special minister to oversee the America's Cup nonsense.

So now Bond gives the BLF a bash for Labor. It happened like this.

Bond planned a development of crew headquarters and units in Fremantle on the cheap.

He asked suppliers to donate equipment and material to the America's Cup Defence League. In return, they would get free advertising during the Cup challenge — a nice little tax dodge all round.

The building unions, especially the BWIU, foresaw members being laid off if building suppliers did not make

deliveries on time. After all, the materials were donations, so unions and developers could not pressure for prompt delivery with any ease.

The BWIU demanded wage labour and not contract labour, to protect workers' jobs. Meanwhile, Bond had other problems with his dubious investment; Multiplex, the developers, dropped the deal.

Finally, Bond cancelled the project. Rather than admit that the \$3.6 million development was being replaced by a mere \$2,000 upgrading of a suburban hotel for financial reasons, Bond claimed a BLF site allowance claim was the cause.

In fact, the BLF's only link with Bond's shemuzzle was that local BLF secretary Kevin Reynolds chaired the Building Trades Unions which pressed the BWIU claims.

But with some big America's Cup projects fading fast, "Bondy" wasn't going to let the facts get in the way of a good excuse.



Bond: blaming the BLF

COVER STORY

Philippines: Changing the guard at Malacanang Palace

THERE IS something particularly satisfying about watching a dictator fall. Especially when he is a ruthless, rapacious, self-serving client of imperialism like Ferdinand Marcos.

Disregard the guff from the State Department about how he left with "dignity and honour". Marcos only left when he was forced to do so — when there were hundreds of thousands in the streets against him, up to 85 per cent of the army had defected, the Catholic Church and the US were demanding that he go, and even his own diarch supporters had lost the stomach for a fight.

Disregard, too, the platitudes about how he was overthrown with non-violence.

Marcos was forced out by the mass action of the workers and students of Manila who, in the course of a few days, managed to neutralise the president, stop his armed forces and face down an "unbeatable" military machine. So much for those who say that revolutions against the modern military are impossible.

But behind the heroic non-violence, the blocking of tanks by unarmed human beings, lay the absolute certainty of civil war had Marcos loyalists tried to crush the revolt in blood. It was a striking confirmation of the revolutionist, rather than pacifist, position, that the best guarantee of non-violence is when the masses have superior weight of arms to back up their numbers and social power.

IN MANILA, unfortunately, the arms were never actually in the hands of the masses. They remained with a disaffected faction of the ruling class and its army. After all the heroism, all that has really occurred is a change of the guard at Malacanang Palace.

Coro Aquino was one of the ruling families of the Philippines. When she married Benigno Aquino, she joined another one. Her first cousin was one of Marcos' chief "cronies". She is fabulously wealthy. As one writer remarked:

"The names Aquino and Laurel have not been ones to have the dirt-poor peasantry falling on their knees in gratitude. For the landless, the dispossessed, they have been part of the problem,

not the solution."

General Ramos personally supervised several massacres of opponents of Ferdinand Marcos. Last year, standing in for General Ver who was on enforced leave, he was in charge of forces that machine-gunned three thousand demonstrators, killing 21. He is a cousin of Marcos, a graduate of West Point, and led a Filipino detachment in Vietnam. In other words, just what the US ordered.

Juan Enrile is the most unsavoury of all. Introduced to politics by Marcos, he was the main architect of the imposition of martial law in 1972. He claims:

"Had I known martial law would be used to suppress our people, I would not have supported it."

Under martial law, he was chairman of a large bank, and gained control of extensive timber concessions. He made a pile. Not surprisingly, he worked hard for a Marcos victory in the election, and admits vote buying. When it became clear that a Marcos victory meant continuing turmoil, and continuing advances for the New People's Army, he switched sides.

Just hours after Marcos departed, Enrile made clear to Aquino the realities of the new political power. He was, he said, still the leader of the KBL, the Marcos political party, which controls the national assembly. If Mrs Aquino wanted any new legislation passed, she would have to negotiate with the KBL. Getting rid of Marcos is one thing; significant change is quite another.

Ramos: just what the US ordered



LETS GO back a bit. In the next few weeks, it will be difficult to remember the farcical 'election' which started the whole ball rolling. In retrospect, it was something of a turning point. Following the election, everybody differed.

Marcos was clearly tossing up his options, if his public statements are anything to go by. One minute he considered martial law (thus all his warnings about the danger of inviting Mrs Aquino into a council of state). One minute he contemplated invalidating the election, the next he was intent on 'touching it out'. In the end, he decided on the latter, which placed the ball in someone else's court.

The US has had problems with dictators losing their grip in the last few months, from South Africa to Haiti. As far as Marcos was concerned, differing opinions were expressed by

President (in his waking hours), the State Department and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the end, it seemed clear that while the US wanted Marcos out, if he stayed, they

would stay with him. But behind the scenes, the US initiated the process of splitting part of the Marcos regime away from the president himself. Philip Habib was dispatched to Manila.

For Filipinos, the most important ditherers after the election were the opposition. To start with, they were shocked that they did not win an overwhelming mandate in the election. Despite the vote-rigging, intimidation and thuggery of the Marcos campaign, they still believed that they would win. When that seemed less likely, they made threats. Cory Aquino announced:

"If I succeed Marcos declares himself the winner, I will lead daily demonstrations. They will be peaceful. I do not advocate violence."

But Marcos did precisely that. And the daily demonstrations steam was going right out of the opposition campaign.

Aquino's counter-proclamation rally was smaller than her campaign rallies. The campaign of 'civil disobedience' she put forward consisted of non-payment of bills, and the boycott of Marcos-connected banks, media and department stores. She called for strikes — but not until February 26 (the day after Marcos' inauguration). This strike quickly became converted into a day of national protest and prayer.

Aquino had a mass following amongst the workers and peasants of the Philippines. But in the masses, particularly those in the cities who earn \$5 a day, are not very interested in banks and department stores. Aquino's campaign was aimed at the middle class. After all, she had promised the Catholic bishops that she would not mobilise her forces on the streets.

By mid-February, the opposition was looking suspiciously like a dead letter. The euphoria was gone, and Marcos seemed set to sit in the presidential palace until they tired themselves out.

To revive the movement it would have had to be tied to the needs of the masses — to the wage demands, the squatters' demands and the demands for land reform. There was little likelihood that the Aquino-led opposition would do that. It could unleash forces that they could not control.



Facing down the army: Manila crowds block Marcos' tanks

(Continued page 4)

Baby Doc has his "monkey tail" broken at last

THE MONSTER has been driven out of Haiti, and so far only one nation on earth is prepared to take him.

Only the repressive state of Liberia will touch "Baby Doc" Duvalier. The Haitians themselves probably regret his departure, but only because they didn't get the chance to lynch him.

The dictator, who had claimed to be "strong as a monkey's tail" as late as January, fled leaving behind what has been described quite accurately as the poorest country in the world. The average wage is a staggering \$141 per year. Fifty percent of the workforce is unemployed, with education and health standards well below other countries.

The Duvalier dynasty dated back to 1957, when Francois (Papa Doc) Duvalier was installed. After a failed coup attempt shook him up, Papa Doc formed a para-military secret police force known as the Tonton Macoutes. In 1985, this force was 14,000 strong.

The regime became infamous for its terror and oppression. When Baby Doc succeeded his father in 1971, he inherited the title of "President for Life". At an "election" last year, he received 99.98 percent of the vote.

The Duvalier family's personal wealth of \$800 million is a testament to the contrast in living standards between the ruling



Haitians celebrate Duvalier's downfall in Port-au-Prince

clique and the many slum dwellers.

American complicity in this monstrous regime was no secret. US investment in light manufacturing has been an important aspect of economic activity, along with tourism. So too has been US aid, about \$52 million a year.

The Reagan administration had clearly withdrawn its support for Duvalier, when it refused to continue this aid last year. The reason was the social and political upheaval which gripped the country for the last three months

before he fell.

Large student protests forced the government to close the schools and universities. In January, protestors burned down the tax bureau and customs house, and raided the building of an American relief organisation.

Demonstrators built barricades across the main highway and ransacked government offices. After a government provocation at a church mass in Cap Haitien, 60,000 demonstrators marched.

The government responded with a state of siege. Hundreds

were killed by the armed forces, but the people would not be denied.

The Americans decided that Duvalier had lost control. To save their investments from a possible revolution, cosmetic changes had become necessary.

By removing the dictator, the US probably also hoped to entice the hundreds of thousands of Haitian emigres, who fled the country to America, to return home.

Haiti's new rulers, the National Council of Government, are really not so new. This six-person junta is dominated by military personnel with close links to the Duvalier family, men who were responsible for repressing the mass demonstrations.

Ideally, the Americans would prefer a government more appealing than a military junta, such as one led by the Christian Social Party. Such a regime would also secure the support of the Catholic church.

But first the population would need to be controlled — and early signs are that popular mobilisations are continuing. On 13 February, thousands of students demonstrated outside the Presidential palace in Port-au-Prince, at least 300 people have been killed by government repression, and the government has shown no sign of embarking on a program of social reform.

The Duvalier dynasty is dead. But its ghost still haunts the island.

— Phil Whitefield

A YEAR ago this month, the great British miners' strike ended in defeat.

Yet any great struggle also brings gains as well, even if they are less tangible than jobs and wages. One important gain from the miners' strike was the liberating experiences it offered to many thousands of miners' wives.

Pessimists continually tell us that "you can't change human nature." But the miners' strike changed and politicised large numbers of men and women whose lives and consciousness would never be the same again.

On 1 March, 1984, the Coal Board threw down a gauntlet to the National Union of Mine-workers, by closing Cortonwood mine. Coal stocks had been built up, and the police reorganised and trained in strike-breaking.

In most areas, the miners responded well. Flying pickets brought Yorkshire to a standstill. Kent, South Wales and Scotland followed. But in Nottinghamshire and some other areas a large percentage remained at work.

Eight thousand police were sent to Nottinghamshire to keep it safe for scabbing. Mass pickets at the Orgreave steel works were defeated by a huge police mobilisation, in battles where the cops were "out to maim, not arrest".

From here on, the strike was forced onto the defensive. Despite tremendous sympathy and financial support from other workers, the miners found scabbing began to increase. After Christmas, significant numbers began drifting back to work, and the strike ended on 5 March, 1985.

THE STRIKE saw an unprecedented, widespread formation of women's support groups throughout the mining communities — a mass movement, largely spontaneous, that took everyone by surprise.

Some women wanted to make a public stand, while others simply wanted to do something about the financial and other burdens that the strike imposed upon their families. Some had political experience, while others had none at all.

Without the women's support groups supplying food and welfare on a regular basis, the strike could not have gone on as long as it did. The strike kitchens allowed women who normally have been stuck passively at home to help to build the strike. The kitchens became a community centre for men, women and children, and had a politicising atmosphere. As one striker said, "Coming here, you



Miners' strike: It radicalized wives the most

learn more about the strike than you do at most union meetings".

Women who had never been anywhere without their husbands suddenly found themselves packed off to London, speaking to large audiences, organising rallies and raising money. Such experiences transformed the women, who in many cases ended up as more effective speakers than the men — they argued the case against pit closures better and had facts and figures at their fingertips.

Women went to the mass pickets such as Orgreave as well as local ones, and sometimes held women-only pickets. As the strike wore on, their courage grew.

"The pigs are policing us with the riot squad, and also horse and dog patrols, but there's one thing we can say. We'll be on the picket line even if they put tanks there."

Women's participation in the picketing gave them the right to say: "We no longer stand behind our men, we stand with them."

FOR WOMEN whose lives had previously been circumscribed, the strike opened up a whole new world of political awareness.

Many became disillusioned with the traditional institutions of society: the media, the courts and above all the police. As one woman said, "It's losing faith in things you once took for granted. The police will no longer be a friendly bobby to me." They learned about the real nature of the community centre for men, women and children, and had a politicising atmosphere. As one striker said, "Coming here, you

government, with political aims in view.

Many also found themselves newly comprehending the struggles of others, in Ireland and South Africa and in Britain's black communities. As the wife of a Welsh miner said:

"Things that have happened during the strike have shown me how much the working class in this country has in common with the working class in Ireland, how much I as a miner's wife have in common with a woman in Belfast fighting for her children."

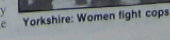
Activists in the feminist movement in Britain had generally ignored or minimised the struggles of working class women over the previous few years, concentrating instead on separatist and pacifist activities such as the peace camp at Greenham Common. The miner's strike changed that.

During the strike, tens of thousands of women were fighting side by side with our men, standing with them, and in some cases, fighting against them for the right to stand on picket lines with them."

Since the early to mid-seventies, feminists in Britain and Australia have largely accepted a notion of women's struggle that pits them against men, and attempts to unite most if not all women across class lines. The British miners' strike demonstrated in practice how irrelevant such notions are in a genuine mass upheaval.

The women grew, developed and began to see new possibilities for themselves because they were part of one of the great class struggles of the decade. Any serious strategy for women's liberation must take note of that fact.

— Dorothy Morgan



Yorkshire: Women fight cops

FROM PAGE 3



Philippines

WHAT SAVED THE opposition was the defection of defence minister Juan Enrile and General Ramos.

This was completely unexpected — in all likelihood as much to them as to everyone else. They were talked into it by US special envoy Philip Habib, as the one way out of continuing instability. Instability means weakness. Weakness means an increasing threat to the People's Army (NPA). The NPA means a threat to US investment and US bases.

The effect of the defection was to deepen the division within the Filipino ruling class, and immediately to split the armed forces. It also provided the mass

movement with a new focus of mobilisation.

There is no question that in the last analysis, it was that mobilisation that forced Marcos out. The masses, however, did not control the complexion of the new government.

It is important to remember that the particularly vicious form of capitalism that exists in the Philippines is a system, not a man. Marcos has gone, but the system remains. Enrile and the others intend to see that it does so.

FOR THE Filipino left, the situation creates enormous new opportunities.

Immediately Aquino took over, the banned National Democratic Front, led by the Communist Party, demanded release of political prisoners, land reforms, and other

democratic measures. Aquino's first response was to prevaricate, saying she would have to "consider" what to do about the 500 political prisoners.

Those on the streets did not fight simply to replace one dictator with a group of others. They fought for a better life, above the poverty line, out of the shanties, away from the sweatshops.

To win it, they are going to have to go on fighting, not against Marcos now, but against capitalism. The weakness of the Filipino left, however, despite its mass influence, is that its Maoist politics lead it to pursue "democratic" demands and alliances with capitalists, instead of organising for workers to take power.

In the hours leading up to Marcos' departure, a Filipino businessman and Aquino sup-

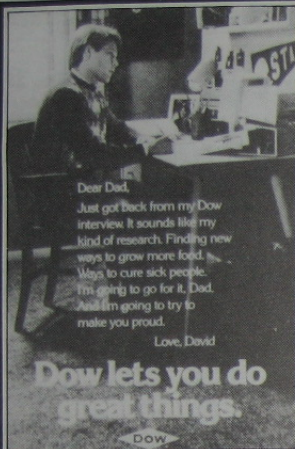
• Aquino



porter said that the Philippines now needed "economic and discipline". His interest in the interests of those in the streets are not the same, and behind her talk of reconciliation, that is what Aquino will now pursue.

But the masses have had a taste of their own power. Whether the ensuing months can throw up new revolutionary forces seeking to make power permanent, whether the Communist Party through the NPA and the National Democratic Front can continue to build its "nationalist revolution", or whether Cory Aquino can be seen to remain to be seen.

— David Lockwood



Dear Dad,
Just got back from my Dow interview. It sounds like my kind of research. Finding new ways to grow more food. Ways to cure sick people. I'm going to go for it, Dad. I'm going to try to make you proud.

Love, David

Dow lets you do great things

Dow

FROM the Ferdinand Marcos school of electioneering...Indonesia's General Suharto faces a general election next year.

His ruling Golkar Party has already announced that it aims to win 70 per cent of the seats, and that it intends to collect exactly 61,391,869 votes!

LIFESTYLE corner... Businessman Basil Sellers was ousted by Geoffrey Edelman for the Sydney Swans football team. So he bought the Newcastle Falcons basketball team as a consolation.

Says Sellers, "In relation to my assets, I live in a fairly modest life. I live in

a fairly modest house in Double Bay, drive a seven or eight-year-old Mercedes. But if I want to buy a nice piece of art I can do that. If I want to buy a basketball team, I'll buy a basketball team!" Sellers threw lavish parties for a fortnight last year to celebrate his fiftieth birthday. If all that is modest compared to his assets, we'd hate to think how big his assets must be.

• AN HISTORICAL footnote on imperialism's civilizing mission. When King Leopold of Belgium was subjugating the Congo, his troops were required to turn in a human right ear for every two cartridges fired.

If not enough corpses were available, they were taken from prisoners. Soldiers who wasted ammunition were liable to forfeit their own ears.

• DOW CHEMICALS has been running a major advertising campaign in the United States, under the slogan "Dow lets you do great things." You remember Dow Chemicals, don't you? They brought the world such great things as napalm, And Agent Orange. And dioxins.

Last year, Dow had to take out an advertisement that wasn't so great. It was a full-page public apology to Greenpeace protester Melissa Orquist, after two Dow employees began spreading false rumours that she had VD when she was arrested on Dow property.

ALL THOSE saps sucked in by the militaristic "Rambo" cult will probably be intrigued to learn that Sylvester Stallone sat out the Vietnam War at a university in Switzerland.

NICE to know where we stand. Labor has amended Companies and Securities legislation covering company liquidations.

Employees are now listed *ninth* in priority of payouts, to receive their award retrenchment pay. Guess we can't complain, though. Business didn't want us mentioned at all!

CRACKPOT literature continues to pollute our mailbox. The latest comes from a new right-wing group called "Safeguard Australia".

They've invited all "ordinary people of Australia" to spend \$35 a head at their inaugural dinner in NSW, to hear ANI boss John Leard talk about "Superannuation

and the Economy." We can hardly wait.

We wonder Leard will talk about the thrashing he received from the ordinary workers of Commonwealth Engineering, when he tried to superannuate them en masse in 1983 in order to make a few economies.

THE LAST word on Ronald Reagan's operation comes from our favourite American columnist, R. F. Kampter in the socialist magazine *Against the Current*.

"They should have kept the tumor and amputated everything else."



KAMPTER also publishes the following useful piece of advice: "I am sweating away on the assembly line when the foreman comes along and says: 'There's



CHEAP SHOTS

a cigarette butt on your floor. Should I reply:
A. No shit, Sherlock.
B. There's plenty of room to walk around it.
C. You have a remarkable grasp of the obvious.
D. Thanks, but you can have it. I'm trying to cut down.

Perplexed"

Dear Perplexed,
Try C. By the time the foreman gets back to his office to look up the big words, he will probably have forgotten the entire incident.

ONELAW for the poor, another for the rich.

While most workers only get the miserable National Wage Case rises, university and college heads are receiving up to a 10.5% salary increase. These administrators of education cuts, and promoters of privatisation will now get up to \$85,554 a year. Apart from expense allowances and car, many also receive a house and housekeeper.

PEACE MOVEMENT

BOMBS AWAY!

The Politics of Disarmament

RUSSIAN leader Mikhail Gorbachev stunned the White House in mid-January. He made a proposal which would rid the world of nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

Under Gorbachev's proposal both superpowers would immediately stop nuclear testing and renounce space weapons. Both sides would cut their strategic nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent in the next eight years. Britain, France and China would begin to disarm from 1990, and from 1995 Russia and America would dismantle all remaining nuclear warheads.

On the surface, Gorbachev's disarmament initiative was the most ambitious ever from a superpower leader. Yet no-one seriously expected much to come of it. Within a week, Western reaction had sunk it almost without a ripple.

American Secretary of State George Shultz scoffed, "It's a bid for public opinion." A Washington official said of nuclear arms, "They're cheap and they work, so they're not going to disappear from the face of the earth." Strategy chief Jonathan Alford summed up Britain's attitude: "Show me some really significant reductions on the Soviet side and the American side, and we will consider building to a lower total than we would have built to."

Such cynicism from the West was entirely in character, of course. For years, the US opposed a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, claiming that no adequate technology existed to check that each side complied. Now the technology does exist. Norwegian seismologists last year detected a small half-kiloton blast at a Russian site 3000 kilometres away.

So the US has simply changed its pretexes, and continues to oppose a ban. "We feel the Soviets have an advantage and for the moment don't see to test," says White House spokesman Larry Speakes. "The United States feels that for our own national security's important that we do test."

MIKHAIL Gorbachev was not entirely devoid of cynicism in making the proposal either.

The initial 50 per cent cut in "strategic" weapons was to apply to all missiles that could reach the other superpower's territory. That meant the US had to cut its European warheads, but the Russians did not have to cut their missiles aimed at Europe.

Gorbachev knew from last November's abortive arms summit that Reagan was fully committed to the Star Wars program, and that he would not renounce space weapons. Gorbachev's real intention came out in a speech to the Supreme Soviet in December,

when he announced that if Reagan continued Star Wars research, Russia would develop a Star Wars project of its own.

Gorbachev also knew that Russia can compete militarily with the US far better in conventional arms than in the nuclear field, where the Pentagon has a considerable lead. It was to protect this lead that four years ago Reagan proposed a ban on nuclear weapons in Europe. Then, of course, the Kremlin rejected the idea of a weapons ban.

So cynicism abounds on both sides. Washington sees nuclear weapons as its best guarantee of superiority over Moscow. Russia, with an economy just half the size of America's, is far keener to reduce the scale of nuclear competition, but is still committed to competing. And both sides use their military superiority to dominate their respective blocs, from Grenada to South Korea, from Afghanistan to Czechoslovakia.

GORBACHEV'S failed January initiative again points up the weakness of the "multilateralist" approach to disarmament.

Multilateralism is a key obstacle to the peace movement. The problem is not just one of "Who makes the first move?" The ramifications are enormous. It determines which class in society we look to as the key to disarmament, and whether we struggle against our rulers or go to them cap in hand.

Multilateralism looks to both superpowers to disarm simultaneously, by a step-by-step process such as the one Gorbachev proposed. The entire initiative lies with Washington and Moscow, who must decide that disarmament is in their joint interest.

Yet the fate of Gorbachev's proposals showed that it clearly is not. Numerous other multilateralist initiatives have also failed. The SALT talks, for example, have dragged on since 1969 while the arms race has spiralled ever upwards.



Peace marchers in Melbourne, 1984

Reagan and Gorbachev, abortive summit



Multilateralism today merely means asking both sides to "try harder." Senator Jo Valentine took this to an almost comical extreme last November, when she organised a hand-holding circle to send "spiritual messages" to the arms summit charade in Geneva. No wonder even Ronald Reagan claims to support multilateralism.

Not surprisingly, so do the three major parties in Australia.

It was the key political difference over which Jo Valentine, Peter Garrett and Jean Melzer split the Nuclear Disarmament Party. "It will make me job impossible in Canberra if the other parties can brand me as unilateralist," said Valentine before departing.

SOcialists, on the other hand, have no hesitation in taking a unilateralist stand. We have no compunctions about forcing the West to disarm, whether or not Russia disarms as well.

There are three reasons for this stance. First, we reject the pro-nuclear lobby's idea that a "balance of terror" somehow keeps the world at peace.

The idea that arming two murderous ruling classes to the teeth can somehow provide a lasting peace is inherently absurd. Just one failure of this precarious balance, one desperate gamble (even by side to win a nuclear war or even a computer malfunction) will destroy the world. In the meantime, the "balance of terror" acts as a cover for each superpower to crush national liberation movements inside its own sphere of influence.

Multilateralism, by conceding the need for nuclear parity during any disarmament process, caves in to the whole "balance of terror" mentality.

Second, socialists recognize that only mass struggle will disarm the superpowers.

(Continued page 8)

Go to school on the ALP

IF YOU'RE a Victorian reader, Socialist Action's Melbourne branch has an intriguing weekend in store for you at Bacchus Marsh.

On April 18-19, we're holding a Weekend School on the Labor Party. What its role is historically, what it is like to be inside, and what strategies socialists can adopt towards it. Enthusiastic support, splits, the Socialist Left will all come up.

As well as the talks and

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SOCIALIST ACTION

discussions, there'll be plenty of time for relaxation at the well-appointed holiday lodge there. Cost is absolutely minimal, and lifts are available from Melbourne.

Interested? Ring us on 380 2227 for more details.

Soc. Action conference

REVOLUTIONARIES always have a lot to talk about when they meet. And the first Socialist Action national conference at Easter will be no exception.

We'll begin with the world

situation, economic and political. Not that a group our size can change it... yet! But we orient ourselves by analysing the world we live in.

We'll talk about the class struggle in Australia, whose ups and downs were analysed in a recent issue of this magazine, and then go on to discuss our own work.

The new organisation naturally took a bit of time to get moving. A new publication had to be launched last year, a discussion bulletin established, a national structure gradually developed.

But now we've recruited some

new members and begun to make our interventions felt in the world. This month we have been appearing on the campuses. On-going trade union work has been established, and a major new pamphlet on the ALP/ACTU Accord should be off the presses by Easter.

Conference will look at this work and start to plan ahead. As our successful Australia Day summer camp showed, national events of the sort we are an important part of building a socialist organisation. If you'd like to be part of the process, why not contact your local branch of Socialist Action and come along.

The conference is in Sydney. If you live in another city, we can probably help with transport and accommodation.

PEACE MOVEMENT

Polite lobbying via Labor governments will not do it. Mitterrand in France, Callaghan and Kinross in Britain, Hayden and Hawke in Australia have all proved staunchly pro-nuclear. Even David Lange in New Zealand required mass pressure to take his mild anti-nuclear stance.

Australia is a key collaborator in the Western nuclear alliance. So it is that alliance that we have primary responsibility to fight against. We can exert little direct leverage on the Russian bloc. If we were to listen to pro-nuclear lobbyists like Leslie G. Kemeny, who demand that we focus our attack equally on Moscow, we would end up doing virtually nothing.

Third, socialists take an internationalist and class attitude to disarmament.

Unlike pacifists, we do not see unilateral disarmament as a "moral example" which the Kremlin might follow. We have no such illusions in the heirs of Josef Stalin.

Instead, we look to the revolutionary potential of Eastern bloc workers to disarm Moscow. This is a force often forgotten by Western radicals.

Yet despite their lack of democratic rights, Eastern European workers have just as impressive a record of revolt as we in the West. The East Berlin workers' uprising of 1953, Hungary and Poland in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland's Solidarity trade union in 1980-81 all challenged the Kremlin's rule.

Disarming "our" side will remove the main threat that ties Russian-bloc workers to their bosses and holds them back from even more struggle.

AUSTRALIAN governments have tied us into the nuclear arms race through uranium exports and US warship visits. But the American bases here are the biggest contribution Australia makes to the menace of nuclear war.

Canberra's official line is that the bases

play "defensive" roles. Pine Gap, we are told, is used for satellite verification of Russian arms and missile tests. Nurrungar detects missile warm-ups and launches. North-West Cape sends signals to "second strike" submarines—submarines which will counter-attack if Russia first attacks the US.

All of this, according to Canberra, contributes to a strategic "stability" which prevents nuclear war.

Even if Canberra was telling the whole story about the bases, that would be unconvincing. Nurrungar and North-West Cape both have "real-time" war-fighting roles. That is, once a nuclear war breaks out, they will be used for the minute-by-minute communications as the US destroys Russia.

But Canberra only tells half the story. Its claims about the bases rest on the starry-eyed assumption that the US would not engage in a first strike, to try to win by a surprise attack which obliterates Russian forces.

In fact, Washington (unlike Moscow) refuses to renounce the option of launching a first strike. And the bases here contribute to giving the US a first strike capacity.

Strategy expert Desmond Ball points out, "One cannot, of course, plan a successful first strike without a precise inventory of the opponent's strategic forces." Pine Gap and Nurrungar help the US compile that inventory.

In addition, Pine Gap's satellites detect the holes in Russia's (and China's) radar defences, so that missiles can get through undetected.

Nurrungar undermines Canberra's theory of strategic "stability" in a further way. A key element of a "balance of terror" is that neither side has an impregnable defence. Otherwise, it could attack the other side with impunity.

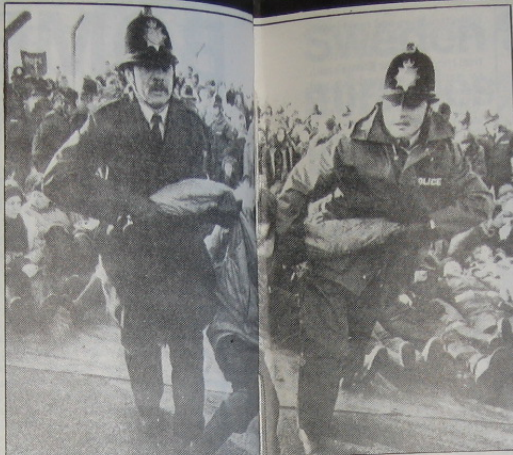
Ronald Reagan's Star Wars project aims to construct just such an impregnable defence, with laser beams operated from space to destroy missiles in flight.

Nurrungar controls America's early warning satellites, which will track Russian missiles so that Star Wars weapons can destroy them.

North-West Cape undermines Canberra's myths most blatantly of all.

Strategic "stability" today rests largely on the two superpowers having nuclear-armed submarine fleets, whose location is difficult to pinpoint. So, the theory goes, neither side can launch a first strike without suffering a retaliatory second strike from the enemy's submarines.

But the US has outstripped Russia in anti-



Greenham Common: remoteness makes such a site unfeasible against US Bases here

submarine warfare. It now has a fleet of hunter-killer submarines to destroy the Russian nuclear-armed fleet. North-West Cape communicates with these hunter-killer subs, so helping destroy Canberra's "strategic balance".

Worse, North-West Cape is now clearly part of US plans to escalate to conventional warfare to nuclear war.

Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger confirmed to the US Senate last month that latest American naval policy is to use its hunter-killer submarines to attack Russian nuclear submarines at the outset of a conventional war. Even ALP Senator Gareth Evans, a staunch supporter of US bases, had to admit on behalf of the government that the new US policy was "questionable".

OF COURSE, these arguments are well known to both the Labor government and the Liberal opposition. Why do they still want the US bases here?

The truth of the matter was hinted at by Liberal Senator David Hamer, an ex-director of Naval Intelligence and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Defence, at a

forum on the US bases in Melbourne last December.

The bases, Hamer argued, were an essential component of the ANZUS alliance. Hamer frankly admitted that ANZUS did not guarantee American defence of Australia, unless it happened to be in America's own interests.

But, Hamer continued, Australia's armed forces derived an enormous wealth of intelligence and military techniques out of the alliance. Australia's defence spending would be to double, Hamer estimated, to make up the loss if the alliance ended.

Moreover, the alliance established a pattern of joint exercises and operations between the US and Australia, Hamer argued. Military cooperation could be quickly established in any future war in the region, unlike in 1942, when the alliance against Japan was a "shambles" for a full year.

Hamer's argument confirmed what socialists have often argued about the bases and ANZUS. They are not so much about defending Australia against some imaginary enemy, or maintaining "strategic balance" worldwide, as a device in a long standing Canberra strategy.

This strategy is to keep a major imperialist power involved in the region as an umbrella for Australia's own military and economic interests. These "junior imperialist" interests extend throughout Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Oceania and South East Asia. Such a strategy dates back to last century, with the US replacing Britain as the big brother in 1942.

SO MANY campaigns to close the US bases will run directly counter to the fundamental interests of the Australian and American ruling classes. It will require revolutionary politics if it is to succeed, rather than politics which attempt to make out some joint interest between all classes.

With Canberra due to renegotiate American tenure at Pine Gap in October,

and at North-West Cape in early 1988, the campaign to close the bases has rightly become a major priority for the peace movement.

But several factors already appear to be shifting the movement away from the sort of politics required to remove the bases.

Obviously, geographical remoteness protects the three bases from militant mass pickets or even Greenham Common style vigils. The Women's Camp at Pine Gap, and an earlier convoy to North West Cape, showed that such actions are accessible only to a few hundred people at a time.

The US has also taken care to protect its bases from union bases and the like. Pine Gap, for example, has its own power and water supply, and a US supply plane flies in provisions every week, usually in the dead of night. All key positions are held by resident US military personnel, with local labour only used for gardening, cooking and cleaning.

More of a problem, however, are the politics of the peace movement itself.

After the ACTU bureaucrats backed away from the uranium bans of the late seventies, many in the peace movement abandoned any working class perspective.

Instead, they looked to middle class respectability in gain massive but passive turnout in the streets each Palm Sunday, hoping to emulate the huge anti-nuclear rallies in Europe.

This they achieved. But like in Europe, where governments have ignored rallies of half a million or more, sheer numbers without militancy or the muscle of working class action were not enough.

Now sections of the peace movement seem to be moving towards even more conservative positions as a result.

At present, People for Nuclear Disarmament in most states proposes to focus the anti-base campaign around, of all things, a "public opinion poll" to be conducted later this year by anti-nuclear activists. Such a poll will have little credibility and even less impact.

THE TASK for revolutionaries in the peace movement is to win activists away from such insipid ventures. For a serious campaign, rank-and-file unionists and ALP members need to be won over before the ALP conference in mid-year. A note of militancy needs to be injected into peace rallies, according to the demand to close the bases.

American consulates and companies, and even the bases themselves, are by no means immune from union action.

The direction needed for the peace movement can be gauged from the last peace movement to have an impact on US and Australian government policies.

The Vietnam War movement had smaller marches than today's anti-nuclear campaign. It succeeded, however, because it mobilised workers in the trade unions, and its street marches and campus actions were defiant and militant. These stemmed from a strong revolutionary current in the movement, which in turn grew as its initiatives succeeded.

A similar revolutionary current needs to be built in today's anti-nuclear movement. Only then can we expect to seriously challenge Australia's role in the arms race.

— Alec Kahn

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to link up with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must be spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through eradicating capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world; the point is just to change it. Marxist theory and propaganda are only meaningful if they are also movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of it. That's where you want to be. Join us today!

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SOCIALIST ACTION



Investors queue for shares in British Telecom

PRIVATISATION, deregulation, market forces ... have governments around the world given up trying to control capitalism?

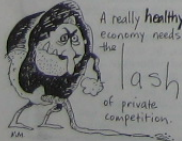
Margaret Thatcher has flogged off shares in British Telecom, the government-run oil company and other state enterprises. Ferdinand Marcos attempted to sell 150 government enterprises in the Philippines. The Papua New Guinea government wants to sell shares in the national airline. Even in state capitalist China, Deng Hsiao Ping is encouraging senior bureaucrats to carve commercial empires out of a once centralised economy.

The pattern extends beyond the American camp. Recent revolutions in Nicaragua and Zimbabwe have not followed the example of Cuba and Vietnam. Rather than nationalising the economy, they have encouraged local business and even foreign investment.

In state capitalist Eastern Europe too, especially in Hungary, ruling "Communist" parties have encouraged "experiments" with market mechanisms, giving greater scope to private initiatives.

After two centuries of gradually expanding state sectors, it suddenly seems that governments east and west are retreating into their shells.

Have national leaders suddenly converted to the ivory tower ideas of academic economists, the "free market" teachings of Adam Smith, after ignoring them for two centuries? Has the



Despite all the talk, the state still rates

state become an out-dated institution in the face of the erratic world market? Have multinationals taken over the economic role of the state, perhaps?

Hardly. To understand what is happening, we need to look at why the state sector of the economy grew in the first place.

IN AUSTRALIA, the small scale of colonial capitalism led to early state activity to provide infrastructures. Governments created railways, ports, roads, water and electricity supplies, and telecommunications.

Employers needed a skilled and reliable workforce, the army needed healthy cannon fodder, and workers pressed for better living standards. So the state provided health services and education.

Governments of the young Australian Commonwealth instituted tariffs and hoisted them frequently, to protect local business from overseas competition.

The imperialist division of the world, culminating in World War One, saw the state extend into organising industry and production. Leading Bolshevik, Nikolai Bukharin argued that the War illustrated two tendencies in capitalism, towards internationalisation — exports, foreign investment, and colonies — on the one hand, and "state capitalism" (or state intervention) on the other.

World War Two reinforced the trend, with the increasing

integration of the economies of the two belligerents into competing blocs. The Cold War saw the formation of two new blocs, around Russia and the US.

The long boom since 1950 allowed capital to internationalise on an unprecedented scale. Production of many commodities is now international. GMH, for example, exports engines, but imports other car components and whole vehicles for the Australian market. Multinationals, some foreign and some locally based like BHP, CSR and TNT, control much of local production. The "rural crisis" results from low international commodity prices (you haven't seen the price of sugar come down in Australian supermarkets).

As the system aged, capital congealed into bigger units, thanks to takeovers, share transactions and bankruptcies of some competitors. Governments and banks played an increasing role in managing investment. State imposed tariffs, regulations and incentives determined more and more what should be produced, where and by whom.

RUSSIA saw the ultimate in state intervention. With the defeat of the revolution, the new bureaucratic capitalist class used state ownership and planning to build the economy and compete militarily.

For the workers and peasants, state capitalism meant the terror of the five year plans, forced

collectivisation and rapid industrialisation.

Other underdeveloped countries tried to follow Russia's path to national independence and economic growth after World War Two. Meanwhile the huge and expensive armed forces in the USA, Britain and France were a vehicle for increased state intervention in the West, involving detailed management of economic demand.

So why the shifts today away from government-run enterprises in some countries?

With closer links between national economies, it is no longer sufficient for the state to simply set up production for it to become economically viable or an effective means of competing with imports. More emphasis is placed on the terms on which national economies are integrated into the world market.

For example, recent industry plans in Australia for the steel, car and white goods industries have used international market forces (within definite limits) combined with subsidies, tariffs, import quotas and other policies to promote economic growth.

Tariffs were lowered, but not abolished for the most vulnerable industries. The state was using international economic forces to achieve national economic ends.

Paul Keating led in foreign banks to ginge up the local copy market. He did not allow open slaughter — only a limited number of new banking licences were granted.

THE INTERNATIONAL market is still a feature of modern capitalism. But so is the state. It is necessary for two reasons.

Contending capitals cannot on their own guarantee all the conditions essential for the system. They need the state to provide infrastructures, to establish legal standards for their commercial relations, to provide military security for their operations and, when, like British Leyland, they threaten to collapse and drag down a whole national economy.

And the state is essential to maintain a workforce prepared to work under existing conditions. For all Thatcher's free market rhetoric, the state, in the form of the police and the courts, was crucial in defeating their market power and struck.

The nation state's role as an economic force has shifted a little recently. But it is far from finished. That will only occur when the capitalist system which relies on the state is overthrown. — Rick Kuhn

Sweden and Austria: Economic miracles or mirages?

IS THE ALP/ACTU Accord a great "working class intervention", which opens up prospects for an "advance toward socialism"?

Amazingly, large sections of the Australian left have managed to persuade themselves that it is. The most articulate defenders of the Accord on the left like to point to European experiences of similar incomes policies.

Not to the British "Social Contract" of the seventies, of course. That led to the worst fall in real wages since the late twenties, together with the worst unemployment since 1938. Hardly something to brag about.

Sweden, however, seems to offer a more hopeful prospect. Doesn't that country have a long history of collaboration between capital and labour, producing a remarkable prosperity?

And most recently Bernie Taft of Socialist Forum, prominent supporter of the Accord, wrote about the "Austrian miracle" which he felt Australian labour ought to emulate.

Let's consider the two cases.

DEALS BETWEEN UNIONS and employers in Sweden began in 1938, when the union federation LO signed a "Historical Compromise" with the employers' organisation SAF.

Regular, directly negotiated agreements on wages and conditions were to be entered by the LO, the employers and a Labour Court. Individual actions relating to the agreement were outlawed. The bosses' right to hire, fire and supervise work was explicitly sanctioned.

The era of the Historical Compromise has been one of prosperity for Swedish capitalism, but that has little to do with the deal between capital and labour. It has far more to do with Sweden's position within the world market.

Strong economic growth began in the 1930s as the direct result of supplying machinery and materials to Hitler. It was consolidated further in the 1940s, as immense profits were made supplying and rebuilding a war-torn Europe.

In the postwar decades, Sweden's important metal and engineering sectors grew more



Late Swedish PM Olaf Palme and colleagues: tightrope act

prosperous still around a strong armaments sector, which flourished because of international capitalism's continual demand for weapons.

Neither the Swedish economy nor the Historical Compromise have proved immune to the growing difficulties facing capitalism in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the 1970s, union claims for industrial democracy, safety and job security were increasingly refused by employers. The unions then demanded government legislation. But by 1976, in the face of inadequate legislation and employer intransigence (backed by the conservative government of 1973-82), the LO formally withdrew from the Historical Compromise.

This meant a return to local bargaining and the growth of strike committees. The increase in rank and file involvement helped spur a great upsurge of industrial militancy in 1980, when the unions called a selective strike and the employers retaliated by locking out 700,000 workers.

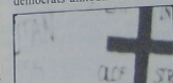
After twelve days the government caved in and forced the employers to grant a 6.8 percent pay rise, plus compensation for the rise being delayed. As one newspaper commented: "The Swedish model broke to pieces."

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS and the LO soon set about mending it.

A proposal for Wage Earners' Funds played a central role. Drawn from corporate profits

and a levy on wages, these would buy shares and voting rights in large and medium-sized companies. Councils, elected directly by the people of each province, would control the Funds. The plan began after the Social Democrats were re-elected in 1982.

The scheme was billed as a challenge to monopoly power, but the real aim was to boost an investment-starved industrial sector. In the face of employer resistance, the scheme has been much revised and reduced, and had virtually no impact on investment. By 1985, the social democrats announced it would



1977: Swedes protest lay-offs

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not operate after 1990. Workers had lost money through the levy and had little to show for it.

A type of social contract known as the "Third Way" is in operation. After the 1982 election, it was agreed between the unions and the government. The Finance Minister described it as a "tightrope walk over an abyss."

These were apt words. After three years of wage cuts, white collar workers found themselves forced to wage a major strike in May 1985, proving again that between the interests of capital and labour, there is no Third Way.

AUSTRIA nationalised its basic industries in 1946. There was nothing socialist about the move. It was a capitalist move supported by all major parties, aimed at bringing into Austrian ownership industries previously owned by Nazi Germany.

This state sector is the core around which a "Social Partnership" between government, unions and employers emerged. It began with a wages and prices pact in 1947. Ten years later, a Joint Commission was set up to preside over it. Today, "social partners" participate in supervising public and semi-public institutions.

This seemed to work until the mid-seventies, when Austria was hit by the world recession. Industrial production fell by over six percent and the state sector was hard hit. The social democratic government responded with deficit spending, and moves to subsidize state workers jobs in return for low wage demands.

These measures only postponed the day of reckoning. Today, the state sector faces a crisis. The largest state-owned industrial group, Voest-Alpine, lost \$317 million in 1985, and larger figures have been spent to cover losses elsewhere.

The public debt has soared, and there is an increasing clamour for the state sector to be nationalised, and parts of it to be sold off.

This would mean significant job losses. With some rationalisation already underway (some production lines have already been closed at Voest-Alpine) and more likely to come, workers are again finding that in the long run their only defence lies in their own strength.

— Liz Ross and Tom O'Lincoln

Women swindled on comparable worth

WHAT IS a woman's work worth? The Arbitration Commission last month firmly rejected the ACTU claim for comparable worth, which aimed to do something about the fact that wages in most jobs dominated by women are far below those in men's jobs.

The Commission would not deny that the average full-time wage for women is 54% of that of men. But if women were allowed to claim their full worth without limits, "it would be particularly destructive of the present wage fixing principles."

As present wage fixing principles, through the Accord, are aimed at keeping wages down, it is not surprising that the Confederation of Australian Industry hailed the decision as a big employer victory.

Even if the claim had been accepted, most women would have had to wait for protracted court cases. But what about nurses, who were used to spearhead the claim?

Victorian nurses ended their strike last November on the understanding that a new career structure, together with a good outcome of the comparable worth claim, would result in better wages.

Now it's back to the courts — this time with an anomalies claim. But those who watched the outcome of the public servants wages dispute in 1984/85 will know what a futile exercise that can be.

NSW Nurses Association Assistant General Secretary, Bronwyn Ridgway, says that an anomalies claim is a long and drawn out process that probably won't win anyway.

The new career structure has also been delayed. The strike by nurses in Canberra has been used as an excuse to postpone the decision until late Autumn.

— with a consequent saving to the government of six months increased wages. Meanwhile, none of the other demands of that campaign have been conceded. Nurses still lack child care, parking facilities or an extra week's holiday.

Numerous other issues remain desperately important to rank and file nurses with little being done about them.

For instance, nurses can be



Striking nurses: shunted off to an anomalies hearing

ordered to work ten days straight before a break without any penalty payment. The nurse in charge of a whole ward of patients gets an extra \$1.40, which works out at 0.5c per patient per hour! Nurses get no nauseous allowance for doing dirty work.

But nurses are no longer Florence Nightingales. Before the Victorian strike last year, "a lot of people were almost howling to go out", according to a nurse at the Queen Victoria Hospital. There is no doubt it could happen again.

— Janey Stone

GOVT CLERKS



Staff review causes blue

WHEN IS a staffing review not a review? When it is carried out by management with the aim of keeping numbers down. That is what the union members who work in the Personnel section of the Department of Employment in Melbourne think. And we have taken action to prove it.

After at least two years of being short-staffed with ever increasing workloads, ACOA and APSA members responded to management's decision not to

increase numbers with a ban on incoming phone calls. When three weeks of negotiation then failed to produce an adequate offer, we went on strike.

Since Personnel has no political or vote-catching aspects, but only services other public servants, management tend to see it as an area which can easily be squeezed. Because it is an area that is often poorly unionised, they usually get away with it.

But our Personnel section is a little different. Last year, the number of cases of RSI prompted members to do something about the very uncomfortable and unsuitable chairs. We placed them in the corridor and worked for three days standing and kneeling at the desks.

As a result, we got better chairs immediately, and a proper ergonomic assessment of the workplace with new furniture due to be installed soon.

Further industrial action produced a partial alleviation of the staff shortages, through an increased number of temporaries. But as untrained people cannot do most of the work, the pressure began to build up again. And members had learnt that industrial action was the only way to get management to take us seriously.

While out on strike we haven't just had a holiday. We have met every day, and spent time building support from other staff in

the Department, particularly in the CES where discussions on staffing numbers are also under way.

The feeling of solidarity is very strong, and as all members are active, there is none of the demoralisation that could occur in the current war of nerves.

The dispute has significance that takes it beyond a minor local issue.

The government is trying to solve its economic problems by cutting social welfare, and cutting down on spending generally. As usual, government workers have to bear the brunt of such policies. The story is no different under Labor than it was under Fraser.

Not all public servants are equally hit. Senior management in our Department have just completed a reorganisation which means a reclassification, and therefore increased salaries, for eleven people in Victoria at a cost of around \$200,000. The state director's office has just been reclassified at a cost of over \$60,000. Government policy on reduced spending doesn't seem to apply here.

The Accord was supposed to bring as one of its benefits to workers an improvement in consultation with management, through what is called "industrial democracy". We have found that what consultation does take place is usually little more than a delaying mechanism. Management was quite happy to offer us a fully consultative review to replace the earlier one. But it was quite clear that even if we were able to justify our claim, there was no obligation to implement it.

Workers' participation and "industrial democracy" schemes are based on a belief that ultimately workers and management have the same interests, and therefore negotiations will work if only enough effort is put into them. But in reality, the interests are quite different.

We and the staff of the CES have far more in common with the unemployed and the ordinary people we have helped to find jobs. Our management and other fat cats in the public service, together with the government, have more in common with the employers and captains of industry, like Holmes a Court.

When we can elect our managers, it will be soon enough to start talking about industrial democracy.

— Janey Stone

Brisbane blacks battle Labor as well as Joh

ANGER continues to grow amongst blacks in Queensland, as the Labor Party in Canberra undermines their fight against the racist Joh Bjelke Petersen government.

Aborigines staged a march in Brisbane on Australia Day, as a foretaste of protests that can be expected during the Bicentenary in 1988.

Black anger has recently been fuelled in Queensland by revelations that two conservative Aboriginal community leaders, Eric Deeral and George Mye, had been paid \$10,000 each by the Queensland government.

Deeral was the National Party member for Cook from 1974 to 1977, and Mye was a National Party candidate for the seat.

The minister responsible, Bob Katter, defended the "sling", saying it was "legitimate compensation for public service".

At the same time, the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs has been underfunding and understaffing community-run services like legal aid, health and child care, which were set up after considerable struggle in the 1970s.

The Aboriginal Legal Service, for example, has not received any extra staff. Yet Queensland has employed hundreds more police in the last few years, creating many more legal problems for the black community.

Staff in black services are finding their wages under attack from Labor.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has tied all black organisations into accepting the terms of the Prices and Incomes Accord under its new "Rules for Grants Assistance". Worse, it has refused to provide any extra funds for CPI wage increases.

Many staff in black services already get far less than normal white rates of pay for similar work. These measures will depress their wages even further.

The new "Rules for Grants Assistance" also attack self-management of black services. The Minister has power to remove any worker in the services, over-riding the elected committees responsible for running them.

Worst of all has been Bob Hawke's statement that he has "no problems" with WA Premier

Brian Burke's opposition to land rights, despite Labor's 1983 election promise to grant them immediately.

This means Queensland blacks can expect no support from Canberra on the issue either, despite Senator Susan Ryan's pious statement that, "It is hoped and expected that the Labor platform commitment to national land rights would be put in place this year."

Black activist Bob Weatherall summed up Aboriginal disillusionment with Labor at the Australia Day march. "At the centre of black discontent is the failure to gain national land rights."

"Fourteen years ago we thought the Federal Government was going to address the need to provide meaningful title to Aboriginal and Islander people. But today we find that the Government has lost any of its principles and ideals of the 1970s."

— Carole Ferrer

SEQEB



Militant draws the lessons

BERNIE Neville is a sacked SEQEB worker and an organiser of the strike which is still a controversial issue in Queensland. He has spoken at jobsite meetings in that state and others.

Further anti-worker legislation is now threatened by the Bjelke-Petersen government, in the form of compulsory secret ballots on



Blacks rally in Brisbane

any strike action. With the SEQEB dispute now one year old, Bernie Neville has strong views on its lessons.

We asked Bernie what impact the strike has had on him personally and on the families of other strikers.

"The great impact is the realisation that when you go out now and try to get a job, all venues are closed. People go for as many as sixty jobs, but when they say they are closed. The legislation is still on the books, so even if I got a job, the same thing could happen again."

What does he see as the main reason for a strike defeat which has led to such a difficult situation? Bernie is insistent: "Lack of

leadership! It's on record that the Trades and Labor Council actually "folded", advised the men to turn the lights back on. They deny this, but we have on record.

The crucial mistake made by the officials of the Electrical Trades Union, says Bernie, was to hand the strike over to the TLC and the ACTU. "If the ETU had shown more backbone we could have won this dispute. We could have dictated the terms to the ACTU."

"The other thing is that no more union funds should be spent in the law courts. Too much money has been wasted. We have to get back to the shop floor and take our action there." A point well taken, given the way the courts have sided with Petersen to date.

Bernie is under no illusions that there is still an industrial dispute under way in any real sense.

"Unless you have industrial action there is no dispute. But we still have 150-200 workers meeting regularly at Perry Park. What some of them could do is go around Australia, speaking at job sites and waking up people to the attacks being made on the trade union movement."

Bernie was scathing about remarks by Tom Barton, Assistant Secretary of the TLC, who said we should all "put the strike behind us." "That's the worst thing he could have said. What we have lost in Queensland is our very basic right to strike."

And he is just as pointed in his views on the ALP/ACTU Accord. "The Accord is the worst thing that has ever happened to workers. It has really shocked us. Discounting is a fancy word for not giving us wage increases."

— Rosemary MacBride



Bernie Neville speaks, cops drag off a picketer, mistake to put ACTU in charge

SOCIALIST STANDPOINTS

THE REVOLUTIONARY party has been a central feature of socialist politics since Karl Marx's time. In the twentieth century, it has possibly been the most controversial question on the left.

What do socialists mean by a revolutionary party? What is it for? Is there one in Australia? Marxist politics start from the axiom that working class struggles can move towards broader struggle against capitalism itself.

Inevitably, this process is uneven. Some workers become more militant or more "political" than others.

Different workplaces, industries, economic and political climates can all contribute to the unevenness. We all associate the Redfern Mail Exchange, the BLF, or the Vietnam War years with unusual levels of militancy, for example. And obviously, there are innumerable individual factors as well.

Of special strategic importance is that layer of workers who are the most class conscious militants. The ones, usually a handful at most in any workplace, who consistently put the workers' interest before the bosses', who understand that you only get what you fight for, and who are prepared to argue these ideas to their fellow workers.

A shop steward for sixty striking garbage workers once summarized the position of these class conscious militants nicely in an interview. "There's three of us, and the others always call us *commos*. But who do you think they come running to for advice whenever there's a blue one?"

In Marxist jargon, the "vanguard of the working class" is what he was talking about.

REVOLUTIONARIES aim to convince this vanguard in particular that socialism is the best means to defend the working class. For these militants are uniquely placed to win over their workmates in the course of struggle.

But we also aim to group this "vanguard of the working class" together into a party. Why?

In Australia, this vanguard must compose many thousands of workers, even today during a time of deep working class demoralization.

All of these militants are beavering away in their workplaces, putting radical and often socialist ideas into their workmates. Nearly all of them are operating on their own. Collectively, their impact would



Bolshevik leader Lenin talks with workers: a revolutionary party aims to unite the militants in the working class

So who's this "revolutionary party" for?

be much greater.

A party of thousands of class conscious militants would immediately challenge the grip that the Tweedledum-Tweedledee alternatives of Liberal and Labor have on workers' political horizons.

Such a party would be able to campaign right across society, in a way that individual militants cannot. The whole would be far greater than the sum of the parts.

So a revolutionary party would strengthen the ability of the vanguard to fight. But it would also strengthen its resolve and its political understanding.

Operating alone, few militants can see achievable goals beyond isolated reforms. Together, in a party of thousands, their horizons would widen too. Socialist goals would become real possibilities.

At the same time, a revolutionary party would actively train its members politically. Someone once described the party's role as the "memory of

preach from the sidelines.

A revolutionary party must be democratic. All members must have full rights to raise disagreements internally, and to organise to change party policy.

This is not only their right but their responsibility, if the party is to remain relevant to the working class. The undemocratic internal regimes of parties modelled on Stalinist lines have led time and again to their slavishly following the dictates of Moscow and Peking, even when this has transparently been against workers' interests.

All of this is light years away from the hostile caricature, drawn by the millionaire press, by anarchists and by social democrats, of a "vanguard party" as a tiny group of manipulative, middle class intellectuals.

IS THERE a revolutionary party in Australia today? Obviously not.

Even the largest group on the left of the ALP, the Communist Party, quite apart from lacking revolutionary politics, has little or no base amongst the most militant elements of the working class.

For that reason Socialist Action, like a number of other socialist groups, is careful to point out that we do not imagine ourselves to be "the party".

What, then, is our role? We see ourselves as contributing to the eventual creation of such a party.

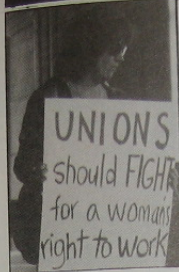
Possibly, our efforts to agitate and make propaganda will draw towards us at least the core of a revolutionary workers' party. Possibly, there will be a process of "regroupment", a coming together of many groups and individuals on terms of equality into a new revolutionary organisation.

Today, however, our aims are more modest. We aim to draw together socialist activists from whatever class backgrounds, to convince as many people as possible of the need for workers' revolution. We aim to develop our understanding of Marxism and its relevance to the world we live in today. And we aim to put our ideas into practice, however modestly, in trade unions and social movements, for by doing so we can test them, and demonstrate to others what they mean in concrete terms.

In itself, our activity cannot by change the world. But by helping to lay the foundations for a revolutionary party of the working class, we can take the first step along the way.

—Graham Willett

REVIEWS



BOOK

Girl's Work works, sort of

NOWADAYS there is a range of literature published under equal opportunity funding, which encourages young women to consider jobs that aren't traditionally theirs.

The idea behind much of it is that women's traditional occupations as typists, clerks and shop assistants are threatened by advancing technology, and we need to offer new training to enable them to enter the trades and technical sector.

The new book *Girls Work* by Peggy Hogan is a good one of its kind, with a format likely to appeal to female students. It makes direct comments about young women's failure to study mathematics, which is a requirement of 60 percent of jobs. Girls also fail to plan their future enough.

Hogan shows how sex stereotyping is used to perpetuate a division of labour between the sexes. Unfortunately, she sees the cure in terms of changing everyone's individual attitudes. She doesn't even consider how the way society is organised forces women and men into their particular corners.

What about the family, with its gender roles? What about the way industry profits from paying women less? What about the way unemployment is built into the system?

Entry of young women into new job areas can only redistribute a limited number of jobs. And even that will be hard to do while society fails to provide adequate child care.

Still, this type of book is a great improvement on traditional careers guidance material. If you're a teacher, make sure you get hold of it.

—Dorothy Morgan

First word the last on Broad Left Conference

THIS PAMPHLET was published last July. Why review it now?

There is an important Broad Left Conference coming up at Easter. We had intended to review whatever literature was published in the months leading up to it. By now the moves for a "new party", initiated by the dying Communist Party in 1984, should be close to fruition.

Yet from the Party's *Tribune* newspaper and the ideologues close to it comes a deafening silence. One *Tribune* article was indeed entitled "Real tasks of the Broad Left Conference", but it consisted entirely of attacks on other left groups. What the "real task" was supposed to be, remained a mystery.

So I returned to this pamphlet, edited by David McKnight. Intended to open up the discussion about a "new party" or new movement, it has now by default become the last word.

McKnight's own article is the most important. It discusses the crisis of the left, pointing to the failure of the socialist movement to grow, and the fact that the economic crisis has not radicalised the working class.

So far, so good, but how do we meet this crisis? One thing McKnight knows for sure: he is against an "insurrectionist strategy". By that he means such boring old-fashioned notions as workers' revolution. These merely make you fixated with "capturing structures" and running things bureaucratically.

Similarly, he rejects the "counterposing of reforms versus revolution" as too simplistic. Instead, he wants to organise around "reforms which begin to change the balance of power in society."

That sounds ambitious, but what reforms has he in mind?

"They include democratising the constitution, a Bill of Rights, including employment and social rights, nationalisation of particular industries, some form of workers' participation and . . . the small child opened

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Socialism in Australia — toward renewal?
Ed. David McKnight (83)

up in national economic planning by the Accord."

Here we begin to see why the push to create a "new socialist party" has run out of momentum. All of these "reforms" are measures which Labor (and sometimes conservative) governments have implemented in Australia or overseas, often with the aim of consolidating the existing capitalist system, sometimes under pressure from below.

If such things are the *centre of your strategy*, you belong in the Labor Party. Why join some splinter party to fight them?

If you are going to join what most Australians regard as a fringe organisation, it is likely to be because you have a bit of daring and willingness to swim against the current. That is especially true at a time when, as McKnight correctly says, the majority of people in society are fairly conservative.

Of course, the socialist movement must relate to any struggle around reforms, however modest. But the aim has to be to win to socialism that minority who are prepared to go

beyond the most immediate demands and ideas. It has to be to harness their radical impulses and begin building an alternative to Laborism.

An "insurrectionist" approach to socialism need not be about capturing structures and changing society from the top down. If anything, it is the Communist Party which can be indicted for having applied different versions of the top-down approach throughout its history.

In the old days, it supported police states overseas and ran a moonlit regime inside its own organisation. Today, instead, it backs the Labor Party when it uses the power of government to attack a militant union like the BLF.

Any new party or movement coming out of the Broad Left Conference is likely to continue such top-down policies, however much it may pretend to disavow them.

The ideas in this pamphlet pretend to be new and innovative. They were supposed to ignite a lively discussion leading to a revitalised left. In reality, they prove to be timid and stale, and it is no wonder that with only a few weeks to go before the high conference, which published their work, came up with nothing more to say.

—Tom O'Lincoln



German communists battle Reichwehr troops in 1919: Does an insurrectionist strategy fixate the left with capturing structures?

Lindy: Martyr to what?

THE AZARIA Chamberlain case has been a public obsession for over five years.

Yet only now, with an article by Melbourne feminist academic Kerry Goldsworthy entitled "Lindy: Martyr to Her Sex?", has the left seriously considered the politics of this remarkable case.

That Lindy Chamberlain was ever imprisoned on the evidence presented was, of course, a scandal.

The Crown produced no body, no murder weapon and no motive. Three witnesses heard the baby cry 5-10 minutes after the Crown said she was dead. Two others heard a canine growl just before Mrs Chamberlain's famous cry of, "That dog's got the baby."

No witness at the campsite believed the Crown version of events. A ranger and an Aboriginal tracker called to the scene saw dingoo tracks, and marks of something being dragged in the sand. Local tribal blacks thought dingoes in the area were quite capable of killing Azaria.

The Crown case was purely circumstantial. It rested on controversial blood samples found in the Chamberlain's car which, incredibly, the Crown's forensic biologist destroyed after testing. At the appeal, the High Court ruled the blood tests were unreliable anyway. Yet the judges voted 3-2 to uphold a verdict now resting on tenuous forensic evidence about tearing and blood sprays on the baby's jump suit. The miscarriage of justice had turned into a travesty.

Accoutailing an innocent party is nothing new, as the Ananda Marga Three can testify. The Crown's chief forensic witness in the Azaria case, Professor James Cameron, himself gave evidence that sent innocent defendants to jail in England's "Conflat Case" and resulted in a \$120,000 compensation payout.

WHAT SHOULD interest the left is why so many people, despite all the question marks, were so eager to believe Lindy Chamberlain guilty.

Even after the accidental finding of the matinee jacket, which finally prompted her release, I have heard otherwise intelligent and left-wing people seriously argue that the jacket was planted and "Of course she did it".

Kerry Goldsworthy has a rather tenuous, psycho-sexual explanation. To put it crudely, she argues that Chamberlain fell from being one of "god's police" to a "damned whore" in the sexist public eye, by being pregnant, by

having tanned shoulders and wearing dresses that shadowed them, etc, during the trial.

Goldsworthy is in the right park, but barking up the wrong tree. The mutterings against Lindy Chamberlain started long before the trial. Sexism was part of the problem, but not in the way Goldsworthy thinks.

Lindy Chamberlain was the victim, I suspect, of what psychologists like to call "projection", where people attack others for things they fear in themselves. (Poofter-bashing is a well-known example.)

Projected onto Lindy Chamberlain were the brutal, sometimes murderous, feelings that almost every parent who has raised an infant has felt occasionally.

The subject is rarely broached, except in the obvious extreme of child abuse. A teacher I know once casually raised it in the staff-room, and touched off a torrent of confessions, admissions of dropping babies onto tables when they could have been placed, letting them howl when they obviously needed attention, and the like. Occasionally, the hostility explodes in public; the frazzled mother who belts into her child in the middle of a shopping centre, while everyone else looks embarrassed.

MOSTLY, though, the hostility remains repressed. Mixed up with love, and rendered taboo by a million TV images of happy smiling families, it is too shameful to admit.

Capitalism needs it to be so. For its peculiar creation, the nuclear family, places more strain on parents than any other past form of society has done, by



Lindy Chamberlain at her trial: a travesty of justice

concentrating the pressure of raising a child onto one or two shoulders. Little wonder that most murders occur inside the family.

It need not be thus. Under socialism, we can look forward to more communal forms of child-rearing developing, just as past societies have employed extended families or communal upbringing.

So Lindy Chamberlain was a scapegoat for the subtle, unspoken hostility that the nuclear family creates towards infants. As a mother, sexist society automatically held her responsible for her child's fate. The onus of proof was reversed; unless she could show her innocence, she was guilty.

Of course, Lindy Chamberlain suffered sexism in a cruder form



with Alec Kahn

SOCIALIST ACTION

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Women's Liberation:

CAN THE VISION BE RESTORED?



too. Because she didn't act the weak little woman and weep in front of the court and the cameras, but rather endured it all with a grim stoicism, she was commonly regarded as "cold". Just the sort of person who would murder her child.

Religious prejudice, usually kept below the surface in Australia, worked against her too. If the rumours about Seventh Day Adventists had been spread about Jews, the press would have rightly called them anti-Semitic. In particular, the story that Azaria meant "sacrifice in the desert", and all that it implied, was a straight bastardization of the old anti-Semitic blood libel about Jews sacrificing children.

WILL WE have Lindy Chamberlain under socialism? Only a fool would argue that miscarriages of justice will suddenly become impossible.

Under the true communism which is our ultimate goal, separate laws and justice will die out, as genuinely liberated people simply help each other in whatever way is required. But of course, that will be some time coming.

In the shorter term, we can say that the material conditions that give rise to the nuclear family, to sexism, to prejudice, to many of the strains of parenting, will be progressively removed.

The jails will be used far less to deal with crime. The emphasis will be on removing the social miscreants communally. As I argued during the first trial, even if Chamberlain were guilty, jailing her would help neither her nor society.

Finally, we can say that no longer will the law claim to be "above" society. Northern Territory officials made it clear that all the campaigning only prolonged Chamberlain's imprisonment for precisely that reason.

Lindy Chamberlain now says she wants to ensure that such miscarriages of justice can never happen again. It is a noble aim, but until the social causes are eradicated, they will.

The innocent, in this case, is free. The guilty, however, remains at large. Not the dingo, but the system that consigns millions to prejudice and to parental roles they find so hard to handle.

- Palm Sunday: Why it failed
- The Broad Left Conference
- Aquino's new broom: for whom?

Deregistration: Back the BLF!



Fleeing Israeli bombs in Beirut: migration to Australia has hazards too

IMMIGRATION



Lebanese lose out

WHOLESALE death, permanent injury and destruction of entire villages are tragically commonplace for the people of Lebanon.

As a result many Lebanese try to emigrate. But a large number applying to come to Australia are rejected, because they fall short on the points system used by the ALP government's Special Humanitarian Programme.

The points system is inherently competitive and geared against the working class.

Approval for migrant entry is not given unless the applicant scores at least 60 points, allocated under the following headings: Employability (0-25 points), Employment skills (0-20), Education (0-20), Age (0-15), and Sponsorship (5).

To score the maximum of 85 points, an applicant would have to be proficient in English, be aged 20-34 years, have completed tertiary education, be in a recognized profession, and be sponsored by an Australian citizen.

Lebanese working people wishing to immigrate have virtually no chance of attaining the 60 point minimum. Few are able to study or maintain personal records, when homes, schools and colleges have been destroyed by invasion and civil war.

The only way to migrate to Australia from Lebanon is through the Australian embassy in Syria. This creates further obstacles.

If your village has a bad reputation with the Syrian

government, you cannot enter the country at all.

The process for applicants requires a number of dangerous trips to Damascus, to submit the application form, to attend an interview, to have medical tests, to find out results and, if successful, to obtain visas.

All of this takes weeks, even months. The route between Beirut and Damascus is plagued with "bandits" who prey on these travellers.

Many applicants report ill-treatment and abuse from counter staff, who seem to be insensitive to their desperate situation. All official forms are in English and no bilingual staff are available to assist.

Immigration controls anywhere should be rejected, as a denial of human freedom. But in Lebanon, Labor's "Special Humanitarian Programme" is denying not only a human freedom, but a crying human need.

BLACKS



Cops tackled over deaths

LAST issue *Cat's Eye* reported the death in police custody of WA black rights activist Tony King. Now Campaign Against Racial Exploitation (CARE) in Perth has taken up the cudgels against the cops.

CARE is holding a demonstration outside King's inquest this month, and has issued a fact sheet on the deaths of three blacks in custody in the last eighteen months.

Everyone is well aware of the John Pat case, in which numerous witnesses saw police assault 16-year-old Pat after a disturbance at a pub. Pat died of brain damage, but the police got

off.

Then there was the death of Robert Walker at Fremantle Prison in late 1984. Various prisoners saw a 20-minute struggle between prison officers and Walker on a lawn, involving repeated punches, kicks and baton blows.

A coroner discounted the reliability of their evidence, but a second post mortem found the most likely cause of death "was a headlock during a struggle".

Tony King died at 3 a.m. one morning last October, allegedly after a chase and struggle with a cop. Asphyxiation was one of the causes of death.

The question is, was Tony King strangled by the police? That is what CARE will be demanding to know at the inquest on April 16.

STUDENTS



Qld unions under threat

"IT'S NOT designed to drastically emasculate student unions or anything funny like that," says Queensland education minister Lin Powell.

But that is precisely what his new proposals for financial accountability for all tertiary student unions have in mind.

The Queensland government wants to cut down on student activism, following their success in banning all "outside" speakers at political meetings at teachers' colleges in Brisbane last year.

The government wants to make student union fees optional, but this may be difficult legally. It can, however, demand uniform statutes enforcing approval of student union budgets by college senates and state cabinet. Powell has asked tertiary administrations to

present revised statutes to him. Powell says the criteria for approval of budgets would be "financial availability" and the "good name" of the institution.

Queensland University already has such statutes. Last year its senate intervened to stop the union writing off a debt for 4ZZZ-FM, the student radio station. So funding to political clubs and student newspapers could well be threatened in future.

At most campuses, notably Queensland Uni, student bureaucrats have not initiated any discussion amongst students on this threat to student control over union affairs.

Griffith and James Cook Unis make student union decisions at open meetings of the student body. They are organising against the moves, and a referendum of Griffith students is planned before the legislation comes up in August.

BOMBING



Reactionaries react as usual

THE CAR bombing of Russell Street police station in Melbourne produced a predictable reaction.

Elements in the press, with no evidence whatsoever, hinted it might be the work of Libyans. When it became almost certain that the bomb was the work of a local gang of neo-Nazi criminals, they muttered darkly about "indirect PLO associations", whatever that smear may mean.

The police exploited public sympathy to demand the right to tap phones, and to end the six hour limit on interrogations, which supposedly hampered their ability to make arrests.

The police arguments were crap. Well-informed crime journalists say that the cops had expected an outrage, knew that the gang had a major arms cache, and knew their leader.

In the Ananda Marga case, NSW police framed three people they regarded as "left", with no evidence at all that they planned a crime. Left-wingers in the past have known how police can "turn the heat on", even when they have nothing on which to base arrests.

In the Russell Street case, the cops let right-wing thugs carry out a crime they knew was in the offing, and paid the price. That says more about the police's own political prejudices and folly, than about any "lack of power" they might have.

Sadly, no cause for celebration in Libs' agonies

IT CERTAINLY is amusing to watch the Liberal Party tearing itself to pieces. Unfortunately, the underlying reasons for this diverting development are not really happy ones for the labor movement.

John Howard essentially faces the same problem as Andrew Peacock before him: the ALP has occupied the middle ground and has even taken over some of the favourite themes of the right wing. Labor not only talks about "wage restraint," it has held wages down better than Fraser ever did. And despite all the scare talk from Hawke about "privatisation," the ALP itself is going about restructuring the capitalist system in the bosses' interests.

How then are the Liberals to stake out a distinctive position of their own? Peacock's solution was to avoid serious policy issues, hammer away at a few hip-pocket issues like assets tests and capital gains taxes, and wait for Labor to make mistakes.

This produced a passable election result in 1984, but the Libs got impatient and dumped him in favour of the more ideological Howard. Howard, it was hoped, would be able to follow the Thatcher/Reagan pattern and rally the upper and middle classes around a "free market" platform.

There was a flurry of talk about selling government instrumentalities like Telecom,

ending centralized wage fixing, deregulating everything in sight. A wave of euphoria swept the Liberal Party. However the enthusiasm soon turned to grief.

ONE KEY turning point was the South Australian election, where scare campaigns directed against privatisation seemed to produce a swing to Labor.

But this in itself was only a symptom. Such a scare campaign could not have succeeded in a society where big business controls the media, had not key sections of the employers been dubious about the new rightwing radicalism from the start.

On the one hand, where big business actually felt an urgent need for deregulation, they also felt the Hawke government was doing the job just fine, most notably in the finance industry. In December, Westpac chief executive Bob White told a *Financial Review* interviewer, "The previous Government was slow on deregulation. This Government outstripped everyone's expectations".

Home loan interest rates are the latest example of what White meant.

And should actual selling off of government enterprises become desirable at some point, Finance Minister Peter Walsh reassured them that "if it's cheaper to put the control of operations of public enterprises into private hands, then I'd like to do it that way".

On the other hand, the key employers were not at all attracted to the Howard rhetoric about ending centralized wage fixing and returning to direct bargaining. The reason is painfully simple. Whereas during the last economic upswing direct bargaining led to what Malcolm Fraser himself called a "wages explosion", the current recovery has seen real wages held more or less stagnant.

FOR BIG firms who can afford to absorb the occasional indexation rise, centralized wage fixing has great attractions, simply because it is planned and predictable.

No wonder that Bryan Noakes of the Confederation of Australian Industry warned last October that "unless handled with considerable care, attempts to free up the system could

seriously backfire".

Then in early 1986, a meeting between top Liberals and top industrialists produced stinging attacks on the Howard wage policies. Ford's managing director Bill Dix described them as "not sensible," while Rod Carnegie said they were "ridicled with problems".

Desperate Liberal Party organisers decided a campaign was needed to "neutralise" these critics, and produced the notorious "hit list" which was leaked to the ALP in such hilarious fashion. The list makes fascinating reading.

We find that Tasmanian Premier Robin Gray has made some "awful comments" about Howard's wage policy, that the Metal Trades Industry Association is unlikely to support it, and that such stalwarts of free enterprise as Sir Peter Ables and BHP's Brian Lott also have to be "neutralised". So a vast range of establishment media pundits ranging from Michelle Grattan to Richard Carleton to Derryn Hinch.

In a word: the establishment in this country prefers the Accord to anything the Libs have yet come up with.

THIS simple fact is the reason for the Liberal Party's current agony.

With Labor ruling the roost, the Libs have to begin wondering whether they can hold their party together. Twice before, the conservative parties have come apart.

That does not make the "New Right" a threat, at this stage anyway. Those in the ALP and on the left who have been beating the drums about a looming danger on the right have been largely missing the point. The most dangerous rightwingers are people from the outside. Small business people who feel squeezed by the radical rightwing forces are putting pressure on the party alliance between Hawke, big business and the ACTU bureaucrats are rallying around the new Australian Federation of

Employers. Ideologues like John Stone and Katherine West are very vocal.

While the NEF could only get 500-odd supporters out to rally in establishment-dominated Melbourne, they did much better in Sydney and Brisbane. For the Sydney and Brisbane, they are time being, they are nothing but a nuisance for the established employer groups and the Liberal mainstream, but if Howard can-



Howard: ALP has stolen his thunder

not lift his game they could begin to destabilize the conservative forces.

Should Howard fall, and Peacock return to the leadership, those forces could become very powerful indeed.

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Richard Emerson



Peacock: Libs got impatient

LET'S START with the good news from the Philippines.

In her first few weeks in office, Cory Aquino seems to have achieved a great deal.

She has released over 500 political prisoners, including four top Communist Party leaders. She has got rid of Marcos' supreme court and dissolved two of his paramilitary bodies. She has set about removing provincial officials and promised job creation and interest-free loans to farmers.

All these are welcome measures, concrete achievements of February's popular upsurge. They indicate, too, that for the moment Cory Aquino has the upper hand over her coalition partners. Salvador Laurel's deeply conservative UNIDO did not want the provincial officials thrown out, and neither UNIDO nor the armed forces chiefs wanted the four Communist Party leaders released.

But we should make no mistake. The Aquino government, for all its divisions, represents one class in Filipino society — the business and landowning class that has always ruled.

Aquino's measures are largely designed to break up the Marcos regime's power structure. She is replacing it, not with the "people's power" that brought her to office, but by building a new elitist regime of her own.

Thirteen of Aquino's top eighteen new appointees were lawyers (five from Harvard and Yale), and the rest were businessmen and politicians, with an unhealthy sprinkling of Marcos supporters (now, of course, "reformed"). The Left was rightly outraged.

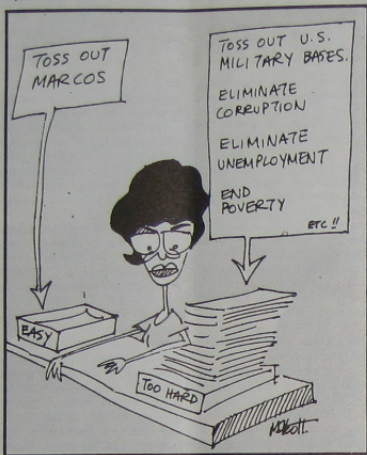
WHILE supplanting the Marcos machine with her own, Aquino is also trying to defuse the threat from her left.

Hence the release of the political prisoners, and her proposal of a six-month ceasefire to the New People's Army (NPA), backed by the flamboyant gesture of sending nuns into the hills to negotiate.

Any idea that with Marcos gone, the insurgency in the countryside by the NPA and the Moro National Liberation Front would end, has proved wrong however.

There has been a trickle of surrenders to the new regime, but the main forces appear to be fighting on. They are fighting against local officials, local landowners and local troops — all the forces of the ruling class

Tales of the "too hard" basket



Aquino's broom sweeps clean, but for whom?

that remain "on the ground", despite the changes at the top in Manila.

Nor are the early indications that the working class in the cities is going to go quiet. On the contrary, the popular upsurge in February seems at least partly responsible for a sensational strike at Subic Bay Naval Base, in which Filipinos employed largely on menial tasks have fought physically with American servicemen trying to cross their picket line.

The Catholic Church itself, which played such an important role in mobilising its followers to the blockade at Camp Crame, is split along class lines. Despite Cardinal Jaime Sin's claim that he regularly gives confession to Communist Party leaders, his hierarchy stands squarely with Aquino and the ruling class. Many "rank and file" priests identify far more closely with worker activists and the fighters in the countryside.

The left-leaning Bayan mass movement in the towns is by no

means out of the picture either. Its attempted boycott of the election had little political impact. It appears to have played its part in the overthrow of Marcos, however, leading the smaller and more militant demonstration that blockaded and eventually invaded Malacanang palace while the Catholic Church concentrated its followers in the essentially defensive action at Camp Crame. Having helpfully topple Marcos, Bayan is hardly likely to lose its voice now.

UNDERCUTTING Aquino's attempts to tread a moderate course will be the disastrous state of the economy.

The Philippines has a minus five percent growth rate, and a foreign debt of \$37.25 billion. Interest rates on the debt suck up fifty percent of foreign earnings. In human terms, this means that half of the labour force is unemployed, or underemployed. Fully two-thirds of Filipino families don't get enough to eat on any one day.

The way out under capitalism is not easy to see. Despite its natural resources and a fairly skilled labour force, the Philippines will find it difficult to break into the world market. In the south-east Asian area, it faces stiff competition from the "newly industrialising" countries — South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore — who all have a huge head start. As for beginners in the region, China is a major challenger.

If the Philippines is to compete, it has to do so on the basis of low wages and "stability". Aquino will have to tame the newly emerging "non-yellow" trade union movement, the KMU, which has gone from strength to strength since it formed five years ago.

Then there is the new government's relationship with the United States. To maintain credibility with its supporters, it cannot afford to be linked too closely with Washington. Few have forgotten that the US was Marcos' firmest supporter for twenty years.

On the other hand, it needs US backing, because with it comes US investment. That is why Aquino backed off from her earlier hints at a "renegotiation" of the two major US bases. When the new government started making noises about nuclear weapons in the Pacific, the implied threat from Washington was not long in coming.

"We need to know what their positions are before we start writing cheques; it's a two-way street," said Senate majority leader Robert Dolan.

THE AQUINO government wants political stability, a ceasefire with the NPA (but no implementation of its programme), a continuing close relationship with the US, and development based necessarily on economic "discipline".

If the grand coalition over which Aquino presides is to be preserved, then workers and peasants — those least represented at the top — will be the first to lose out.

Whatever the good intentions of the millions of Cory Aquino's followers, these are the realities of Filipino politics — the reality of international capitalism.

The task of the Filipino left and workers' movement is to stand up to the oncoming challenge. It must build on the tremendous experience of "people's power"; to defend workers' and peasants' rights and push on for a fundamental change in society.

—David Lockwood

Sparks fly and militants win at Broad Left Conference

MORE THAN a thousand socialists talking about issues and strategies, over four days, sounds like an event where sparks might fly. And despite the efforts of the organisers, that is just what happened at the Broad Left Conference this Easter.

The origins of the conference date back to 1984, when a crisis-ridden Communist Party of Australia (CPA) decided to end its existence, and try to create a new socialist party (or movement) around a watered-down version of its politics.

The new party has remained a pipe-dream, and the lame-duck CPA is still around, but it and its allies still had hoped that the Easter Conference might at least allow them to rally their forces.

This too largely failed, because the politics of the CPA and of the conference organisers gener-



George Campbell, bravely ignored evidence against the Accord

are satisfied with pleading for increasingly modest reforms (such as child care — but no longer are they demanding free, 24-hour child care).

Arguments for militant class struggle were denounced by them all week-end as crude and old-fashioned.

Yet anyone who accepts their point of view is hardly likely to join them in building a new movement, for there is already a place for this sort of thing in the existing Labor Party left.



Laurie Carmichael: Accord gains eroded, or were there never any?

ORIGINALLY, the Broad Left Conference was to be held by invitation only, with the aim of restricting participants to those who accept bureaucratic methods and conservative approaches to politics. But after widespread protest, the organisers caved in and agreed to open it up to all comers.

A last-ditch attempt to restrict the number of revolutionaries attending also collapsed ignominiously, as the organisers made no effort to enforce it.

Of course, a number of participants at the Easter gathering probably did sympathize with the insipid politics advanced by platform speakers. They cheered Brian Howe when he called for more welfare spending, and turned a blind eye to the welfare and staffing cuts he has presided over in his own department.

They cheered Laurie Carmichael when he warned that "gains of the Accord" were being whittled away, and did not seriously expect him to actually point to any gains.

And since the platforms were carefully organised to exclude any hard, revolutionary point of view, the CPA and its friends

were able to retain a formal dominance at most sessions.

Nevertheless, militant and revolutionary socialist views got a much better hearing than anyone had expected. And around two issues in particular, they had marked impact.

THE FIRST was the ALP/ACTU Accord. Few speakers even from the platform were prepared to call the Accord a raging success. The evidence to the contrary has become too overwhelming, although George Campbell of the metal workers' union made a brave attempt to ignore it.

Most speakers were prepared to criticize the Accord, but fell back on arguing that it offered great opportunities for a "working class intervention in politics".

Concrete examples of how such intervention had occurred, or might occur, were desperately scarce.

The "hard left" critics of the Accord intervened quite effectively from the floor in the panel discussions, and were able to win strong majorities in the work shops, where bureaucratic control was minimal.

It was clear that among rank and file leftists, dissatisfaction is building rapidly. Socialist Action members sold about 300 copies of our new pamphlet, *Labor's Accord: Why it's a fraud*.

The second major intervention by the "hard left" was around



Brian Howe: calls for more spending, but cuts DSS staff

defence of the unions. In a session on SEQEB, one speaker after another rose from the floor to denounce the union officials for abandoning the sacked power workers.

Then, in a packed session in the main auditorium, there was a heated debate about the BLF.

Predictably, the platform was stacked two-to-one against the BLF. But speakers from the floor were able to effectively argue the importance of defending the union, and the volume of applause made it obvious that the BLF's defenders were in the majority.

The original project of using the conference to rally people around the rightward-moving politics of the CPA and its allies, had been dealt a serious blow.

A FINAL report-back session did allow the organisers to reassert their bureaucratic control.

Fifteen minutes were devoted to reporting organisational news, much of it a legitimate and important (but uncontroversial) topics such as land rights. One sentence out of the hour-long session was devoted to the BLF.

On the Accord, reporters had to concede that an anti-Accord case had been put and that the issue was "unresolved". However they did their best to downplay what had been a weekend-long controversy.

There was much talk of interventions, mobilisations and the like, but it appears the only practical thing to come out of the conference will be a campaign around welfare, the social sector and defence of the public sector. This is to unite unions and community groups. It is supposed to be based on "grassroots involvement" — but we shall see.

In any case, one suspects it had all been agreed upon by key people long before the conference began.

For the "hard left" which had coalesced in the run-up to the Easter debates, the week-end was a bit of a triumph. The triumph was celebrated in a packed meeting at Glebe Town Hall, which cheered SEQEB militant Bernie Neville, a number of BLF militants, and Philippine activist Etta Rosales

(continued page 6)

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• **MARCH 1986 was not a good month for Ronald Reagan. He accused the Sandinistas in Nicaragua of being anti-semitic, only to be contradicted by a prominent rabbi. He accused the Sandinista Interior Minister Tomas Borge of being a drug smuggler, only to be called a liar by his own Drug Enforcement Agency. He claimed the Sandinistas were backing sinister Brazilian rebels, only to be refuted by the Brazilian government. He called on the American public to deluge Congress with telephone calls, and they did. The calls ran four-to-one against backing the "contra" mercenaries.**

KATHARINE West, university academic and sometimes advisor to Andrew Peacock, is regarded as one of the intellectual giants of the "new right".

Questioned about the unemployed, she recently told an interviewer, "I'm for the unemployed... Yes, I say abolish the dole... There is a great number on the dole who are taking the money but working in jobs at the same time. Abolish the dole and immediately you get rid of all these illegal people." The same interviewer

also asked about her proposal to start young workers on a wage of one cent per week, "I stand by that," West replied, "If you pay young people half a wage that's condemning them to a low self image."

BUT FOR sheer wackiness, you can't go past America's rightwing cranks. David Berglund, the Libertarian Party's candidate in the 1984 presidential election, has come up with the ultimate in privatisation. He has called for an end to

the government-run army. If citizens want national defence, argues Berglund, they can band together, and hire a private contractor to provide it.

THOSE misguided souls on the left who are fans of the Russian bloc will be gratified to learn that "socialist" Rumania now gives official veneration to... Count Dracula!

Yes, the original Count Dracula (the name means "demon") was a 15th century Walachian prince also known as Vlad the Impaler. The national chauvinists who today run Rumania regard him as a hero because, true to his nickname, he impaled no less than twenty thousand Turkish soldiers on spikes.

WHILE we are on a historical note, did you know that Robin Hood was banned in Indiana, USA, in the McCarthyite 1950s because robbing the rich to give to the poor was communism?

IN JOH BLEJKE-Petersen's Deep North, moves are underfoot to launch a new concept in amusement parks entitled "Folkworld". The idea is to establish "authentic" racial communities on islands in an artificial lake. Tourists will ride around in boats,



CHEAP SHOTS

looking at the "natives" in their "natural habitat." Approaches have been made to the Tompan government and to the Queensland Department of Community Services, which now controls aboriginal affairs. As yet, we don't know just who is behind this project. But if there is a dollar to be made out of such racist paternalism, you can bet the Queensland government will be backing it.

• **THE DOLLAR has been floated for a while now, with numerous effects on our cost of living. So you'll be reassured to read the attitudes of the foreign exchange traders to whom Labor is entrusting the dollar's value.** "I don't want my traders to have a view longer than 24 hours," says Westpac foreign exchange manager Peter Chan. "I don't want them to see past the ends of their noses." Art Brown of the Commonwealth Bank agrees. "We are very short term. We look at the next 10 minutes, the next hour and maybe tomorrow."



WE HEAR Imelda Marcos has offered to sing a song for the next Live Aid concert. It goes, "We own the world, we bought the children". As an encore, she proposes to sing "These Boots are Made for Walking," 6000 times.

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COVER STORY

Women's Liberation: Can the vision be restored?

ONLY fifteen years ago we were "bra-burners", and our ideas were mocked by "humorists" on TV. Today the Prime Minister has top level advisors on women's affairs, and parties chase the female vote.

The women's movement has come a long way. We have equal pay at work and women have edged into non-traditional jobs. Access to abortions (in most states), readily accessible contraception, no fault divorce and community child care centres give women more choice in arranging their lives.

There are anti-discrimination laws, affirmative action programs and trade union courses for women. "Women's issues", once of concern only to radicals, are now legitimate across society.

Of course, many problems remain. Rape and other violence against women continues. There are still no tax rebates for child care costs, let alone free child care. Average female earnings are only 67% of males'.

Still, many feminists would argue that reforms have brought the goals of the women's movement a lot closer. But are the changes all that fundamental?

Many reforms have been limited, or benefit only a few.

For example, affirmative action will mostly move more women into management positions. Its essential irrelevance for the working class is typified by BHP, which fought long and hard against Wollongong women who wanted jobs in the local steelworks. BHP was in a pilot program for affirmative action at the same time.

Abortion is still very limited in Queensland. In other states, we rely on court rulings which could be reinterpreted if the political pendulum swings right.

Despite the Arbitration Commission's 1972 equal pay ruling, won only after a long and militant battle on the shop floor, women's wages still average far less than men's due to our concentration in low

paying jobs. Yet last month the Commission rejected a claim for fair comparability, which would have narrowed the wage gap by comparing traditionally female jobs with men's.

This is not to say that we should reject reforms. Obviously they are welcome. But it is significant that the women's movement has lost the word "liberation" from its name. With it has been lost the vision inspiring the movement.

WHEN WE began in the late 60's, our goal was not just this or that reform, valuable as reforms might be. It was radical social change, and freedom from exploitation and oppression. Along with other radical movements of the time, women's liberation set out to turn society upside down.

To achieve liberation, women needed to be able to control their own lives.

The women's liberation movement demanded free 24 hour child care controlled by staff and parents, free abortion on demand, equal pay and education.

But more important than specific demands was a new way of looking at the role of women in the family and the family in society, a new understanding that social problems are often hidden within personal life.

For some feminists, the goal has been women's rights and equality within the framework of existing society. But many in the liberation movement went further. We believed it was possible to achieve equality in general in society, by abolishing hierarchical and authoritarian relationships between bosses and workers, teachers and students, parents and children, women and men.

Quite obviously we are no closer to this fundamental goal of liberation than we were before, despite a decade and a half of sometimes successful struggle. Let us consider why.

THE OPPRESSION of women is rooted in society, and has changed with the nature of society.

In feudal times, women were subject to the whims of the lord of the manor sexually as well as economically. Fortunately, the landlord's "right" to rape a newly wed wife no longer exists in modern society.

But capitalism has replaced this with new forms of mistreatment. Women workers' low pay is part of the general exploitation of the working class. Hidden unemployment among housewives exists in a society in which both sexes face the threat of losing their jobs because a capitalist somewhere decides it isn't profitable to employ them.

In the industrial world, female oppression is also integrated with the social structure. For instance, as feminist Miranda Davies says, for poor low caste Indian women rape is a consequence of poverty itself.



More women in management: what does affirmative action offer workers, though?

Or consider the comment made by the Association of African Women for Research and Development:

"To fight against genital mutilation without placing it in the context of ignorance, obscurantism, exploitation, poverty, etc without questioning the structures and social relations which perpetuate this situation is like refusing to see the sun in the middle of the day".

MANY feminists argue that the world would be changed if only women could be got into positions of power. This idea is based upon an assumption of a fundamental "sisterhood" among women, who can be united, they argue, on the basis of a common oppression.

The fact is that while all women are oppressed, the type and degree of oppression varies with social class. Imelda Marcos, with her 6000 pairs of shoes, is just not in the same category as a poverty-stricken Filipina forced to choose between prostitution and sweat labour making those shoes.

When abortion was first legalised in Britain, the poor faced up to three month waiting lists for a National Health

(Continued page 8)

SOCIALIST ACTION

Our meetings

READERS often ask us what Socialist Action meetings are like.

A typical branch meeting lasts two hours, or a little less. Usually, the first half consists of a talk and discussion on an item of contemporary, strategic or educative interest for socialists. In the second half, we move on to business: decisions that need to be made, tasks that need to be done.

Coming talks include:

Melbourne — the Broad Left conference, the Mexican revolution, the Arms Race.

Brisbane — the British working class, Black resistance in Australia, the US bases, the West German Greens.

Sydney — the Philippines after Marcos, SEQEB, Privatisation, Mass education, Northern Ireland.

If you'd like more details, give us a ring. Or just turn up. Phone numbers and meeting times are in the centre pages.

Soc. Action debates ALP

SOCIALIST Action and the ALP debated "The Parliamentary Road to Socialism" at Melbourne's Monash University last month.

Sixty students heard prominent Socialist Left figure Lindsay Tanner look horns with our own Tom O'Lincoln in a stimulating exchange.

Speaking first, Tanner argued for the left to fight inside as well as outside the state structure. Unions and community groups had spearhead a gradual change to socialism, just as feudalism had gradually changed to capitalism. The ALP

had to help by leading public opinion, empowering community groups, and bring in major reforms.

Australia was not in a revolutionary situation, and was never likely to be, he said.

The state, O'Lincoln replied, belonged to the ruling class. As in Chile in 1973, they would use it to crush any radical reformist government. The change from feudalism to capitalism had required revolutions in France, America, England and elsewhere.

The record of Labor in government showed it could not play the roles that Tanner had outlined. While Australia had not yet had a revolutionary situation, experiences like the NSW BLF in the early 1970s showed the radical potential of Australian workers in times of mass struggle. This was what the left had to build on.

A vigorous question time followed, with ALP Club students particularly keen to grapple with the Socialist Action argument.

FROM PAGE 5 Broad Left

of Bayan.

There was talk of uniting the militant sections of the left and building a new revolutionary party. For now, the aim is practical collaboration around limited aims, which is sensible.

The meeting was a little over-enthusiastic about the successes of the week-end, and about the short-term prospects for the revolutionary movement. At the same time it betrayed a hint of conservatism, when it refused to condemn the Accord in explicit terms in its main resolution — even though all the participants themselves said they were for smashing it.

Nevertheless, it was a good week-end for militants and revolutionaries, and a difficult one for those who would tie us to the Accord and abandon the B.L.F. In that we can take some real satisfaction.

— Tom O'Lincoln



Women demand jobs from BHP: affirmative action program did not help

COVER STORY

operation. Better off women just went to the more expensive private clinics.

But not only does women's oppression vary. Their relationship to the exploitation that occurs in capitalist society does as well. The 1981 Australian census showed that of all people in the labour force who are employers, over 40% are women. And experience shows, time and again, that women at the top of capitalism's class structure and their hangers on act in their class interests — even when the victims are other women.

During the depression the Australian Women's Guild of Empire campaigned widely to "end the industrial and class strife and to restore industry on a basis of co-operation and good will". A leading member, Adela Pankhurst Walsh, would appear wherever there was a strike and, not surprisingly, she got to be very popular with employers.

Another example was the struggle some years ago at the Lucy clothing factory in Peru. The women workers occupied the workplace and held demonstrations and a hunger strike. They were fighting against their boss's wife as much as against the boss himself, because she had locked them into the factory, put the machines so that they were facing the wall, and forbade any conversation.

In the conflict in Chile between 1970 and 1973, women were active on both sides of the class line. Middle class women hoarded food, and then organised demonstrations known as marches of the empty pots and pans, as part of their campaign to undermine the Allende regime.

They used local women's centres to draw poorer housewives away from political activity, focussing instead on sewing and other traditional female tasks. Middle class women gained considerable dominance in this way, some even getting poorer women



WW2 munitions worker: women defied war-time curbs on union action

to stand in food queues for them.

Today, as more women appear in parliament, in top trade union positions and in senior management, the real class divisions become more obvious. Maggie Thatcher has no compunctions about closing women's hospitals or crushing the hopes of miners' wives. Indra Gandhi forced sterilisations on large numbers of Indian women. Right wing women in Right to Life and Women Who Want to be Women are an important part of the movement which wants to turn back the clock and reimpose sexual repression.

FEMINISTS sometimes claim that the left and the labour movement have ignored women, and that class struggle is something that is carried on by men in the interests of men.

This is not true. History shows that when mass upheavals and revolutionary changes do occur, women haven't wanted to be asked. They have been right there in the forefront, and have often proved the most determined fighters.

The poet Southey wrote about a glove-makers' strike in Britain in 1807: "Women are more disposed to be mutinous; they stand in less fear of the law... and therefore in all public tumults they are foremost in violence and ferocity".

In the French Revolution of 1789, it was the poor small women who initiated the march to Versailles, which dragged the king back to Paris. In the 1871 Paris Commune, working class women met the invading

French troops and persuaded them not to fire on the Paris working class but to join them, thus initiating the Commune.

Hunger riots led by working women in Leipzig in 1917 generated the first German workers' council, while women both as protestors and strikers created the Turin insurrection of the same year.

And it is not just in the west that women have played this role. In India, for example, during the national liberation struggle, Nehru noted that women, "though unused to public activity, threw themselves into the heart of the struggle... generally the attitude of the women was more unyielding than that of the men."

A militant struggle by South Korean women textile workers in 1976 involved a sit-in and hunger strike which was only broken by a police attack. They had to confront not only the bosses and the totalitarian government, but also their company controlled union leaders, whose contribution consisted of, "What sort of women are you, who prefer the labour movement to marriage?"

ALL OF this contradicts the common idea of women as tending to be more conservative, as needing special training to even participate in trade union meetings, as requiring special caucuses to overcome their conditioning.

It is true that women's conditioning does tend to make them more conservative — in periods of general passivity and low class struggle. In these periods we also see an increase in racism, in national chauvinism and other divisions among the working class.

But in periods of mass activity, the opposite happens. The perceived need for unity tends to overcome divisions. Women and other oppressed groups, once the yoke of passivity is thrown off, often become the most militant fighters. For they do not have the habits of routine political activity, and years of repressed anger suddenly find an outlet.

This happened among blacks in the US in the 60's and early 70's. Following the mass struggles of the civil rights movement, black workers took the lead in direct action in Detroit car factories and elsewhere.

In Australia during the second world war, the majority of men went along with their unions' acceptance of war time restrictions on industrial militancy. But women in war-related industries refused to accept the lower pay awarded to them and engaged in courageous industrial action in the face of



The strains of child-rearing: the family must be transformed

opposition from employers, unions and government.

So there are two extremes — passivity and subjection to conditioning on the one hand, and mass mobilisation and "unfeminine" fighting spirit on the other. The missing link, as Marx pointed out, is struggle.

In the British miners' strike of 1984-85, women who had previously been afraid to even take a train on their own were suddenly precipitated into organising strike kitchens for thousands, into speaking to mass audiences, travelling to foreign countries, fighting riot police on picket lines. Thousands were transformed, and transformed in ways that years of training courses could not approach.

"When I look at myself now, I just can't believe I'm the same person. I've grown so big with the knowledge I've got from it. Now there's nothing I can't do. Absolutely nothing."

It is not just political knowledge that this woman was referring to. Such a struggle had a great impact on the home and personal life, and permanently changed many lives.

"Kids, pots and housework. That's all it were. I think if I had to go back to that I'd jump in 't'out (canal)."

WE HAVE established, then, how women participate in struggle and the change in consciousness that this can bring about. What though of the possibility for

ending oppression in a different society?

To get an idea of what is possible we have to look at the experience that went furthest in the direction of freeing humanity, that is the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Women had been involved from the beginning in the Russian revolutionary movement. As the working class grew they were involved in strikes in textiles and other industries. The 1905 revolution, later called the dress rehearsal for 1917, sparked mass mobilisations. As Alexandra Kollontai, later a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, said,

"In 1905 there was no corner in which in one way or another the voice of a woman speaking about herself and demanding new rights was not heard."

Women workers initiated the strike wave of 1910-1914. Frequently the women's section of a plant was the first to strike and afterwards gain the support of the men. Demands included paid maternity leave, nurseries, an end to sexual harassment, and bath house and laundry facilities.

In February 1917 the women of Petrograd proved correct a police report which said they were a "store of inflammable material for which one spark will set off a fire". A strike on International Women's Day precipitated a general uprising and the overthrow of the Czar. In October the revolutionary process was completed with the creation of a workers' state and the Bolsheviks coming to power.

THE RUSSIAN Revolution meant more wide-ranging changes for women than have been seen anywhere since.

Women gained the complete right to choose their own domicile, name and citizenship. Marriage became a matter of simple registration, divorce was freely granted on request by either partner, and property rights within marriage were abolished. The Bolshevik government dropped illegitimacy, incest, adultery, and homosexuality from the legal code.

Leon Trotsky said that "the problem of women's emancipation is clearly tied to that of the transformation of family". Lenin commented at length about the "barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery" of housework. The new workers' state set up communal dining rooms, laundries, and child care centres to begin the socialisation of housework which is so necessary for the emancipation of women.

All this produced an upheaval in family life, sexual experimentation and communal households.

Today, little remains of these brave experiments. Following the civil war and the failure of the revolution to spread successfully to Germany, the Russian workers' state was isolated and decayed politically. As a new bureaucratic ruling class emerged following a capitalist logic of development, reforms were rolled back and women were again bound hand and foot to the family.

We want, some day, to be able to carry on from where the Russian Revolution was forced to stop. That is why, while today's feminists speak of their women's movement, it is largely socialists who speak of liberation.

— Janey Stone

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts toinker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must be spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through ending capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world: the point is to change it. Marxist theory and propaganda are only meaningful if they are a paganda to action. In the unions, social movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. If that's where you want to be, join us today!

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for location

BHP battle: Who'll pocket the "national interest"?

ROBERT Holmes a Court's takeover bid for BHP has produced some fascinating alliances and splits.

Much of the left of the ALP and union officialdom has lined up with right-wing NSW Labour Council secretary John McBean to oppose Holmes a Court's bid. Bob Hawke, after vacillating for several weeks, agreed with Paul Keating (now an ex-ante of McBean's) that the Government should not intervene.

The Liberal Party was even less decisive than Hawke. Bosses and the financial press were divided on the question. BHP management stood on its record, while Holmes a Court touted his skills as an entrepreneur.

Everyone claims to have the national interest uppermost in their hearts. As usual, this was just a euphemism for the interests of the employing class. Take Bob Hawke's position, for example.

Hawke is worried about the ability of Australian employers in general to make profits. Steel is a basic input into most other industries, so a ready local supply is crucial to Australian capitalism's success. It is also vital to ensure that local industrialists cannot be blackmailed by overseas steel makers threatening to cut off supplies.

Labor's Steel Industry Plan aims to ensure that the local steel industry (and thus industry in general) becomes more efficient and profitable. It was premised on the sacking of 15,000 workers, with further job reductions through natural wastage. BHP got protected local markets and subsidies to encourage it to invest.

Holmes a Court eventually changed his proposals for breaking up BHP. Once he assured Labor that he wasn't going to close the Steel Division, Hawke's mutterings about an inquiry ceased. He was satisfied a new management would pursue the "national interest".

Holmes a Court, for his part, has recognised that the Steel



Holmes a Court: another "hands on" exercise

Industry Plan was a guarantee of the profitability of steel making. Even if the Plan were not enough to achieve this, it is clear that Labor would take any additional steps necessary to preserve the industry.

HOLMES a Court's supporters claim he will shake up BHP's lacklustre management and make it more profitable. For the workers, that can only mean he will be even more ruthless than the current management.

John McBean and the labour bureaucracy's left are opposing Holmes a Court's bid, ostensibly out of concern for BHP workers' jobs. But defending the current BHP management is hardly going to protect the workforce. After all, they have already shed 15,000 jobs, and a productivity speed-up will double steel output per worker by the end of the decade.

McBean and co's response to all of this has been a dealing silence.

BHP management, McBean and much of the left have made a lot of one individual controlling Australia's largest company. And they have a point; in our society a few individuals have

enormous power compared to the vast majority.

But this applies just as much to people like BHP managing director Brian Loton and his fellow-directors as it does to Robert Holmes a Court. They, and he, are only beholden to people like themselves who own blocks of shares, or run the finance institutions which hold shares.

McBean also has a prejudice against "robber barons" and "big finance" as opposed to other bosses. This reflects a long-standing hostility to Money Power (or in more modern terms, "monopolies" or "multi-nationalists") in the Australian labour movement. It has consistently meant siding with one group of bosses against another, instead of opposing both groups with militant industrial action. This prejudice is particularly ridiculous in the BHP takeover battle.

There is also a certain amount of national chauvinism in the opposition to Holmes a Court, based largely on BHP's "flagship" image for Australian capital. Yet Holmes a Court could probably claim to be more Australian than BHP management, supported as it is by large overseas shareholders in the company.

MOST OF the labour left want an inquiry into BHP. This is just empty rhetoric for state activity for its own sake, as it is not backed by any demands over the future of the company.

All the "left" Metal Workers' Union officials have done to defend their members in the steel industry is to set up "Corporate Watch". This body will, at considerable expense to union members, duplicate the functions of the financial pages in the daily press in monitoring takeovers and share trading.

Holmes a Court's borrowings to finance his bid will allow him to dodge company tax, since interest payments on loans can be written off against taxable income. Such a lark will reduce the company tax on Holmes a Court's Bell Group by millions.

This is hardly a new lark, however. All companies which borrow take advantage of it. BHP doubtless did when it borrowed to take over Utah.

(Of course Paul Keating, in

reorganising the tax system, closed off this lark for ordinary home buyers.)

The ACTU has lined up with Hawke rather than with McBean. Simon Crean said, "We're not just concerned here over the issue of jobs... Takeovers have to be seen in the light of industry development."

The ACTU's concern about jobs was shown when it did nothing about the 15,000 sackings. Crean, like Hawke, is more concerned about the national interest — ensuring that Australian industry develops as rapidly as possible. His only qualification was that the interests of BHP shareholders must be respected.

Actually, the only worthwhile statement from a union official has come from Glen Batchelor of the Plumbers Union:

"My attitude is, a boss is a boss — doesn't matter who they all are. We just make sure the new bloke gives our members at least as much as they had under the old boss."

The only serious arguments against Robert Holmes a Court taking over BHP are really arguments against private ownership of industry in general. And you can bet no boss, ACTU leader or government is going to put those forward.

It just wouldn't be in the "national interest".

— Paul Stylianou



McBean: traditional hostility to Money Power

LAST SEPTEMBER, a lone-paragraph news item appeared in Australia's daily press.

It announced that more than a thousand trade unionists had been arrested in the Bolivian capital La Paz, and that a general strike was underway. From then on, all news of the struggle was blacked out.

Now the story can be told. And a remarkable story it is.

Bolivia has a long tradition of class struggle. In 1952, an insurrection spearheaded by armed miners defeated the army and broke the power of the traditional tin magnates who had dominated the country for decades.

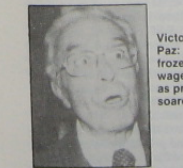
The tin industry was nationalised, land given to the peasants, and the trade unions gained a share in government.

Power really lay with the reformist "National Revolutionary Movement", however, and gradually the workers saw control of the revolution slip from their grasp. However in 1971, a new mass movement threw up the Popular Assembly, a kind of workers' parliament which for a time promised to become an alternative centre of political power.

More recently still, workers' determined resistance brought a military dictatorship to an end, and stymied the attempts of the ALP-type government which followed it to impose the brutal economic measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund.

IN MARCH 1985, workers staged a prolonged general strike in protest against the ruinous rate of inflation facing the country.

They demanded automatic wage rises to match inflation at every step. At one point, miners armed with dynamite controlled the central district of La Paz.



However the strike was unsuccessful, and in July, new elections brought to power a rightwing government. It was led by Victor Paz Estensoro, the man who had been the president after the 1952 revolution and had played a key role in steering it away from its original socialist direction.



Bolivian miners on the march last year

The general strike the press blacked out

Paz announced he would impose the IMF's program for the country, come what may, and signed a pact with the even more rightwing opposition party ADN to promote the "modernisation" of Bolivia.

By this he meant decentralizing the nationalized tin industry and opening it up to market forces, while attempting to break the power of the miners' union.

Paz announced that wages would be frozen while prices soared. Miners would lose subsidized food distribution programs which had long been provided in work places.

The announcement of this program was greeted by a mass protest rally in La Paz on 2 September. Angry workers launched a spontaneous strike movement, which was soon made official by a general strike call from the trade union federation, the COB.

TO GIVE the strike a political focus, groups of workers and community activists began to launch hunger strikes. Fearing that these apparently harmless actions would mobilise public opinion, the regime declared a state of siege.

On 19 September, 1500 trade unionists were arrested, including the famous COB leader Juan Lechin. Along with 150 others, he was flown to exile in remote rural areas. Despite assurances from the government that the exiles were being kept in "marvellous and paradisaical zones", their release became a key demand of the strike movement.

The apparently decapitated labour movement fought on, with the emergence of a clandestine alternative leadership from the COB and the miners' union. Norma Salguero, miner's wife from the historically militant centre of Siglo XX, told a journalist:

"We are not afraid. They have the arms, but we have the valour and the truth on our side and they will have to carry us out dead."

In Oruro, directly south of La Paz, many hundreds of men, women and children entered the San Jose mine and went down to the deepest levels to prevent the police and army from driving them out. One of the women there told the press:

"I work in the mines and support ten children. In the widow of a miner who died in an

industrial accident. I went on hunger strike because we have nothing to eat anyway. Many of my children go to school without shoes. We won't end the hunger strike... Better die than live as slaves."

The government threatened to send the army into the San Jose mine, but never summoned up the courage to do so.

By this time, the underground strike leadership estimated that 6813 people were engaged in what were effectively illegal hunger strikes.

HOWEVER, throughout the strike the labour movement had been on the defensive.

In the mass movement of the previous March, workers had controlled the streets of the capital, but had no political organisation capable of taking the struggle forward. On the contrary, the largest parties claiming to represent the "left" were in the very government which was resisting their demands.

The only genuinely revolutionary organisations were small fragments. Despite its historic industrial militancy and general radicalism, the Bolivian working class has never thrown up a mass revolutionary political movement. As a result, the socialist potential of the 1952 revolution was lost, the chance of building an alternative government in 1971 was lost, and so was the chance for victory in early 1985.

By late 1985, when conservative government claiming an electoral mandate to impose its "economic model", the unions could only react. The courage of the hunger strikers was admirable, but it was hardly a tactic designed to defeat an entrenched opposition.

In the end, the strikers began negotiations with the Minister of the Interior. In exchange for the release of the detainees, the COB agreed to order a return to work. It was, as any miner's job delegate, at best "an honourable retreat".

He went on to say that the workers "must reorganize their forces" and that trade unionists outside the mining industry needed to strengthen their organisations. This is no doubt entirely true, as the catastrophic fall of world tin prices has deepened the economic crisis facing Bolivia.

But without the creation of a new political leadership, no amount of regrouping and retooling on the job will equip the workers to challenge a reactionary government bent on making them pay for its drastic economic measures.

SOCIALIST ACTION — PAGE 11

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INDUSTRIAL



REPETITIVE Strain Injury, or RSI, has become the major occupational health problem of the eighties.

A 1984 survey showed 37 per cent of workers in the Australian Taxation Office suffer from overuse injuries. The figure among data process operators in several major banks is between 16 and 21 per cent.

Last financial year the NSW Government Insurance Office paid out ten million dollars in compensation for overuse injuries, half of that in the public sector. Commonwealth figures are just as high. In NSW alone there were 53,000 workers' compensation claims for RSI in 1984.

Repetitive Strain Injuries are not new, but they have only recently been recognised in occupational health figures. One reason for the relatively recent interest in RSI is that it now affects many more professional people, teachers, journalists and other white collar workers than five years ago.

Another is the pioneering work done by the Workers' Health Centres in Lidcombe (NSW) and Richmond (Vic), and others, in detecting, publicising and preventing RSI in blue collar areas. So when the problem hit white collar jobs, much of the medical ground work had been done.

WHAT causes RSI? There are many theories, and almost as many "cures". But we need look no further than the workplace to find the basic cause.

In blue collar workplaces, especially the sweatshops which

RSI: A disease that we have to cure politically

employ predominantly migrant women on piece work, the speed of the assembly line or production process causes RSI.

For example, in the clothing trade, with its outwork and very low piece rates, many women get RSI and just keep working until permanent damage is done. In large factories, line speed-ups often contribute to RSI.

In this era of productivity deals as the basis for wage increases, we are likely to see an increase of RSI in manufacturing. Other blue collar workers particularly at risk include industrial cleaners, kitchen hands, people using jack hammers, floor polishers, mail sorters, assembly workers, and so on.

Almost all manual work under capitalism is repetitive, and so most blue collar workers are potentially at risk. One of the fundamental demands of workers' control, the control over the speed of production, is especially important in this context.

In the public sector and white collar industry, the pattern has been slightly different.

The incidence of RSI is quite clearly related to the introduction of word-processing and computer technology. The latest generation keyboard is so much faster than manual systems, file updating is so much quicker,

and most white collar jobs now involve some electronic keyboard work.

But RSI in white collar areas is not only caused by personal use of new technology. New work practices, speeding them up and altering them in other ways that make RSI more likely.

Stress at work is a related factor. Those most at risk from RSI are workers who have little or no control over their jobs. That is why keyboard operators, who do nothing else all day, were the first widely visible victims.

INSURANCE companies and employers have been quick to respond to the so-called "RSI epidemic".

There have been attempts to discredit workers with RSI in the courts. Manufacturers Mutual Insurance Company has its own doctors who are encouraged by the chief medical officer to seek reasons other than work as the cause of RSI.

Private insurance companies naturally want to play down RSI, since large pay-outs will hit their profits.

The public service is little different. Commonwealth Medical Officers are often rude and disbelieving when they see you. In my own case, I was even questioned about my "family

life". Did my "spouse" complain of aching arms? Was I happy or depressed?

And for many employers, higher insurance premiums are sure to follow successful actions for RSI compensation. Already there have been pay-outs of over \$90,000 in individual cases.

Lawyers are quick to offer advice, especially if it is being paid for. But the best advice I got from a lawyer when discussing RSI was to "treat it as an industrial problem". He was right.

RSI is an industrial disease caused by unsafe working conditions. On a building site, the BLF wastes no time in defending their members. And no-one would work near asbestos without protection. RSI requires the same vigilance.

ALREADY several unions have taken action over RSI. The most famous and militant action was that taken by Federated Clerks Union and APSA members in the Taxation Office.

Other unions are beginning to take the question seriously. But some of the solutions being proposed are really only half-way measures.

Demanding well-designed furniture and machinery is of course necessary to prevent RSI. So is recognition for adequate rest breaks and flexibility in duties.

These are directly political questions in most workplaces. If we demand better furniture, rest breaks and job rotation, somebody has to pay for it. The whole question of who controls the work process arises.

Employers, whether trendy operators like my own employer, the ABC, or hard-nosed industrialists like BHP, will do their utmost to defend management prerogatives and keep down costs in such circumstances.

There is another consideration. RSI is as much a result of the speed-up and decreased staffing caused by the introduction of new technology, as it is of using the visual display units and computer keyboards themselves.

Tackling these, and the related problem of piecework in blue collar industry, are just as crucial to conquering RSI.

They are battles **aid** as capitalism itself, and as the latest front on which they have to be fought. We will have to keep fighting them, too, until workers run their workplaces and lay down the conditions of the job.

— Martin Hirst

LABOR IN OFFICE

As a showdown looms, the BLF looks strong

LABOR'S moves to deregister the Builders Labourers Federation are nearing a climax.

The judges have brought down their decision to deregister the union. The hearings were grossly biased against the BLF from the start.

The judges were chosen by Sir John Moore, who told a TV reporter that he thought it would be "a good thing" if the union was deregistered. In the hearings, the BLF was denied adequate time to answer a host of charges, yet any charges not answered were considered as proved!

High Court appeals may delay the inevitable, but union militants should assume that deregistration is here to stay. Fortunately the BLF looks fairly strong due to recent victories.

Before Christmas it put on bans, demanding the 3.8% pay rise denied during the national wage case. The employers replied with a lockout. With holidays approaching, the BLF dropped the bans. The employers cowered.

Yet it seems that Norm Gallagher was way ahead of the boss. In February the bans went back on. When the employers resorted again to sackings, they got a shock.

The BLF pointed to Section 5 of the Arbitration Act, outlawing unfair dismissals. The bosses had locked out the whole union, including a majority of sites where no bans were on. Legal opinion on all sides agreed that the BLF had a strong case.

The union looked solid, and NSW employers folded. Isolated, Victorian employers held out a bit longer, egged on by John Cain's promises of financial compensation, but then found the dispute too costly.

The ACTU, meanwhile, criticized the employers for taking the offensive before the union was deregistered.

To cut their losses, the Master Builders in Victoria invited workers back, offering the 3.8%

Give Socialist Action to a friend



Gallagher: way ahead of the bosses

if they would join another union after deregistration. Labourers rejected this bribe en masse.

The picture has become slightly clouded since. Cain and co say the BLF returned to work on many sites without achieving its demands. Few believe them. The BLF tells of quiet deals on many sites, with workers being paid the 3.8% in the form of bodgy overtime, "site allowances" and the like.

Leighton's, one of the loudest advocates of deregistration, agreed to pay the 3.8%. The union says the vast majority of BLFs back at work returned on its terms.

The employers generally are a shambles. Five key contractors — Jennings, Hollands, Civil and Civic, Leightons, and Concrete Constructions — are pushing deregistration hard. But in a cut-throat industry, plenty of others just want to do the job quickly, and are not interested in vendettas.

Cain appears coy about meeting his promise to compensate the employers, and confidence in him must be low. It is also dubious whether the

key Building Workers Industrial Union will poach BLF members. The two unions are friendly, and there are plenty of jobs around.

The danger is in Sydney, where both the right around Labour Council secretary John McBean and the fake-left around the Communist Party have contributed to the union's isolation. Even here, BLF organisation is strong.

In both cities, BLF organisation on existing large sites should hold solid. The battle will be waged on new sites, and a clear pattern may take months to emerge.

It will be a historic battle, and the support of socialists and militants will — or should — be riding with the BLF.

— Richard Emerson

LAND RIGHTS



Labor dumps black hopes

ANOTHER broken promise!

For three years now, Australian blacks have waited for the ALP government to grant land rights. After all, party policy was perfectly clear. It says that Aborigines are to get full ownership of black lands and full control over any mining.

Now, however, Cabinet has dumped this policy as "too hard". Instead the states — to the likes of John Bjelke-Petersen and Brian Burke. The veto on mining will be limited to five years.

By way of compensation, Labor will spend more on Aboriginal welfare (unless they simply break that promise too). This is something Aborigines lose more children, die younger, get less education than any group in Australia. Any increase in welfare has to be supported.

But land rights is not a welfare issue, no matter what Hawke and sections of the press now claim. Land rights are a basic political demand by a viciously oppressed minority. Along with full citizenship rights and equal pay (both won in the 60s), they would enable blacks to exercise some degree of control over their own lives.

Bob Hawke, as usual, has found someone else to blame for this betrayal of party policy. This time the scapegoat is the Australian people, who he says, are less compassionate than

twenty years ago.

What hypocrisy! He knows that a mere six years ago a solid majority of Australians supported land rights. Since then, a well-funded campaign by the mining companies and their political friends has rolled back that support by playing on racist undercurrents in Australian society.

The tragedy is that the effect of this poisonous campaign could still be averted. Government research shows that a simple education campaign would win back support for black rights. It would cost a piddling \$2 million — but they refuse to spend the money.

All this is yet another kick in the face for Australian blacks. It is a kick, too, for those "realists" who insist that changing ALP policy is the way to secure social change.

The support for land rights that existed until recently was built by a fighting, campaigning movement of blacks and their supporters. The ALP simply trailed along behind.

That support was eroded by a campaign of the mine-owners and right-wing activists. Again, the ALP simply trailed the mood.

The lesson is clear. The fight for land rights, as for all rights, will be won or lost in the streets and workplaces. The ALP and parliament will be obstacles, not tools, in that struggle.

— Graham Willett



Black marchers: betrayed by Labor

EVERY newspaper from the Murdoch press up tells us that Russia is socialist. Many people are surprised to learn that we in Socialist Action regard Russia as state capitalist.

For the normal worker in Russia, work is as tedious and alienating as it is in Australia. The boss kicks you in the bum to make you go faster, and all you get is a few lousy kopéks that hardly pay for food and rent.

For us, socialism is nothing without workers' control. The last vestige of workers' control in Russia was abolished in 1929 with the death of the Troika, a joint management/party/workers body. Managers' orders became unconditionally binding on all staff. Trade unions were stripped of all functions, including the negotiation of wages.

Industrial enterprises were forbidden to employ workers who left their former jobs without permission. Even worse were the slave labour camps depicted by Solzhenitsyn. The repression of Solidarity shows that the situation hasn't changed much.

BUT THEY don't have competition in Russia, some say. And true, there might not be much of a struggle between the Moscow car factory and the Leninrad car factory.

Yet Russia as a whole competes with the West. It is capitalist competition on a world scale. To protect itself from invasion and to defend its empire in Eastern Europe, Russia must keep up with the US. This means more bombs, more steel factories, more power stations, more oil, etc.

The socialist notion of defending oneself by helping revolution in other countries was dropped by Russia in the 1920s. Stalin's doctrine of "building socialism in one country" meant the sacrifice of key revolutions in China (1927) and Spain (1936).

Consequently, Russia had to compete on the capitalists' terms. Stalin argued:

"No comrades... the pace must not be slackened! To slacken the pace would mean to lag behind; and those who lag behind are beaten... We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this lag in ten years. Either we do it or they crush us."

As more effort went into accumulating capital (steel mills, armaments factories, etc), less could be spent on producing food, houses, washing machines and other consumer items for the people. Consumer goods industries hardly developed at all,



Arms competition: Russia's military brass show off a missile

Why we call Russia "state capitalist" . . .

while the proportion of investment going into the production of factories and machinery increased dramatically. The latter rose from 32.8% in 1927-8, to 53.3% in 1932, and to 68.8% in 1950.

BUT IN Russia, everything is nationalised, some say. For genuine socialism, however, that is not enough.

"Nationalisation" merely means ownership by the state. Unless the working people themselves control the state, through workers' councils in which they have the freedom to politically organise, nationalisation is no



Stalin: compete — or else

gain at all.

You do not, after all, suddenly enter a socialist time-and-space bubble when you fly TAA or take a train. Italy, where nearly half the economy is owned or controlled by the state, is not "half socialist". Nazi Germany had 60 percent of its industry state-owned; few would argue that it was socialist.

In TAA, on the trains, and in Russia, the task of extracting the most from the workers has been taken over by managers who act in the same way as the classical capitalist boss. The workers have no control over them, or over the state for which they act. The Russian bureaucracy is a self-contained ruling class, performing the same functions as the Western capitalist class.

What, then, of Russia's planned economy? Does not that make it socialist?

Alas, no. When the workers do not control the planners, and when the aim of the plan is to compete with the West rather than to satisfy human needs, there is nothing socialist about a planned economy.

Today, multinational corporations, with budgets as big as those of many smaller nations, plan extensively. One would not

call Ford or General Motors "socialist" merely because they plan; neither should one see Russia that way.

The Russian-style planned economy has not saved it from economic crisis. Like the West, it has booms and slumps. In the period 1966-74, its difference in growth between slump and boom years averaged 130% for the USSR.

As in the West, the crisis is caused by over-accumulation of capital. The planners of the ruling bureaucracies set unrealistic targets for growth. Supplies don't keep pace; expansion runs into the "raw material" barrier and the economy begins to grind to a halt. In order to complete some investments, raw materials and components are switched from other investments which are "frozen" and left uncompleted for years at a time. So a tractor factory may be completed, but not the tyre factory which is supposed to supply it.

As in the West, the rate of profit tends to decline in Russia. National earnings per rouble invested in 1964 were 86% of the 1960 figure. In 1968 they were down to 81%, and in 1972, just 76%. Growth rates steadily declined from 11.3% in 1950-55 to 4.0% in 1965-70.

RUSSIA is imperialist, the higher stage of capitalism. After the Second World War it looted Eastern Europe for capital, shipping factories wholesale back to Russia. It tried to overtake Rumania and Northern Iran to get more oil.

Today, it still exploits its empire in Eastern Europe through one-sided trade deals. When workers have rebelled, it has sent tanks into East Berlin, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Today it occupies Afghanistan, while its threat of invasion gave the Polish regime the cover it needed to crush Solidarity.

So Russia has many of the characteristics of Western capitalism. It competes on a world scale, it accumulates capital, it exploits and alienates workers, and it has a ruling class. It is imperialist. It even has booms and slumps.

Russia can best be compared to a war economy, where the state controls most of its production and strives to produce as much as possible for military purposes. We call it state capitalism.

It is certainly not our idea of socialism, where there is workers' control and where goods are produced for need rather than for profits or military accumulation.

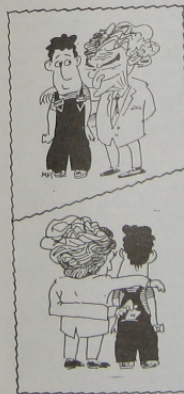
— Lydia DeLong

New pamphlet makes the case against the Accord

AUSTRALIA'S very own social contract, the ALP-ACTU Accord, has been "in place", as the politicians like to say, for three years now.

Sections of the Left have attacked it, and rightly so. Yet little in the way of a substantial critique has appeared. A new pamphlet by Socialist Action members Tom O'Lincoln, Liz Ross and Graham Willett, entitled *Labor's Accord: Why It's a Fraud*, rectifies this omission.

Labor's Accord first examines similar accords in Britain, Sweden and Austria. The authors note dryly that for British workers, the Social Contract of the 1970s "was so disastrous that the ALP and ACTU in this country have studiously avoided the term 'social contract' in discussing their own strategy."



From *Labor's Accord: Why It's A Fraud*

The pamphlet argues that Hawke's Accord strategy found favour with Australian capital, after Malcolm Fraser failed to contain wages during the 1980-81 "resources boom". The results are scrutinized in detail.

For employers, the Accord has been a windfall:

"According to budget estimates for 1985-86, corporate profits would be \$11,000 million higher

than in 1982-83. At the same time the corporate sector's tax liability has increased only \$150 million . . ."

Conversely, it has been a disaster for workers. In just two years, real wages declined 11.45 per cent. Yet annual spending on government services — has only risen \$600 per household.

"The Accord is supposed to benefit lower-paid workers," the authors point out. They then detail how, for example, it was used to reject the principle of comparable worth, which would have raised women's earnings from their current average of 67% of males.

Labor's Accord: Why It's A Fraud argues an alternative way forward. First, it dispels the bogey of privatisation and John Howard, currently being touted by Accord supporters. It shows, too, that the Accord's other claimed benefit, the access of union officials to a limited role in economic planning, is in fact a drawback on the labour movement.

Certainly, unions should intervene in politics, the authors argue. But the model should be the rank-and-file struggle of the NSW BLF of the early 1970s, with its green bans and demands for workers' control, not the bureaucratic positions that ACTU officials now take.

Certainly too, the wages of the lower-paid must be raised. But the model should be what John Hallpinney, in his more militant days, called the "ratchet effect" — where strongly placed workers make break-throughs that others can follow.

To win the labour movement back to such positions, the authors recognise, will not be easy:

"We have to begin with the struggles which are actually occurring today. That means active solidarity with the BLF in their fight against deregulation. It means supporting women who oppose child care cuts and public servants who are fighting for more staffing."

Labor's Accord: Why It's A Fraud is a small step towards reviving the socialist vision in the labour movement. Buy it, read it, and use its arguments.

— Alyc Kohn
• *Labor's Accord: Why It's A Fraud* is available from Socialist Action branches for \$2 (inc postage).



Escape inside jail: Molina tells his "Spider Woman" fantasy

FILM 

Big kiss for Spider Woman

KISS OF THE Spider Woman is set to become the left's favourite film of the year, and deservedly so.

Films that show gays as anything other than desperately sad or hopelessly frivolous are pretty rare. Films that show revolutionaries as other than bomb-throwing crazies are rarer still.

Kiss of the Spider Woman breaks with both of these stereotypes, wonderfully. The story is fairly simple. Two men find themselves sharing a cell in a South American prison.

One, Valentin Arregui, is a stern and committed revolutionary who has been tortured once and expects to be again.

The other, Luis Molina, is a trizzy queen whose flashy clothes and pots of make-up are strewn carelessly around the bleak cell. He is in prison for "corrupting a minor".

To pass the time, Molina tells the story of an appallingly trashy melodramatic film from the forties, acting out the heroine's role as best he can.

Molina is afflicted by the suspicious of Arregui's politics. He wants only to hide from the horrors of the world, and of the cell especially. That is what his films are for.

Arregui, on the other hand,

believes that his commitment to "the cause" means that he must subordinate all else to it, and absurd lengths. At one point, he brusquely refuses to share Molina's precious avocado for fear that he will be spoiled, softened. He fights a growing fondness for Molina for the same reason.

For all their differences we see that they are alike in one thing. They seek to escape from the world, to protect themselves from it.

They share, too, the same guilty secret. They cannot bring themselves to close off entirely. It is the slow revelation of this fact that saves *Kiss of the Spider Woman* from being just another parody of gays and revolutionaries.

We discover that beneath Molina's frivolous campiness lies a great strength. When Arregui is struck down by food poisoning, he is dispirited by his own body's collapse. It is Molina who goes calmly about cleaning up the shit.

When the police decide to use the prison ground to decide if Molina is to betray Arregui, it is Molina who wins out. He gets food, cigarettes, even his freedom in return for nothing.

If Arregui, and the audience, are surprised by Molina's strength, it is only because they have not thought about what it takes to be openly gay, and "effeminately" gay at that. Arregui's secret is his capacity for love. Outside the prison his lover is a well-to-do, apolitical woman. Within the prison he comes to love (if not to "be in love with") Molina.

His occasional cruelty to Molina is produced by a misplanned introduction. He believes that Molina's campiness is a capitulation to, even a collaboration with, his own oppression, a sign of weakness and humiliation. No revolutionary could watch that without anger.

By the end of the film both men have revealed themselves, and expanded themselves in the process.

This is the political point of the film. Revolutionaries, if they are to contribute anything useful to "the cause", must be open to the world, prepared to grapple with it as it is, to learn as well as to teach.

That is a lesson we all need to be reminded of from time to time.

— Graham Willett

Palm Sunday: Why it failed

ANOTHER Palm Sunday has come and gone. And frankly, I thought that the peace marches were a failure.

Sure, the numbers were still big — 120,000 in Sydney, 100,000 in Melbourne, 25,000 in Perth and so on. But they were noticeably down on last year. And politically, the marches were as wishy-washy as ever, as groups like the Turkish workers, the South Americans, Young PND and ourselves discovered when we tried to get chants going.

For four years now, peace activists have accepted the passive "Sunday stroll through the city" atmosphere, fearing that a more militant and pointed march would deter thousands from coming.

In Melbourne, for example, People for Nuclear Disarmament (PND) leaders reiterated a PND Council decision to march on the Army's Victoria Barracks, instead taking the march 300 yards away into the Domain opposite. Earlier, two little kids had delivered a peace dialogue so embarrassingly cutesy it could have been lifted from *Different Strokes*.

Now this "lowest common denominator" policy is bearing its bitter fruit. The falling turn-out means one thing: people are questioning the point of marching at all. A friend of mine, no flaming revolutionary, expressed the frustration of many when she said, "Every year we just march, knowing we'll be doing the same next year."

The passivity of the movement no longer attracts people — if indeed it ever did — but now is positively losing them.

The ineffectuality of the marches was reflected in the

Right's increasing confidence. Last year, the only right-wingers to appear were a handful in Melbourne, who harangued the crowd with a loudspeaker. They were careful to keep the Yarra River between themselves and the march, however.

This year the Right was more cocky. In Canberra and Melbourne, pro-ANZUS groups demonstrated alongside the march. Worse, in Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne, Liberals armed with "Peace through Security" slogans actually took part. In Perth, they even tried to lead the march, and buzzed it with a chartered plane trailing a "Peace through Security" banner.

THAT organisers did not exclude the Liberals from the marches was a disgrace. They disagree with all three of the peace movement's demands, of no bases, no warships, and no uranium. Their presence only further diluted the marches' political thrust.

But then, as one cynic noted, how could they exclude the Libs, when top leaders of the ALP, which also rejects the peace movement's demands, figured prominently at the rallies?

Neville Wran again led the Sydney march, and John Cain spoke in Melbourne. Cain's appearance, I believe, was kept under wraps by PND heavies to avoid a brawl with their own activists.

The argument used to be that the movement's strength obliged Wran and Cain to appear. Yet the movements' "strength" has had little real impact on Labor.

Clearly, now, Cain and Wran's prominent role reflects a weakness, not a strength: the



Patrick White: snubbed Wran

continuing illusions in Labor of the movement's leadership.

Fortunately, this time the Labor leaders came under challenge.

In Sydney, Patrick White refused to march in the front row with Wran. Thirty Aborigines then took over the head of the demonstration, marching in front of Wran to protest at Labor's sell-out on land rights.

In Melbourne a section of the crowd noisily jeered Cain and ACTU secretary Bill Kelly during their speeches. When Cain admonished his hecklers that "Courtesy costs you nothing", one wag replied, "Neither does your anti-nuclear policy."

DISCONTENT brimmed over in Melbourne in another way, too. One hundred anarchists and punks broke away from the march, and tried to tear down the pro-ANZUS group's banners.

The common objection to this action was that such "violence" was out of place at a peace march. To my mind, this is misguided. The dispersing of a bunch of flag-waving, pro-imperialist stooges would have been a welcome show of militancy from a hitherto insipid movement.

The real problem was that the anarchists substituted themselves for the movement. They did not try to win any broad section of the march to a militant attitude against the right-wingers, for example by starting a mass chant below the plaza where the Right was assembled. Instead, they rushed ahead to stage their own adventurist confrontation, resulting in four pointless arrests.

But if Palm Sunday epitomised



with Alec Kahn

the malaise in the peace movement, its leadership clearly has no idea what to do about it.

Dr Helen Caldwell, erratic at the best of times, had the most bizarre prescription. Having told the Melbourne rally that a vote of at least 20 percent for the anti-nuclear parties was essential at the next election, she then advised everyone to "join the ALP, the Liberals, and the DLP" to stack the branches.

The peace movement's leadership has no intention of arresting its rightward drift. "Ambassador for disarmament" Richard Butler says that peace group leaders have told him they will seek closer co-operation with the Government in future.

WHAT CAN be done to lift future Palm Sundays, and the peace movement in general, out of their passivity?

This seems to me a task, and a rare opportunity, for the revolutionary left. A mass audience now exists on the disarmament issue. But the movement lacks a left pole, a revolutionary current putting forward militant ideas and proposals for action.

For example, a militant left contingent is now a must at future Palm Sundays, to lift at least one section of the march from the morass into which it has sunk. The politics of struggle for disarmament need to be delineated from the general sappy pacifism and from the capitalist politics of the ALP, the Liberals and the Democrats.

In between Palm Sundays, there is also a role to be played. Hiroshima Day and the October 19 Pine Gap mobilisation will be equally insipid — if PND organisers them at all — unless militant groups and individuals on the left take a hand.

In the past, the left has formed caucuses operating largely inside the structures of PND. Needed now is a force that goes beyond that limited confine, to ensure that, no matter what the socialist politics of direct action have an impact.

Operating separately, no group or individual on the militant left has any real prospect of influencing the peace marches or the peace movement. Operating together, we might just have a chance.

SOCIALIST ACTION



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HOW LOW CAN LABOR SINK?

- The fall-out from Chernobyl
- Libya: Why Reagan did it
- Racist police outrages



Hypocrisy on parade: Neville Wran leads Sydney's peace march

CAT'S EYE

ARMS CONTROL

Ronnie's line shot down

FOR A long time now, Ronald Reagan has refused to enter arms control agreements with Russia, claiming that the USSR leads the US in the arms race and that it cheats on arms control.

Three revelations from his own administration last month have shredded these excuses.

Testimony before congressional committees showed that the CIA and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) agree that Russian arms have been constant for ten years, and may even decline in future.

Donald Hicks, an under-secretary of defence, revealed that the US led Russia in all fourteen of the key areas of military technology.

And the CIA revised its methods for calculating Russian nuclear tests, and concluded that the USSR may not have cheated on any of them as it had originally claimed.

Will any of this lead the old Cold Warrior to moderate his behaviour? Is the Pope a member of the BLF?

CPI RISE

Judges stall, wages fall

The Arbitration Commission had better watch itself. Even its friends are starting to talk.

The long drawn-out April wage case has prompted the conservative *Sydney Morning Herald's* economics editor to come out with a remarkably candid observation.

Writes Ross Gittins, "The main employer group, the Confederation of Australian Industry, seems deliberately to have been introducing reams of not-very-relevant evidence on the productivity question. And the commission is adopting a fairly leisurely approach — although, contrary to popular impression, adjournments prompted by industrial disputes have, in practice, set the timetable back by literally 15 minutes."

Gittins continues, "The CAI long has taken the attitude that if it can't get a pay rise reduced, the next best thing is to get it delayed as long as possible. And the commission obliges."

The upshot, according to Gittins, is a massive hand-out to employers. He calculates that



Ronald Reagan and admirer, excused exposed

the month-long delay to last October's case caused by the debate over discounting had the same impact as a 0.4 per cent discount. So the employers got their discount anyhow, just by stalling.

This time, calculates Gittins, the employers will save another \$450 million if they can stall the decision till early June. Put another way, that's about \$70 out of every worker's pocket.

When even conservative commentators raise their eyebrows at this daylight robbery, it's time the ACTU got a good hard kick in its well-padded behind for accepting it.

FRENCH TESTS

Is Muroroa sinking?

THE FRENCH government won't admit it, but Muroroa Atoll may be sinking.

Muroroa has been the site of French nuclear testing for the last twenty years. According to Bengt Danielsson, an anthropologist who has worked in Polynesia for 35 years and has just written a book on the history of the French tests, it is so full of holes that French scientists and military personnel refer to it as "le Swiss cheese".

Of course, the French government is saying nothing. The consulate in Canberra did allow *Cat's Eye* to speak to its

less-than-helpful press attaché.

He politely told us that as he'd heard nothing from Paris, it could not be true. He then, just as politely, hung up.

When *Cat's Eye* rang back and told him our source, the attaché said he knew all about Bengt Danielsson, and that he was a well known opponent of nuclear testing who would say anything to get the French out of Polynesia.

And how did Bengt know about the sinking atoll?

After the last series of tests that finished last October, the French began moving their bombing and mining equipment to the atoll of Fangataua, some forty kilometres south of Muroroa.

They know something we don't?

REBEL TOUR

Cricket picket case begins

FIVE anti-apartheid demonstrators, including Socialist Action member Sue Donnelly, who were arrested in Perth last October for protesting against rebel cricketers Kim Hughes and Terry Alderman, have appeared in court.

The police pressed charges of trespass at Fremantle's Stevens Reserve, despite Fremantle Council's request that the case be dropped. Fremantle Council now has an anti-apartheid policy, and has made it clear that council employees will not volunteer to appear as police witnesses.

The police were undeterred that their main witness, a council employee who supposedly warned the demonstrators to leave the reserve, was away on leave. They simply changed the charge from being warned by the Council Parks Manager to being warned by a policeman.

Cross examination of police revealed that not only were Fremantle and Palmyra police and plain clothes cops present at the protest, but also the Burke

government's anti-riot Tactical Response Unit. All for a protest by thirty people!

As one defendant said, "This is reminiscent of my days in South Africa."

The case resumes on June 6.

PALESTINIANS

Find refutes Zionist myth

AN ISRAELI historian has shattered the traditional Zionist explanation for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem.

Dr Benny Morris has uncovered a secret Israeli army intelligence report, dated June 30, 1948. The report estimates that 70 per cent of the first wave of the Arab exodus in 1947-48 resulted from Zionist military action.

Some four hundred thousand Palestinians fled the country between the UN partition in late 1947 and June 1, 1948. The official Israeli explanation has always been that Arab radio broadcasts told them to leave to clear the way for an invasion. This explanation has been used for almost four decades to blame the Arab states and the Palestinians themselves for the refugee problem.

The intelligence report, uncovered by Morris in a private archive, specifically makes the point that the mass exodus was against the wishes of Palestinian leaders and the neighbouring Arab states. The document states that 15 per cent of the first wave of Arab refugees was caused by Zionist terror groups like the Irgun (responsible for the massacre of 250 villagers at Deir Yassin) and the Stern Gang. Military actions by the Hagana, the official Zionist army which became the Israeli defence force, caused 55 per cent of the refugee flight.

The switchboard of Israel's state-run TV channel was jammed with complaints when Dr Morris appeared on a talk show to describe his discovery.



Arab refugees in 1948: document contradicts Zionist claims

ENVIRONMENT

Chernobyl: The political fall-out is worldwide

FOR YEARS the nuclear industry has told us that nuclear power is safe. The Chernobyl meltdown has blown that myth skyhigh, and has tragically vindicated the anti-nuclear movement in its campaign against nuclear power.

Pro-nuclear lobbyists have long argued that the day-to-day operations of the nuclear power industry are far safer than alternatives such as coal-mining.

The anti-nuclear movement has never particularly argued this point very hard, although the recent walk-out at Australia's Ranger mine over safety suggests that it is of the anti-nuclear movement has been that it takes just one error in a nuclear power plant to produce a disaster of un-speakable magnitude.

The accident at Chernobyl has borne out that fear in horrendous fashion. A cloud of radioactive gas was produced which then spread across much of Europe. As a result, several cancer-causing agents have now entered the food chain.

Iodine-131 will cause thyroid cancers, strontium-90 will cause bone cancers, and caesium-137, which has a half-life of 137 years and will therefore remain potent for three centuries, will cause cancer in body tissues. These cancers may take years to develop.

Just how many people died in the accident is unclear, although the Russian figure of only two must be highly suspect. After all, hundreds died in the Urals in 1958 when buried nuclear waste exploded, and the Kremlin never even acknowledged the disaster.



After the cover-up: Polish children get iodine



To protect their own nuclear industry, apologists in the West have been quick to point out that Chernobyl is different to plants in the West. Scientists say that "our" plants are quite safe, and that a meltdown is "almost impossible." Yet this is precisely what Russian scientists said about their plants.

An article in the *US edition of Soviet Life* said:

"Even if the mercurial happened, the automatic control and safety systems would shut down the reactor in a matter of minutes."

In the same article, the Ukrainian Minister of Power said that precautions at Russian power plants were so strict that "the odds of a meltdown are one in 10,000 years." Three months later, Chernobyl exploded.

CERTAINLY, Western plants appear to use a safer form of nuclear technology. But it is not completely foolproof, and that is the whole point.

A recent report by the US government's General Accounting Office revealed that there had been 151 "significant nuclear safety incidents" in fourteen countries between 1974 and 1984. Most of them were kept secret.

There have been some well documented accidents. In 1957, fire destroyed the reactor core at Britain's Windscale plant. Authorities have since claimed that no-one died in the accident. But a recent report estimated that the accident caused at least 33 subsequent cancer deaths.

In 1979, radioactive gas leaked into the atmosphere after a partial meltdown at the Three Mile Island plant in the US. Authorities evacuated 144,000 people, and the damaged reactor

Discarding milk in Poland; Russians get the bad news



is still sealed off and radioactive.

Again, because no-one died on the spot, pro-nuclear apologists have claimed that Three Mile Island killed no-one. But unofficial estimates at the time were that the escaped radioactivity would cause at least a thousand deaths over subsequent years.

There will be more accidents. A survey commissioned by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission showed that we could expect a major nuclear accident every 600 reactor years. Since there are around 350 reactors operating worldwide, this means there could be a major accident every 20 months or so.

Not in the slowdown in the building of reactors any great comfort. As existing reactors get older, chances of an accident through plant failure increase.

CHERNOBYL has exploded the myth that Russian society is somehow superior to the West.

The criminal disregard that the Kremlin showed for the lives of its own and Western workers by seeking to hush up the disaster indicates that Russia is in no way a "workers' state" or "on the road to socialism."

(The US has no right to be pious over the cover-up, however. During the Three Mile Island near-meltdown, workers

in surrounding areas were ordered to turn up at such essential industries as Hershey's Chocolate Bars while scientists battled to prevent a total disaster, so that the nuclear industry could avoid the embarrassment of a complete evacuation of the region.)

While most countries have slowed the development of nuclear reactors, Russia has pushed ahead. At present it gets only 11 per cent of its electricity from nuclear power. The plan before Chernobyl was to double that by 1990.

Military competition with the West forces Russia to industrialize. This means concentration on heavy industries like steel and armaments, which demand huge amounts of electricity. Yet Russia uses its vast fossil fuel resources inefficiently. In addition, most of its coal and oil is in the east and north, while the population and industry is largely west of the Urals. These factors make nuclear energy a convenient option for Russia's bureaucratic elite — and a deadly one for its workers.

AUSTRALIA plays its role in the world nuclear industry, by feeding uranium to the so-called "safe" reactors.

Only in the late seventies did this role come under challenge, when unionists stopped the transport of uranium. Chernobyl underlines the need for that sort of action to be revived today.

Is there any alternative to nuclear power? Even under capitalism, there are a number. Massive resources of coal and oil still remain.

But the long-term solution must be to utilize renewable energy sources like solar power, wind power and tidal power. Even rubbish can be used as fuel, under recently developed techniques. There is also methane gas and geothermal energy. The possibilities are numerous.

But none of these offer quick or sure profits. Most would require an enormous initial investment. A socialist economy, planned to meet human needs, could easily undertake the project, but no capitalist corporation or state will.

Therein lies the lesson of Chernobyl. Production for human need, and not for competition or profit, is essential if we are to avoid poisoning the only earth we have.

— John Passant

LAW'N'ORDER

RACISM in the police force has always been rife in Australia. In case anyone doubted it, recent events in Queensland have underlined the point.

First, there is the curious question of who killed Barbara Yarric, a young Aboriginal woman.

Barbara Yarric died in a Brisbane hospital in mid-April, after being in a coma for over two weeks. She never recovered consciousness after being taken to the hospital from the City Watchhouse, where she had spent a night.

The police say that she was found lying on a footpath in Fortitude Valley. They say they presumed she was drunk and took her to the Watchhouse.

Barbara had been bashed. What happened to her that night at the Watchhouse is anyone's guess.

Paddy Jerome, a black welfare worker, says of Barbara, "She did drink a bit, but was apparently no boozier. It seems she just lay unconscious on the floor of the Watchhouse all night."

Dozens of other claims of police harassment, bashings and intimidation in Queensland every week give one little confidence in the safety of young black women in the Watchhouse. Cell walls there are scrawled with testimonies of rape, signed by black women.

In another recent case, Ipswich police played Russian roulette with a 15-year-old Aboriginal youth, Jamie Melville.

Melville, who was picked up but not charged with any offence, had a gun placed at his head, in his mouth, and at his groin, and the trigger pulled each time by police.

The gun eventually discharged when Jamie's legs, leaving powder burns. The police "defend" this terrorizing of an innocent youth by claiming that it was a blank cartridge. We have heard otherwise.

The only recourse in such cases is to complain to the



Vernon Timms: racist outburst



New outrages by Qld police against blacks

Police. A worker in black services in Brisbane comments, "The complaint is just swept under the carpet and left there to rot."

THEN there was the outburst by Vernon Timms, Senior Sergeant Timms is one of "Queensland's finest", running the police station at Cairns. At least, he did, until he shared his thoughts with *People* magazine last month.

Timms referred to Aboriginals as "coons", "boongs" and "black bastards". He attributed 90 percent of the robberies and assaults in Cairns to them.

What upset him even more was that "they all plead not guilty — another burden on the taxpayer."

Timms' solution was cutting off welfare — and apartheid. "I'd like to build a fence around this whole place and say 'Right, you bastards! Step through that fence and you're dead!'"

The outcry from black rights supporters, including a demonstration in Cairns, led to Timms being transferred (though not sacked). His racist attitudes have plenty of sympathy inside the Queensland police force, however.

The prisoner in question is now in hospital after a heart attack, thought to have been contributed to by this style of racial harassment in prison.

In Western Australia, the inquiry into the death of part-Maori black rights activist Tony King has concluded. King died of asphyxiation after a headlock applied during his arrest.

During the inquest, at least three officers including the senior policeman present at the scene admitted that they were aware that King had stopped breathing, and that they could not find a pulse. Yet none applied mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or external heart massage.

"I suppose I thought he was okay at the time," testified Det-Sgt Dennis Collinson, the senior officer present.

The inquest, which commenced an extraordinary five months after King's death, was overshadowed by unsubstantiated police claims that King was the "Geraldton rapist".

ONE OF the frankest analyses of why police behave like this came from a policeman himself last year.

Inspector Bob Haldane, a Victorian policeman since 1968 who commenced a history of the police force in 1982, bluntly admitted to a police-Aboriginal seminar what socialists have argued about the cops for a long time:

"The sort of treatment that the police have meted out to Aboriginals in Victoria is the same sort of treatment that they have meted out to poor people, to working class people, to disorganised nation that has flourished against unionists and working men."

"If one looks at the history of policing in Victoria, police have been very quick to side with capital against labour... So when we talk about the way the police have dealt with Aboriginal people, although it's no consolation to Aboriginal people, in many respects it's the same as we have treated the poorer and the disadvantaged from white society within this state."

Haldane's solutions to police racism are purely liberal ones — more black cops, more police-Aboriginal liaison and the like.

Yet as he himself admits, the problem arises directly out of the police force's class attitudes and class role.

Until we get rid of class society, police thought against blacks and white people will have to be at the bottom of society will continue.

And getting rid of class society will mean getting rid of the police themselves.

Carole Ferrer

INTERNATIONAL

Tripoli: Reagan rolls back the "Vietnam syndrome"

DID RONALD Reagan really believe that bombing Libya would help end terrorism in the world?

Hardly. Reagan's real motives were part of a well-orchestrated strategy, which may well make him the most successful president the US ruling class has had since Kennedy.

Clearly, the bombing of Tripoli was not about stopping terrorism. If anything, it could only have had the opposite effect, since terrorism was Libya's one viable military response.

In fact, Gaddafi does not really use all that much terror. He does murder domestic political opponents at home and overseas, but that is a little different. The only terrorist acts blamed on Libya recently were the Rome and Vienna airport massacres — which the European governments did not believe Libya supported — and the Berlin disco bombing.

The disco bombing may have been done in retaliation for the American show of force in the Gulf of Sidra. But the US has shown no hard evidence, and the



Italy: anger at the raid



West Germany: big protests

military defeat by Hanoi. The unease that defeat caused amongst America's allies, and the storm of protest the war had raised at home, led Reagan's predecessor Jimmy Carter to take Washington on a new foreign policy tack.

Carter set out to co-opt various forces for change in the Third World, with diplomacy and his "human rights campaign". One advisor said, "Change is inevitable. The real issue is not how to preserve stability in the face of revolution, but how to create stability out of revolution."

Carter had some successes. Egypt moved into the Western camp, and China was consolidated there. But the US had to watch the Portuguese colonies in Africa fall to guerrilla forces and move into Russia's orbit. In 1979, Somoza fell in Nicaragua, the Shah fell in Iran, and Russia invaded Afghanistan, while the US stood by helplessly.

Ronald Reagan swept Carter from office in 1980, supported by the New Right, the Pentagon and the CIA, with a clear program of "making America proud again".

But if America's rulers had shaken off the Vietnam syndrome, the American people had not. In 1981, the mere suggestion of one-day using military force in El Salvador was howled down. Since then, Reagan has moved more cautiously.

In 1981, an advisor to the Defence Secretary identified the factors needed to motivate the American people to support a war. These were righteous anger (especially over US deaths), a heroic ally to defend, and a low death count amongst US troops and enemy civilians. If a quick victory was not won, the US should withdraw.

Reagan has adopted substantially this approach in Grenada, in Beirut and now in Libya. So it was that Colonel Gaddafi, a rather ordinary North African dictator, became in Reagan's eyes a crazed killer of innocent civilians.

Carefully prepared US provocations in the Gulf of Sidra in 1981 and in April this year became the defence of the freedom of the seas. When Gaddafi tried to approach the US through Saudi Arabia a week before the Tripoli raid to discuss their differences, he was



Victims in the morgue after the Tripoli raid

refused. Reagan's tactics succeeded in uniting 70% of Americans behind him in a blatant act of war. They inclined the Congress closer to approving his aid package for the "contras" in Central America. And they were another show of belligerence by an administration that is convinced that, in the words of one advisor, "The Russians respect force".

The one redeeming feature of the whole affair was the immediate and angry response in the streets in Europe. Thousands marched in West Berlin, London and Rome. Most inspiring of all, perhaps, were the campus protests that erupted in military-run Chile.

Ronald Reagan may be turning the tide in the US, but he is still far from being able to hold together the rest of the Western alliance behind his military adventures.

— Graham Willett

LIBYA



Washington's new bogey

COLONEL Muammar el-Gaddafi has become Washington's bogeyman of the eighties, even more reviled than the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Gaddafi came to power when he led a group of young army officers who overthrew the British-installed feudal monarchy of King Idris in a bloodless coup in 1969.

Until 1959, Libya was one of the poorest countries on earth. Its main industry was salvaging scrap metal from World War II wrecks.

Then oil was discovered. The



Gaddafi supporter: a tightly run regime

FORMER President Richard Nixon addressed a convention in America last month. Asked what was the greatest lesson from Watergate, Nixon replied, "Just destroy all the tapes."

You can't teach an old Dick new tricks, it seems. Even more revealing was the audience response to Tricki Dick's answer. Half the convention rose to give his reply a standing ovation.

You'll be heartened to learn that those clappers of cover-up were none other than the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Apparently it's all Watergate under the bridge now.

A SELL-OUT sells up... former Water-side Workers union boss Charles Fitzgibbon has just sold his union medals.

Fitzgibbon was honoured with fifty medals and badges during his thirty years as a union leader. He has just auctioned the lot for \$400, the value he presumably places on his union career.

These days, Fitzgibbon is one of the bosses — a director of the Australian National



Nixon: still tricky

Line. At eight dollars a medal, we suspect his collection was overpriced.

ABRISBANE woman recently turned sixty and retired after 25 years as cleaner at Arnott's biscuit factory.

At her farewell party a

YOUR taxes at work under Labor:

- The world's only Professor of Entrepreneurship, Dr Rosabeth Kantor of Harvard University, gave a seminar in Canberra last month. True to her teachings, this charlatan claims to earn \$30,000 a day on the lecture circuit. Of the fifty-nine Canberra bigwigs who paid \$225 each to hear her entrepreneurial advice, thirty-nine were public service fat cats there at taxpayers' expense.
- During the current carve-up of the BLF in Victoria, over 25 state police watched one BLF member on a token picket of the Footscray Plaza job for over two weeks.
- The centrepiece of the Museum of Australia, being built in Canberra for the bicentenary, is to be... the Bond Corporation's Australia II. Evidently Bob Hawke regards this as the pinnacle of 200 years of white settlement of these fair shores.

fewer worker commented that although she turned sixty with the Queen, she did not look nearly so youthful. The woman replied, "Well, if the Queen cleaned the floors at this factory every day for 25 years, she wouldn't look too good either."

WITH all the fawning over the Queen's sixtieth birthday, we were interested to note that her wealth is now estimated at \$5 billion. We say "estimated" because she has always

refused to divulge, even to parliamentary committees on the subject of royal incomes, how much she owns.

The Queen pays no tax on her estates or on the income derived from her fortune. She is the largest land-owner in Manhattan, has a stamp collection that alone is worth \$20 million, and still gets \$8 million a year from the taxpayers to pay her servants.

We're glad to learn, however, that the Queen collects jewelled Easter eggs by the French jeweller Faberges. Last monarch to do so was the Tsar of Russia, until his yolk got scrambled in the 1917 revolution.

SPEAKING of the royals... students at Melbourne's Monash University called on the university last month to confer an honorary degree on Winnie Mandela in recognition of her years of struggle against apartheid.



CHEAP SHOTS

The university has other plans. It intends to give an honorary doctorate of laws to Prince Philip, whose main claim to fame is to be married to the world's richest woman.

The university is so fearful of student reaction that it is holding the ceremony in the middle of term holidays.

CHAMPIONS of free speech department.

The greatest thing that could happen to the state and nation is when we get rid of the media. Then we would live in peace and tranquillity and no-one would know anything. I think if we could put you (the media) out of existence that could be the best thing to happen to anything.

General Suharto? PW Botha? Adolf Hitler? No, it was Queensland's very own John Bjelke-Peterson.

up the structure, with himself as leader. He used it to launch production campaigns, defeat his opponents and crush dissent.

Revolutionary committees are his latest formation. They are handpicked by Gaddafi's office, usually from the government's ideological training seminars. The fifty founding members are now the permanent leadership, with thousands playing a secondary role.

The committees have no formal role, but are the real authority in Libya, present in schools and workplaces, the army and the cities. They are directly responsible to Gaddafi, who convenes meetings of individual leaders to implement his policies.

The committees and the state bureaucracy are Libya's ruling

class. They run a state capitalist economy; workers have not taken over Libyan capital collectively, even in nominal terms.

As oil prices plummet, Gaddafi's grip on power may well be shaken, and Libya's workers may emerge as a force in their own right.

In the meantime, Libya's less a threat to the West than an annoyance. Gaddafi's attempts to steer an independent course (through leading closer to closer to Russia) have led him to support a number of anti-imperialist causes for his own ends.

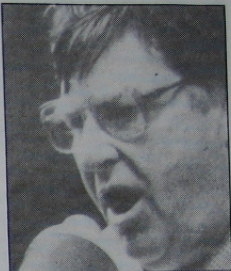
That does not make him a madman, but it does make him a menace to Western interests in a volatile Arab world.

Jeff Goldfarb

COVER STORY

The BLF fights for its life

Norm Gallagher addresses BLs



DESPITE a brutal pounding from the employers and the government, the Builders Labourers Federation still lives and fights. Contrary to the boastful assertions of Victorian Industrial Relations Minister Steve Crabb, the battle is by no means "all over but the shouting".

The assault on the union began with a nasty trick by Bob Hawke. After making much ado about holding an Arbitration Commission hearing to establish the legitimacy of deregistration, the Labor government then rushed through special legislation to keep the BLF from challenging the Commission's findings in the High Court. This caught the union by surprise.

Large police contingents then moved onto sites to help employers and heavies from rival unions to intimidate rank and file workers. In some cases, labourers were literally surrounded and forced to sign up with the Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU). So blatant were the methods that even the bosses' press was forced to comment. The *Financial Review* admitted that many labourers "were heavily leaned on" to join other unions, while the *Melbourne Age* referred to BWIU "organisers", putting the word in quotation marks.

In Melbourne, the union-busters struck first at the Hyatt hotel site, with heavy police backing. It was no accident that they picked this a Grollo job, for Bruno Grollo had long been friendly with Gallagher. The sight of massive defections on a Grollo site was calculated to sap the confidence of union militants.

The next major battle was at the huge Jack Chia site in South Yarra, where

labourers were locked out for refusing to abandon their union. Initially the BLF effort was successful, with sizeable pickets. However, on the weekend, the cops attacked the picket and arrested three men. When the union failed to mount a sizeable counter-mobilisation the following Monday, labourers began to drift back to work and sign up with the BWIU.

Meanwhile in Canberra, the Parliament House site also went over to the BWIU and the BLF found itself trying to hold the line at Civic Centre sites.

In Sydney, when hundreds of scaffolders marched to join a picket at the Grosvenor Place site, they were laid into brutally by police. Many appeared at a subsequent mass meeting bandaged and out of crutches.

THE government's strategy appeared to be to concentrate initially on large city centre sites, to be followed by the suburbs, and the country last. A week after deregistration, the first stage seemed to be working. Gloating politicians claimed thousands of labourers had defected, and federal BWIU secretary Stan Sharkey said "the Gallagher organisation is finished".

But in the second week, the situation began to stabilise. Labourers in their hundreds and thousands were signing statements declaring they had only left their unions under duress. In Canberra, transport workers were honouring BLF picket lines. Many building sites in Melbourne and Sydney which had not yet been the scene of any battles remained strangely quiet.

Norm Gallagher called on his members to sign themselves over into the new unions if

they faced overwhelming intimidation, but to remain BLs in practice and to reorganise on the job. As we went to press, it appeared that the union was nothing up some successes. At some places in Melbourne at least, BLF organisers were able to enter sites which were formally signed over to the BWIU.

But there had been a number of victimisations, men who had been sacked without being given the opportunity to sign over. These had to be defended, and they were. On two Melbourne Costain sites, in Market and William Streets, daring unionists occupied cranes. They demanded that victimised militants get their jobs back. As flags fluttered bravely from the cranes and the occupiers featured on TV news programs, the morale of BLF members revived.

At the Market Street site, management openly negotiated with BLF organiser John Cummins — representative of a union they claimed no longer existed!

IN THE run-up to the battle and in its early stages, solidarity began to build. Over Easter, a debate attended by 800 people at the Sydney Broad Left Conference showed clearly that the majority of the audience supported the union.

Over the Anzac Day week-end, at Left Consultation in Melbourne resolved to launch a solidarity organisation to defend this and other unions under attack. In Sydney over the same week-end, the national homosexual conference carried resolutions supporting the Builders Labourers. Activist Ian Jordan pointed out that the BLs were suffering from "socially unacceptable behaviour" and that gays should understand this experience all too well.

At a Victorian Communist Party function held at Camp Eureka, CPers roared a BWIU official who attempted to defend deregistration.

There were also encouraging signs of solidarity on the job. When a concrete truck driver was sacked in Canberra for

(Continued page 8)



Labour's police attack BLF members at Grosvenor Place

FROM PAGE 5

Libya

national interest. Gaddafi saw a chance to take a lead in the Arab world by outflanking the more conservative regimes.

Gaddafi's nationalism had its unsavory side too. When Libya moved closer to the reactionary monarchy in Morocco, he withdrew support from the Polisario Front, which was fighting Morocco for independence for the Western Sahara. Last year, he expelled 30,000 Tunisian workers.

It is Gaddafi's backing for anti-imperialist forces that is the reason for Reagan's onslaught. That is why we support Libya against it. It does not mean we

support Gaddafi's politics, though.

For his revolution was carried out purely from above. Repeated attempts since to mobilise mass support have all failed.

In the cultural revolution of 1973, Gaddafi called for a cleansing of the administration, distribution of arms to the people, and formation of people's committees to take power. Students got the arms, two thousand people's committees formed, but the army kept a tight control over the whole show.

Direct democracy was the next buzz word, supposedly a third way between communism and capitalism, with no class politics and the whole population governing. But Gaddafi set

honouring the picket lines. Transport Workers Union members took industrial action and got him his job back. Plumbers refused to work out from his job back. Plumbers with police inside, and electricians blocked two jobs.

Some BWIU stewards joined BLF pickets or expressed personal support, and numbers of carpenters changed over to the Carpenters and Joiners union out of disgust with the BWIU leadership. On at least one site, BWIU rank and file threw their officials out when they arrived on the job. The BWIU organiser in the Latrobe Valley reportedly refused to go onto jobs to sign up labourers.

A meeting of 70 BWIU delegates in Brisbane voted to oppose deregistration of the BLF and to oppose their union poaching its members.

FUNDAMENTAL issues are at stake in this struggle. In recent times, union-bashing has been primarily a device of conservative governments. We have seen the smashing of the Queensland power workers, and attacks on the meatworkers' union at Mugginberri in the Northern Territory.

But now we are witnessing the attempted destruction of a militant union by Labor governments in the supposedly more progressive southern capitals.

In fact, it seems likely that only the Labor leaders together with their ACTU cronies could have attacked the BLF in this particular way. Bob Hawke and Simon Crean know the trade union movement well. John Cain and Neville Wran have the services of trade union officials, including fake "leftists" like Stan Sharkey and Tom MacDonal of the BWIU. Such "inside" knowledge is invaluable in a struggle of this sort.

As Liberal MLC W.R. Baxter told the Victorian upper house last year, the ALP is doing the dirty work for the conservative



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parties:

"I am pleased that this bill has been introduced by a Labor government because it enables a conservative government, when it comes to office in three years in Victoria, to hang its hat on this sort of legislation and get tough with unions ..."

"If a Labor government can do that, imagine what a conservative government would be able to do ..."

Meanwhile, federal Industrial Relations Minister Ralph Willis has indicated he regards the BLF deregistration as a trial run, and intends to use elements of this legislation in a new Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

Next to come under attack might be the Victorian Hospital Employees Federation, or the Meatworkers, unions with a militant reputation. But in addition the opportunistic leaders of the BWIU, as well as the Australian Workers Union and Federated Engine Drivers who are out to poach BLF members, might find themselves suffering similar attacks under the new laws which they think.

This struggle is laying bare the truth about the Labor Party. This party exists to keep workers tied to the capitalist system. The ACTU bureaucrats share this objective with them. The ALP/ACTU Accord is a device to increase our exploitation, and boost profits at our expense, and militant unions which try to fight back are seen as a threat to the government's whole strategy.

In the coming weeks, as builders' labourers defend their union, and an unholy alliance of bosses, ALP leaders, union bureaucrats and erstwhile "Communists" try to destroy them, the future of Australian trade unionism is going to take shape. Every member of the labour movement is going to be tested. Too much is at stake for anyone to sit on the fence and retain their credibility.

ANY GREAT class struggle is a school of tactics. The confrontation at Melbourne's South Yarra site is a case in point.

Initially, when management there demanded that labourers sign over to the BWIU and the Federated Engine Drivers, the BLFs were quite solid. On Wednesday 16 April they walked off the job and set up picket lines. On Friday the pickets looked quite strong, and were keeping away deliveries.

The first real test came on Saturday. Although management had advertised for scab labourers, they made no attempt to bring them on site. The BLFs were able to



Picketers and police at the key South Yarra site in Melbourne

turn one truck away, to the annoyance of the police.

The police took up positions in front of the main gate in Chapel Street and informed the picketers that another truck was coming. When it came, they forced a pathway for it through the picket line. Having done so, they turned on the labourers. Several unionists were monstered four-on-one, including one 16 year old. One man bled profusely from the face.

When organiser Mick Lewis re-monstrated with police, four of them sized him and dragged him into a van. Three picketers were arrested in all. These arrests proved a turning point.

It was absolutely essential for the union to mobilise for a mass picket on the following Monday. Yet when Monday morning arrived, there were fewer workers there than on Saturday.

With a massive police presence at the site, there was no way of stopping the entry of several trucks. The lack of a coherent strategy was obvious to everyone. As one militant said, "What's killing it is that Gallagher's not organised and we don't have the manpower."

By the following morning, given the lack of any alternative, all the remaining BLF loyalists felt compelled to sign up and go back on the job.

Mick Lewis called a meeting, at which the

militants aired many of their concerns. They felt a lack of leadership from the union, and a lack of information. Lewis himself conceded that in the "new ballgame" they faced, the union had not yet worked out its tactics.

The charges against the union

WITH SO many lies and distortions being spread in the media, a lot of genuine union militants and leftists have been asking about charges of thuggery and corruption aimed at the BLF. Here are answers to some of the charges.

- "The BLF engages in intimidation and violence." The union operates in a violent industry. But most of the "thuggery" the bosses talk about is actually just militant trade unionism, the use of effective industrial action to improve wages and conditions. It works; that's why they whinge.

- It is true there has been some violence in the past, but in recent times and in this campaign the union has told its members to avoid violence against other workers, even in the face of severe provocations. Those who are sincerely concerned about violence should have a good look at what the cops are doing.

- "Gallagher took bribes and his union is becoming like US unions." It has not been proved that Gallagher returned any favours for whatever help he got with his now-famous beach house. And more and more people are recognizing that his trial was politically motivated. But in any case the issue today is defence of a union with thousands of members, not the alleged sins of one person.

- BLF officials are among the lowest paid in the union movement, and Gallagher is on a labourer's wage. On the other hand the bureaucratic and massive union, which is the main problem with the US labour

movement.

- "Gallagher should not be defended because of the 1974 intervention in NSW." The 1974 intervention was wrong. But the issue today is defence of workers' labourers' right to the union of their choice, irrespective of the past sins of their officials.

- If you were for defending this right in NSW in 1974, you should be for defending it today also.

- "BLF officials are carrying out a personal vendetta, without consulting their membership." Gallagher and his supporters had a landslide victory in last year's election. The union has monthly meetings which all members can attend. This is not true of the BWIU or FEDFA. A beleaguered union like the current BLF has to rely on the support of its members, which cannot be avoided without taking their concerns into consideration. The BLF leaders have that support.

- "The BLF have isolated themselves by their actions." This is typical victim-throwing. The leaders of the rival unions blaming. The leaders with Hawke out of their own greed and empire-building.

- Several unions have made statements in support of the Builders Labourers', Inclusion of the Food Preservers and Hospital Employees Federation. Rank and file members have defended them, as building workers have defended them, with electricians and plumbers. Work-place meetings in abattoirs, the railways, the money, usually in large amounts. They know that defending the BLF today is the first step in defending all unions against government attack.

- The union in Melbourne will now seek to regroup and rebuild around three issues. One is restoring the jobs of victimized members.

(Continued page 10)

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to tinker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must be spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through ending capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world; the point is to change it. Marxist theory and propaganda are only meaningful if they are a guide to action. In the unions, social movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. If that's where you want to be, join us today!

EDITORIAL

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WEEKLY MEETINGS

Melbourne
Mondays, 7.30
Upstairs,
175 Sydney Rd,
Brunswick

Sydney

Mondays, 7.30
2nd floor,
Trade Union Club,
Foveaux St, City

Brisbane

Wednesdays, 7.30
Phone 371 7114
for location

BLF support activity

SOCIALIST Action is making BLF support a major activity nationally, visiting picket lines and attending mass meetings and demonstrations to show solidarity. Members are collecting money at work, and we arranged a speaker and collection at Monash University.

BLF representatives have spoken at our branch meetings, and we have a slide show entitled "The Battle of the Building Sites". If you would like to get involved, contact your local branch of Socialist Action.

Anti-Apartheid week

MONASH University's Anti-Apartheid Action Club held a week of action in early April. A 600-strong student meeting supported Socialist Action member John Passant's motion demanding that the university will break all ties with South Africa.

At the end of the week, 250 students rallied in the centre of Melbourne, where John also spoke, arguing that a black workers' revolution was needed to end Apartheid. Australians, especially unionists, had a role to play in isolating Pretoria. John said the Plumber's Union had shown the way by banning a South African supermarket company trying to set up in Melbourne.

Go to school on the ALP

WHAT attitude should socialists take to the ALP? We will discuss that at our Melbourne day school on Saturday 24 May at the YWCA (489 Elizabeth St., level 3, room 1).

- How Labor Governors (panel discussion, 10am).
- Should Socialists work in the ALP? (debate, 1.30pm).
- Reform or Revolution? (4pm).

We will conclude with a fundraising social for the BLF at 7.30pm at 61 DeCarle St., Brunswick. For more details of the day, call 380 2227.

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APARTHEID



ANC Women's League members lead a defiance march in 1952

Black sister, white madam

THERE is a small socialist sect that believes the revolution will be led by a black working class woman. Triply oppressed, she has more chains to lose than any one.

Silly and mechanical thinking it may be. Yet in South Africa, black working class women have been some of the most determined fighters against apartheid.

In South Africa, the common sisterhood, alluded to by many feminists, of oppressor and oppressed, of white "madam" and black "girl", has never had any basis in reality. Afrikaaner rule has worsened the position of black women within their own society. Women are the traditional cultivators, but agricultural colleges built for blacks exclude women. The "migrant" labour system leaves women alone in the homelands to maintain the reserve economy which supports the non-productive population and the reproduction of labour. They also bear the brunt of poverty — malnutrition, prostitution, venereal disease, illegitimacy and the abiding fear of resettlement.

White women, like white workers, are members of a privileged group. This privilege is based on the oppression of their black sisters, sometimes directly in the mistress-servant relationship. Often the only African woman a white woman knows is her servant, and with

over a million black women in service, a majority of white households have at least one servant.

The vote was won by white women in 1930 to the exclusion of black women. This strengthened white vote was used to disenfranchise the better-off African men of the Cape, who had qualified for the vote.

There has been one instance when black and white women have united in struggle.

After the Boer wars, the newly industrialised towns were flooded with poor whites. Single white women's wages were slightly higher than the starvation rates of the blacks. In the garment industry, these women came to trade union consciousness under conditions of extreme exploitation.

When African and Coloured women entered the industry in 1936, the Garment Workers Union fought for their unionisation. As black women were not yet subject to the pass laws, they could legally join the union. For once, being politically disregarded was to the women's advantage. Unfortunately, Nationalist Party agitation in the GWU prompted the formation of a parallel union for "coloured" workers, the National Union of Clothing Workers. However an important moment of solidarity had occurred. Today, 95% of workers in the clothing industry are unionised.

Black women's organisations have existed in various forms since the 1913 campaign against pass laws and the establishment of the African National Congress Women's League in 1918. Black women were at the forefront of the struggle during the 1940s food crisis, through the Food Committees. These committees grew out of the food queues and successfully protested against the government food vans, but did not succeed in forcing rationing.

The Federation of South African Women started in 1955 with a meeting of a wide cross section of women and organisations. The participants were mostly black women with some background in trade unions. Its aims were to participate in struggles for the removal of class and race exploitation, but also to address issues affecting women specifically.

During its decade of existence, the FSAW concentrated on the anti-pass campaign and passes for women, opposition to Bantu education and the Group Areas Act which created the homelands, and against rent increases.

Black women since the seventies have become increasingly economically independent.

One-third of the eight million strong black workforce is female, compared to one-fifth in the whites. About 70,000 black women are employed in industry, with the remainder in service and agriculture.

A number of strikes have been led by women, such as the Durban textile strikes of 1973 and the Ladysmith bus strikes.

In 1980, seven thousand workers at Frames textile mills near Durban came out again, this time demanding a 20-25% wage increase. All those who walked out were sacked and police broke up the demonstration outside the gates. Women were also prominent in last year's boycotts, which sent many white shop-workers bankrupt.

White and black women have only united on the basis of shared class exploitation. While white women enjoy the fruits of their privileged position there is little likelihood of a black and white women's movement in South Africa, although individual whites can play a useful role in the struggle against apartheid, economic exploitation and the oppression of women.

As the Pan African Congress magazine *Azania Woman* wrote recently, "We the women of Azania demand the total overthrow of exploitative colonial society. Our fight is alongside our men against the system."

— Mary Gorman

NEWS ROUND-UP

May Day marches spark back to life

MAY DAY has often been dubbed "the Anzac Day of the left". And like Anzac Day, it has been in decline in recent years.

But this year's May Day marches around Australia showed a welcome revival of numbers and fighting spirit.

Recent May Days have been tame, boring and decreasing in numbers, a reflection of the general malaise of the left. This year, however, the urgent issue of defence of the unions, particularly the BLF and the SEQUEB workers, sparked May Day back to life.

In Sydney, the march was not huge, possibly because many were discouraged by its domination by rightwingers and pseudo-lefts like the increasingly sorry Communist Party. In Melbourne, a big and vocal pro-BLF contingent made up well over half of the 2000 marchers.

The organisers had put up a platform of anti-BLF speakers, like Labor senator Bruce Child.

The crowd booed and chanted them off the stage. When organisers abandoned the rally, the Siege Black of the BLF, Bill Hartley and George Petersen and MLC mounted the platform on the back of the official truck, to the cheers of the crowd.

The driver of the truck took off, driving it into the crowd. Luckily, no-one was hurt, and angry marchers quite justifiably broke the truck's windshield.

The only real violence, however, came from police who waded in to make two arrests. Naturally, they let the driver go, while arresting two pro-BLF marchers.

In Brisbane, angry seenes erupted when sacked SEQUEB workers and their supporters confronted union leaders who had sold them out last year.

The mother of one sacked worker marched up to the official May Day platform with a huge banner on poles, and completely blotted out the official speaker from view. She was quickly set upon by supporters of the officials. Fist fights and shouting matches broke out elsewhere during the rally.

Melbourne saw its biggest May Day in recent years, reversing a pattern of declining attendances. People obviously

wanted to rally behind the BLF. The BLF trucks were cheered and marchers eagerly grabbed solidarity placards distributed by the union's supporters. The march was less polarised than in other cities, because march organisers were sympathetic to the BLF and a number of speakers attacked the Labor governments. A big and closely packed contingent followed the BLF trucks to the Yarra Bank.

Socialist Action members joined the militant contingents in all cities.

This was not the first time that May Day has seen political sparks fly.

May Day was born in struggle, when Chicago workers struck for the eight hour day exactly one hundred years ago. When some strike leaders were executed, American unions declared May 1 a day of struggle. In 1889, the Socialist International made it a worldwide event.

Often, conservative labour bureaucrats and politicians have turned May Day into a quiet Sunday stroll, with a few tub-thumping speeches and resolutions at the end.

It has been left to militant dissidents to raise the banner of class struggle. In Melbourne in 1932, the Communists and the Siege Black of the BLF, Bill Hartley and George Petersen and MLC mounted the platform on the back of the official truck, to the cheers of the crowd.

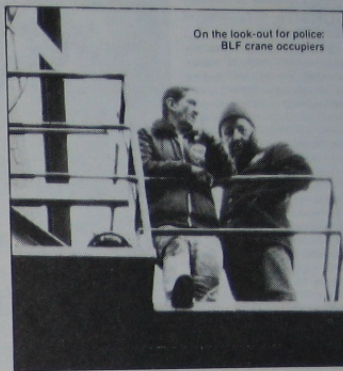
At other times, May Day has reflected a mood of revolutionary upheaval in society.

In Saigon in 1945, Vietnamese workers flocked to join a revolutionary Trotskyist contingent that proceeded to rebuild the Vietnamese trade union movement after the war.

In the aftermath of the 1974 Portuguese revolution, half a



May Day in the 60s: penal powers were the issue then



On the look-out for police: BLF crane occupiers

million marched in Lisbon on May Day 1975.

In Melbourne in 1971, at the peak of the anti-war movement, the May Day crowd rioted when a Special Branch spy was found in the rally, routing the police contingent at the march. And fittingly, this year's most impressive May Day was in South Africa. Over 70 percent of the workforce struck for the day, in an awesome display of the power of the black working class.

In coming years, more of that militant May Day spirit will be needed in the battles to come, against the combined forces of employers, police, the media and Labor politicians. And not just on May 1, but all the year round.

— Maria Giolitti

POLICE POWERS SOG "maces" crane sit-in

THE END to the BLF's recent Melbourne crane occupation saw a police intervention with extremely sobering implications for trade unionists.

The Special Operations Group (SOG) arrived soon after midnight. This was a surprise, as the union had reached verbal agreement with the Costain company and expected written agreement next day.

Clearly the government could not allow that to happen. A local victory for the BLF at this stage would have been an extreme

morale booster. It was against this "terror" that the specially trained anti-terrorist SOG were sent in.

Wearing masks, blacked faces and full riot gear, including daggers, the squad of over a dozen threatened the media that anyone filming the operation would be charged. When a top Costain manager arrived demanding to know what was happening, he was shoved aside. The ordinary police were told to keep out of the way.

The squad climbed the crane, cut through the trapdoor to the platform, and sprayed the two occupiers with MACE, ignoring the risk that they might fall off the crane. The SOG then handcuffed them with special wire handcuffs which must be removed with wire cutters, and threatened to throw them off if they did not come quietly.

John Cummins, the BLF organiser, was not allowed to see his men before they were taken direct to Pentridge, an unprecedented move in itself. Normally, they would have gone to the City Watchhouse.

The spectacle of this elite squad trying out its fancy new equipment and methods reminds us inevitably of *SWAT or Hill Street Blues*. It does not bode well for future industrial disputes.

But that is worry, important though it is, should not obscure the key point of this episode. That is, the state government pre-empted employers who were about to settle. The Labor government is more aggressive than the bosses.

— Janet Stone

AS A YOUNG whippersnapper, I once read a leaflet by a revolutionary group I admired. It said they wanted "the dictatorship of the proletariat".

I was outraged. How dare left-wingers, claiming to be for the working class, say they wanted to dictate to the working class? Fortunately I read on, and found that the proletariat was to do the dictating. My heroes did not intend to set up a carbon copy of Russia.

Today, we in Socialist Action describe our aim as a "workers' state", which avoids such misunderstandings. Still, Marx's original term contains an important concept.

Behind the facade of parliament, capitalism is a dictatorship of the employing class. Their media and schools shape what we think. Their control over investment shapes what parliaments decide. If all else fails — as it does in many countries from Chile to South Korea — their military shapes society by brute force.

Marx's "dictatorship of the proletariat", or our "workers' state", turns this on its head. Instead of the employers doing the dictating, the vast majority of society, the ordinary working people, will dictate to them and eventually abolish their class.

IS SUCH a thing possible? Can it be democratic?

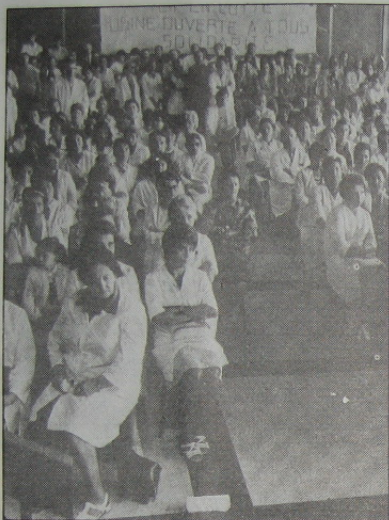
Conservatives often tell us that workers are incapable of running the workplaces, let alone society as a whole. Evidently it is a task that requires special talents, such as having a lot of money.

In reality, as Marx pointed out, capitalism has created its own grave diggers. It has educated its wage slaves, and mustered a vast clerical army to do the day-to-day administering of the system. Capitalism itself has made workers fit to rule.

The managerial decisions that the employers reserve for themselves and their most trusted lackeys are mostly about how to extract more out of their workers and customers, or where next to gamble on capitalism's anarchic market.

Their "responsibilities", such supposedly justify their huge managerial salaries, are in fact the height of social irresponsibility. In a planned socialist economy, they will be redundant.

Workers have often shown that they can survive without bosses. George Orwell describes such experiences in revolutionary Spain in the 1930s in



Proving it can be done: Lip workers meet to run their factory

Mastering our fate . . . in a workers' state

Homage to Catalonia. Workers elected their foremen, and ran industries more safely and more efficiently than under the old regime.

Employees at France's Lip watch factory gave another demonstration in the early 1970s. Faced with mass layoffs, they seized the plant, made their own watches, and did their own distribution to get around an employer boycott. Efficiency shot up 25 percent, and only a police invasion ended the venture after the best part of a year.

PAST working class revolutions give us a fairly clear picture of how such workers' power can be established across a whole.

Contrary to the popular image of everyone suddenly rushing into the streets and setting up barricades, most revolutions come out of a period

of protracted social crisis. As the authority of the central government breaks down, workers in many situations have been forced to create their own organs of power, simply to keep society running. In Spain in 1936, in Hungary in 1956, in Bolivia in 1971, in Russia in 1915 and 1917, workers set up factory or neighborhood councils to seize the workplaces, to distribute food, to maintain order and curb hooliganism.

The power of such workers' organisations is enormous, of course. In the Portuguese crisis of 1974, where workers had seized hundreds of workplaces, the employers tried the time-honoured device, effective against so many Labor-style regimes, of taking their money out of the country — a capital strike. The workers' committees stopped them, by contacting the bank workers' committee to block the transfer of funds

overseas.

Such power naturally poses an immediate threat to the already shaky rule of the old regime. An unstable situation of "dual power" exists, until one side must inevitably move to crush the other.

Tragically, in every revolutionary situation bar Russia in 1917, the capitalists have done the crushing, and usually by naked military force. Unless the workers' councils have an armed workers' militia at their disposal, and can split the standing army (or at least its conscripted sections), they will usually be repressed.

IF THE workers' councils do take state power, what will the new workers' state look like?

It would be foolish to draw up a blueprint. But from past revolutionary situations, we can get a fair idea of what will be possible.

We can expect that workers' councils will take control of industry, and together with other organisations like neighborhood committees, farmers' councils and the like, will send delegates to a central council that will make the key policy decisions for society.

We can expect full political freedom in such a system, at least for those political tendencies that support a workers' state and do not try to re-establish the dictatorship of the old employing class. The press, now out of private hands, will open up to all points of view, probably in proportion to their support.

All delegates and administrators will be elected and subject to immediate recall — a practice established in the very first workers' revolution, the Paris Commune of 1871. The old capitalist institutions of law and order will be broken up; arms, policing and justice will be under the direct control of the workers' councils.

We can expect that the anarchy of capitalist production for profit will be replaced by planned production for human needs. Unlike in Russia and China, the planners will be controlled by the workers, through their democratic institutions.

Today, such a workers' state seems a long way off. But then, it was less than a year before the first workers' state was, all too briefly, established in Russia that Lenin candidly advised an audience of Swiss students that he did not expect to see one in his lifetime. The class struggle is full of surprises, and some of them are quite pleasant ones.

— Alec Kahn

America's human guinea-pigs for the Bomb

WOULD American imperialism deliberately submit thousands of innocent people to deadly radiation, just to see the effects?

The film *Half Life*, written, directed and produced by Australian film-maker Dennis O'Rourke, says it would. Currently touring the major cities, it is an anti-nuclear film well worth seeing.

The film focusses on the deliberate failure of the US Atomic Energy Commission to evacuate the Rongalap and Utrik islanders before the explosion of the hydrogen bomb on Bikini Atoll in 1954. *Half Life* suggests that the US wanted to use these 20,000 people of the Marshall Islands group as guinea-pigs to assess the short and long term effects of nuclear fall-out.

The researchers were not disappointed. The effects ranged from radiation sickness and burns immediately after the blast, to various on-going diseases in the adults, and to gross deformities and deaths in children born in the following thirty years.

Half Life shows the transformation in the attitudes of the islanders, from congenial and innocent co-operation with the Americans, to anguish, bitterness and cynicism.

US lawyers are currently fighting a huge compensation case on behalf of the islanders. *Half Life* shows only helplessness on the part of the islanders themselves, however.

The film concludes with Ronald Reagan's congratulatory speech on the achievement of independence by the Marshall Islands. After the grim spectacle of the abuse that these people have suffered at the hands of the Atomic Energy Commission, we are treated to Reagan's reflections on the "special relationship" the US has had with the islanders. It is a wonder he did not choke on the words.

The film itself is simply presented, in contrast with the more satiric style of the black comedy *Atomic Cafe*. Like *Atomic Cafe*, *Half Life* uses footage of US propaganda films, but much more central are the

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US atom test were islanders exposed on purpose?

interviews of the Rongalap islanders.

Also interviewed are some of the US "weathermen" involved in the explosion — true-blue yanks, who have reluctantly come to the conclusion that the US premeditatedly avoided evacuating the islanders despite foreknowledge of a change in weather conditions. The "weathermen" themselves became fall-out casualties.

A serious short-coming of the film is its failure to inform us of the real extent of the damage. We are given an impression, instead of the hard facts and statistics. We get no real, quantifiable idea of the effects of the fall-out, although evidently they are extensive.

Half Life holds few surprises for those familiar with the anti-nuclear case. It is the sheer callousness of the US that gives it its impact, and makes it a "must" to see.

— Kay Grover

BOOK

Vashti's voice from the past

BEFORE 1969, when I first became involved in women's liberation, I preferred the company of men to women because they were more "intelligent" and more "serious".

It was the Women's Liberation Movement which inspired me to learn how to be a committed political activist, and to unlearn

the tendency to put down women that society had so successfully encouraged. At the same time I became a revolutionary socialist, because I saw the liberation of women as inextricable from the socialist transformation of society.

In 1972 I helped establish a women's liberation group at Melbourne University, and participated in setting up a magazine. As the first issue sold, women's liberation was new and expanding rapidly.

The magazine was called *Vashti's Voice*, after the biblical queen who objected to being a sex object. It was published for ten years. Recently, a small collective of women have published an anthology of articles from the pages of *Vashti's Voice*.

This anthology is not a history of the women's liberation movement. That is yet to be written. But the excitement and freshness of the early movement come through in the early articles. Even though much of what we wrote then was crude (I no longer agree with my own article from 1972), there is a sense of unlimited possibilities.

We mobilised then for more than reforms. On International Women's Day in 1972, two thousand people demonstrated around the new ideas of women's liberation, that to achieve liberation fundamental changes in society are necessary. There was a radical quality, a preparedness to challenge old established ideas about the family, sexuality, children, roles in society and personal relationships.

But the movement very quickly came up against the reality of political activism in capitalist society. By 1976, at a policy and strategy conference, different directions had emerged. Should we operate within or in opposition to the system?

Some argued that "feminism is a mentality". Some wanted no higher status. Others, like me, wanted to abolish oppression and exploitation altogether.

The issue of strategy became critical at this point, in fact, because the money which flowed so freely in the Whitlam era had dried up. Radical community projects were no longer so viable. Activists now had to make a political choice.

By the time *Vashti's Voice* ceased publication in 1981, there was no longer a cohesive mass movement. There had been a number of reforms, and "women's issues" were now widely accepted. Feminists (having dropped "liberation" as a goal) embarked on careers in the ALP, trade union bureaucracies, management and top public service.

But some of us have maintained our rage at the way the system oppresses women and many other groups. We still fight for liberation.

With Anna Key, writing on abortion in *Vashti's Voice* in 1980, we can see "the absurdity of relying on reformist government for any real change of justice". And we can agree with her conclusion that "it's also time for us to intensify our struggle for our rights".

— Janey Stone



Janey Stone addresses an early Women's Liberation rally

The offensive Drug Offensive

LIKE most people, I got a "Drug Offensive" brochure in the letter box. Unlike most, I found it rather intriguing.

True, it had that prose style that only advertising agencies write. True, it patronised parents with a lecture on their role as society's first line of policing. And true, it used quite sexist arguments — so sexist that the brochure itself admitted the fact — in the "Boys on Girls on Drugs" section.

What intrigued me, though, was the table of figures it produced. These showed that of 20,230 deaths from drug use in Australia in 1984, fully 81 percent were from tobacco and another 15 percent from alcohol.

So was the pamphlet launching an offensive against tobacco and alcohol use? A crackdown on the breweries and cigarette manufacturers, perhaps?

Of course not. The pamphlet made token references to alcohol and tobacco. But the entire focus of the hundred million dollar "Drug Offensive" is to be on illegal drugs. Coastal surveillance alone is to get another \$33 million.

The powerful cigarette and alcohol lobbies will continue unchecked. Alan Bond will fly his Swan Brewery emblem from the mast of his America's Cup yacht. And Bob Hawke will be there cheering him on.

THE glossy PR of the "Drug Offensive" brochure, which reputedly cost \$6 million, sells something far more insidious.

As soon as the campaign was launched every state premier bar John Cain boasted that his state had the first, or the toughest,



Alcoholism: became a mass disease under capitalism



Well-known pusher Alan Bond with victim

anti-drug legislation.

Joh Bjeke-Petersen's Drug Misuse Bill, currently being slightly redrafted, is without doubt the most brutal. It provides up to fifteen years jail for possession of up to 100 grams of marijuana, or a drug utensil, or for allowing others to consume drugs on your premises.

So if you smoke a joint, or even hold a party where someone else smokes a joint, you are liable for fifteen years in jail!

Other provisions include life imprisonment for possession of over 100 grams of marijuana or two grams of hashish, mandatory life imprisonment with no parole for possession of two grams of heroin or cocaine, and legal buying of "suspected" drug traffickers. Police will be able to hold people arrested for drug offences for 48 hours before taking them to court or releasing them.

Originally, the Bill would have jailed parents for up to fifteen years for not "docking in" their children to police if they found them using drugs. Even the Temperance League joined the public outcry at this first draft.

Canberra is orchestrating this carnival of reaction. Labor is legislating to give full phone tapping powers to state police, ostensibly to crack down on drug trafficking. Currently only the Federal Police can legally tap phones, and then only after gaining a warrant.

BOTH the "Drug Offensive" brochure, and the repressive laws that it heralds, focus on drug users, their families, and drug dealers and pushers (Tooheys and Philip Morris excepted, of course).

Yet capitalism itself directly

created its own drug problems.

Alcohol became a mass drug of addiction for the working class in the early 19th century. In the new industrial slums, workers had no open space, no sporting facilities and no libraries. Playhouses were denounced as immoral in England, and everything closed on Sundays (workers' only free day) for religious reasons. Family life started to come apart, and alcohol was the only escape for millions from capitalism's stresses and its alienating labour.

Opium, cocaine and cannabis took off for similar reasons in depressed sections of the working class early this century. Cannabis became particularly popular in America's black ghettos.

Early capitalism turned many a dollar from drugs. Britain, France and the US did a massive trade exporting opium to China. When China tried to ban the drug, British imperialism fought the Opium War (1839-42) to force the trade to continue.

Coca-Cola originally used cocaine, a stimulant, as an ingredient last century. Then, it really was "the pause that refreshes". The cocaine content was vital in winning Coke the mass market it still holds.

With the invention of the hypodermic syringe, the opium derivative morphine became an easily-applied pain-killer for the victims of capitalism's wars. And with baleful consequences. The US Civil War alone created 400,000 morphine addicts amongst soldiers.

Alcohol and tobacco, however, had a long head start in the West over other drugs. Alcohol was used for religious celebrations by the earliest western cultures.



with Alec Kahn

Tobacco came in via the courts of Europe, introduced by Christopher Columbus and then Sir Walter Raleigh. So these drugs were firmly established in all classes.

America, the emerging capitalist power of the early twentieth century and with a powerful Protestant work ethic, led the international crackdown on drugs between 1909-25. The aim was economic as well as moral: the workers had to be kept fit for production. In its zeal, America went so far as to ban alcohol without success.

The youth rebellion of the mid-sixties saw the illegal drugs re-emerge. This political edge to modern drug use is the origin of current hysteria and double standards.

For example, LSD was a fashionable plaything in certain middle class circles in the US after it was synthesized in the fifties. Only when the youth counter-culture adopted it in the mid-sixties was it banned.

ODDLY, the "Drug Offensive" openly admits the prime cause of drug use.

"Some use drugs to escape from reality," says the glossy brochure. "People who are house-bound all day long, or stuck in boring, unfulfilling, god-awful jobs."

But the obvious conclusion — that we need to change society to get rid of powerlessness, of sex roles and alienation — is carefully avoided. For that is a socialist conclusion.

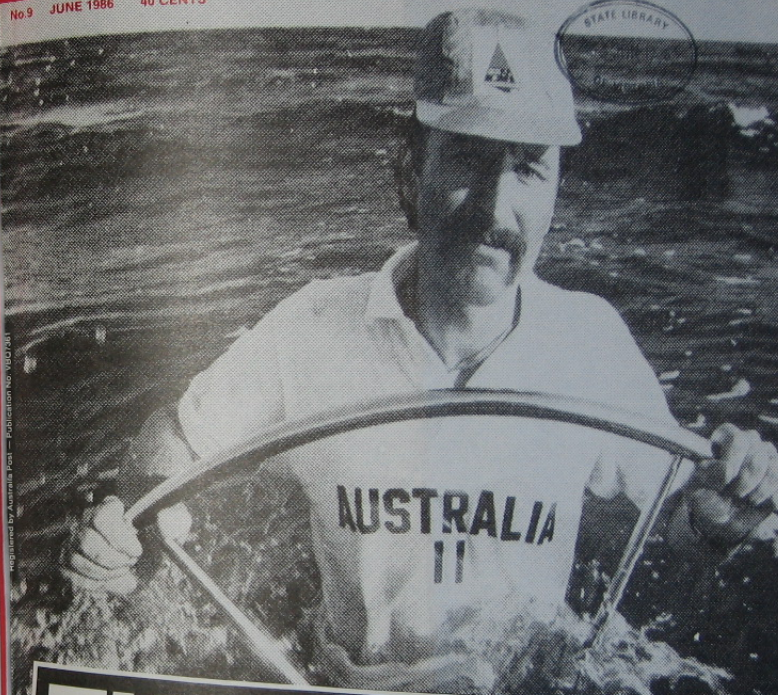
So how should we answer the "Drug Offensive"? Clearly, we must oppose its increased state powers. Prohibition cannot stop the drug trade while the social conditions that cause it remain. Prohibition merely ensures that criminals and the more corrupt elements of the police force get all the profits. Meanwhile, drug users are criminalised and driven even deeper into the culture of petty crime, jail, addiction and dealing.

Our stand must be for decriminalisation of drug use, and for serious rehabilitation programs for addicts. Not because these will solve anything — under capitalism, they won't.

But until we can move to a better, socialist society, we have to fight the mentality of "punish the victim" which underpins so much of capitalist ideology.

SOCIALIST ACTION

No. 9 JUNE 1986 40 CENTS



**THE ECONOMY:
Don't let Labor sink YOUR pay!**

- China: Taking care of business
- Unbowed, the BLF fights on
- The party line on love

INTERNATIONAL

HAVE Cory Aquino and "people's power" changed anything in the Philippines? DAVID GREASON gives his impressions after a recent visit there.

I ARRIVED in Manila on Friday, February 28, hoping to see a bit of action. President Marcos had fled the country on the Wednesday, so I expected that the country, and particularly Manila, would still be tense.

I can't say that I have been in a revolutionary situation before, but the country certainly didn't feel in a revolutionary mood. The only evidence I could see that anything of a vaguely political nature had occurred was the number of people in Makati, Manila's business district, selling "We love Cory" t-shirts and badges.

None of the taxi-drivers (traditional if somewhat dubious pundits) I spoke to in Manila had any gripping words of wisdom. When asked about

Marco's excesses, most offered the excuse that Marcos, like all of us, was only a wretched sinner. So Manila, except for the occasional piece of yellow bunting, was quiet. Some people had interesting tales though, like Ramis, the engineering student who had gone to Camp Crame with his friends after Cardinal Sin had called on workers to go into the streets to support General Ramos and Defence Minister Enrile.

Ramis said he had never seen as much food in his life as he saw on the road to Camp Crame and Camp Aguinaldo. The food came from traditional supporters of workers' struggles: McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Dunkin' Donuts, Tropical Hut, and other multinational food chains.

Confirming this, a Manila businessman told me that the "Makati Mob," a group of senior Aquino backers, felt that the "people's power" revolt would fizzle out if food wasn't supplied to those blocking the tanks.

The same businessman had been to Camp Crame on the first



NPA guerrillas on patrol

Manila after Marcos: an eye witness view

two days of the revolt and had seen the demonstrators arrive. "On the first day," he said, "they came in their Mercedes Benzs. After that, they came in their Toyotas, and after Cardinal Sin's call, they came in jeeps or on foot. There's been no revolution here," he said. "In Marxist terms, it was a bourgeois revolt: in one section of the bourgeoisie against the other." The businessman was not left-wing, but doubted claims that the revolt was popularly led.

People were happy with Marcos's removal but could not translate this politically. Many thought they had stopped the tanks (with the help of God) and said they would do the same again.

BUT IN the provinces, particularly in areas where the New People's Army was active, people saw things differently. In the southernmost province of Mindanao, over half of the country is owned by multinational corporations, mainly American, and the countryside is a virtual military encampment.

A taxi-driver in Davao City, Mindanao's capital, asked whether the Marcoses owned property in Australia and what would happen to it. When I replied, rather lamely, that the

people voted, the United States would back Marcos. Some members said that the party did not understand that there was diverse opinion in the US towards the election, and so there was a real possibility of the US backing Aquino as a moderate candidate.

Marcos and the cronies system was certainly becoming too much for the Americans. He and his followers were seriously destabilising the Filipino economy through their graft and corruption. Continued strikes had led the Americans to move a Ford plant from the Philippines to China, where they felt they would have a more pliant labor market and less overhead costs lost through kickbacks.

To a large extent, the CPP failed to take account of this American disillusionment. This was made worse by the CPP's ideological hegemony over the Filipino left. Once the CPP had developed its boycott policy, that policy was reproduced by other groups almost automatically, although internal debate in the party is increasing.

One left-wing nun in Mindanao echoed the views of the Manila businessman on the so-called "revolution." "They have been saying that people's power is God's power," she said, "If there was a real people's revolution you wouldn't have Cardinal Sin calling for the workers to come out and block the tanks. What change has there been in social relations? Not only is the same class running the country, but in some cases it's the same people."

The NPA and its political wing, the National Democratic Front, enjoy a considerable amount of support in Mindanao, both from the poorer section of the community and from the clergy. One NPA guerrilla, a young man who had studied accounting at college, studied how the NPA raised funds for its military campaigns.

The NPA would find a factory that was operating in a "red" area and, after checking the profitability of the company to determine how much the company could pay in NP levied "taxes," approaches would be made to the management, which usually ended up paying.

If it didn't it might find its trucks at the bottom of a river, as did one American multinational corporation, or it could be driven out of business through sabotage, as happened to a couple of Mindanao timber companies.

THE NEW People's Army has been considerably helped by its supporters in the Church. Many of the clergy have developed radical critiques of the church and its wealth, and their anti-Marcos politics are stronger than Cardinal Sin's, if still somewhat elitist.

When I asked a seminarian in Davao City how he reconciled his Christianity with his claims to be a marxist, he said that in developing countries such as the Philippines, where the Church and its representatives were often seen as authoritative, it was necessary to pass to the people the message of social justice through authorities that they respected.

Many members of the Communist Party of the Philippines confessed that they had been caught unawares by the "people's power" events, and said that the party was analysing its call for an election boycott.

The boycott campaign was based on the belief that however



* Aquino

COVER STORY

As the economy comes apart, bosses' demands grow

THE PARTY is over. The economic recovery, which the Labor government boasted about and which it said proved the correctness of the ALP/ACTU Accord, has begun to come apart.

Paul Keating fears we could become a "banana republic". Business journalist Terry McCrann warns darkly that living standards will have to fall ten per cent.

It comes as a bit of a shock. For three years, economic output and employment have grown. Welfare spending grew a bit, and investment eased upwards.

But the growth was essentially due to economic expansion overseas. Exports expanded while overseas investors sought new outlets in this country. Together with wage cuts imposed on us by the Accord and government spending on housing, these things boosted profits.

The "world's greatest treasurer", Paul Keating, claimed it would go on and on. But it hasn't.

International demand for Australia's main exports — coal, wheat, iron ore, along with other mineral and rural products — has fallen away. Many mineral exports are energy related, and returns from them have dropped with the collapse of international oil prices.

The European Community and the USA have been dumping rural products at subsidised prices, which undercuts Australia's exports.

But there has been no comparable fall in the prices of the commodities Australia imports, mainly manufactured goods.

This deterioration in the terms of trade has offset any benefits from the devaluation of the dollar. As a result of devaluation, the volume of exports has risen dramatically, but because of falling prices the returns from these exports have actually gone down.

DEVALUATION has also increased the price of imports. According to the government, this should have reduced imports and encouraged local manufacturing to replace them. That hasn't happened, and the reason is extremely important.

Real wages have been cut under the Accord. Union officials were quoted in the press in May as saying that under the Accord, wage rises have totalled about 15 percent, while prices have soared by 22 percent. Consequently, profits are way up. As a share of the national product, they are nearly back to the levels of the 1960s. Yet the bosses are refusing to invest. They want more sacrifices from the working class.

Unless they start investing on a much bigger scale, local manufacturing will remain in the doldrums.

This problem was worsened by the government's decision to force up interest rates last year. That slowed the economy down, which was supposed to reduce imports and thus help the balance of trade. It also attracted



The "world's greatest treasurer"

overseas capital keen to invest at the higher rates, which in turn boosted the dollar.

But higher interest rates also made it more expensive for bosses to borrow for investment. Speculation on financial markets became more lucrative than productive investment. So the economy is in a mess, and the rhetoric from the politicians is full of ironies. The partisans of the Accord have justified wage "restraint" for three years in order to sustain growth. Now they demand more sacrifice because the growth is not being sustained.

AS LONG as workers accept this bizarre logic, our living standards will suffer.

We were ripped off under the original Accord, with its wage freeze at the start followed by wage "discounting" for Medicare. At present we are being taken to the cleaners under Accord Mark 2, which has brought a wage cut to make us pay for the fall of the dollar, and a long delay before our meagre indexation rise is even handed down.

Now we are being promised Accord Mark 3. The Financial Review is demanding it. Keating and Hawke are working towards it, and it seems Simon Crean will do it, and it seems Simon Crean will do it, and it seems Simon Crean will do it. It will mean a delay in the tax cuts we were promised (if we ever get them at all). It will mean another round of wage cuts, possibly through cancellation of the second 1986 wage indexation rise. The elusive wage indexation gains will be diluted and delayed still further.

Labor has come full circle.

The Accord was justified as the alternative to Fraser's "high inflation first" strategy, with its razor gangs and wage freezes. Now the government wants to lock the unions into supporting just those sorts of policies... to fight inflation and boost investment.

The only "trade off" union officials will get for holding our wages down will be in "industry policy". The so-called left unions have called for changes here for some time. This can work one of two ways.

The government can introduce tax incentives for investment. Or it can impose import controls to keep out foreign goods, drive up local prices and hence promote investment.

Either way, we lose. Tax incentives will be paid for by cuts in welfare spending and/or postponement of the promised tax cuts. Import controls will mean rising prices, but we won't be compensated with wage rises.

MEANWHILE the "social crisis" is coming under renewed attack. Broadly speaking, this means government spending on health and welfare promise.

Three years later, what's the picture? Age writer Kenneth Davidson estimates that this spending has grown by \$600 per household per year. On paper, this is more or less makes up for the wage cuts, but no more. When you look at where the money is going, the figures look less impressive still.

Housing spending is up by 63.5 per cent. Virtually all of it has gone to two areas: home ownership assistance and grants to the states.

Home ownership assistance is not primarily aimed at helping workers. At its inception, the First Home Owners Scheme did give new home buyers a significant amount of money.

However, that was merely a by-product of the scheme's main purpose, which was to subsidize the housing industry. The consequence was runaway inflation in the industry, which by 1985 cost new home buyers a lot more in higher prices than they gained from government grants. Meanwhile the grants have been cut drastically.

As for grants to the states, if the Victorian housing budget is still further...

(Continued page 6)



Jobless worker and family; no real change

HANG DOWN your head, Earle Bailey... the Queensland National Party backbencher and rightwing "mouth" is very embarrassed.

Bailey has been forced to resign as director of Skirmish, a Rambo-style wargame in which adults run around with guns firing paint-pellets at each other. A Skirmish game in April went terribly wrong when organisers misread a map and set up camp on church land, causing parents from a junior soccer club nearby to call police.

A fellow director of Bailey's said, "Earle phoned this morning. He was depressed. Apparently he was told by Joh that he was copping too much flak which was reflecting on the party. He was also upset by barbs from fellow parliamentarians such as 'Would you like to borrow my compass?'"

ONE LAW for the Bosses Dept... Ever tried not paying a parking fine? United Parcel Services, one of America's biggest carrying companies, has run up \$1,200,000 in parking fines in New York. It has not paid a parking fine since March 1985.

• THE SINKING ship of state... the Coalition Against Poverty and Unemployment has taken a nautical view of the three major parties.
"Basically, voting in the next election is rather like voting for the captain on the Titanic: Howard would change course to charge straight at the icebergs, Hawke wants to retain the present course but would like to throw some of the less valued passengers overboard to lighten the load, and Chipp would like to do both, so long as he can wear the First Mate's hat!"



Powell: death wish

SOCIALIST Action agrees with racist Enoch Powell!

Well, we had to, really. The ultra-rightwing Tory MP, arch-enemy of coloured immigration into Britain, announced recently in a burst of patriotic fervour, "I would have liked to have been killed in the war."

ANOTHER world-famous racist has been putting his foot in it.

Ian Smith, former PM of Rhodesia, had to make a humiliating apology to Zimbabwe's parliament last month, for telling the BBC that most Zimbabweans were "uneducated

• AFTER the Suharto regime's fury over reports here of its corruption, we were fascinated to read the Indonesian government's official handbook on the role of the press.

"Disseminating objective information, exerting constructive social control, bridging communication between the Government and public at large and mobilising the community's participation in the process of nation-building."

Just so, Joseph Goebbels could not have put it better himself.

and uncivilized" and that majority rule was therefore "a negation of democracy."

THE NSW Police Association has voted unanimously to oppose the wearing of identification badges.

Now, now, no mattering about a "police state". As Senior Constable Godfrey told their conference, these badges are dangerous. A felon might use the five centimetre pin to stab an officer to death.

Don't accuse the police of cowardice, though. They will bravely continue to wear such dangerous decorations as guns and batons.

HOW EASILY they forget! The Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU) and the Federated Engine Drivers & Firemen's Association (FEDFA) are the two unions profiting most from the carve-up of the deregistered BLF.

The BWIU itself was deregistered federally from 1946-51. In NSW, the FEDFA was deregistered in 1955-56. Both survived... because other unions, including the BLF, refrained from coming in and poaching their members.

MAY WAS another bad month for Ronald Reagan's campaign to win aid for the "contras" in Nicaragua.

Just as Reagan was trying to paint the Sandinistas as drug-runners, who should his allies, the Costa Rican security forces, arrest for drug trafficking but Adolfo Chamorro Chamorro is a leader of the Nicaraguan Democratic Front... the main "contra" organisation.



GIVE ME your tired, your huddled masses... so I can exploit them.

So the inscription on the Statue of Liberty should read, now that median weekly earnings in America in 1985 have



CHEAP SHOTS

been announced. For white families, they were \$543. For Hispanic families they were just \$404, and for black families a miserable \$378.

AFFIRMATIVE in Action... Armidale College of Advanced Education in Northern NSW has in a recent advertisement that it was an equal opportunity employer.

The ad went on to invite applicants "for the position of male cleaner!"

LEARNING to love the Bomb... the US has a new doll called the Nukie.

Nukie is shaped like an intercontinental ballistic missile, and comes with a card saying its owner is now "a certified nuclear power" with "a sphere of influence, the right to set up puppet dictatorships, and all the rights and powers of a 'thermonuclear war'". Nukie sounds just pukie to us.

INTERNATIONAL

China: Taking care of business

"... Marxian thinking is out. The capitalist system, best described as the competitive system, is back."

THOSE WORDS appeared in the *New York Times* in 1944 — about Russia. They stand as a warning to us not to overstate what is going on today in China.

On the other hand, we should not understate it. The changes in the last few years have been tremendous. They go much further than anything in Russia during the era of "de-stalinisation".

China's rulers have embarked on major reappraisals of policy before. Since 1949, the regime has veered between two extremes. Sometimes, it has relied on the enthusiasm of the masses for economic growth (during the Great Leap Forward, for example), usually ending in economic disaster. At other times, it has relied on the mechanisms of the market, generally producing a significant layer of society out to make a quick buck.

This zig-zag has occurred, not because the Chinese regime is erratic, but because of the contradictory imperatives imposed upon it. To maintain its control over China, it must stress the role of the Communist Party and the importance of a centralised economy. But to maximise its rate of accumulation of capital (and it must do so to survive), it must integrate the economy into the world market. And that means weakening its own control.

The present rulers are completely reversing the first alternative, which dominated in Mao's last years, and are ardently embracing the second.

AT THE end of 1978, the Communist Party Central Committee adopted the Four Modernisations: industry, agriculture, science/technology and the military.

It soon became clear that the plan was to develop agriculture first, followed by light industry and heavy industry. Profit was to be the key measure of performance. "Even if successful in stabilising the currency, the government's wages policy and thus the government — which is the last thing they want to happen."

Locked into the insidious logic of the Accord, union officials have accepted wage cuts, and will now inevitably fail to fight against welfare cuts, because keeping Hawke in office is more important to them than defending the working class. It is time that rank and file workers began to reject these policies and develop militant and socialist alternatives.



Bottling Coca-Cola in Peking: integration into the world market

Another reform established four Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The SEZ phenomenon is well known in other less-developed countries like Sri Lanka and the Philippines. They aim to attract foreign investment through special tax, and investment arrangements, and special deals on wages. The Governor of Fujian province, which includes an SEZ, spelt out the consequences for workers:

"We are now studying the wage rates of Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea. We believe that our wage levels will be lower than these places. In order to protect the investor's profitability, the wage rate cannot be too high."

According to *International Business Week*, wages in China's SEZs are low, even by third world standards.

In late 1984, the Central Committee adopted a plan to extend the reforms into urban areas. A meeting of Western industrialists, bankers and economists had already looked over the plan, this typified the Central Committee's loss of control. The forces of supply and demand were now to operate in industry. A bonus system would reward "hard work, efficiency and special responsibilities."

The urban reforms aimed to abolish the "iron rice bowl" (secure, permanent jobs for all) and the "big public pot" (roughly equal wages). Neither of these ever applied universally, as the difference in living standards, sally, as the difference in living standards between China's rulers was fundamental to the regime and its supporters.

Replacing them now is "the principle of more pay for more work, less pay for less work, no work no pay", a principle "all too familiar to most of us."

WHAT WAS the effect on China's workers? Life under the Gang of Four was no bed of roses for them. Most were undoubtedly pleased at its downfall, at the abolition of lifelong tenure for Party cadre, and at the appearance of Western goods in the shops.

But this is no new era of freedom and liberty. The decision on urban reform stated: "Modern enterprise calls for centralised and unified leadership and direction of production, and strict labour discipline." At first, there were limited wages rises. But overall, workers' living standards are under attack. *Beijing Review* made this clear:

"Obviously the Big Public Pot practice runs counter to the socialist principle of distribution. It serves only backward enterprises and lazy individuals. The industrious should be rewarded and the indolent penalised."

"The gap in private incomes may become larger at the beginning. But in the long run, the lazy will become diligent and those falling behind will push themselves to catch up."

The regime intends to widen income differentials, and have them reflect "differences" between mental and manual, skilled and unskilled labour.

Enterprises can now sack workers for laziness, absenteeism and "irresponsibility". Most Managers have been told that while output must go up, the result of employees must not.

The result is inevitable. China's press breathlessly reported from Shansi colliery: "Most miners have vigorously striven to raise the utilisation of work hours, with one doing the work of two or even three."

(Continued page 8)

FROM PAGE 5



Economy

any indication, most of the money is passed on in the form of low interest loans. Since governments will get most of this money back, it's simply a con-juring trick to pretend they are "spending" the hundreds of millions earmarked for loans.

Health is the second major area to show a rise. Spending here has risen by about \$1600 million (in 1979 dollars). But \$755 million of it comes from the Medicare levy, paid by us! What is taken from us, then given back, is hardly an increase in the social wage.

This spending is not im-

proving our health care, as shown by the crisis in public hospitals, with their ever-increasing waiting lists (while expensive private hospital beds lie empty). Recent figures show that the gap in health care between rich and poor has increased over the past 20 years, and the Hawke government has contributed to this process.

Social Security spending has slipped behind inflation. In the 1984 budget, social security spending was 28 cents of every dollar of expenditure. In 1985, it was 27.6 cents. In areas such as family allowances, the government has cut spending.

George Campbell, pro-Accord AMWU official, conceded recently: "Millions of people who relied on Labor to make the Accord processes work are now being threatened and

there is no respite in sight."

On the contrary, there are moves to cut the social wage in the coming budget.

WHAT WILL the unions do? At the Broad Left Conference, Peter Robson of the ACOA (public service union) called for a joint union and welfare group campaign to prevent social wage cuts, with the longer term aim of increased spending. This was to be a "grass roots" campaign that would shake the government.

Two months later, all we see is a spate of advertising in the papers. The closest workers in welfare departments have got to grass roots action is one delegates' meeting in Sydney.

The union leaders are doing next to nothing. The *Financial Review* explained why with

regard to the metal unions:

"The dilemma for Mr Carmichael and the metal unions is this: After exhausting the internal ALP political processes their remaining weapon to force a change in the economic strategy is industrial muscle... Even if successful in stabilising the currency, the government's wages policy and thus the government — which is the last thing they want to happen."

Locked into the insidious logic of the Accord, union officials have accepted wage cuts, and will now inevitably fail to fight against welfare cuts, because keeping Hawke in office is more important to them than defending the working class. It is time that rank and file workers began to reject these policies and develop militant and socialist alternatives.

INTERNATIONAL

The reforms are "an incentive for enterprises to continually seek management improvements". The dreary logic of capitalism is evident: speed-up, piece work, new technology.

The wage rises that did occur were soon wiped out by inflation, most recently due to the lifting of price controls on non-staple foods in the cities. Workers' wages are still very low — an estimated average of \$300 per year.

YET THE Western media continually confronts us with an image of the Chinese going mad buying TVs, fridges, washing machines, VCRs and tape recorders. The sales figures seem to bear this out. Between 1984 and 1985, the sales of fridges went up 78%, tape recorders 105%, etc. If workers' wages have remained low, who is doing the buying?

The answer lies with the peasants. Between 1978 and 1984, average rural incomes rose by 165%. But averages are funny things. The income of some peasant families is substantially more than others — because they have more technical skills, or because they are bigger. There are well-publicised reports of peasant families on 10,000 yuan a year, or twenty times the average worker's wage.

The *People's Daily* reports that in one province, while peasant incomes had risen, 60% of them had barely enough for adequate food and clothing, and many were unemployed. That means that to achieve an 'average' rise of 165%, some peasants are making a very great deal of money. Where that money will lead them (beyond an initial lashing out on consumer goods) is already becoming clear. China's Australian supporters admit (in *Vanguard*), "it is true that hired labour has reappeared in China's countryside."

Even if only a section of the peasantry is raking in the wealth, that section is very large indeed. The number of peasant house-



Shoppers crowd for TVs, and buying big in Peking: rich peasants are doing best

holds engaged in sideline production back in 1983 was 15½ million. The regime refers to this as the "collective sector", and it now produces one-third of China's total industrial output.

Westerners tend to have a certain view of the peasantry: that they're badly dressed individuals, grubbing about in the filth, and that they are rather more backward than workers. The idea of peasants doing better than workers seems at first rather odd.

There is however, an important difference between peasants and workers, and it is the reason that the peasants are doing better. In China today, the peasants are able more and more to control the surplus that they produce. As the amount taken by the state lessens, that surplus increases, and with the advent of free markets, the amount earned for it rises.

Workers are not able to control their surplus. It is produced without their knowledge, and taken away from them. So the amount earned by workers will remain relatively stable, while that earned by peasants will increase — for some, dramatically.

AFTER A moderately good start, the *Aereforms* ran into problems.

The regime wanted to introduce market-oriented incentives, yet keep production under control. They could not do so. It is generally acknowledged that they lost control of the economy in 1984-85.

Exports fell dramatically. Much of the growth in 1985 was fuelled by construction, the classic mark of speculation. Rural bankruptcies increased, inflation ran riot, and the expected level of foreign investment did not appear.



(Where it did, officials in the SEAs and "open cities" spent it forthwith on foreign cars and consumer goods, which they then hawked around at a hefty profit.)

Wage inequalities have become a major source of tension. *Newsweek* magazine contrasted a peasant family, selling goods on the free market to earn a reasonable income and buy consumer goods, with workers at the No. 1 Machine Tool plant, who struggle to make ends meet. One worker commented, "After so many years since the founding of the People's Republic, I think living standards should be higher."

The Chinese press has toned down its enthusiastic reports on the "10,000 yuan (peasant) families" because they excited too many envy.

CORRUPTION has become a massive problem in the new entrepreneurial atmosphere.

Officials on Hunan Island (off the southern coast) in one year formed nine hundred companies to import 90,000 cars, three million TVs, half a million VCRs and 122,000 motorbikes... and then resold them on the mainland. An enterprising citizen, Wang Yimin, swindled advance payments, presumably from rich peasants, for over 60,000 TVs which never turned up.

The Communist Party is involved in this corruption too, and up to its armpits. The Auditor General "lost" \$1.67 billion in 1984. Twenty-seven party officials in Fujian province set up a fake medicine factory. A



Corruption trial: rife in the Party

government investigation found that 67,000 party members and officials were involved in 28,000 illegal businesses.

"There is no denying the fact that our Party has its seamy side," lamented *Beijing Review*.

Unemployment, too, is increasing. Traditionally, unemployed workers have been sent to the countryside. Now the countryside is sending them back.

Those who missed out on the allocation of land from the 'Commonwealth' have become "unwanted peasants", and are forced to seek work in the cities.

In one county, near Shanghai, *Beijing Review* reported 100,000 unwanted peasants. Officials predict another 120 million over the next twenty years. They will find no jobs in the cities, where unskilled workers will have enough difficulty keeping their jobs they have. Add to this 800,000 already demobilised from the armed forces in another cost-cutting exercise, with more to follow.

With an economy periodically out of control, increasing divisions between rich and poor, corruption and unemployment, China is beginning to look not unlike the rest of the third world.

WE should not conclude that China is undergoing the "restoration" of capitalism.

For what existed beforehand was a form of capitalism: state capitalism, on the Stalinist model. The state bureaucracy ruled China Limited just as Ford's management rules its business, and the workers were just as divorced from any real control.

However, the events in China are not just more zig-zags. A country taking itself to the extremes of state capitalism, and then turning back and dismantling them, is something quite new.

The Chinese ruling class are no fools. They know that as the power of the world economy over China increases, their own power decreases. But they must allow this to happen in order to survive, no matter how much they, or the economy, may be transformed in the process.

One Marxist writer on China, Nigel Harris, suggests that what we have known in China and other parts of the third world as

'socialism' — an emphasis on self-reliance and state planning — has simply been an episode, a phase in the accumulation of capital, forced on the backward countries by the world market, and embraced by them to defend themselves. That episode, Harris argues, is over. Continued accumulation (to survive) demands reintegration into the world market; the abandonment of the state capitalist structures that have become an obstacle to growth.

That is why the trend away from state capitalism has appeared not only in China, but in many other parts of the undeveloped world as well — not least, in India.

THAT IS not the end of the story. There will not be a smooth transition back to the world market mechanisms for China. **Already, resistance has appeared.**

Late last year, there were student demonstrations against Japanese economic expansionism, corruption, price rises and living conditions. There have been demonstrations against China's nuclear tests.

In 1981, a "Solidarity" type organisation appeared in Shanghai. Wuhan and Sian, though it was quickly suppressed. Managers attempting to sack workers have been insulted, beaten up, stabbed and bombed. There have been strikes, sit-ins and confrontations, particularly around the last round of price rises.

The regime's "progress" seems blocked by the latent power of the working class. They have been forced to restore the traditional two-hour midday siesta. Foreign companies have complained about the power of the workers committees.

Some of the regime's stalwarts put on a brave show. The manager of Quindao's Rubber Seal factory declared, "If they [the workers] don't work, I won't give them a penny."

But at last report, he had not dared to sack a single worker, including one who refused to do anything at all. "He comes in every day," the manager complained, "so I have to pay him."

Not doing anything obviously isn't enough. Yet it is in that relationship that the power of China's workers lies. In that power lies the potential to change the face of China itself.

—David Lockwood

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to tinker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must be spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through a united, international and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world: the point is to change it. Marxist theory and paganda are only meaningful if they are a guide to action. In the unions, social movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. It's there where you want to be, join us today!



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Union busting: Why Labor is so gung-ho

Peter Voigt at the Banana Alley picket



THE BLF deregistration battle has been a remarkable event.

It has pitted Labor against a militant union. It has pitted other, not-so-principled unions against each other as they jockey for the BLF's membership. Oddly, it has also pitted governments against building bosses.

At times, Labor has been keener to crush the BLF than the employers are. At times, it has even coerced those bosses. Journalist Mungo McCallum remarks:

"It can be argued that the government is acting in the long-term best interests of the employers in breaking the BLF, but it can also be argued that the employers themselves are the best judges of that, and that if they agree with the government, they should not need to be bullied and black-mailed by Messrs Hawke, Brown and Cain."

Bullied they were. Soon after McCallum wrote this, John Cain said he would "cut off at the socks" and "blow out of the water" any firm breaching Labor's building industry Code of Conduct.



Cain: savage threats to keep bosses solid

Considerable resistance to the Code had emerged. Major Melbourne builder Bruno Grollo was so worn down by battles with Labor over the BLF that he talked of retiring. The Becton group and Podgor had to be forced into line.

Of course other builders, like Costain, were keen on deregistration. Yet even Costain felt Labor's heavy hand. It was about to settle with crane occupiers at a Melbourne site. The police Special Operations Group, sent in to forestall a settlement, shoved aside a Costain boss who challenged them and arrested the occupiers.

Many on the left, perhaps recalling Marx's one-liner about

the state being the "executive committee of the ruling class," find this odd.

But capitalism is not a conspiracy and the state is not simply the executive committee of the employers. Capitalism is a system of cut-throat competition, and those who lose sight of their own longer-term interests. At times, the state must step in and tell them what is good for them. Labor, with few ties to particular bosses, often does this better than the Libs.

The ALP may be based on the unions, but it is based on their bureaucratic structures, which are largely integrated into the system. Labor always rules within the logic of the system. So it ends up attacking the class it claims to represent.

The attack on the BLF is part of Labor's broader plan for Australian capitalism. It aims to restructure industry through the steel, car and engineering plants. It wants to encourage new export industries. It has an important role for the unions.

The union bureaucracy of right, centre and fake-left is to be drawn into planning committees and so on. In return, it has to deliver industrial peace. The Accord is to hold down wages while profits soar.

Labor has been savage on any union, however small, challenging the Accord. It hammered the Food Preservers and the Furnishing Trades union.

The building industry was a bigger problem: a major industry with a union whose motto was "Dare to struggle, dare to win!" Corrupt, larmkin employers often did deals with it, in their haste to exploit the building boom which began in 1984.

The technocrats of the ALP and the ACTU were appalled by this. They were prepared to kick a few heads on both sides of the class line to get order.

Of course, Labor's actions against employers cannot compare with the fierce attacks on the BLF. Labor is committed to crush worker militancy in the building industry.

The vehicle is to be a new union, formed when the Building Workers Industrial Union and the Federated Engine Drivers amalgamate this year.

Having "carved up" BLF members, these unions even have plans for "re-educating"

them, with "meetings and seminars to foster a co-operative spirit". Bill Kelly wants the new union to follow the path of the now-tame Amalgamated Metal Worker Union.

These dreams of class peace have suffered some shocks. Unions engaged in the carve-up have fallen out, with the Australian Workers Union stopping concrete to five Sydney jobs over other unions' poaching "its" BLs. The Transport Workers and Federated Engine Drivers have differed in Canberra on similar grounds.

Such rivalries seem to have held up anti-BLF moves at the Portland smelter project in Victoria. The special site agreement and the exceptional unity among all unions there may also be a factor. So may Hawke's desire to sign up China's government as a partner there.

Of course, the main obstacle to Labor's plans remains the bitter resistance of builders labourers still loyal to their union.

SACKINGS

Blacklisted 15 fight on

"WE'VE been out since the St Valentine's massacre."

The picketer at Melbourne's Wheat Board site was referring to the day thousands of builders labourers were sacked, fighting for the last national wage rise.

Most BLs are now back at work. But Costain, contractor at seven city sites, blacklisted fifteen militants.

Locked out, the workers have picketed since February. Recently, they staged an occupation of two cranes, almost winning their jobs back until the Special Operations Group stepped in.

For months the boss denied any blacklist. Peter Voigt, shop steward at Banana Alley (Flinders St station project), refutes this. Despite Peter's 16 years with the company, a boss told the BWIU steward, "We don't care what ticket Peter Voigt gets. We'll never employ him again."

With Peter sacked, conditions at Banana Alley have deteriorated. Unsafe scaffolding, dangerously untidy work areas, a poorly set-up brick cutter are visible. Tradesmen worked a day with no water on the job, cause for an automatic stoppage previously.

Workers inside are starting to wake up. Electricians have blacked jobs over police on site. Plumbers have imposed bans in support of those sacked.

Solidarity is growing on other jobs. A hundred police broke the Wheat Board picket to bring in glass. The whole Lincon job across the road joined in the battle, with a carpenter and two plumbers among the ten arrested. The Furnishing Trades union has now blacked the job.

Costain is feeling the pressure. They have called into negotiations John Cummins of the BLF, a union which no longer legally exists.

"The boss says Cummins doesn't exist, but they want to speak to him," Peter Voigt says. "They know bloody well the BLF exists too."

THE TIMING was impeccable. As soon as the ACTU announced that the BLF had made itself unacceptable to the union movement, building workers from all trades at a Melbourne site joined a BLF picket.

In trying to stop a delivery of glass, plumbers and carpenters were arrested in defence of builders labourers. At rank and file level, the BLF is by no means isolated.

On March 11, Victorian minister Steve Crabb gave the BLF six weeks before it was wiped from the earth. Yet while many labourers in NSW, Victoria and Canberra have formally signed over to their assigned unions, the BLF is far from dead.

Labor planned to first crush the big city sites, then the suburbs and the country. Many early picket lines were swiftly defeated as no mass picketing was organised, and police had the numbers. But this was only the first battle.

Norm Gallagher told members to sign over if necessary, and go back to fight on the job, a move which by then had become inevitable.

The myth was now shattered that labourers only belonged to the BLF through intimidation. Thousands signed forms stating they had left the union only under duress. On many jobs they elected the old BLF steward as BWIU delegate.

Many city jobs still have not signed over.

The country did not follow as quickly as Labor planned. The militant Latrobe Valley only signed over four weeks after deregistration, and then only on BLF direction. Workers at Portland's Alcoa smelter have not yet been touched. The same applies to various NSW suburban and country sites.

Melbourne BLF organiser John Cummins thinks that Labor needed a quick victory to win. "On a protracted fight, they would acknowledge it."

A war of attrition is developing. Support is growing for the BLF among other building workers, while employers resent the continual disruption.

At Melbourne's Lincon site, all trades sat in the shed for three days until sacked shop steward John Loh was reinstated. At Truman's in Collins Street, the whole job stopped for 24 hours when police tried to raid a safety meeting. On returning, workers imposed bans which won back jobs of four victimised militants.

Despite the big stick, the BLF survives



Members of the BLF women's committee meet the press

John Cummins says that while many non-BLF unionists initially accepted their leaders' actions, "more and more they're seeing it's not just a question of approving or disapproving of the carve-up, but it's been a forerunner to an attack on their wages and conditions."

Some site allowances in Melbourne have fallen by over half. Workers are made to work in the wet. Asbestos is being removed without normal precautions. Electric leads lie in pools of water, and stairs are provided without handrails.

One foreman said, "There is no award any more. I can do what I like!"

Joint resistance is taking place. The National Convention Centre site in Canberra stopped for a day over safety, and two Melbourne sites did likewise over amenities.

BLF organisers led nominal BWIU members in Melbourne.

Support is growing in other industries. Wharfies' all day workers, teachers' at workplace meetings, Melbourne public servants picketed a Trades Hall meeting to oppose their union leaders' anti-BLF views.

At first, police were called whenever BLF organisers showed up. But workers repeatedly walked out. Where this happens, companies do not call the police again. BLF organisers have now attended hundreds of job meetings.

The situation seems less favourable in Sydney, but similar struggles are probably occurring unadvertised. Even when work is proceeding "normally", many places have virtual go-slows. Employers are feeling the strain.

The Master Builders said in March that many of them could not afford a long fight. Yet still, as John Cummins says, "There is a whole battleground bubbling out there."

— Janey Stone

SUPPORT

Wives dare to struggle, too

"I'D STRUGGLE with him all the way, if I can't, who can?"

So says the wife of a

Melbourne builders labourer, a member of the new BLF women's support committee. Sydney and Canberra have similar committees.

The committees aim to show that family members support the BLF's struggle. With the women publicly involved, it is much harder for the media to portray the workers as acting against their families' interests.

Still, families can find the situation hard. Many women, isolated at home, may find it hard to understand the issues.

In the Loy Yang lockout in 1984, one woman fed her family on just potatoes and baked beans for seventeen weeks. Things are not that stage yet. But over 80 families in Victoria are surviving only on relief money from the union.

Men in these families have been locked out since February. Black lists stop them getting other building jobs. They are denied the dole by legislation brought in by Fraser, and never repaid by Labor.

The Melbourne women's committee plans to help such families. In Canberra, distribution of food parcels and clothing has already begun.

Children have joined in. Two young boys, the sons and brother of BLs, turned away a truck at a Melbourne picket while the adults slept. In school holidays, several children spent time at the Banana Alley picket. They got an education in class struggle that no schooling could provide.

A teacher told the two boys off for picketing. The media attacked the Banana Alley BLs for involving children in a rough and political picket line. But children are involved automatically when their father is locked out and blacklisted.

When TV showed one picketer recently, his family got 17 abusive phone calls. A woman abused his wife in the supermarket. The children were spat on at school, and jeered at: "Your father's a BL. He's violent. Does he beat you up too?"

When friends don't understand, and strangers call you "scum" and "fucking bastard" and cross the street when they see you coming, you need support.

To counter this sort of pressure, family members need to be involved in the daily organising of the struggle. "At the BLF women's committee," one woman says, "we're all in the same position, all in together."

The BLF motto is "Dare to struggle, dare to win." The woman says, "We have dared to struggle alongside our husbands."

— Janey Stone

SOCIALIST ACTION — PAGE 11

BLF, Wellcome support

SOCIALIST Action has been busy supporting workers in struggle.

In Sydney, members have been on the Wellcome picket line, dodging "cowboy" cars and abusing scabs.

In Melbourne, members are active in the BLF support group. Our members in the St Kilda area are setting up a local BLF support group, and we have been visiting picket lines regularly to lend solidarity.

ALP school

THIRTY members and supporters attended Melbourne branch's day school on the ALP on May 24.

We heard Canberra member Rich Kuhn give an illuminating talk on the economics of Labor governments. A lively debate followed between Tom O'Lincoln and ALP member Dave Nadel on the value of working inside the ALP.

A Socialist Action fundraiser that night raised \$150 for the BLF.

Monash

SOCIALIST Action member Janey Stone spoke to an appreciative audience at Monash University last month on women's liberation and socialism.

Janey discussed the differences in oppression between working class women and those of other classes. She argued that liberation will be achieved not by organizing separately, but by women participating and playing a leading role in the class struggle and the revolutionary movement.

Also at Monash, Socialist Action's John Fassant told 250 protesters against Prince Philip that the royal parasite was getting an honorary doctorate merely for marrying the world's richest woman.

Socialist Action members at Monash are currently agitating for a library occupation in protest at the university's library cutbacks and sackings.

Canberra

SOCIALIST Action is now holding weekly meetings in Canberra. Readers and supporters in the ACT are welcome to attend. They are at 6 pm each Thursday in the Blair Room of the Workers' Club in Civic.

INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLE



Don't railroad us, say V/Line workers

"WE ARE in a growth business. At the moment we employ too many people to do the job and we can't go on like that if V/Line is to develop."

So says Len Harper, a V/Line general manager, about plans for extensive cuts to Victoria's railways.

Six thousand jobs will go and cuts in railway tracks will mean the closure of lines. Freight wagons will be cut by a third and most country passenger services will go to road transport.

The belt tightening does not apply to management. Melbourne's administration is now as large as for the whole state four years ago. The division which produces propaganda for the railways has grown fourfold.

V/Line is particularly concerned with its image. According to Len Harper it is "a business not a welfare organisation."

He wants to have customers "walking around saying: Gee that was good service. Gee, that train was clean. Great to see the train was on time. Gosh, the catering staff was good." But consider what an internal situation statement said on the subject of cleanliness:

"The number of complaints received each week regarding the cleanliness of trains varies from zero to a maximum of seven."

V/Line will not do anything about filthy trains (cleaning has been reduced) unless people write

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letters.

Labour and Industry minister, Steve Crabb, has declared that retrenchments have never been contemplated. But rail unionists know a snow-job when they see one.

Action started last October when transport unions were told that they would have to accept the consequences of a budget cut of \$30.5 million.

The first of these cuts was to be the axing of 105 station assistants. The Australian Railways Union responded with an indefinite strike. A mass meeting voted to go back to work after six days, and to commence a combined unions campaign of guerrilla tactics.

The following week workers marched on parliament, where they voiced their anger when union officials tried to send them back to work.

In December the government launched its attack on the shunters, the most militant section of the railways, by paring back overtime.

Overtime in most sections of the railways is compulsory and the shunters naturally made commitments based on their regular wage. The loss of overtime means a loss of up to \$150 a week, a direct attack on living standards.

The shunters responded with work bans and then a one day strike. When they went back to work, the shunters in the freight section found themselves locked out unless they agreed to lift bans. They refused and many trains were locked up in the yards, severely affecting passenger services.

Management then launched a propaganda war in which the

shunters were depicted as bludgers who wanted to get paid for not working.

A compromise is being worked out in the arbitration commission. Shunters expect to get an allowance to make up for loss of overtime, but details are not yet settled. There is no guarantee shunters will get a reasonable amount.

The Cain government wants to keep the rail workers tied up in court while it deals with the BLF.

Its industrial approach was made clear on Channel 9 in November:

"A secret war is established. The leadership of the unions involved is analysed and a series of contingency plans drafted to beat every possible move to escalate the dispute."

The Australian Railways Union has responded in a piecemeal way and seems to be orientated to powerless, high-level committees and reliance on arbitration. It encourages only sectional and limited industrial action. Yet all of Melbourne's public transport unions are under attack. Only a united and militant response will succeed.

— Christine Clifford

DEFEND THE BLF
Demonstrate:

Master Hotel's Dinner
Hilton Hotel, E. Melbourne
7 pm, Friday June 13

ALP Victorian Conference
Essendon Community Centre
9 am, Saturday, June 21

Called by BLF
Defence Committee

INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLE

SYDNEY

No Wellcome for militants

SACKED workers have been on an angry 24-hour picket of the Wellcome drugs factory at Rosebery in Sydney.

Trouble began last year, when Wellcome decided to relocate to Carbarita in Sydney's outer west. Employees unable or unwilling to move would be sacked. For eight months, Wellcome refused to negotiate a retrenchment and relocation claim.

In April, the workers struck. A week later, Wellcome sacked them all — and advertised their jobs. Strikers could apply if they signed a no-strike undertaking. Forty-seven militants refused, but a minority returned to work alongside staff and Clerks Union labour.

Still out were metal workers, storeman and packers, process workers, plumbers and electricians.

They accepted an arbitration recommendation to return to work if Wellcome withdrew the sackings and negotiated. When the workers tried to return, they were locked out.

Police cleared the picket lines to let in seven semi-trailers. Police and security guards now patrol constantly. But the picket has persuaded several trucks to turn back since.

After eight weeks on strike pay, the picket is holding up well. Scabs are angrily reminded that they are betraying their class. Picketers use megaphones to address them in several languages.

The Wellcome militants need funds to continue their campaign. Send donations to Wellcome Dispute Committee, C/-AMWU, PO Box 206, Strawberry Hills 2012.

— Dorothy Morgan

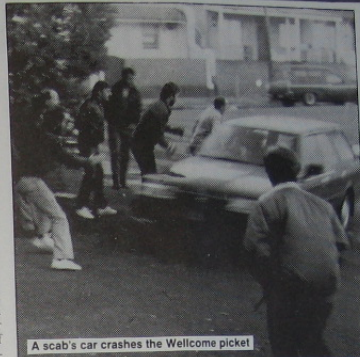
KAMBALDA

Nickel bosses knuckled

NICKEL workers at Kambalda, WA, have won a retrenchment deal from the conservative stalwarts of Western Mining.

When WM sacked 190 workers without notice, unionists set up a Combined Unions Committee with full support from the Kambalda community. Then they went on strike.

West Australian workers fed Kambalda, near Kalgoorlie, for



A scab's car crashes the Wellcome picket

six weeks. Over \$100,000 poured into the town.

Allan Hutchinson, ex-secretary of the Combined Unions Committee, said the strike was won by intense unity not seen for a long time. But as an AWU member he was sorry that the AWU hierarchy performed badly. He criticised them for not supporting the strike, and for suggesting an independent arbitrator to Premier Brian Burke without first consulting members.

After a six week strike, company directors, gathered in Perth for the funeral of a crony, ordered a settlement. Detested Western Mining officer Stan Carter had to make a deal with the unions.

— Sue Donnelly

BROKEN HILL

Back to 1919, say owners

THE SLUMP in the world mineral market is behind the big miners' lock-out at Broken Hill.

Proposed new work patterns, which threaten health and safety, are the immediate causes of the dispute, which has seen 1100 locked out and a thousand others face stand downs.

Lead and zinc mining at Broken Hill are in big trouble. World prices are low and falling, and the ore is running out. So the owners want three shifts a day and weekend rosters, night-work in the stopes (timber-supported shafts), and a return to underground, and a return to explosives-use procedures abolished after the great 1919 strike.

The bosses have broken a

three-year deal signed in 1984, threatened to sack 750 miners, and asked the NSW Industrial Commission for an award.

Broken Hill has always relied on union-management agreements struck outside Arbitration. A meeting of 2000 miners almost unanimously rejected the award, so the companies promptly locked out the underground miners. Then it set about standing down surface workers.

With the industry in a slump, the companies are in no rush to re-open the mines as long as they are properly maintained. So the workers need an alternative to just sitting it out.

They could, for instance, occupy the mines to prevent maintenance. They could help with other workers: the Miners Federation has offered already, and Port Pirie smelter workers in SA, who process Broken Hill ore, are a possibility.

But while union leaders dither with legal appeals, and wonder about those locked out drawing holiday pay, vital chances have been lost.

— Graham Willett

MONASH

Uni devalues library staff

THE AUSTRALIAN dollar is falling. And as usual, workers are paying. Monash University in Victoria has sacked all its casual library workers, and will not replace any permanent who leave.

The Monash library spends \$7 million yearly on new books. The devalued dollar supposedly caught it unawares, leaving it

\$1.3 million over budget. But the university still found money to put on a lavish do for Prince Philip a week before the sackings.

One library worker said, "If one person leaves, others will get, say, a quarter of their work each. Staff, many of whom are overworked already, will get disillusioned and leave too. You will have a snowball effect."

The university has cut funding for book orders for the Main Library from 35,000 volumes to 3,200. Other libraries on campus have had their book buying funds cut completely. All libraries will close on Saturdays.

At the start of the year, Monash held \$432,517 worth of Commonwealth Securities and \$980,163 worth of shares. Sale of these assets would cover the library shortfall. But capitalism always puts profit before people. Staff and students will hold meetings this month to consider action. Staff want to keep existing job levels, and students want continuing university services. A joint campaign is essential.

— John Fassant

GOVT CLERKS

Ructions on Day of Action

THE DAY of Action called by the ACTU on May 26 over the National Wage Case delays was a purely token effort. But it produced ructions in the public service unions.

In Sydney, ACOA and APSA members voted to go out for the afternoon on the APSA executive's recommendation, despite the pained looks of most ACOA leaders.

In Victoria and Canberra, ACOA officials called no branch-wide, or open building, meetings. Individual delegates were to hold meetings in their offices. The Public Service Board then directed that meetings could not be held on Commonwealth property, and that union discussions could not come to discussion. (They never intended to, anyway.)

In several Canberra buildings, militant delegates ignored the ACOA and held joint meetings.

The one in the Edmund Street building, for example, rejected building for a moment request to leave a managers. It then carried a rank-and-file motion 68-2 demanding national branch-wide stopwork meetings in a fortnight to discuss real action if the wage hold-ups still had not ceased.

— Rick Kuhn

ONE WOMAN for one man for one lifetime. This is God's ideal for mankind."

So says US fundamentalist Jerry Falwell, arguing that unrestricted sexuality undermines the family and society.

Falwell has a point. The family is a key prop to this *exploitative and authoritarian society*. "The foremost breeding place of the ideological atmosphere of conservatism is the authoritarian family," wrote psychologist Wilhelm Reich.

In feudal times and in early capitalism, the family was the basic economic unit, as it still is today among small farmers and traders. As industry grew, production shifted to the factory. The family's role changed, as Reich comments:

"Its immediate economic basis became less significant... its place was taken by the political function which the family now began to assume... that of serving as a factory for authoritarian ideologies and conservative structures."

Conformity, discipline, respect for authority — all of these are instilled by the family (aided today by the schools and media).

WHY IS the family associated with sexual repression? The growth of private property had a lot to do with it.

As men began to control property and pass it on to their sons, wives "fidelity" became essential. How else could a man ensure his own son was inheriting it? But monogamy meant repressing women's sexuality, and that had to start in childhood.

Sexual repression of men also enforces monogamy. But as women bear children, their "fidelity" was especially important: thus the famous "double standard".

For women to endure oppressive relationships throughout their lives, they must learn to reject their own sexuality. The extreme form of this is "frigidity". Sexual repression also helps produce authoritarian personalities: people who are dependent, afraid of authority, and willing to oppress those below them. Power relations in the typical family, with the father at the head, weaves in with sexual repression to form people who "fit" into capitalist society.

The other side of capitalist morality is prostitution. Normally, women are more completely repressed sexually, while men are often conditioned to see sex as an exploitative act. This creates a demand, and the supply arises among the poorest women in society. Poverty, and



What is the party line on love?

women's lower wages, help provide a ready supply of prostitutes.

THE "permissive revolution," however, was no real revolution, but the product of an over-ripe capitalism.

Capitalism arose with a "puritan revolution". The ideology of hard work, thrift, limited pleasure and morality suited the rising middle class. The bourgeoisie arose at the decadence of the aristocrats they replaced at the top of society.

Once in control, the capitalists took their morality less seriously. As early as 1848, Karl Marx pointed out the orgasmic habits of French bankers.

Still, they recommended sobriety and chastity to the masses. Asexually repressed working class was less likely to rebel. Today, though, capitalism itself undermines this bulwark of conservatism.

Western society today is visibly decaying. Human relationships are becoming intolerably tense, and the family is cracking.

made it a duty. Most women in hip circles have encountered the line that amounts to, "If you don't sleep with me, you're not liberated." Frigidity went out, but orgasm became *compulsory* for women: two-thirds of women surveyed by *Psychology Today* had faked orgasm.

GENUINE sexual liberation must accompany a major change in the social order. Revolutionaries have not always understood this.

Marx was so embarrassed that Engels "lived in sin" with a woman that he would not have them around with other guests. Lenin rightly condemned bourgeois hypocrisy over prostitution, but took a puritan attitude to sex. Who, he asked, wanted to drink "out of a glass with a rim greasy with many lips"?

Nonetheless, the Bolsheviks passed many liberal laws. Marriage was made a matter of simple registration, and was not essential. Divorce was as easy. Abortion and contraception were made freely available, homosexuality and incest were legalised. The Bolsheviks aimed to establish nurseries, communal dining rooms, and to collectivise housework.

But the Bolsheviks only partly understood the psychological and social aspects of women's liberation, as Lenin's remark shows. Confusion resulted: "You cannot 'abolish' the family," pointed out Trotsky, "you have to replace it."

Alexandra Kolontai went furthest of the Bolsheviks, writing on free love and sexual liberation. Wilhelm Reich, who in his early life was a revolutionary both politically and in his ideas on psychology and sexuality, produced works including *Sexual Psychology of Fascism*.

Confusion on the Left about sexual liberation worsened a hundredfold when Stalinism rose in Russia. "rehabilitating" the family and reviving puritanism in the Communist movement. The German Communist Party, for example, expelled Wilhelm Reich in 1933.

Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation undid much of this damage in the early seventies. Marxists must develop those contributions and integrate them into our social outlook.

We stand for the individual's right to complete freedom of sexual expression (including the right *not* to have unwanted sex). Socialism, as Marx argued, must be a "fully developed humanism". It must be *sex-affirming*.

— Maria Gullotti

France's poisoned reign in the Pacific

Poisoned Reign by B & M Danielsson (Penguin) \$10

FRENCH Polynesia is a tropical paradise, with happy carefree natives and benevolent white protectors. At least, that is the fairytale spun by French governments, both Gaullist and Socialist.

The reality is more like a nuclear nightmare. *Poisoned Reign* is a chilling and readable account of French imperialism in the Pacific, constructed by Bengt and Marie-Therese Danielsson from available documents and their own observations.

The Danielssons have lived in Tahiti since the War, and have observed the evolution of French colonialism in the islands. Their closeness to the politics and their willingness to take a stand for independence and against weapons testing give their book a personal touch that is inspiring.

The underground test last September was France's 120th nuclear explosion in the Pacific since 1966. France does not need these tests. Ten years ago, when in opposition, Francois Mitterrand denounced the test program as a waste of time and militarily useless.

France's atomic weapons are pop-guns compared to the vast arsenals America and Russia have in Europe. France can never catch up, and is in the arms race merely for international prestige.

France, America and Britain have made over 200 atmospheric and underground tests in or close to the Pacific basin in the last



Danielssons: taking a stand

thirty years. The whole Pacific region has been polluted with the fallout.

Strontium-90 and caesium-137, both with half-lives of over twenty years, have been found in large quantities in fish, crabs and squid, integral parts of the diet of Pacific islanders. Migratory fish such as tuna are also heavily dosed, and can even find their way onto supermarket shelves.

Poisoned Reign pieces together a remarkable cover-up of French activity in the region. French dirty tricks have included the Rainbow Warrior bombing in July 1985, and the cold-blooded murder of Kanak socialist leader Eloi Machoro in New Caledonia.

Over 30,000 French people have been settled in French Polynesia since nuclear testing began in 1966. Most are associated with the military, and from the back bone of the support for testing in the islands.

Tahitian political leaders have complained for years about this. The settlers vote in local elections, distorting the free feeling against the tests. Bengt Danielsson says that in the last election, the anti-test forces got 45,000 out of a possible 75,000 votes.

Because of official censorship

in all electronic media and the lack of alternative news outlets, French government claims are often hard to refute. But in *Poisoned Reign*, they are all laid out and dissected.

Despite local leaders being goaded, excited, bribed, threatened and silenced, opposition to the testing units the Polynesians. All major local parties support independence and want a referendum on the nuclear tests. Even the pro-Gaullist deputy, Gaston Clouffe, is forced to support these demands, to his obvious discomfort.

There is little in the way of a working class in Polynesia, even on Tahiti, the largest island, and the Polynesian Socialist Party is a small recent addition to the scene. Unfortunately, the Danielssons do not detail the politics of the left very well.

Poisoned Reign is a powerful argument against the testing of nuclear weapons, and it underlines the courage of the Polynesian people. At present, the islanders do not have the muscle to evict the French. But as New Caledonia shows, this situation is by no means permanent.

Here in Australia, we can help their struggle. Not with the weak Nuclear Free Pacific Treaty, which does nothing to stop French testing, but by international trade union action against imperialists of all stripes and (tricolours).

— Michael Hudson

TELEVISION

Perfect schmaltz

OKAY! So I watch *Perfect Match*. In fact I almost never miss it. Okay, so it's sexist bullshit. There's no doubt about that.

First, there's the fact that spiffy Tiffany Lamb pops out as the co-star of the show to bob and curtsy in her latest quack creation, while a man handles the 'serious' compering.

Then there's the tits-and-bums, Frankie Howerd style humour that is written into the questions. Finish this question, "How would you like a big —?" It's like watching a *Carry On* movie, except that the cast is made up of the nerds in your office or a selection of your old school chums.

I'm told by someone who tried to get on the show that all the

questions are pre-rehearsed and the answers are vetted by a professional comedian (J). Then it's Greg Evans' job to try to make the two non-match contestants look like dummies so that the correct Mr Right / Ms Right gets chosen.

In other words, the show is as real as *Wrestlemania*. Instead of fake forearm jugs, we get the tired old Hollywood myth of the one perfect partner, to be half-Nelsoned and pinned for ever and ever.

So why do I watch it? Here's one theory. You remember *Safe-way New Faces*? It was the show where 'new talent' would audition in front of a bunch of has-beens led by Bert Newton (the Pope's answer to Dr. Oz). I remember some TV critic once said that the reason people watched that show was not out of some idealistic desire to see a new star get the 'big break'. They watched it to see the bad acts!

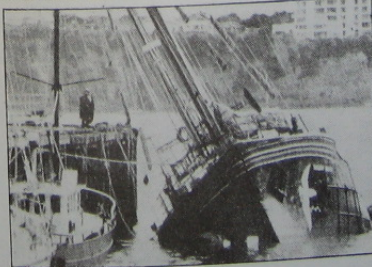
They wanted to see some dull make a total idiot out of him/herself. Then the viewer can muse "Well, I may be all kinds of halfwit but at least I'm not dumb enough to do that and embarrass myself". It helps you to feel superior.

And since we don't often feel fulfilled in this society, feeling superior is just about the only joy left to us.

I wonder how many people really look forward to seeing someone match up 'perfectly' on *Perfect Match*? Personally, my thrill is from the vicarious revenge I get when some jerk who usually already has a boyfriend/girlfriend (the greedy bastard) gets bucketed on national TV.

Sick, isn't it? But it makes me laugh — even if the laughter is as hollow as everything else that *Perfect Match* stands for.

— Mark Matcott



The Rainbow Warrior: French dirty tricks



Chaperone Tiffany Lamb

Sport: Why we lose our heads

SOCCKER'S World Cup had not even begun. Yet Portugal's squad was on strike, and Mexico City's earthquake homeless were planning a march against their government's priorities.

Meanwhile, the hypocrites who once cried "keep politics out of sport" were suspending Ian Botham from cricket for pot-smoking.

Sport is certainly "politicised". But is it political? Why do events like the World Cup engross millions?

Trotsky called sport a diversion from politics. Orwell, himself a handy centre-forward, called it "war minus the shooting". Both had a point.

Yet neither explained much. Workers soon tire of bosses' wars; sport has thrilled them for a century. Music, films, sex, books all divert us from politics. Yet all are vehicles for politics too, and socialists take them very seriously.

SPORT has existed since tribal times, at first as training for war.

American Indians played a brutal form of lacrosse, which the Cherokeees dubbed "little brother of war". Genghis Khan's men played polo with a goat's carcass.

Medieval monarchs had a different view. They banned all sports, as distractions from archery practice. Only with the advent of gunpowder could sport revive.

Sport became a mass phenomenon last century. Capitalism drew millions into the cities, where sedentary labour created a physical need for active recreation. Alienation — workers' loss of control over their products — created a psychological need, too, for an activity in which one's own efforts controlled one's results.

But it was not capitalism's concern for workers' health that caused sport to take off. Three other events were crucial.

First, Britain's public schools introduced compulsory sport to instill a "muscular Christianity" into the nation's future rulers. Then, the working class won the free Saturday afternoon in the 1850s, and celebrated by embracing sport. Finally, Britain consciously spread its games overseas to create cultural ties for the Empire.

West Indian cricket writer and Marxist historian CLR James explained how sport reflected values of every social class. It combined the athleticism of the gentry, the patriotism and rewards-for-effort ethic of the middle class,



Uruguayan soccer player makes the ultimate sacrifice for the team

and the hand-eye skills and strength of manual workers.

This can be a two-edged sword, though. CLR James aroused broad West Indian sentiment for independence, by campaigning for Frank Worrell to become the nation's first non-white cricket captain in 1960.

Private ownership of teams, currently a source of angst in Aussie Rules circles, is another front for struggle in America, where top baseball has been "corporate-owned" since last century, players twice set up their own leagues in the 1990s. Both times, the owners crushed them by blacking out press coverage. Player strikes are still common today.

Sports pros rarely become as well-organised as other entertainers, however. Unlike the stage, sport is not a career for life. Actors Equity gets its militancy from the vast army of intermittently employed support actors, a layer that the sporting world scarcely has.

For the upper classes, sport is an arena for self-promotion and affirming status. Racehorse owners patronise trainers and jockeys. Businessmen run football clubs. Cigarette companies sponsor cricket. Alan Bond says that even his failed America's Cup attempts paid for

themselves by making him known in the world's money capitals. At the base, sport remains a relatively democratic institution. Thousands of local clubs are run by players and ex-players, their equipment the property of all.

This structure makes the actual playing of most traditional sports difficult to exploit for profit. In the last thirty years, however, we have seen increasing privatisation of "new" sports — squash courts, ten-pin bowling, fitness gyms — with participants paying a form of "rent" to private owners to play. With the boom in indoor cricket, the trend has spread to team sports.

COME THE revolution, will sport slowly die? Some socialists believe so. In a society based on co-operation, they argue, competitive games will be a quaint anachronism. People may run and swim to keep fit, but doing it in competition with others will seem pointless, even reactionary. At most, people might compete against themselves, striving to do better.

Such predictions may be right. But I doubt it. Socialism will create more leisure time, and more opportunity for sport to be played. It is unlikely that people will all head for the gyms and swimming pools ahead of the more social sports. With society stripped of the more odious forms of competition — economic, military, academic, job — we may well find the relatively harmless competition of games less repulsive. (Just as the collapse of feudalism removed the irksome associations of gardening and handicrafts, and allowed them to become mass leisure activities.)

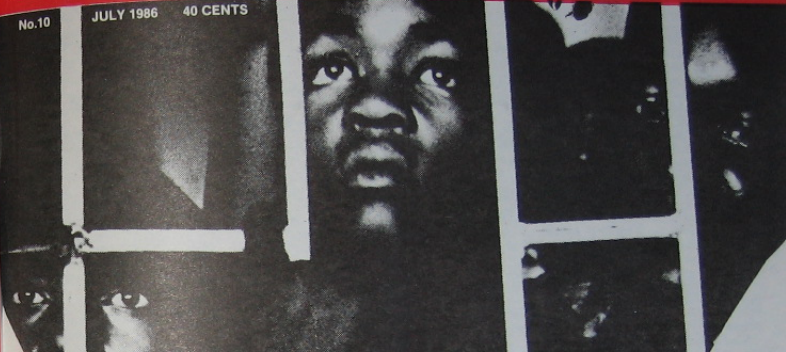
Until we can develop a socialist culture of sport, we have one example to inspire us. In 1925, 1931 and 1937, the European Left, opposed to the elitism and nationalism of the Olympics, organised its own Workers' Olympics. These were open to all. The best of them, at Vienna in 1931, drew 100,000 worker-athletes and 250,000 spectators.

Think of that as we endure another America's Cup. When we can organise Workers' World Cups and Workers' Olympics on such a scale of participation, we will really be getting somewhere.



with Alec Kahn

SOCIALIST ACTION

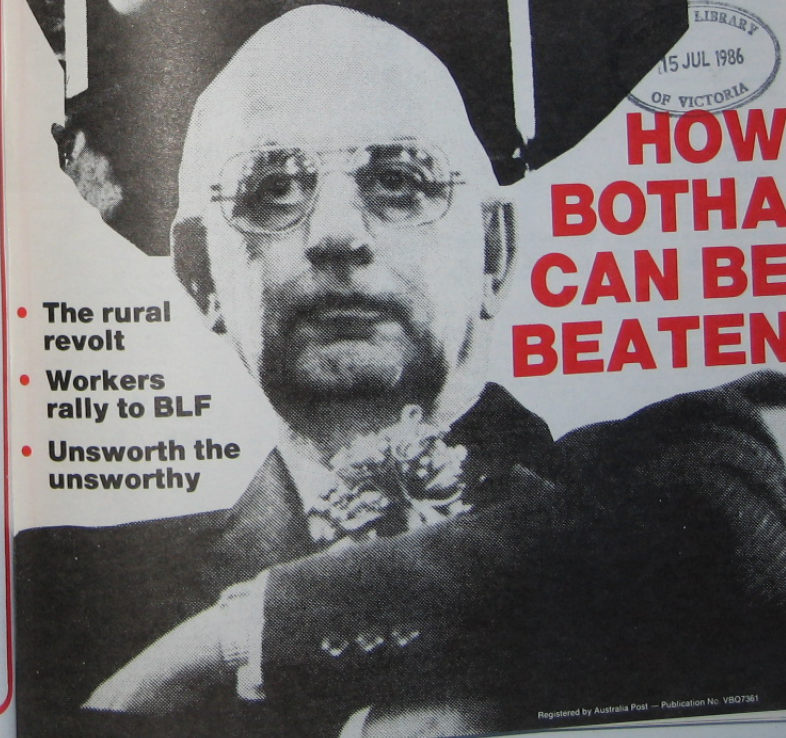


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HOW BOTH CAN BE BEATEN

- The rural revolt
- Workers rally to BLF
- Unsworth the unworthy



CHERNOBYL

Nukes in West caught out

TRUST the nuclear industry? Sure can't.

A new West German nuclear reactor at Hamm, in North Rhine-Westphalia, leaked radioactivity on May 4, at the height of the Chernobyl furore. So the consortium running it dishonestly blamed the high radiation level in Hamm on the Russians. An independent inquiry found that 70% of the radiation in the area had nothing to do with Chernobyl. Now the reactor is closed for "a routine inspection". With West Germany undergoing wild anti-nuclear protests, the state government is looking at a permanent shutdown.

As for "expert" reassurances that Western reactors are much safer than Chernobyl — don't believe them.

Washington's Nuclear Information and Resource Service, an anti-nuclear body, has revealed that Chernobyl's containment walls that blew up were built to resist pressure of 27 psi. Ten reactors in the US, each producing weapons-grade plutonium, are designed to resist only 12 psi.

REBEL TOUR

5 fined for cricket picket

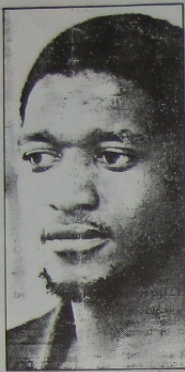
"THE ONLY difference between South African and Australian law is in the public relations... As soon as you stand up against the 'heroes', you cop it."

Those were the bitter words of Soweto-born Glen Mashinini, after he and four other protesters were fined 50 dollars each last month for trespass. The five had demonstrated against cricket mercenary Kim Hughes last October at a Perth match.

The magistrate fully accepted the police evidence, despite contradictions in basic facts. Some police said protesters were told to stay behind a white line, others swore it was a black line. The protesters believe the line did not exist.

The protesters said that police instructions about where they could stand were confusing, and in most cases police warnings were not given. An independent journalist supported this evidence, only to be ridiculed in the magistrate's decision.

The protesters later found that the magistrate used to play cricket for Hughes' club.



Glen Mashinini, fined for protest

Glen Mashinini, whose family left their shanty in Soweto six years ago hoping to find democracy in Australia, was scathing.

"The guy I peacefully demonstrated against is probably lying around some swimming pool now with his \$200,000 while I have to pay a \$50 fine.

"The farmers can protest all they like in public places and as business men. They don't get arrested. It's so ironic that when I was being arrested, the Prime Minister was travelling around the world talking about Australia's abhorrence of apartheid."

QUEENSLAND

Joh's big day a dud

THE REST of Australia scarcely noticed, but June 6 was Queensland Day. According to Job Bjelke-Petersen, it was a day to commemorate "the opening up of the land".

Predictably, Aborigines were not recognized in this history and were not included in the celebrations. In fact, for most of the day, it was a normal workday and their involvement amounted to watching the Queensland of the Year ceremony on TV.

While the state's parasites wined and dined at the ceremony, about 600 protesters held alternative celebrations across the road. Speakers included Aboriginal activist Bob Weatherall and a spokesperson from the Union of Supporting Parents.

The protesters voted to march

to the Crest Hotel and present a letter to the Queensland of the Year, liver transplant specialist Dr Russell Strong, calling on him to fight the government's oppression. The cops moved in and Socialist Action member Julia Reid was arrested. The group then moved to the Queen Street mall where another protester was arrested for "delivering a public address". The spirit that has made Queensland what it is today is indeed alive and well in 1986.

On the same day, former head of the Queensland Day Committee, Judith Callaghan, appeared in court on a charge of "dishonestly applying to her own use" \$48,303.63 of Queensland Day Funds. She is married to the premier's former press secretary and friend, Allen Callaghan, the man who created the 'Joh' image.

In court, Judith wore the official Queensland Day emblem to mark the state's celebrations. Our nomination for Queensland of the Year!

EXPLOITATION

Perth pub cops a serve

THE USE of "see-thru", topless and even naked barmaids in pubs is one of the grosser types of sexual exploitation around.

So picketers tackled a Perth pub that specialises in the practice last month.

Forty supporters of the Campaign Against Sexual Exploitation (CASE), including several barmaids, picketed the Commercial Tavern in Midland.

If workers wish to wear "see-thru" clothes as a matter of personal preference, that is one thing. But the Commercial pubs clothed barmaids just a quarter of the rates of unclothed barmaids for the same work.

The aim is clear: to use women as sex objects to sell more beer. Only women with "Hollywood stereotype" bodies get the \$40 an hour unclothed jobs. Such women have very short careers, and when the alternative is bar-maiding on very average rates, they have little real choice.

To counter the picketer's charges of sexism, the Commercial hired a token male in a G-string for the day. The play fooled no-one.

The picket would have been even stronger if CASE had managed to involve barmaids from the Commercial. But it seems to have overlooked this aspect.

CASE wants legislation on

the following lines to protect barmaids from pressure to work semi-naked: "That people be attired for their task, without special conditions being attached to dress which are unrelated to task performance."

THE RIGHT

Freedom, Liberal style

"WORK is Freedom". Thus read the signs above the entrances to Nazi concentration camps.

The authors of those signs would approve of the Liberal student paper *Student Times*.

Once you wade past the praise of Ronnie Raygun and the cricketer mercenaries and get to page 16, you will be delighted to learn that the world is not such a bad place.

There we find the Liberal-geopolitical division of the world into free, partly free, and not free.

Needless to say, the Russian bloc is not free. So much for the bad news. Now for the good news.

Egypt, where 107 demonstrating police conscripts were shot dead by helicopter gunships, has since Nixon's visit there become partly free. In Chile, the relatives of the 30,000 victims of the junta will be glad to learn that they too are partly free.

The good news continues in Turkey, where tens of thousands of political detainees enjoy partial freedom.

And so on, throughout the American bloc. Finally we arrive at the southern tip of Africa, where 20 million Africans enjoy partial freedom.

They will be glad to hear that the process of reform toward complete freedom has been started... by President Botha.



COVER STORY

South Africa: How the regime is hanging on

FOR SOME time now, we and others have been saying that the white regime in South Africa has nowhere to go. It cannot hand out any more reforms, we said, and it is unable to move back to pure repression.

We were wrong. In fact, the regime has done both. In nearly two years of escalating violence, predictions of imminent change have been two a penny. The South African government has faced one 'turning-point' (or 'watershed' or 'point of no return') after another. Two years later, the violence continues. And so does the regime.

It survives by implementing non-fundamental reforms (which give the US and British ruling classes an excuse for not imposing sanctions) on the one hand, and imposing the sharpest repression on the other. The current struggle was sparked off in protest against such 'reforms'. It began as a boycott movement against the Indian and 'coloured' chambers of parliament. Despite the success of that movement, state president Botha continued with his 'reforms'. He announced on television in May:

"Influx control has been abolished. The pass laws have gone. The prisons have been emptied of the victims of this unhappy system. A new era of freedom has begun."

All of which was clearly meaningless and unacceptable to the black population. But it was substantial enough to unleash a significant new anti-racist white backlash against Botha.

THE OBJECT of Botha's exercise was to bring together a privileged layer of blacks who would have some stake in, and be tied to, the system.

It was not without success. One source of potential collaborators was the members of the Indian and coloured parliaments. Another was the local councillors. Another was Chief Buthelez's 'Smother the Front (UDF), from the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses, from the End Conscription Campaign. All political meetings have been banned — except, significantly, one organised by Inkatha.

The whole scheme was endangered by the radical opposition to the system from the black unions and community



groups. Their continuing demonstrations, and the increasing number of public executions of collaborators, made collaboration an unattractive option. The South African state readied itself for a crackdown. Firstly, together with Inkatha and the squatter wardlows (all of whom are extremely rich), it unleashed a wave of violence against the radicals in the townships. Scores of paid vigilantes, led by white police, drove out the radicals and physically destroyed their bases of support.

Next came the state of emergency. From June 12, the police could detain anyone indefinitely, without charge. They proceeded to do so. Thousands have been rounded up — from the unions, from the United Democratic Front (UDF), from the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses, from the End Conscription Campaign. All political meetings have been banned — except, significantly, one organised by Inkatha.

The media, both internal and external, has been silenced by the threat of film confiscation,

while pleading for their release, because the arrests had led to a "collapse of established labour practices" and had left workers "disoriented and leaderless".

The workers' movement is intact and still capable of fighting. The purely political movement however, seems considerably weakened.

The political movement's voices — those of Tutu, Boesak and the rest — have expressed condemnation, horror and defiance. But none of them has shown leadership. None of them has suggested how the movement can go forward, how it can get out of the present situation.

For the moment, everyone seems to be pinning their hopes on sanctions. From Malcolm Fraser (who wants them in order to keep South Africa in the western sphere of influence), to Winnie Mandela (who wants them to bring down the system), sanctions are the go.

If the west were really to impose sanctions, it would be a tremendous boost to the morale of the opposition in South Africa. They are quite right to demand them, and we should press for them.

They will not, however, bring down the system in South Africa. When Britain imposed sanctions against rebellious, white-dominated Rhodesia, all sorts of companies found all sorts of ways to get around them. Within South Africa itself, there are sections of the ruling class that would welcome sanctions against rebellious, white-dominated Rhodesia, all sorts of companies found all sorts of ways to get around them. Within South Africa itself, there are sections of the ruling class that would welcome sanctions against rebellious, white-dominated Rhodesia, all sorts of companies found all sorts of ways to get around them.

THE FORCES that can destroy apartheid remain within South Africa. No amount of international pressure can alter that fact.

Within South Africa, the opposition can no longer rely on the sanctions, or negotiations, or the power of prayer. The regime has proved itself more than capable of a tenacious survival.

They way forward is to take the 'great power' of the working class and fuse it with the radicals in the townships. It is to unite the economic demands of the black unions with the political demands of the opposition.

For this, the leadership of revolutionaries is needed. Until that leadership emerges, the movement will remain where it is, and may eventually stagnate.

— David Lockwood



IT IS 10.30 on a Saturday night towards the end of June, six months since print workers on Rupert Murdoch's News International staff were thrown out of their jobs.

Since January, picketers have marched to the barbed wire barricades around "Fortress Wapping" to block the delivery trucks' exits.

There are several exits to the plant, and the thousand or so demonstrators who have marched from the Tower of London are now split up between them.

If the trucks could be stopped, Murdoch's profits would really be hurt. You can sell coal mined yesterday later, but not a newspaper produced yesterday. But though the pickets have sometimes delayed the trucks, they haven't been strong enough to stop them.

The forces that the state has mobilised behind Murdoch are massive. Hundreds of police are at each entrance. In front, police on foot (with one solitary black copper amongst them at our entrance), behind them a solid lineup of dozens of mounted police; and behind them again, just visible, are the roofs of the vehicles carrying police in full riot gear.

The comrades I'm with say they're not using Specials any



Picketeer bashed by police

At Fortress Wapping, Dirty Digger digs in

IN BRITAIN'S biggest industrial showdown since the Miners' Strike, five thousand sacked printers are in the sixth month of their fight for re-employment by the "Dirty Digger", newspaper boss Rupert Murdoch. From their picket line at Murdoch's new Wapping plant, CAROLE FERRIER reports.

more, like in the Miners' Strike, but newly trained not police. They are possibly more dangerous, because they panic. And it is rumoured that tear gas or plastic bullets could be used at any time. Already "secondary pickets" or black-bans are illegal, and a new Public Order Bill will soon further restrict legal solidarity action.

RUPERT MURDOCH launched his full-on attack on union organisation and power in January.

The introduction of new technology led to the sacking of the printers on the Murdoch-owned *Sun*, *News Of The World*, *Times* and *Sunday Times*. Because the new technology at Wapping is direct-input typesetting, this did away with traditional printers' jobs. Journalists took over work the printers formerly did.

One right-wing union scabbed on the strike, recruiting and training workers to run the presses and machinery. The weak journalists' union did little to support the printers.

The *Sun* is one of Murdoch's biggest money-makers. Its jingoism and chauvinism go far beyond anything we've seen in

So Murdoch has been allowed to make the running for the smashing of the NGA, and the weakening of other print unions' ability to fight. Fellow press baron Robert Maxwell has sacked 2000 workers on the *Mirror*, and all the other Fleet Street employers have benefited.

ON THE DOCKS, outside Fortress Wapping, it's cold even in the middle of summer. About 10.45, the cars of the journalists leave in convoy and are bused.

Several ambulances begin to move down the road in the direction of the other entrance. It looks as though the print trucks will come out there. We begin to move back that way.

At the other exit, the police have just arrested SOGAT official, Mike Hicks. Unfortunately, disobeying the odd injunction is about as far as the officials will go.

On previous nights, there have been major confrontations. After May Day, for example, 15,000 were made to leave the dock picketed and were attacked by police. On other occasions, rangings have been ordered and picketers hospitalised. Tonight, the trucks drive through and only a few police move forward out of the entrances.

Effective mass picketing and generalising the struggle, especially to Fleet Street, are still the only strategies that can turn the tide at Wapping. They would mean going right outside the law.

Instead of giving a lead, however, Labour-oriented union officials have lain low and compounded workers' lack of confidence. And as yet, Britain's revolutionary left is too small and lacking in influence in the working class to seriously put the alternative that is so urgently needed.

So night by night, the printers' picket at Wapping is slipping closer to defeat. And Rupert Murdoch will be, once again, "thrilled to blitz".

The economy: Why the bosses want blood

THE GLOVES are off.

Bob Hawke can hardly hide his satisfaction with an Arbitration Commission decision which gives us a discounted rise months late, and tells us we will have to fight for the super gains we were originally promised in exchange for a cut in real wages.

Already, wharries have taken up the gauntlet by striking around the nation.

The government is now quite openly out to cut wages and slash welfare spending. The air is filled with talk of economic crisis. The immediate problem which has led to a crisis atmosphere is Australia's balance of trade. Prices are falling for most things Australia exports, and it appears there is a longer term trend for them to keep falling. This threatens the employers' profits, and they demand that these profits be propped up at our expense.

But wage cutting cannot possibly solve the problems facing the economy. What Australian capitalism would need to get out of its difficulties would be to develop new export industries. This would require massive new investments. Yet even after the profit revival of the past three years, the bosses are extremely reluctant to undertake productive investment.

The more shameless among them say the failure to invest is because of unreasonable demands made by greedy unions. But serious observers know better. The unions have made considerable sacrifices. Wage earners have had only two wage rises in 14 months, against a background of price rises of 9.2 per cent.

The idea behind the Accord was that these sacrifices would boost profits, the bosses would feel encouraged to invest, and a

happy partnership between capital and labour would take the country forward. It has not worked. Simon Crean admits plaintively:

"We were told that if we proceeded down the path of more moderate wage claims, then we would be laying the basis for a future investment-led recovery, and it's been found wanting."

This is a striking confession of failure from one of the principal architects of the Accord.

Let us investigate the problem further. As Crean and Paul Keating both point out, our sacrifices have indeed allowed profits to rise. The share of national output which goes to profits is nearly back to the high levels of the sixties, while the share devoted to our wages has fallen significantly. On the face of it, it seems bizarre that the bosses won't invest.

But they won't. Investment eased upwards in the first half of 1985, only to fall away, and total investment by the private industry during the March quarter of 1986 fell by 2.1 per cent. Crean and Keating are genuinely perplexed by this phenomenon, and have taken to abusing the employees. Says Crean, "We have a management class which is, by and large, incompetent."

Of course, he does not draw the logical conclusion, which is that our class, the working class, should kick out these incompetent managers and run things ourselves. He is just whinging.

But there is more to the bosses' incompetence than the ACTU leaders and Labor politicians realize. The Business Council of Australia has published an important paper explaining the apparent mystery of falling investment in a time of high profits.

What concerns investors, says



Crean: why won't they invest?

the Council, is not the share of national output which goes to profits. What they look at is the rate of return on each dollar they invest. This is what Marxists call the rate of profit.

This rate, says the Council, has been depressed for years. It was around 17 per cent at the end of the sixties, but fell to around 9 per cent by the middle seventies. It plunged to six per cent during the last recession, and has risen again to nine per cent during the present recovery.

In other words, all that our sacrifices have done during the time of the Labor government is get it back to the levels of the mid-seventies, a time of economic stagnation.

This is a problem right at the heart of capitalism. The Business Council offers various explanations for it, but only one is really to the point. Their representative Jim Hoggett cites a "growing capital per worker contribution to output". What he means is that as a consequence of the long postwar growth of capitalism, industry has become far more capital-intensive.



Yet as Karl Marx explained in his *Capital*, it's only living human labour which creates the new value from which profit is derived. Competition forces each individual boss to automate, but the result at the level of society as a whole is a longterm tendency for profit rates to decline.

Of course the employing class and their academic camp followers have always ridiculed Marx's theory. Yet Mr Hoggett and the Business Council with their paper have confirmed its correctness.

Only the abolition of an economic system devoted to profits rather than human needs can remove this fundamental problem, which is now destroying Labor's economic program and hurling the Australian economy back into crisis.

But since the Labor leaders would never consider such a thing, they are forced to turn to the only alternative: further pro-capitalist politics allow: cutting our wages, slashing welfare, and hammering any union which dares to fight back.

The BLF has a slogan: If you don't fight, you lose. Most of the unions have not fought over the last three years, and the losses are adding up with frightening speed. It is time to unite and fight. We have nothing to lose but the chains Labor's Accord has drawn about us.

— Richard Emerson

PEACE



Defiant demo meets warship

MELBOURNE saw its most defiant anti-nuclear demonstration in years, when two American warships visited on the Queen's Birthday weekend.

Three hundred demonstrators marched alongside the USS Rathburne when it opened for public inspection. (Its partner, the Cimarron, was forced to anchor offshore by maritime union bans.)

Half a dozen protesters hurled pig's blood at the Rathburne, which carries ASROC nuclear missiles. Then the trouble started.

Sailors responded by fire-hosing the side of the ship, and a good proportion of the crowd. Police moved in and made

(Continued page 6)



Rivkin: flush with funds?

HOLD YOUR BREATH. Rene Rivkin, one of Sydney's richest stockbrokers, has revealed that he does most of his overseas business from his toilet.

We kid you not. Rivkin has admitted to the *Financial Review* that he has a phone specially installed in his toilet, so that he can sit there most of the night talking to New York, London and Paris, without disturbing his wife. He also sits there on weekends, watching the neighbors of African Norderburg wine, and without any public for it, alter threats of a picket.

"We'd like to that!" **SO ARGENTINA** has jailed General Galtieri and two of his fellow-ex-junta members

describing the capitalist cistern.

In a similar vein, ace Buckingham Palace reporter James Whitaker has just revealed that Prince Andrew has a lavatory-roll holder that says "God Save The Queen."

We trust that Prince Andrew, like us, always remains seated when he hears the Royal anthem.

ONCE he was a respected trade unionist on the wharves. Now Victorian Labor MP "Bunna" Walsh is an enthusiastic ally of John Cain in attacking the BLF.

Take this boast, from Hansard in November last year. "Incidentally, I have had five Builders Labourers' stood down the past ten days without pay, because they will not lift bans on scaffolding at the courts in Russell Street. . . . Not one of the former ministers of Public Works have ever had the guts to do that."

PERTH anti-apartheid campaigners had an intoxicating victory during the recent Soweto week.

A liquor store cancelled the tasting of the African Norderburg wine, and withdrew all publicity for it, alter threats of a picket.

"We'd like to that!" **SO ARGENTINA** has jailed General Galtieri and two of his fellow-ex-junta members

DEAR CHEAP SHOTS.

How can I discourage my foreman from hanging around my job all the time?

Dear Reader,

Use reverse psychology. Every time your foreman comes within range, call him over. Tell him you need a new pair of gloves, impact wrench, Johnson rod or whatever. Suggest ways that the job could be improved, all requiring massive additions of manpower and machinery. Let a few jobs go by while you talk. Seek out your foreman at lunch and smoke to reminisce about how things were done "back at Chrysler". If he is even slightly younger than you, address him as "sonny". Very soon he will go the long way around to avoid coming near you.

for terms of eight to twelve years, for dragging the country into the murderous Falklands War.

Wonder when "British justice" will mete out a similar sentence to Margaret Thatcher?



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VICTORIAN police also have egg on their faces after a recent BLF picket.

Twenty cops turned up to "guard" a Chadstone site from two picketers. While they were there, an enterprising robber stole \$10,000 from a bank less than 50 metres away. A week later, someone stole a Mercedes, again under the cops' noses.

AMERICA now has a group called Fundamentalists Anonymous. It helps people cope with the

BYWAYS of history . . .

• In the Greek and Roman religions, Hermes and Mercury were the patron gods for both businessmen and thieves. St Nicholas played the same role for Christians.

• During the Boer War of 1899-1902, about 7000 Boer men were killed in combat. At the same time, over 26,000 Boer women and children, and 13,000 of their Black servants, died of starvation and disease in British concentration camps.

• Benito Mussolini was expelled from school after he stabbed a fellow pupil in the buttocks. . . . Senator Edward Kennedy was suspended from Harvard for cheating.



CHEAP SHOTS

strain of leaving nutty right-wing religious sects.

AND WE thought the Communist Manifesto was priceless!

One of the thirteen known copies of the original 1848 edition was auctioned for only \$55,300 in London last month.

A small earth tremor was detected in the vicinity of Highgate cemetery.

RURAL REVOLT

SOME of the most militant opposition to the Hawke government in the last twelve months has come from the farmers.

Are farmers the innocent victims of a vicious socialist regime, as their right-wing groups

claim? Or are they the whinging Mercedes-owners of urban mythology? GRAHAM WILLETT looks at the Rural Revolt, and the facts behind the crisis in the countryside.

The push from the bush

THE CURRENT "push from the bush" began quietly enough.

During the federal election campaign of late 1984, a thousand Queensland sugar farmers formed themselves into a "Cane Train" to draw attention to their economic plight. In the brohauha of a general election, they created scarcely a ripple.

Yet by mid-1985, tens of thousands of angry farmers had followed them into the streets of the capital cities. Eight thousand marched in Perth, seventeen thousand in Adelaide, thirty thousand in Melbourne. At the Canberra Tax Summit last July, forty thousand farmers stood outside Parliament, heckling politicians of all stripes.

Peter Ryan of the Canowindra Rural Reform Committee, a group of militant NSW wheat farmers, sums up the present mood:

"We are becoming involved in a major (political) bushfire. It would be useless if we did not protest. We want to provide the music so the government will have to listen."

Robin Tiffin, a ricegrower's wife who organised a rally of farming women in Wagga early this year, agrees.

"We are not inefficient, we are not lazy, we like our enterprises and we are proud to work hard at them. . . . but we are being treated unfairly."

Many have gone beyond mere protests, taking direct action to force their point.

Rebel Victorian dairy farmers blockaded dairy supplies, and destroyed their milk rather than continue selling it for a pittance. Outside Perth, scores of angry farmers disrupted the sale of a bankrupt farmer's property, demanding an end to all forced land sales.

A cocky farmer from Canowindra in NSW dumped thirty tonnes of wheat on the steps of Parliament. When he was taken to court, thousands of farmers turned up to support him, despite the advice of the leading farmer organisations.

Hundreds of trucks in convoys disrupted roads in Victoria for two days last February, in protest at freight charges.

There has even been talk of a farmers' strike. "We have the means to withhold our produce and we should do it," a farmer from Werris Creek told a meeting of eight hundred in January.

Such actions have won over public opinion, and forced politicians to listen to farmers' demands.



Farmers rally at the Tax Summit: a major bushfire

Federal spending on the primary industry sector jumped 37 percent in the last Budget, and will rise again this year. Tariffs on grain harvesters have been abolished, and the tax on diesel fuel dropped. Labor's Rural Aid Package, announced in April, gives farmers another \$140-200 million.

FARMERS won these gains by taking action. Their actions were successful because, despite their relatively small numbers, they play a major role in Australia's economy.

Unlike most advanced economies, Australia still has an important rural sector. Farm products bring in forty percent of

export earnings, and provide much of the funds used for capital import (both loans and equipment) and for consumer goods from overseas. The rural sector also spends some \$11 billion a year on city-made products.

True, the rural sector is in decline. In the mid-fifties, it employed 15% of the workforce (compared to 5% today), and generated 84% of export income. But it remains central.

The way the rural crisis is working its way through the rest of the economy bears this out. Many farmers have stopped buying new machinery, wiping out jobs in sales and service in country towns. The largest tractor distributor in Australia, Chamberlain Holdings, is on the verge of collapse, threatening many more jobs. Lower sales, have meant less advertising, spreading the recession to the provincial newspapers. Eventually, machinery production will fall off, causing more unemployment in the cities.

This link between the "crisis on the land" and the rest of the economy points up an important development. Farming today does not simply consist of thousands of sturdy farming families selling their goods at the local market. Since World War 2, farming has become big business.

The family farm is still the typical form of rural production: of 174,000 farms in Australia, ninety percent are owned and operated by families. But these farms are locked into a process of production and distribution that dwarfs them.

Farm inputs — machinery, chemicals and other items used in farming — are produced by giant city-based corporations which make very large amounts of money out of farmers. Every year, farmers spend \$300 million on tractors, \$50 million on ploughing and seeding machines, \$100 million on spare parts, and \$300 million on chemicals.

These corporations also control many services that farmers rely on — land sales, insurance, and the marketing and distribution of farm products. Dalgetys, for example, recently took a one million dollar commission on the sale of a major Queensland cattle station.

Above all, they control the processing of farm goods into the products that consumers buy. In fact, for every dollar we spend on food, only 28 cents goes to the farmer. Fully 67 cents goes to wholesalers, retailers, processors, transporters. With \$20 billion a year spent on food in Australia, this is big business indeed.

(Continued page 8)

FROM PAGE 5



Warship demo

random arrests, including one Community Radio reporter who was covering the demo.

Socialist Action member Alec Kahn, who was speaking at the time, called on the crowd to join others who had moved across in front of the police van, to prevent the arrested from being taken from the wharf. "They can wash the blood off their ship, but they can't wash the blood off their hands in Chile and in Nicaragua and in the Philippines," he said.

And demonstrators linked arms and lay down in front of the paddy wagon, chanting "Let them go" and "No nuclear warships". "We've seen their law and order, now let's show them our law and our order," said Kahn.

With their exit blocked, the

thirty police began pulling demonstrators away row by row, and inching their van forward. But with the van soon full, they were unable to make further arrests, and demonstrators swiftly regrouped at the back of the crowd when pulled away.

A torrid, hour-long battle ensued, as the van inched forward. Frustrated cops threw punches, twisted arms, kicked, pulled hair and hurled demonstrators away as brutally as possible, trying to frighten them from returning to the fray.

Police broke one demonstrator's arm, and another's fingers. One young cop pummeled a squatting woman repeatedly, just feet in front of an HSV-7 news camera. The footage was never shown on TV.

Demonstrators responded by blocking the van's path with their bodies, with oil drums and finally with a car.

Only when police reinforcements arrived was the paddy

wagon able to escape. But the political victory on the day belonged with the peace movement. The militancy of the demo completely undermined the US Navy's attempts to create "goodwill" for itself, and showed that future warship visits will be met with a new mood of defiance.

The significance was not lost on the daily press. Some media responded in typical Pavlovian style, branding the demo itself as violent. But the *Sun* and *Channel Ten* felt obliged to give major coverage to the protestors' case. Unlike most peace demos, this was one they couldn't ignore.

The eight arrested are due to appear in court in October, just as a new batch of nuclear warships will be heading for Melbourne. That fact, and documentation of the police behaviour at the demonstration, promise to make the trial a political as well as a legal battleground for the peace movement.



Police try to clear the sit-down

RURAL REVOLT

BIGGEST of the agribusinesses is Elders-IXL, headed by John Elliott of BHP takeover fame.

Elders has interests in banking and insurance, meat processing and selling, woolbroking, household foods like jam and margarine, and brewing. It owns Melbourne's Carlton and United Brewery. Many other firms have a similar spread of operations.

These firms have not only spread across the rural sector, but up and down the production chain as well. Elders' role in pig meat, for example, includes breeding, feed-making, meat processing and export. It owns its own pig farms, and has contracts with many independent farmers.

Some of these corporations have reached monopoly proportions. Elders and its main rival, Dalgetys, between them control 80% of woolbroking, 70% of livestock sales and 80% of farm insurance.

Even the largest family farm pales into insignificance against that scale of operation. Sara Sargent describes the consequences in *The Foodmakers*:

"Farmers are treated simply as suppliers of raw and frequently perishable materials, and as a result their bargaining power in the marketplace is limited . . ."

The size and diversity of the biggest corporations means that they not only survive the rural crisis, but positively flourish. In 1982, for example, while most farmers reeled from the effects of the drought and thousands faced ruin, Elders boosted its profits by 78%.

KEY to this seeming paradox lies in the nature of the present crisis — the cost/price squeeze.

Simply put, this means that over time, farmers' costs (for machinery, chemicals etc) have risen much faster than the prices received for farm products.

Since the mid-sixties, costs have risen twice as much as prices — 235% to 113%.



Just how far can the rural revolt go? Find out . . .

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Since 1980, this process has accelerated; costs have risen three times as much as prices, 41% to 14%.

The actual prices of farm inputs have not risen all that much faster than inflation. But the amount of machinery, chemicals and credit used by each farm has grown enormously. Most spectacular has been the rise in tractor use:

| Year | 1955 | 1975 |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Farms | 210,000 | 180,000 |
| Tractors | 187,000 | 333,000 |

Similar, although smaller, increases occurred in other machinery and chemical use, and in the amount of loans taken out by the average farm.

Savings in wage costs initially paid for all of this. Thousands of workers were thrown out of their jobs and migrated to the cities.

Today, this is less of an option. Many rural sectors use hardly any labour, other than the farmer and family. Other sectors do not have the technology to replace what labour they still use.

AS WELL AS spending less on wages, farmers also tried to pay for their extra inputs by producing more goods. From 1954 to 1976, the volume of rural production doubled.

But increased production only pays for the cost of inputs if the extra products can be sold. This brings us to the other half of the cost/price squeeze — the prices received by farmers for their goods.

Farm prices have risen only slowly since World War 2, far slower than input costs. This is largely due to the huge increase in world production in that time. Many Third World countries which used to import food are now nearly self-sufficient (like China), or even net exporters (like India).

Many countries are now dumping farm goods on the world markets at much less than it costs to produce them. This is driving prices very low. Europe's food mountains and wine lakes are the best known examples, but recently the US began subsidising its wheat exports, including its sales to traditional Australian markets like North Yemen.

It is part of the madness of capitalism that selling food cheap to the world's hungry causes poverty and hardship in places like Australia.

So farmers have enriched agribusiness and the money lenders, by buying huge amounts of machinery and chemicals. But they are unable to make enough from sales



A Canowindra farmer dumps 30 tonnes of what Parliament: forcing the point

to cover their costs. A severe shakeout of the rural economy has resulted, with thousands of small farmers going broke.

As the table above shows, the number of farms has declined by 30,000 since the mid-fifties. Since 1970, half of all pig-meat, beef and mutton farms have closed down. The number of people working on the land — workers, employers and self-employed — has fallen from 485,000 to 376,000 since 1954. In the fifties and sixties, most of those displaced found jobs in the cities. But today, many lives are being ruined.

Even for those not wiped out, things today are grim. One third of all farming families have negative incomes to live on. Most try to extend their loans, which already total \$7.2 billion. One in six farmers is in danger of going broke.

TRADITIONALLY, farmers have looked to the government for help. With the Country Party out of power (and now in the pockets of the mining companies), their direct line to Canberra has been severed.

Labor is more interested in economic "rationalism" than in protecting farmers. John Kerin, Minister for Primary Industry, has said that farmers must give up their dreams of feeding the world, and produce for the domestic market only. This means production must be cut, with even fewer farmers.

Not surprisingly, farmers reject this approach. After all, when the Rural Adjustment Schemes have paid farmers to leave the land, what happens then? Who needs an unemployed farmer — a worker who is, in terms of the urban economy, unskilled?

So farmers have looked more and more to their own strength, to militancy and a new leadership.

The National Farmers Federation (NFF) and its various state-based affiliates have emerged very rapidly in the last decade to spearhead most of the recent actions. The NFF is far more popular among farmers today than the National Party.

But the NFF has interests quite distinct from those of ordinary farmers. Its president, Ian McLachlan, is the head of a very old, very wealthy South Australian grazing family; he is a director of Elders-IXL, the largest agribusiness in Australia; he is a member of the Liberal Party and a keen supporter of the "Dry" wing.

Many in the NFF leadership have similar backgrounds. Brian Locke of the Canowindra Rural Reform Committee describes the bulk of them as:

"... The direct product of the society we wish to change. They live in indexed affluence and enjoy the terms of trade. We produce the wealth and they spend it."

Ian McLachlan:
Interests not
those of the
small farmer



IT IS no surprise, then, that the NFF supports privatisation, deregulation of the labour market, and confrontation with the unions. It bitterly opposes wage indexation, "union power", and all government subsidies and protection to industry. It is an enthusiastically anti-working class organisation.

Farmers have followed the NFF's lead in all this. Victoria's rebel dairy farmers

demand an increase in their incomes through higher prices for milk for consumers. When Labor announced its Rural Aid Package in April, members of the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association distributed a leaflet in Melbourne streets calling for a "slowdown" in wage increases and cuts in government spending.

Yet many policies pushed by the NFF would be disastrous for the small farmers who look to it for protection.

Complete deregulation of the currency would unleash a wave of inflation that would drown many of them. Abolition of transport subsidies would push costs through the roof. If import protection were abolished, then so too would be the dual-pricing policy that keeps farm goods' prices much higher at home than on the world market.

In truth, the NFF does not represent the farmers; it uses them. It points to farmer militancy to prise from the government what it really wants — access to power for itself, and economic policies that would benefit only those farmers and agribusinesses big enough to survive their effects.

The destruction of the small farmer is painful but inevitable, according to the NFF. In a government that destruction, McLachlan and his colleagues will do very nicely for the big farmers and agribusinesses that they really represent.

THERE IS a solution to the rural crisis, one that avoids the misery and unemployment that the ALP and the NFF offer.

That solution involves farmers joining forces with workers, in a struggle for a rational economy: one that will pay farmers to produce food for a starving world, regardless of whether it is "profitable" or not; an economy that uses the skills and resources available to it to fulfill human needs, rather than tossing them onto dole queues.

For farmers, that means breaking with the anti-working class ideas and agitation of their leaders. History does not offer us much cause for optimism on that score — the Russian are not the latest peasants — the Russian are not the latest World revolutions — but we cannot write off the prospect.

We have seen that the NFF is motivated primarily by its loyalty to big business. Over time, this may become clear to many farmers. Already, more militant farmers have criticised the NFF for its concern to present a respectable face, and for its opposition to further use of successful militant tactics.

The economic divide, too, between small farmers and big business has also been noted by some. A storm of protest by Queensland cattle farmers greeted a bid by Queens to set up a cattle-buying cartel by attempt to set up other big processors. Elders and other big processors. Workers Union has recognised Victorian dairy farmers' picket lines, and the BLF has publicly declared its sympathy for their grievances.

If the working class takes up the fight for farmers' living standards, it might yet find itself with real ally, and the farmers with a real prospect of survival and a living income.

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to tinker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. The state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must be spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through ending capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world: the point is to change it. Marxist theory and propaganda are only meaningful if they are a guide to action in the unions, social movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. If that's where you want to be, join us today!

Greek unions confront the real "threat from the right"

TWO MASS strikes shook Greece last October and November. They received little media attention here, even in the Greek-language press.

So why write about them now? Oddly enough, they are more topical today than when they actually happened.

There is a lot of talk at the moment in Australia about "the threat from the right". Some see John Howard's Thatcher-style monetarism and privatisation as a major menace. This threat therefore boils down to a danger that the Labor government might fall — the ultimate horror!

Socialist Action argues that the ruling class of Australia does not need to turn to Howard to carry out a major attack on the working class. In Greece, the ruling class has received excellent service in just such an attack from the "socialist" prime minister, Andreas Papandreu.

IN THE early 1980s, investment in Greece slowed considerably.

Andreas Papandreu's ruling PASOK government blamed the previous conservative government for creating an economy that could not stand up to international competition. Their New Democracy opponents replied that PASOK's handouts to industry had led to a rising cost of labour, thereby frightening investors away.

In the mid-seventies, the (conservative) government had thrown lots of money into the economy, and Greek banks were tied in tightly to presiding over this stimulation policy. Before long, public debt began to blow out and investors tended towards speculation. In the late seventies, this led to a reaction, the cutting back of public spending, closure of some mines and shipyards, and confrontation with unions.

The eighties, however, saw a return to government-inspired investment, but with tighter supervision of the banks. Industries which were on the verge of folding — the so-called "problematic" industries — were nationalised. The ATA (cost of living adjustment) was used as a mechanism to tie wages down to definable limits. The drachma was devalued.

The economy was being tightened up, but it still was not faring well in international

markets, and the rise in oil prices created further pressure. The belt not only had to be tightened — it had to asphyxiate.

PASOK's leadership, especially those close to Papandreu, decided on an austerity program. In early September, it announced substantial price rises. It mapped out a strategy to open up the labour market. This meant blocking the progress of unionisation, expanding temporary and casual employment, and promoting employment by the hour or day rather than by the week.

PROTEST strikes and demonstrations greeted the initial price rises.

But to show it was deadly serious, the government announced further severe measures in early October: devaluation of the drachma, cuts to the ATA cost of living adjustment, and cuts in welfare spending. The stage was set for battle.

Bank workers immediately struck in protest, while the public service unions and Communist Party controlled union federations condemned Papandreu's measures.

At a plenary of the Greek trade union federations, seven unions affiliated to PASOK itself condemned the measures. A general strike was proposed for October 21, and the seven unions resigned from PASOK.

Papandreu's reply was to ban all wage rises which fell outside government guidelines. The counter-reply was a nation-wide strike, 27 trades halls and 19 union federations taking part.

Papandreu in turn purged some top union officials. This proved to be a much more inflammatory act than he had imagined.

By his actions, Papandreu had signalled to the whole trade union bureaucracy that its favoured view of its own role, as a respected and respectable partner in running the economy, was no longer on. Henceforth, their only use was to serve as an industrial police force to hold back the demands of their members.

With outrage swelling amongst workers themselves, the union leaders put aside their usual reluctance to organise serious protest. The November 14 general strike dwarfed even the impressive October effort.



Strikers block a street

Late in November, the conflict spilled into the streets. Police killed a young student protester, and students occupied the Athens Polytechnic. An anarcho-terrorist group blew up a police van in retaliation, killing a police officer.

DECEMBER saw new price rises, and a mass meeting protesting court restructuring of the union federation. Papandreu declared in parliament that democracy itself was in danger.

This shrewd move forced the Communist Party onto the defensive. The CP had been in the forefront of organising the protests, but was in no position to challenge for power by forcing a crisis that could actually tear the Greek parliament apart.

It therefore declared that it had no intention of bringing down the government. This clearly limited the further advance of the struggle.

The situation still seems to be at a relative stalemate. None of

the PASOK initiative has been driven back, though.

Late in April, Bank of Greece Director Halikias called for a complete end to state intervention in private enterprise, an end to price restrictions, the abolition of the ATA, an end to limits on employer's rights to sack workers. PASOK ministers have so far denied the need for further austerity measures.

The Athens Trades Hall has responded by saying that measures such as those proposed by Halikias would meet a strong reaction from the trade union movement. But for the time being, Halikias is not the issue. The real issue is rolling back PASOK's austerity measures.

How convenient for Papandreu to be able to point at a policy even more savage than his own. How convenient for Bob Hawke to have so many in his own party warning of a threat "from the Right" to divert attention from his Accord.

— Mark Matcott

IN APRIL 900 women workers at the Enaves textile factory near Managua, Nicaragua, took over the factory. They demanded the removal of a hostile management which had accused them of theft and sabotage.

Knowing any stoppage in production would hurt the war effort against Reagan's "Contra" mercenaries, they didn't stop production but simply locked out management.

The official Sandinista union leaders professed sympathy, but warned the women their occupation was wrong and said they should abandon it. The government declared it illegal and threatened to remove them by force. We don't know the final result, as our Nicaraguan leftist press sources were heavily censored.

What is clear is that the Sandinista's union leaders and their cops were being used against the workers in whose name the government claims to rule.

It is not the first time this government has clashed with organised workers. Within months of the original revolutionary triumph, left wing union groups were subjected to police repression, and representatives of the Workers' Front group were jailed. A year ago police were used to end a factory occupation in Granada.

SUCHEVENTS illustrate one of the fundamental problems of the Nicaraguan revolution. When the Sandinistas took power they nationalised dictator Somoza's vast economic holdings, but not those of other capitalists. Over half the economy remains in private hands.

Despite talk of "popular power", the Sandinista strategy has been to collaborate with the capitalists and rich landowners, while seeking reforms compatible with capitalism for the workers and peasants.

With the beginning of the Contra war and the US economic blockade, the reforms largely stopped. Living standards began to fall drastically. The regime's own press states that real incomes fell 50% between 1982 and 1984, and that in 1985 prices rose by 300%, while wages increased by an average of 140%.

The "social wage", too, is being held down for city workers in order to put resources into the countryside.

The Sandinistas have no choice but to favour the countryside. A lot of conscripts



Enaves occupiers: a growing disillusionment

The Sandinistas are losing the workers

for the army come from there, and the fighting takes place there. And while some of Somoza's land was parcelled out to poor peasants after the 1979 revolution, land reform slowed to a trickle in the early eighties.

With an acceleration in the war in 1985, the regime decided it had to give the peasants more to keep their support. It handed out some state land and expropriated some private land that was underused. Social wage resources are going to them as well.

For city workers, says the Sandinista press, "the policy of giving priority to the countryside means there will be no construction of new schools, hospitals or houses, or new electrical installations and waterworks in the cities."

So workers are bearing the economic cost of war and blockade more than any other group. Certainly the capitalists are not suffering. The state guarantees their rate of profit and channels them hard currency.

NICARAGUA'S workers are prepared for sacrifices. They have worked on weekends for nothing, forgone their Christmas bonus to help the unemployed, done militia training after hours. The Enaves women kept production going during their factory occupation.

But they are beginning to realise these sacrifices are demanded of them, and not of the capitalists. And they are being demanded by a government which is not under working class control — on the contrary, it uses the cops against workers' struggles.

The result is a growing disillusionment, and even apathy. At Managua's big Fanatex factory, it has been hard to get quorums for union meetings. The neighbourhood committees (CDS) have declined to say a point that their national leader, Leticia Herrera, announced a special "democratic renovation" campaign last year to revitalize them.

In response to this mood, officials of the Sandinista union federation (CST) called a special union congress last September. Prior to it, they consulted the rank and file, and at it they presented a "basic document" reflecting worker demands for action to maintain living standards.

The document raised delegates' hopes, but they were dashed when Agriculture Minister Jaime Wheelock denounced the demands as unrealistic, and none of the CST officials contradicted him. Many delegates left the congress more disillusioned than before.

The Sandinista regime still has a reasonable popularity, and the

vast majority of the people will defend it against US aggression. Yet if things go on as they are, the prospect is for a gradual wearing out of the revolution's popular base.

A COMBINATION of two things could reverse the trend.

One would be for the workers to be mobilised to take power into their own hands, in the factories and in the government, and to expropriate the capitalists. The bosses' money could be used to maintain living standards, while the workers' creative energy would be unleashed to boost production once they knew the factories belonged to them.

The other would be to spread the revolution throughout Central America and beyond, beginning with serious aid to the rebels of El Salvador. Nicaragua would no longer have to fight US imperialism with only its own meagre national resources.

As we have seen, the Sandinistas are not interested in workers' power. And as for spreading the revolution to El Salvador, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega showed his conciliatory attitude to its outcome when he spoke to the Salvadoran president Duarte earlier this year.

"Dialogue is always good... By talking, solutions can be found, especially if there is mutual respect."

It will take a new revolutionary movement to carry out a strategy for Nicaragua based on workers' power and international revolution. And there are Nicaraguan revolutionaries arguing for such a strategy, with enough effect apparently for the Sandinista censors to feel obliged to heavily censor their newspaper.

Unfortunately, these comrades are still few in numbers, and the problems facing Nicaragua grow with each passing day.

— Tom O'Lincoln



Herrera: "democratic renovation"

What our members do

READERS sometimes ask what being a Socialist Action member involves.

Four things are required: selling our magazine, attending meetings, being an activist, and paying dues.

Each member sells our magazine twice an issue, for an hour or so each time. Since we don't have the capitalists' vast distribution networks, this is vital in spreading our ideas. Members do regular sales at markets, shopping centres, outside (and inside) workplaces, on campuses and even door-to-door.

Members are expected to attend a majority of our branch meetings. We discuss our activity, and have talks on issues of current or educational interest. For example, recent talks in Sydney have covered the Iran-Iraq War and Australian nationalism.

Our members get involved in the struggles of the day, raising the politics of direct action and socialism. Last month in Melbourne, for example, was very busy, with various members active in the Monash Uni occupation, support actions for the BLF, Soweto Day, the anti-warships demo and the July 4 march.

Weekly membership dues are not onerous — \$5 for employed, \$2 for others — but they are vital for our magazine, which costs far more than the 40 cents per copy cover price. (Unlike Rupert Murdoch, we don't carry ads.) If people can't afford the dues, we make special arrangements.

Interested in joining? Ring us right away, or just drop in at a branch meeting.

Spaghetti and Socialism

THE NEXT dinner/talk in Melbourne branch's popular "Spaghetti and Socialism" series will cover the Spanish Civil War, which began fifty years ago.

The talk will be on Friday 18 July, at 7.30 pm at 13 Lygon St, South Caulfield. Cost is \$2, including a spaghetti dinner. All Socialist Action readers are welcome.

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AN AMAZING scene. Hundreds of students chanting "Save the Library" have filed into Monash Uni's holy of holies, the Administration building. As of now, it is under occupation.

Senior administrators look on with trepidation. This is June 1986, not 1968. Student militancy is supposed to be long dead; they have not even bolted the doors against the possible outcome of today's student meeting.

The issue we're here for is clear enough. Monash's rulers want to make savage cuts to the library services. At our lunchtime mass meeting, the only debate was whether to occupy the Main Library, to forcibly keep it open on Saturdays (one of the cuts), or the Admin building itself.

We hammered deputy vice-chancellor Kevin Westfold with questions. (The VC is rumoured to be off at golf. Why the hell is the Uni sacking all temporary library staff, and not replacing permanents who leave? Why are disabled facilities being slashed? Why have purchases of science and law books been stopped, and humanities purchases been cut 90%?)

And if the library really is \$760,000 in the red, and devaluation really has raised book prices overseas so much, why, we ask, can't the Uni use some of its \$18 million worth of shares and savings to make up the subsidies it says the library needs? Westfold stumbles and bumbles. Finally, he hears that the press is coming, and leaves. We decide to stay overnight.

We debate tactics, and run off a leaflet urging all students to join us. The occupation becomes a mix of spontaneous activity, as people paint banners, fetch food, megaphone lecture theatres, leaflet and argue politics.

MANY students, pulled into struggle for the first time, speak during the debates. As in any such case, the ideas thrown up are a real mixture.

Some want to find other areas to cut before the library, a notion we and other socialists oppose with some success. A petty but bitter debate breaks out over whether a socialist group should hang its banner at the head of the stairs.

Yet there is also remarkable militancy. The occupiers vote to lock out top administration staff the next morning, a move that has never been tried at Monash even in its most radical days.

We and other socialists oppose such a tactic as premature, fearing that police will be called

Library protest keeps Monash occupied



Locking out the Administration: a new campus mood?

to break up the occupation before it has built wider support. We are wrong.

The lock-out is a stunning success. Just one heavy force's way in, literally crawling under students' feet. He then stands around bemused as students pack the main entrance, the campus ringing to their chants. Students passing by join in, to our deafening cheers.

The police are not called. It seems the vice-chancellor knows the whole campus is against him. The next Monday, academics and library staff stop work to join a student demonstration.

YET ANOTHER amazing scene. Students from the Monday demonstration have re-occupied the building, having vacated it on Friday after 27 hours with partial concessions from the vice-chancellor.

We are lying down in front of the Council chamber doors and forming a human barrier on the steps, to prevent University Council members from leaving the building. The Council has just ruled that the library must keep to its budget, and that it will await the McDonnell Report into the library which is several weeks off. Council has spent most of its meeting, it seems, discussing whether to censure students for the occupation!

Some Council members try to climb over students, but most

are stuck inside. Vice-chancellor Ray Martin is forced to answer questions. We have won one major concession: no cuts will now be made until the McDonnell Report comes down. Just how did they magically find the funds? "I don't know where the money is coming from," says Martin. We know our win is only temporary, and we must be prepared to take action when McDonnell reports.

But our struggle has produced a core of activists who can continue the campaign. In the following days, we leaflet the ALP state conference, we demonstrate outside a McDonnell committee meeting, we picket all the campus libraries, distributing 5000 leaflets.

Martin has now agreed to replace seven library staff until November. The Professional Board has mysteriously found \$350,000 which may allocate to the libraries.

So our direct action is bearing fruit. And many students realise that Bob Hawke's New Australia can only mean more education cuts in future.

We cannot yet know whether June 1986 at Monash was just a flash in the pan, or the first stirrings of a new mood amongst students.

But certainly, one campus is learning that direct action can get results, and that austerity measures can be fought.

—Patricia Langenacker

Spotlight moves to the rank and file as the BLF fights on

AS THE Builders Labourers Federation fights on against deregistration, Norm Gallagher, Bob Hawke and the Master Builders are no longer at centre stage.

The spotlight has shifted to the rank and file workers in the various building unions.

When an 18 year old apprentice carpenter was killed in Melbourne recently, it was a grim reminder that the assault on the BLF has produced a deterioration in safety standards on building sites.

Such is the "climate of industrial harmony" that Victorian ALP frontbencher "Bunna" Walsh boasts. Little wonder that building workers are rallying to defend the BLF.

Victoria is the most active state.

At the big South Yarra project, management thought it had the workers cowed when police broke the picket line in April. But labourers stopped for a day over victimisation, and crane crews forced the transfer of a scab.

More recently, workers held an angry meeting when they found a contractor working cash-in-hand and without a union ticket. All trades jeered and heckled the BWIU organiser, but when BLF organiser John Cummins got up to speak, shop steward Ivor Lawrence says, "They cheered like a football final."

The whole site stopped for 48 hours despite the opposition of the BWIU. Afterwards, a manager was heard to say, "How can this happen? We got rid of the BLF."

BY THE end of June, most employers had accepted the fact that the BLF hadn't gone away.

Companies were allowing organisers on site. At one city site, the BWIU asked the boss to call the police, but he refused. At another site, the manager apologised profusely to John Cummins for calling the police. He explained that they had been heavily by government officers.

The main focus of employer intransigence has been the Costain company, who seem to be acting as the government's industrial relations officers.



Portland demo greets Cain: the BLF is far from licked

Having declared its determination never to take back 15 blacklisted workers, its city sites have been the scene of picket lines and police confrontations for five months now. This, and the "accidental" arrest of an Electrical Trades organiser, have led to electricians and plumbers on all Costain sites.

Combined with support action by scaffolders, furnishing trades, and some truck drivers, the bans have almost brought Costain to its knees. It is currently negotiating re-employment of those victimised.

The company has held out for so long is mute evidence of the pressure the government must be bringing to bear. Costain has made a very large claim for compensation for deregistration losses, and looks vulnerable now.

OTHER employers continue to niggle, and the number of stoppages involving all workers has increased. In one week in the city area alone, there were five one-day and two-day strikes over safety and amenities.

John Cain's visit to Portland highlighted the mood of building workers. Most labourers there

are still BLF, and management continues to respond to their industrial claims. A thousand workers from most trades returned to demonstrate their support for the BLF. They hit out at a bus which almost ran over some men (an incident which was again played up as BLF violence).

The government's continuing hostility has been evident in the use of police, which, strangely, Cain denies.

There are regular picket line confrontations. Two activists have been beaten up. At a demonstration outside the Master Builders' Ball, cops ploughed into the crowd with no warning, punching and kicking.

The aim is probably to create an association in the public mind between the BLF and violence. The media happily co-operate. For instance, in Sydney they sensationalised visits to members' homes into a "campaign of fear".

Meanwhile, claims that the BLF is totally isolated are wearing thin, as support grows. A large number of unions have publicly declared their support and donated money. Even more importantly, rank and file

meetings of teachers, meatworkers, food workers, and many others have welcomed BLF speakers.

Rank and file public servants are circulating a reply to the ACOA leaders' anti-BLF position.

THE SITUATION in these states appears to be less volatile than in Victoria. In Queensland, WA, SA and Tasmania, the union has remained intact under state laws.

In WA, the Burke government has imposed a code of conduct on the building industry as a whole, but mainly directed at the BLF. They have threatened deregistration, hoping to discourage the union from embarking on disputes. The local BWIU organisers appear not to be carrying out their national office decisions, and relations between the BWIU and BLF in Perth are good.

In Tasmania, the Liberal government has made threats about a state deregistration bill, but has not followed through. Apparently, employers there do not want the resistance they have seen in other states.

In Canberra, there have been strikes and stoppages at the Parliament House site over unsafe work practices.

Recently, a Croatian organiser went around sites speaking to Croatian workers about the situation. There was unanimous agreement that conditions have deteriorated since they were forced to join the BWIU. One worker's comment was, "We feel we have no union now." Many workers said they supported the BLF, but could not be seen speaking to the union because they would be put on the black list.

The on-going picket in front of the South African embassy has been strongly supported by the BLF.

In Melbourne at least, the BLF is in a reasonably strong position. But the struggles have been largely defensive. The frequent stoppages in the built up momentum, and to ensure that it is not dissipated again, the union will have to consider taking the offensive, perhaps around wages.

A wages campaign, in the current climate of government sponsored wage-cutting, could allow the BLF to give a lead to wider sections of the working class.

—Janey Stone

WORKERS' participation, it is said, gives workers a say in running their workplaces. Instead of confronting their bosses on the shop floor, they can consult with them in the manager's office.

The ACTU adopted workers' participation, or "industrial democracy," as a policy in 1978. It seriously took up the concept in its Accord with the ALP in 1983. The AMWU journal *The Metalworker* goes so far as to call industrial democracy "the Accord on the job".

Two well known workers' participation schemes operate at Melbourne's Naval Dockyards and GAF, the Government Aircraft Factory. They are held up as showpieces of industrial democracy, of employers and employees working happily together. A closer look, though, reveals a different picture.

The "GAF Recovery Plan," introduced to stave off imminent crisis, brought workers' participation to the Government Aircraft Factory in 1983. A glossy leaflet explaining how the plan was all about saving jobs.

An ACOA (clerks) union rep, a supporter of workers' participation, was franker:

"The impending closure of the factory is what brought about industrial democracy and that's getting the unions involved and making everyone work hard." (emphasis added).

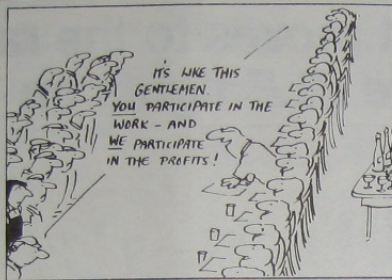
At Williamstown Naval Dockyards, the convener of the Combined Staff Associations (white collar workers), Pat Tobin, claimed that workers' participation there meant, "The unions now have a much greater opportunity to talk to key decision makers."

But after hours of joint management-union meetings, the only gains he could point to were better flextime and "mutually beneficial breaks over Christmas and New Year."

AMWU National Secretary George Campbell says that



Pat Tobin: few real gains



Workers' participation — or control?

industrial democracy at the Dockyards is important to make these systems succeed. These systems aim to increase productivity — with AMWU backing!

THOSE workers from the Dockyards and Aircraft Factory who had any faith in industrial democracy had it cruelly shattered in March 1986. Defence Minister Kim Beazley announced that hundreds of jobs were to go. Top management were to be "pressured" into changing their work practices, but workers were to be sacked. His aim was to make the workplaces "more productive and cost effective".

Barry Corbett, AMWU shop steward at the Dockyards, remarked:

"Industrial democracy has played the role of preparing the workforce for this sort of eventuality. It's tied us up in all these committees with management and softened us all up for the bitter pill."

He argued that any talk of industrial democracy now will be laughed at. "This will be the end of it."

Union leaders still enthuse about its role elsewhere. In militant departments in the public service, such as Social Security and Employment & Industrial Relations (DEIR), they are making a concerted effort to introduce workers' participation.

Workers in DEIR soon found that "consultation" was just a management tool for delaying change.

The high incidence of RSI, caused by inadequate furniture and lack of staff, proved the breaking point for workers' participation in DEIR's Victorian personnel section. After a year of meetings with no results, union members put their chairs out in the corridor and worked for three days standing or kneeling at their desks. Management suddenly found better chairs.

The same unionists also had to strike over an offer on staffing from the Department. A Socialist Action member working there commented, "When we can elect our managers, it will be soon enough to start talking about industrial democracy."

ELECTING their own foremen was exactly what labourers in the NSW building industry did in the 1970s. Their aim was not workers' participation but workers' control: the workers themselves decided what they were going to do.

A classic example occurred at a site in Kent Street, Sydney.

The employers tried to provoke a strike, alleging "industrial sabotage" and calling police. In response, the labourers decided that for the next month, they would only do safety work. They elected their own foreman. They would only do safety work. They elected their own foreman. They would only do safety work.

The BLS told management that:

"It could map out what it wanted done from day to day, but it was the unionists' elected foreman and leading hands who would

decide what would, in fact, be done."

For the rest of the job, the safety record was first class, with no accidents. More importantly, it showed that workers can run things. Elected foreman Peter Barton said, "If that were done was proving that workers could run industry and do it better than when a boss was telling us what to do."

A similar experience at the Opera House site showed that workers could build their own collective authority. One militant put it:

"Things can develop quickly, given the right conditions. At the beginning of 1972 the workers here would have laughed at you if you'd suggested working-in without the boss and in defiance of the boss. But then in April that's just what we did, it shows how ideas can change."

Taming the Concrete Jungle is the NSW BLS's history of their attempts at workers' control. It raises an important issue at one point. Many people are apprehensive about workers moving into control. After all, they say, employers know best: "They have been in control for so long."

The authors reply: "Employers and governments certainly have been in control. And what a mess they've made of it! A building industry mishap for the cruelest motives of profit, hazard and planned housing shortages that are chronic and other social needs neglected."

The same applies to any other industry one cares to name.



Beazley: a cruel awakening

As these cases suggest, achieving a society run by real producers of wealth will take a whole different approach to the Accord's "consultation and co-operation". It will take class warfare.

Frank Milne, president of the Dockyards Shop Committee, summed it up. "You get into bed with management because you were meant to work side by side with them. But in the end, we realise now, you have to struggle to get what you want."

— Liz Ross

Land of Hope a better brand of soap

CLASS struggle and soap opera are never easy to combine.

The British series *Days of Hope* did it successfully. The producers of the tele-series *Land of Hope* obviously tried to do something similar.

In the early episodes, they succeeded. These are set in the middle of class wars: the 1892 shearers' strike and the 1908 Broken Hill lockout. Unlike the usual soapie, the characters are not so rich and powerful but the plebs and battlers.

Hero Paddy Quinn represents the young working class. He enters episode one as a young Catholic lad about to scab on the striking shearers.

Like many an "apathetic" worker, he is instead swept up by the struggle. He joins the union and the picket line!

Other key characters, the young squatter Nesta and her maid Maureen, are also politicised. The one that grates is the crude portrayal of the most militant strikers as mere hotheads.

Paddy tries to stop the hotheads from lighting fires. He is nabbed by police and jailed for arson, but refuses to "grass". Overall, the struggle of the working class is portrayed very positively.

Each subsequent episode wraps the plot around a major political event. Paddy and Maureen wed, and start the family that provides most of the characters. Nesta becomes a left-wing suffragette and peace activist, a source of political and sexual tension for the Quinns, who are strain-laced Catholic Liberals.

This formula works well at first, but breaks down around episodes four and five.

As the story moves further into this century, the focus shifts from the front line of the class struggle. Paddy becomes a fan of Arbitration. Son Frank is briefly a Wobbly, but settles down as an ALP hack. By 1941, he is bawling out striking coalminers for upsetting the War Effort. This time, an entire union is portrayed as mere hotheads.

Daughter Kathleen, a member of the communist Party, represents the militant left. This portrayal is pessimistic and clichéd. She is merely a left-wing variant of her devout

Catholic family. When her god falls in 1956 and invades Hungary, she kills herself.

So hotheaded militancy and religious socialism are dead ends. Is there a way forward? *Land of Hope* gives us the good old parliamentary numbers game. Maureen mutates from a straight-talking worker into a crashing bore, delivering regular lectures about "Paddy's dream" and the need to get the numbers.

In the last two episodes, little happens. The script is almost all melodramatic, one-to-one dialogue.

The most important workers' mobilisation since 1950, the near-general strike over Clarrie O'Shea in 1969, is not mentioned. Distant struggles may be glorified, but not the more recent.

Still, the early episodes vindicated the effort to put working class history onto TV.

Perhaps the dryness of the later episodes is not all the script-writers' fault.

For when the time comes "Step by step, we'll build a land of hope", it identifies the dominant strategy in the Australian labour movement; one that began 90 years ago when Paddy and his class, after a battering on the industrial front, formed the ALP to enter the parliamentary arena.

Its attempt to skin the capitalist tiger ham by hair-faile. Now all Labor offers in Parliament is step by step reduction in workers' living standards. Not an inspiring climax for any storyline.

Fortunately, the most exciting episodes of *Land of Hope* were written in the future. Outside Parliament.

— Eric Petersen

FILM

Out of Africa, into fantasy

AFRICA is a confusing place for Western liberals today.

Reflecting that confusion is *Out of Africa*, Hollywood's most successful "serious" movie in the last year.

As a piece of pure cinema, *Out of Africa* is a treat, as its seven Oscars suggest. But it is also a reactionary fantasy, idealising the white-dominated past in the face of today's upheaval.

Out of Africa recounts Karen



Nesta fights an eviction in *Land of Hope*

Blixen's struggle to assert herself in the male conservative bastion of British Kenya at the time of World War One.

Typically, it focuses on her love life. We get no sense at all of her major life-work, her writing. Yet in her book *Out of Africa*, Blixen scarcely mentioned her husband Bror or lover Denys, who are central to the film. For all its new-found "feminism", the film's relationship with her by their relationships with men.

Worse is the film's unrelenting view of Blixen's relationship with her black workers, which she portrayed as "a great affection". Kenyan author Ngũgũ wa Thiong'o was less kind, saying "she had robbed (them) of vast acres of land".

Blixen's "farm", humble enough in the film, was in reality a 6000 acre plantation. Like other whites, Blixen used just 10% for her cash crop. The rest was alienated from the blacks, purely to drive them off the land and into the labour market.

British taxes kept blacks from becoming self-sufficient. Privately, this upset Blixen:

"Natives are starving here, and will die of starvation, while the Government is building a new Government House for 80,000 pounds and champagne flows in rivers at their feet."

But as a landowner, Blixen still collected these taxes. Her writings merely called them "a heavy burden" and "much disliked".

The one conflict the film admits is over Blixen's efforts to educate "her" blacks. Blixen's sense of *noblesse oblige* clashes with Denys' preference for the Noble Savage; paternalism well-done versus rare. The only African voice heard is from the cynical Kikuyu chief.

Yet American writer Christy Brown notes that in this period Kenyans

... developed their own set of demands which included compulsory primary education as well as sufficient higher education. By 1928 they had rebelled against the Christian Mission schools ... and offered an alternative in the Kikuyu Independent Schools Movement."

The most lasting image from *Out of Africa* was Karen Blixen on her knees, pleading with the Governor to help "her" blacks.

That really sums up the movie's liberal appeal. The true story of colonial Africa — that of repression and revolt — is still to be told on film.

— Anja Wolkenhaar



Meryl Streep as Karen Blixen: a reactionary fantasy

Unsworth the unsworthy

Unsworth at
Pagewood:
only bluster

LABOUR Party sources tell me that ALP membership has fallen sharply under Bob Hawke's regime.

I wonder how many more members will leave now that Barry Unsworth has the top job in NSW.

For Barry Unsworth represents all that is worst in the Labor tradition.

He is racist. "Get back to the fish shop," he once told a Greek-born ALP delegate. After meeting a Japanese trade delegation, he said, "I don't want to be ingoistic, but I don't like Japs."

He is sexist. As Labour Council secretary, he told nine women delegates they'd be "no competition" in the Miss Australia quest. (They walked out.) He claims to support women's rights, yet bitterly opposes abortion.

He is unprincipled. As boss of "Labor station" ZKY, he brought in John Singleton, the virulently anti-union advertising tycoon, as announcer for 3 hours a day, making a mockery of Labor policy to counter conservative media domination.

And he is profoundly cynical.

In one interview as Labour Council secretary, at a time of record unemployment, he pointed outside the window of his plush office and said, "Affluence of the working class. How can you make life better than it is out there?" The interviewer noted later, "When he refers sardonically to 'the masses', it's clear he thinks he's left them behind."

UNSWORTH'S career is a case study in how right-wingers use the ALP as a stepping stone to power.

Believe it or not, he began as something of a leftwinger. As a youth he led a strike at Flinders Naval Depot (and won). At 21, he joined a leftwing ALP branch in working-class Padstow, and got involved with the NSW left "steering committee".

But like many a leftwinger who has tried to change the ALP, the party changed him instead. At 23, his job as an electrician caused him to move to the north shore and join the rightwing Gordon ALP branch. He soon came under the Right's influence, and became a close friend of Right king-pin John Ducker.

In 1961, aged 27, Unsworth became an Electrical Trades Union (ETU) official. In 1966, he went to Harvard Business School on a Churchill Fellowship to do a trade union program allegedly run by the CIA. He came back a firm supporter of America's role



in Vietnam, and an admirer of American "business unionism", the highly bureaucratic notion that unions are businesses to be run like any other, with executives who trade labour as their product.

Unsworth continued his climb, becoming Labour Council organiser. He goofed for the first time in 1972. The ETU Federal Executive fined him \$50 for misrepresenting himself as a current NSW official of the union, when he went to Victoria to help a rightwing election challenge.

This peccadillo did him little harm. Another overseas trip in 1974, to the Duke of Edinburgh Study Conference, made him a keen advocate of "worker participation". This was a convenient alternative to the much more radical "worker control" movement that had developed around the NSW BLF. It also fitted snugly with his appointment the previous year to the National Pipeline Authority.

In 1975 John Ducker became Labour Council secretary, and Unsworth his assistant secretary. Ducker played the "soft cop", making deals and compromises across the ALP, while Unsworth was the "hard cop", kicking heads and keeping the numbers in line.

Unsworth took to quoting his favourite book, Machiavelli's *The Prince*. His pet line was, "It is better to be feared than loved."

DUCKER and Unsworth brought Neville Wran to power in the party.

Wran was never quite of their faction, and Unsworth never took to him. But he had the urbane lawyer image that Wran and Don Dunstan had wooed the middle class with, and the Right



Baldwin after his bashing: Unsworth resisted reform

wanted government at any price.

Wran went on to smash picket lines, close hospital beds and attack railway workers. Unsworth's only key difference with him, though, was over Lotto and casinos. Unsworth had a puritan streak, and the sale of Lotto to big business brought the Right a lot of flak besides. Unsworth bitterly condemned casinos as "a cover for organised crime", words that will haunt him now as the organised crime issue eats away at the NSW Labor Party.

Ducker retired in 1979 to join the Public Service Board bosses, and Unsworth became Labour Council secretary. Even his own faction members began to call him "the fuchser". He had the BLF suspended from Trades Hall. When GMH sacked 1500 at Pagewood, Unsworth was full of bluster, promising the company "the biggest fight it has ever experienced... We can't accept it and we won't accept it." But

accept it he did, without any fight at all.

The bashing of ALP leftwinger Peter Baldwin produced a flood of allegations of branch-stacking by the Right. Unsworth simply rode out the demands for reform.

Unsworth took to bailing conservatism as the "middle class Volvo set". Of course, Unsworth himself was on \$40,000 a year, owned a two storey \$175,000 north shore house, a swimming pool, a garage full of cars, and a Tweed Heads holiday unit. His office, a visitor noted, had a "carved wooden escorial, glass topped table, and stuffed 19th century Nouveau Capitalist settles."

In parliament and as Health Minister, Unsworth continued his form. He cut the nurses' recruitment campaign in half and banned a series of anti-AIDS ads for condom use. He also changed his address to his Tweed Heads holiday unit, to get an \$8000 a year travel allowance and 116 free plane trips. The public scandal made him repay the money.

NONE of this will surprise those of the Labor Left. What surprises me, though, is why they stay in a party that is just a ladder to power for people like Unsworth.

Without the legwork of Left rank-and-filers, and the votes of Left MPs, the Unsworths would be nothing. Yet if the tables ever turned and the Left took control the Unsworths would rushlessly split the party, just as Billy Hughes did in 1917. The NSW Right, after all, is historically very much the same element that split in other states to form the DLP.

For many leftwingers, the ALP seems a short cut towards socialism. Leaders like Unsworth, however, make it clear that the short cut is in fact a dead end.

How much more sensible it is to build a genuine socialist party outside the ALP, where one can openly argue for socialist politics, instead of being used by Liberals like Unsworth in "Labor" disguise.

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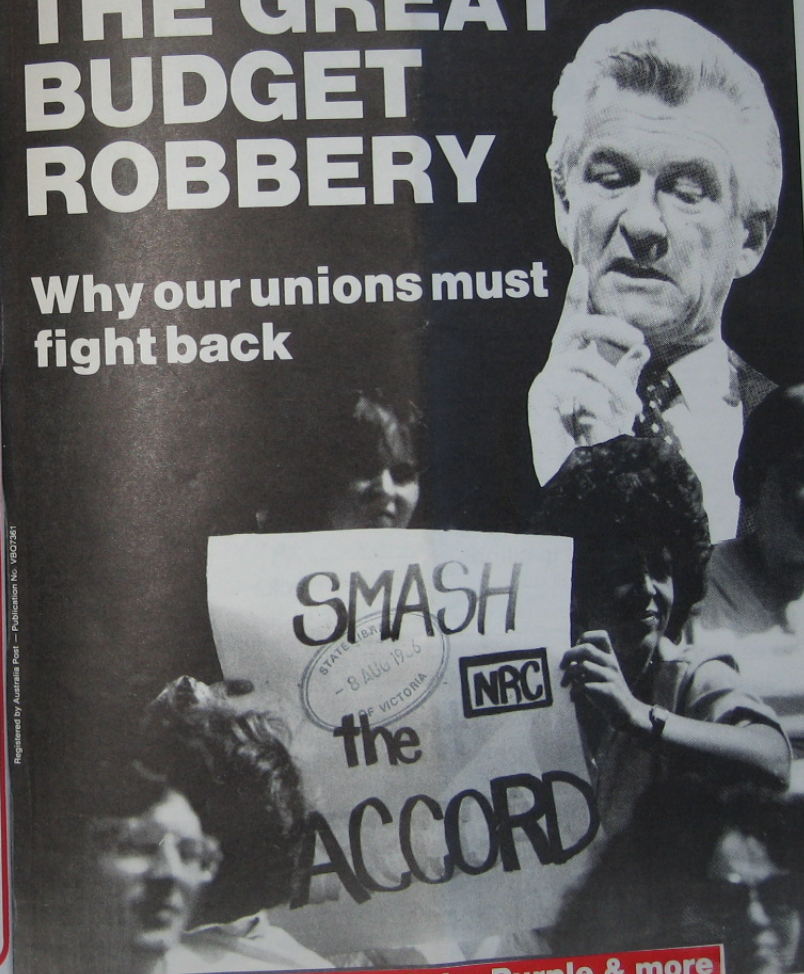
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CAT'S EYE

MOURA

Joh's dismal mine safety

LAST MONTH'S coal mine disaster at Moura cost twelve workers their lives. And miners are rightly making some angry complaints about the Queensland government's attitude towards their safety.

Queensland has had three major disasters in the last eighteen years since Joh Bjelke Petersen came to power at Box Flat, Kianga, and now Moura. By contrast, NSW has had just one in the last fifty years, despite about four times the level of underground mining.

Yet Queensland mine safety measures lag way behind NSW's.

A mine safety research unit near Ipswich, urgently recommended by inquiries after both Box Flat and Kianga, still needs \$2 million and is set to be opened, four years after the Box Flat disaster.

State Mines Minister Ivan Gibbs has not even fully read the Kianga report.

The Mine Rescue Brigade in NSW has 40 full-time workers in four stations. Queensland's has just eight workers, spread over five stations.

In NSW, the mine owners pay over \$4 million to finance the Rescue Brigade. Queensland's gets about \$1.5 million, the owners paying just one-third.

And Queensland, unlike NSW, has no law requiring owners to train a set ratio of miners in rescue techniques.

As yet, the exact cause of the Moura explosion is not known. But even Blind Fire can see that profit is the cause of Queensland's abysmal record on mine rescue and safety.

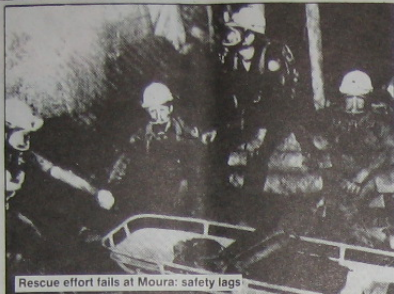
MANAGEMENT

Just In Time just a take

"A SYSTEM which gives workers greater control over production rates." Sounds like an Oxford Dictionary definition of socialism, doesn't it?

In fact, it's the description of a new management technique called *Just In Time*. Its supporters claim it eradicates worker hostility to increased production.

There are always plenty of quack remedies around for solving class hostilities. This one developed in Japan.



Rescue effort fails at Moura; safety lags

Just In Time works by tailoring raw materials and production to exactly fit what has been ordered. It does away with stockpiling, arguing that are "economies of scale" are more than cancelled out by storage costs of raw materials and finished products.

So where does the greater worker "control" come in? As part of *Just In Time*, management is supposed to consult with workers about whether particular orders can be fulfilled in time. Big deal!

Peter Cox, NSW Minister for Industry, supports the scheme.

Cox thinks *Just In Time* can save employers up to \$50 million a year, and give workers "a stake in the system". Sounds like the sort of state that Joan of Arc was tied to, frankly.

MUDGINBERRI

Bosses' hero set to climb

THE \$1.7 million damages awarded against the Meat Employees' Union (AMIEU) over the Mudginberri dispute was appalling, but predictable.

The ACTU strategy of "fighting" the Section 45D prosecution in the courts, rather than with industrial action, was an open invitation to the Federal Court to invoke the full force of the Trade Practices Act for the first time against a union.

The crippling damages have turned Mudginberri boss Jay Pendarvis into a national hero amongst employers. Pendarvis now looks set to begin a political career, courtesy of the National Country Party in the Northern Territory parliament. Who knows — he might even become industrial relations minister in the NT government!

The NT government, along with the National Farmers' Federation, gave massive

financial aid to Pendarvis to carry out the prosecution. Despite his claims that the case cost him dearly, Pendarvis and his wife spent their visit to Sydney for the judgement in one of the city's most expensive luxury hotels.

It appears the AMIEU has taken some precautions against paying the damages. Mudginberri's lawyer complained that it had taken \$240,000 out of one branch's funds to hide away.

For the moment, the AMIEU is pursuing the legal path and appealing. Federal secretary Jack O'Toole seems resigned to paying up, speaking of a "leaner and meaner" AMIEU.

If the AMIEU is made to pay up, it will be a green light to other employers to use the courts against blackbans too. Like the Penal Powers in 1969, Section 45D is only going to be beaten by mass defiance in the end.

DEFENCE

Beazley backs US sleazily

NOW WE know why the ALP has a pro-US foreign policy. Defence Minister Kim Beazley told the recent ALP

KIM BEAZLEY'S DEFENCE POLICY:



Federal Conference that Labor lost working class support in the 1966 election because it was anti-American!

Beazley is making sure Labor doesn't make the same mistake again. A recent defence contract for a fleet of helicopters was won by the US Sikorski company, after a string of accusations from the French Aerospace group that Canberra changed the rules of the bidding.

Fittingly, the Sikorski helicopters are called Black Hawk, and they will be phased out in the US after 1987. With any luck, so will their prime ministerial namesake here.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Bob Hawke's dole fraud

BOR HAWKE'S proposal for "voluntary community work" for the dole was not widely received at the ALP Conference. Nonetheless, the idea is far from dead.

Hawke's scheme would cut across the whole concept of welfare being an entitlement, the case ever since the Social Services Act of 1944. Unemployed now apparently have some debt to pay to society for their lousy \$95 a week.

The usual pretext for such a scheme is that it will train young people, and give them "work experience" to get paid jobs.

This is nonsense. Community organisations are grossly underfunded, and have no resources to train people in the skilled parts of their work. Young people will find themselves cleaning, labouring and doing domestic tasks. Paid, trained community workers — already strained through understaffing — will be expected to supervise them, while governments will use the volunteers to avoid more welfare funding.

In 1983, a survey on voluntary work revealed that 1.5 million volunteers were already doing an average of 4.5 hours a week each. This translates to 160,000 full-time positions being lost already.

Hawke's "voluntary workers" will be non-unionised, and will undercut the unionisation of community workers, which has only recently started.

To date, Hawke's ministers, especially those who might have to run the whole nightmare, have been skeptical. But with the media in full support of the concept, welfare workers and unemployed alike need to remain on their guard.

COVER STORY

Labor's Budget: A big lie about living standards

'THE ECONOMY is sitting on a powder keg', said a manager of the National Bank in June. He was talking about the deteriorating balance of trade and falling dollar.

At the end of July, it seemed as if the powder keg had exploded. The dollar fell sharply, then went through an acute spasm which forced the government to dump various constraints on foreign capital. The US Senate decided wheat trade to Russia and China would be subsidized, sending a chill down the spine of Australian farmers.

And Paul Keating was forced to deny he was panicking; the surest sign the government was doing just that.

Actually, there are no grounds for panic. We are not about to become a "banana republic" ... at least in the short term. A fair amount of the scare-mongering in the media has been designed to soften us up for this month's brutal Budget.

The government had already targeted sizeable welfare cuts, in a bid to get the Budget deficit down. A much-discussed goal was \$5 billion. In the aftermath of the economic shocks, the pundits were calling for it to be cut to \$4 billion, which would mean inflicting some real pain and suffering on the most impoverished Australians.

They hope to get away with it by spreading the idea that the looming economic crisis is caused by our wage levels (supposedly far too high), our four weeks' annual leave, or even by the holiday loading. And in some places it is working. I spoke to a union secretary

recently who said some of his members are starting to feel guilty about their standard of living.

This is ridiculous. Our wages and living conditions are not the cause of the problem. They never were the cause of recessions and depressions, and certainly are not today, with our industries so capital-intensive.

In fact, our wages are not all that high. Here are some average wage comparisons for manufacturing industries which I took from the *Canberra Times* (adjusted to eliminate distortions caused by the different length of the working week in different countries):

| | |
|------------|----------|
| Canada: | \$34,562 |
| USA: | 28,425 |
| Japan: | 27,811 |
| Holland: | 23,444 |
| Germany: | 22,237 |
| Australia: | 18,237 |
| Britain: | 17,711 |
| France: | 16,039 |

Nearly 80 percent of the goods we import come from high-wage countries in Europe and Japan. So the suggestion that Australian workers are "living beyond their means" and causing the trade crisis is transparent rubbish.

NEVERTHELESS, there is an economic slump on the way. Job ads in the papers are becoming fewer, which means unemployment figures are soon to rise.

The Australian Chamber of Manufacturers forecasts that economic growth over the next year will be a sluggish 1.9 per cent. That means a dramatic rise in unemployment. Why is this happening?

It has little to do with workers' wages, or the government's Budget and other economic policies. Contrary to the opportunistic rhetoric of John Howard, Bob Hawke and Paul Keating cannot be blamed for the trade crisis, any more than they deserved the credit for the previous economic upturn — which merely followed the economic recovery overseas.

Australia is tightly tied to the world capitalist system. It cannot escape its pressures. As we go to press, it is not clear whether heavy pressure from Canberra can even induce Ronald Reagan to veto or force modifications in the wheat subsidy proposal. If it can, it will only be because



Keating: phoney line on wages

Canberra is joining forces with elements of the American establishment who also oppose it for foreign policy reasons — hardly an option for most of the country's economic problems.

(One thing has become clear, however. The repeated signals from the Labor government that the US bases might be used as a bargaining chip exploded, once and for all, the government's claims that the bases must be sacrosanct because they were our contribution to keeping world peace. Hawke and Keating don't believe that any more than we do.)

WHILE this country cannot escape the pressure of the world market, it could perhaps cope better if it were not so tied to exporting minerals and agricultural produce, and if its industry were more productive.

What industry we have got is pretty backward. One factor here is the stupid economic protectionism in which all

governments have indulged for decades, and which has always been a favourite remedy of "left" union officials as well. It has simply left industry flabby and fragmented.

New industries could be created, and old ones modernised, if there were substantial investment. But here the real problem arises. Despite all the sacrifices we have made under the Accord, despite a substantial reversal of profits, Australian capitalists refuse to invest. Investment went down earlier this year, and most predictions are for it to remain sluggish over the next twelve months.

The Australian bosses quite simply have no faith in the long-term viability of their own system, and they are certainly not going to invest cash in it.

This fact has led the government to whinge about the bosses being an "income percent managerial class". But it never occurs to Labor that this class should be kicked out of power, that the working class could do a better job.

It has also varied "left" union leaders and MPs to call for increased investment by the government. This is stupid. After we've copped wage cuts so that profits could rise, and then found the bosses still won't invest, what could be more outrageous than for the government to take our money and pour it into the bosses' enterprises for them?

It is about time we fought to put money into our own pockets. And if we don't want to find our money confronted with one grim Budget after another for the rest of our lives, it is time we also set about getting rid of the incompetent capitalist class that has made such a mess of the Australian economy.

Then and only then can we implement "industry plans" and "budgets" designed to meet the real needs of working people.

— Tom O'Lincoln



As support grows, the BLF wins a vital trial of strength

THE PAPERS called it a "rampage" and a "riot".

In reality, last month's march by building workers in Melbourne (see following article) was a trial of strength between the BLF and Lewis Constructors, the most aggressive of the building employers.

The BLF won, proving that it not only lives on, but can mobilise real support on Melbourne building sites.

The showdown had been brewing for some weeks, with BLF organisers going on site to deal with safety and other issues. A falling concrete slab brought John Cummins to the Lewis site. But Lewis paid a price for having him arrested. Two days later, crane crews walked off when police manhandled a FEDFA official. The march itself shut down four Lewis jobs.

Since the march's success, the mood has changed on building sites. Managers are more tractable, and workers more outspoken in support of the BLF. It is clearer than ever that the BLF's militant unionism has support from all trades, not just labourers.

Most notably, many members of the BWIU, the major gainer in the carve-up, are changing attitude. The union has not been servicing its members, with organisers failing to turn up on numerous occasions when issues arise. Even when they have addressed meetings, BWIU organisers have been booed and heckled by members on several occasions. Over 1000 members have defected to the rival ASC & J largely over the BWIU's actions towards the BLF.

BWU shop stewards expressed this dissatisfaction by voting for an automatic walkout if police came on site, and for a mass meeting to discuss the carve-up. Many BWU carpenters have joined labourers and other trades in BLF-led walk-offs.

Allan Sargent, a prominent ex-organiser of the BWIU, publicly stated his support for the BLF in an open letter earlier this year.

"We may be powerless to prevent governments deciding whether to recognise us or not, but we must never allow governments and their institutions to decide whether a worker organisation can continue to exist or not."

Yet Sargent has been taken on

again as organiser by the BWIU, and on his own terms. It seems that the BWIU is feeling the pressure from its members, and needs to rebuild support.

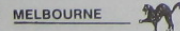
But the BWIU has not changed its political position. The industry faces a testing time, with the national building agreement up for renegotiation. The BWIU wants to defer a decision for six months, taking it up to Christmas, a bad time for an industrial campaign. It has agreed that some superannuation benefits only be received on retirement, rather than whenever the worker leaves the industry, as at present.

The BWIU's inadequacy is most obvious in Sydney. Conditions have declined badly, with such things as scaffolding resting on a metre-high pile of bricks now common. While BLF organisers find workers on site responsive, employers and the BWIU are aggressive and called. So the Sydney strategy has been more politically than industrially oriented.

Outside the industry, support for the BLF still seems to be growing. A Melbourne mass meeting of Commonwealth clerical assistants heard a BLF speaker and passed a motion of support almost unanimously. One delegate even went back to work and apologised for having opposed the BLF in the past.

Flying BLF pickets have been going around Melbourne building sites, sparking action by all trades over a range of issues.

With the BLF's industrial base stronger now, and the trials of organisers beginning, we can expect to see the mobilisation of active support in a political campaign.



MELBOURNE

What a demo, what a day!

IT IS 10 am, and building workers and supporters are gathering at Melbourne's Magistrates' Court.

We are supporting John Cummins, a BLF organiser who has been in prison for five days after refusing to give a bail undertaking not to return to a site.

When the case is adjourned,



we move off to the Lewis Construction site where Cummins was arrested. For an hour we stand outside, chanting, "Join us!"

A few workers trickle out. Then the electric moment. The rest vote to stop work for 24 hours!

With a newfound confidence, we march off to another Lewis site. After only a few minutes, BLF organisers convince the workers to come out.

At the next Lewis site, the Victoria Square project, with our swollen numbers we all surge onto the site. The police can do nothing. We talk to the workers and again they vote to walk out in support of Cummins.

The fourth Lewis job is closed down in the same way. We then decide to target Costain, the contractors responsible for locking out 15 militants since February.

We march right through the city, the numbers still growing. Giving the police the slip, we again all stream onto the Riverside site, where the workers decide to go out for two days!

"This is the way it should be," says one BLF member. "The workers on site and the cops outside."

Next is Market Street. The

police have finally massed and look ready for a confrontation. The locked-out BLF shop steward manages to get inside, but the police attack and arrest him.

With the leaders arrested, will the megaphone fall? Someone takes the megaphone and leads the chanting and speeches — a BWIU member!

The question now is, will the job stop? This site has been working for months despite a picket, police action, and plumbers' and electricians' bans. But convinced by some persuasive arguments from the BWIU safety officer, they walk off for the rest of the day.

Later, we find out that a nearby job also stopped as soon as the confrontation started. The total at the end of the day is seven jobs stopped, a euphoric success.

Back at the court, the magistrate still doesn't release Cummins. He probably doesn't want to appear to be bowing too easily to pressure. And so it proves — the next day Cummins is out with no bail conditions.

Later in the pub, a BL says, "A millionaire with billions of dollars couldn't feel the way I do". We all drink to that.

—Janey Stone

THE BOTHA regime has successfully stopped the flow of information out of South Africa as part of its state of emergency. This makes any assessment of the situation difficult.

But some things are clear. The white regime's crackdown had as one of its main targets the black workers' movement. Of the ten thousand people arrested without trial, a large number have been trade union officials and activists.

A labour monitoring group attached to the University of Witwatersrand reported in mid-July that 245 union officials remained in detention, and that 2,324 rank and file unionists had been held at various times since the emergency began.

Botha chose his time carefully, when he thought the black trade unions were on the defensive. He had hoped to do what Jaruzelski did to Poland's Solidarity union movement a few years earlier. He has failed in that objective, although he has slowed down the resistance.

For example, the Soweto Day strike saw almost a million and a half workers stay away from work, despite the fact that most of the trade union leaders were in jail or in hiding. Although the strike was probably bigger than the one held on May Day, it was also much more passive. There were reports of small meetings in Soweto and barricades in the Eastern Cape, but elsewhere the country was quiet.

ANOTHER indication of Botha's overall failure has been the reaction of the South African ruling class. Instead of congratulating him for his efforts, they have been calling for the release of jailed trade union leaders.

Partly, this is because the employers want a group of "responsible" and "moderate" trade union leaders who will be in a position to ride the power of the working class. Without such a labour bureaucracy, South African bosses fear that the fight against apartheid may become one to overthrow capitalism itself.

Leading businessman Mike Saunders said: "The absence of trade union leaders who are actively involved in settling disputes between labour and management is already leading to serious problems in industry."

Another reason for the employers' unease has been the response of some sectors of the working class, especially in the retail industry. Strike action by



Soweto Day service: a bigger strike than May 1

The cauldron boils on despite Botha's clamp

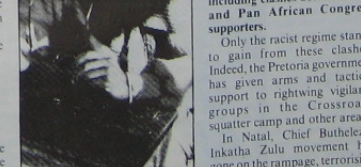
rank and file members of the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA) has reportedly seen the release of a number of union officials.

Workers in CCAWUSA have built up a tradition of links between different chainstores and across cities as a result of struggles in the past. These contacts were vital in getting the retail workers' strike action off the ground. The fact that other workers in stronger sectors such as mining have not followed suit indicates they do not yet have the confidence or the organisation to act independently.

Similarly, the mass arrests of community activists may be backfiring on the regime in some areas. The *Washington Post* reports from Johannesburg that:

"Churchmen like Bishop Desmond Tutu and UDF leaders say the police crackdown and the arrests of at least 4000 activists, many of them with UDF affiliations, have... (taken) off the streets those who can impose a measure of order on younger militants."

The report goes on to quote Soweto UDF (United Democratic Front) leader Mazibuko, interviewed in hiding, about a rent boycott that young militants are enforcing in Soweto: "We've got to stop this one or there could be chaos. They wouldn't do this if its members of the Soweto Civic Association were still around. But we're in hiding or in jail."



UDF leader Mazibuko: militants taking over

launched the United Workers Union of South Africa, to try to split black workers away from the militant Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Despite these setbacks, most of the opposition in South Africa thinks that the regime will fall in two to three years. Part of the strategy they have adopted is to make the townships ungovernable by attacking the police and other manifestations of the state.

Certain areas in the Eastern Cape are probably still no-go areas for the police, even with the State of Emergency. But such actions do not fundamentally threaten the state.

The white regime is armed to the teeth. Even the State of Emergency is only a glimpse of its firepower. The army has not yet been deployed in any great numbers. To call now for an uprising, on its own, as some elements of the resistance are doing, would be to condemn thousands of the most militant blacks to slaughter at the hands of the Botha government.

CERTAIN groups — called "workerists" — in the trade unions recognise this.

They see the working class as the most powerful force in the struggle against apartheid, and therefore argue for the primacy of the role the working class has to play in smashing the system.

Another group — the "populists" — see the working class as only one component of the movement. They have gained the ascendancy in the trade unions because they have argued politics, albeit the "democracy now, socialism later" politics of the African National Congress.

It is the failure of the organisation of the various socialists in the unions which has left the field wide open to the populists. The task for the workerists must now be, difficult as it is, to build a revolutionary socialist organisation in South Africa.

The situation now appears to be one of stalemate. Botha has not crushed the workers' movement. He has put a lid on the boiling cauldron, but has not managed to turn down the heat very much.

If black workers can organise themselves, they can eventually blow that lid sky high.

—John Passani

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Don't knock Manila's revolt

I'M WRITING in reply to David Gresson's article regarding his impressions of a recent visit to the Philippines. (Socialist Action, June.)

I have recently visited the Philippines, and there are noticeable changes. Firstly, the change of government has resurrected freedom of speech and the press. In my experience of living in Manila before the declaration of martial law in 1972 and for three years afterwards, the repression of this right was a mental imprisonment for those who put forward alternative viewpoints. The lack of 'politics' you

mentioned in your article, and the strong belief in the power of god in Marcos' removal, is the result of an inherent belief system in the upbringing of the majority of Filipinos. The lack of politics I would attribute to 20 years of repression, where alternative viewpoints and structures were virtually illegal and labelled as subversive and inciting rebellion.

Although my experiences were centered in Manila, I captured a strong sense of optimism to start rebuilding the country's economy and political structures, and for dialogue with groups such as the New People's Army.

The change which we are looking for — a more equal distribution of wealth to all sectors of society and a more equitable economic system —



Priest talks to NPA guerrillas: a desire for dialogue

will take more than 20 years to unfold. There are strong unequal economic, cultural and social

factors, which were modelled on the Spanish feudal system and the American paternalistic exploitative system, which have to be dismantled. It is an extremely difficult task, particularly with Australian multi-nationals exploit such a system, along with other western countries.

I agree with you that this was indeed a middle class revolt; but political, economic and social change is not achievable overnight, especially in the terms of reference of foreign observers. I am optimistic that the change of government is the beginning of the process of more positive changes, particularly in restoring human rights.

—Noemie Doronila, Melbourne.



The Parasitic Pair: fatuous praise

JULY was a vintage month for fatuous comments from the rich and powerful.

There was Margaret Thatcher, perceptively noting that countries boycotting the Commonwealth Games were "damaging the chances of their own athletes".

There was the clergyman who married Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson, describing the Parasitic Pair as having "a natural talent for happiness".

But the one we liked best came from the builders of the \$313 million Grosvenor Place office block in Sydney, vaulting their energy-saving devices, they boasted: "We have spared no expense to cut costs."

A FINANCIAL services company has advertised in Sydney for a general manager "like Frank Furillo".

Very calm under pressure. Frank is our sort of guy."

No doubt he is. Frank Furillo is also said to be righteous, an alcoholic, and the veteran of a disastrous broken marriage who wantonly neglects his son.

GUESS which countries have most prisoners per head of population.

According to Harper's Index, they are 1. The Soviet Union, 2. South Africa, 3. The USA.

So it was kind of appropriate that the US spent \$146 million in 1985 on radio broadcasts to Russia and Eastern Europe, lecturing on the subject of "freedom". And that Russia spent an estimated \$300 million trying to jam them.

IS it a sign of the times?

The Hawk Ascendancy, marked price \$8.99, is now retailing at a Brisbane bookshop for \$1.50. Nobody wants to read bad news, it seems.

• TIMES must be tough. Nearly 300 businessmen are taking a month off, and spending well over \$10,000 each, on a luxury cruise to view the America's Cup from a "floating grandstand" next February.

Aboard the elite Island Princess, they will eat gourmet food, gamble in the casino, gambol in the disco, and lounge around the swimming pool. Should they wish to contact their offices, they will have direct-dial telephones, telexes, word processors and secretarial services laid on.

When it comes to restraint, Australian workers, we suggest you follow your masters.

BOMBERS AWAY... Does David Lange's disgraceful swap of the two French agents for \$11 million prove that, at least for the New Zealand government, there is a pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow Warring?

Or is it just a case of trading gun-thugs for butter?

A SMALL step for Hugh Hefner, a giant leap for womankind.

Yes, Hugh Hefner has been forced to close three Playboy Clubs in the US because of declining business. Hefner says that they are "passed" and "an albatross". In a belated admission of the impact of the Women's Libera-



Hefner: empire crumbling

tion movement, Hefner now says, "I should have closed them down ten years ago."

INDUSTRIAL espionage must be getting serious.

A US firm now retails an executive briefcase with a burglar alarm. Costing \$1200, it shrieks and gives out 4000 volts of electricity in the wrong hands.

AND FOR the shareholder capitalist who cannot take his mind off the job, the same firm makes the ideal gift for his wife or mistress.

As suspense bell, with a choice of bulls or bears on a ticker-tape background. Just \$85 a pair.

• THE CIA has been advertising for recruits in the Wall Street Journal.

Just what sort of person is the CIA looking for? The International Herald Tribune investigated Mr Howard of Santa Fe, an undercover agent who committed suicide when the CIA sacked him.

From his friends, it built up this picture: "He had a quick mind, could manipulate people and lie when necessary. He was described as an outdoor man, a gun dealer and collector, a hard drinker with a nasty temper when he consumed drugs, a drug user, a man who liked to turn a quick dollar, and a womaniser."

"Many of these characteristics were part of the profile of an ideal CIA undercover agent and explain why the agency hired him."



CHEAP SHOTS

ALL THAT spending on weapons systems, and they still can't protect Pearl Harbor.

The US Navy sent two battle fleets from California on an exercise to "attack" Hawaii One, on an aircraft carrier, cruisers and destroyers, kept radio silence while it launched 2500 air sorties.

Despite having long-range reconnaissance planes, radar and satellite surveillance, the defenders couldn't locate the fleet until it sailed into Pearl Harbor.

Shifting power in the ivory tower

1973: Thai students topple a junta



What about student radicalism in the West?

Even at the most tumultuous of times, only a minority on the campuses are seriously radicalised. At Monash, Australia's most radical university in the sixties, a consistent core of around 1000 voted for hardline left positions, and meetings of over 3000 in a student body of 10,000 were rare.

The reasons for majority apathy are many. Universities are elitist places: to get there, you must come through an intensely competitive exam system that fosters a "Take care of yourself" attitude. Once there, the workload does not slacken; if anything, it doubles. Students are constantly behind in assignments, and surveys show that most even give up reading books (apart from set texts).

Generally, they come from relatively comfortable backgrounds. Gough Whitlam abolished tertiary fees, but few working class kids were making it to HSC anyway. Just 25% of High School kids in Year Seven stayed on to HSC, compared to 94% of non-Catholic private school kids, and the class bias persists to this day.

YET OFTEN a larger minority can be radicalised on the campuses than in the rest of society.

Most students are young, and relatively open to ideas. Few have families to support or jobs to keep, factors which inhibit most workers from political involvement.

Students are trained to think in abstract ideas. Even when the left is small, and unable to put its ideas into practice, it can still attract students to its theories and its vision.

The compactness of a campus means that even a few socialists can have a large impact. A huge anti-exam campaign at Monash in 1974, with a week-long sit-in by hundreds and meetings of up to 2000, began with just five revolutionary students.

None of this, however, guarantees that campus radicalism will be leftwing. As politics has moved to the right in Australia in the last decade, Right to Life's, Zionists and fundamentalist Maranathas have recruited as many campus activists as has the radical left.

Before the War, Western universities were almost exclusively upper and middle class. Campus politics reflected this.

In Germany, jingoistic student fraternities supported Hitler's rise to power. In England, large-scale scabbing by students occurred in the 1926 General Strike. The same happened here in the 1917 General Strike in NSW.

The right did not have it all its own way, though. America saw a wave of brief campus strikes against the threat of war in the thirties. A maverick strain of left liberal students emerged in England, spawning

spies like Philby, Burgess, McLean and Blunt. In Australia, small Labour Clubs formed in the 1920s.

World War Two transformed the universities, laying the basis for mass student radicalism.

The "ivory tower" walls came down, as academics turned their research to the war effort. After the War, capitalism needed a more educated workforce for its new technologies, its arms race and its growing state sector. Britain built its "red brick" universities and let in the lower classes. Here, the Liberals raised campus intakes and the number of scholarships. "If I wasn't for me, you wouldn't be here," bragged Liberal PM Menzies to student hecklers.

WHAT ARE the main features of postwar student radicalism?

As a social layer, students are more independent of economic pressures than workers, and also of institutions like the unions and the Labor Party, which both have considerable inertia.

This makes them more volatile, and sensitive to shifts in the ideological climate. Students are often "barometers for society".

For example, the Cold War eased in the late fifties. Students quickly got involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain, and in the black civil rights movement in the US. Mario Savio, a leading figure at Berkeley, America's most radical campus, estimated that by 1964, 10% of the student body had walked civil rights picket lines.

Yet the working class internationally only really awoke from its Cold War slumber with the 1968 General Strike in France. Likewise in Australia, the student movement began in 1965-66, but workers over Vietnam began only 1968-69, when did not move seriously until 1968-69, when the anti-strike Penit Powers were challenged and smashed.

Of course, the same holds when the ideological climate gets worse. The student

(Continued page 8)



1968: Paris students at a sit-in salute strikers

STUDENT RADICALISM

movement began to decline in 1972 as Gough Whitlam rose to power. In 1975, when the last of the "Vietnam generation" had graduated and the media onslaught against Whitlam peaked, it collapsed entirely.

Yet worker militancy kept rising well past Whitlam's election and into 1974. After Whitlam's electoral obliteration, workers kept fighting major battles against Fraser right through to the Horror Budget of 1978.

This responsiveness to the ideological climate allowed students to play a leading role in the Vietnam movement.

They formed the backbone of early anti-war marches. The shift from "conscientious objection" to conscription to outright defiance centred largely on the campuses, as draft resisters dared police to come on to arrest them. And the Monash Labour Club pulled the Vietnam debate sharply to the left by collecting aid for the NLF.

But this leading role also created one of the weaknesses of the sixties movement. Some, particularly in the New Left, tended to dismiss the working class as the key force for social change, and to look instead to student power, the Third World or vague notions of cultural revolution.

STUDENTS' intellectualism also acts as both a strength and a weakness.

An example was Australia's first wave of student radicalism, just after the War. An influx of ex-soldiers radicalised by the War saw Communists lead university Labour Clubs at both Melbourne and Sydney. Melbourne's Labour Club had 400 members, with a Communist Party branch of 120 on campus.

These radicals were often talented propagandists. But they saw politics as an intellectual exercise and engaged in little direct action. A Melbourne Labour Club



1978: Sydney Uni students give their vice-chancellor a hard time

member recalls:

"It was all much more civilised in those days. We had notable speakers at lunch time... our leaders were brilliant orators, men like Ian Turner and Rex Mortimer and Stephen Murray-Smith. We wrote articles, put on humorous political reviews, marched in the May Day parade, and I remember some very enjoyable camps we went on. We used to go along to Liberal Club speakers and hear them out, but try and catch them out with interjections and well-prepared questions."

Yet despite its weaknesses, it was largely this layer of socialist intellectuals that cut drift from the Stalinist tradition after Russia's invasion of Hungary, preparing the soil for a new anti-Stalinist left to emerge here.

Indeed, students' intellectualism makes them very sensitive to overseas trends, for better and for worse.

The US civil rights movement inspired the first stirrings of sixties radicalism here: Melbourne Labour Club's anti-White Australia campaign in 1961, and Sydney's freedom rides.

When Labor flopped at the polls over Vietnam in 1966, students again looked overseas for inspiration. Mao's Cultural Revolution in China, and the events of May 1968 in France, in which New Leftists and Trotskyists figured, gave a fillip to three brands of revolutionary politics.

On the negative side, as the student movement declined from 1972, a whole

layer of radicals picked up the wispy-wispy ideas of Eurocommunism as they retreated into the campus bureaucracy.

THE FUNDAMENTAL problem facing any student movement, however big or radical, is its lack of real social power. Unlike workers, students play no direct role in producing profit — the motor of capitalist society.

Certainly, they can win particular battles on their own. The Berkeley Student Revolt in 1964, the Monash students in 1970, and various disinvestment campaigns in the US and here recently, have all shown that University administrators have to keep their brain factories running smoothly.

But such victories are over on-campus, symbolic issues. Berkeley's three month battle of sit-ins and lecture boycotts and 782 arrests was over a ban on civil rights rallies. Monash's was over nine expulsions for an anti-Vietnam sit-in. The disinvestment campaigns have been over relatively minor university share holdings in South Africa.

When students challenge the fundamental nature of the university, let alone of society, on their own, they are invariably crushed. So Monash and Macquarie students found in 1974, when their sit-ins demanding an end to the competitive nature of education were smashed by mass arrests.

To win their wider demands, even for educational reform, students must link up

with the power of the working class. They will not always be lucky like the French students in 1968, and discover the workers in a revolutionary mood. But as the Vietnam Moratoriums in 1970 and the anti-Springbok campaign in 1971 showed, major victories even on non-educational demands can be won by turning outwards.

TURNING students' horizons towards the working class is a hard task for socialists. The campus is, after all, a relatively cosy place to practise politics on.

Yet the number of radicalised students lost to socialist politics after the collapse of the sixties movement shows its importance.

Some turned out to be "hard but brittle". When they left the intellectual hothouse of the university, their revolutionary fervour disappeared. Former American radical Jerry Rubin, now a Reaganite stockbroker, is a classic example.

Some New Leftists, whose politics revolved around anti-authoritarianism, collapsed into "do your own thing" hedonism, the precursor of the "Me Decade". Others wandered into mysticism, massage, the Divine Light Mission and Down to Earth festivals.

Some, as we noted, retreated into the student bureaucracy, and then, via the ALP and Communist Party, into union and government bureaucratic posts.

Hundreds, of course, found their way into teaching and the lower-to-middle levels of the public service. There they greatly accelerated the shift of the white collar unions to the left.

Even so, there were problems. Radical teachers tried to implement anti-authoritarian "open classroom" theories they had learned on campus, without attacking the system as a whole. Most failed, and many became dispirited.

The Maoist Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) tried to come to grips with the task after 1971, taking some of its best activists off campus and into factories via the Worker-Student Alliance.

Their approach drew in only their closest supporters, and probably hastened the movement's decline somewhat. The tactic only really bore fruit at Adelaide's Chrysler factory.

More successful was the British Socialist Workers Party, a group with similar politics to Socialist Action, which recruited heavily out of the student movement. It inculcated working class politics into its student recruits, by organising them to do support work for strikes and picket lines, while remaining active on campus.

STUDENT radicalism today is back on the fringes of campus politics. A movement, in any meaningful sense, no longer exists.

Liberal and ALP clubs again dominate. On campuses like Monash, they literally disappeared prior to 1972 as communist and DLers fought it out in the polarised atmosphere.

The collapse of sixties radicalism deformed student politics badly for years, reinforced by the "heads down, study hard" attitude that mass unemployment induced in students.

Radicals fought for bureaucratic positions and control of campus newspapers as a substitute for action. They wasted enormous energy hanging onto the Australian Union of Students, until it dissolved in acrimony. Yet AUS was always an empty bureaucratic shell. It lobbied MFIs, played a marginal role in the anti-Springbok campaign in 1971, held a string of rallies over student allowances in the late seventies, and achieved little else. Real radicalisation came through struggles run by local campus activists.

Student radicalism did not die altogether, though. Sporadic campaigns did erupt. Students fought for child care at Melbourne, political economy courses at Sydney, civil liberties in Brisbane.

And increased isolation (and sometimes, the agitation of revolutionaries) pushed radical students to take the struggles of campus workers far more seriously than sixties radicals ever did. Six times since 1975, most recently at Monash last month, Victorian students have linked up with cleaners, canteen workers or library staff in major campaigns.

THE MAIN contribution of student radicalism to Australian politics has been in rebuilding a revolutionary current on the left.

That current is small, to be sure. But it is a major advance on the ossified, staleshed left of the fifties and early sixties.

Students still have a vital role to play today in building a revolutionary working class party in Australia.

As we noted earlier, workers are generally reluctant to join the left when, like today, it is small and unable to put its ideas for struggle into practice.

The British Socialist Workers Party tackled this problem during the sixties. It recruited heavily amongst students, and reached a credible size of a thousand members or so. Those thousands have since recruited 3000 other students and workers, so that it now has a small but serious working class base and is Britain's largest revolutionary organisation.

In a similar way, radical students here today can form the core of a united revolutionary party, and can ultimately link up with the force in society that can overthrow the system.

— Alec Kahn

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to link with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

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We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

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We fight for liberation against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through ending capitalism and building socialism.

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While Maggie packs for a trip to South Africa...



... follow the struggle against Apartheid

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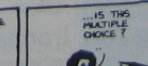
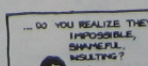
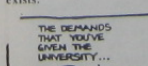
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Fightback Conference

SINCE our last report on the work of Socialist Action members, we've been busy indeed.

Comrades from three cities converged on Canberra to participate in the national Fightback Conference on 35 July. John Passant introduced a workshop attended by 70 people on the Accord, Janey Stone showed slides of the BLF struggle, Tom O'Lincoln spoke on the Minority Movement of the thirties, and Rick Kuhn led a discussion of radical public service struggles of more modern times.

Socialist Action members sold our magazine, ran a bookstall throughout the conference, and participated in the plenary debates, helping to strengthen the final resolution in its rejection of the Accord.

PS stopworks

OUR MEMBERS also have been active in public service stopwork meetings in several cities. We were among the minority arguing for stronger action and against giving the National Wage Case no-extracurricular commitment.

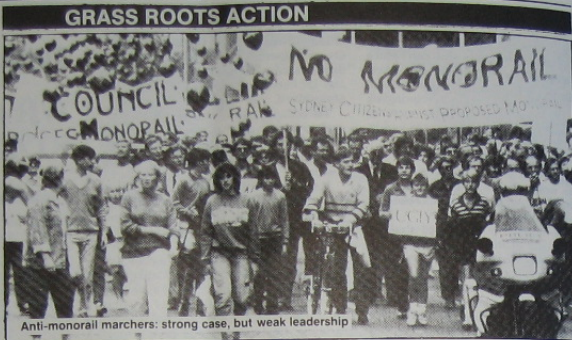
In the Canberra meeting, Rick Kuhn pointed out that wages were actually workers' most important condition, and that we should be as militant in defending them as in fending off attacks on flexitime, staffing, holiday pay loadings and the like.

Coming events

COMING Socialist Action events include a Sydney educational weekend on 23 and 24 August, to be held at Rozelle CYS. Talks will be on Britain, France and Poland. If you'd like to attend, ring 550 1424 for details.

In Melbourne, Socialist Action members were planning as we went to press to organize a barbecue for picketing Builders Labourers in the city. But it also appeared possible the picketers could win a victory before the projected barbecue date, so contact us on 534 9493 to check details if you'd like to attend and show solidarity.

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Anti-monorail marchers: strong case, but weak leadership

Mixed opposition to the "monsterrail"

OVER ten thousand people marched against Sydney's proposed monorail last month.

They were a mixed crowd indeed. Along with union banners, there was a large one for the Liberal Party, and the turnout was overwhelmingly middle class.

Their cause is a reasonable one. The monorail will undoubtedly damage the urban environment. Bus employees and railway workers fear it will create even more excuses for Labor to cut public transport jobs. The firefighters' union says it will hinder their members and create a public hazard if any highrise building on the monorail route has a fire.

None of this has impressed the ALP, whose Sydney benefactors stand to make a fortune from the project. Sir Peter Ables and TNT have invested \$40 million in it.

Bob Carr, a darling of the "greenies" and leading member of the Labor left, has proved to be a loyal ALP hack. As minister for planning and the environment, he has taken planning control out of the city council's hands. Carr is big on saving trees, but less so on the urban environment.

Most unions on the right wing dominated Labour Council are also backing the state government's disregard for the wishes of Sydney residents.

The NSW Liberals are being extremely opportunistic in opposing the "monsterrail". A week before the march, their spokesperson on such matters,

Terry Metherill, did not oppose the development at all. It was indicative of the anti-monorail committee's politics that the Libs were allowed to march.

Of the unions opposing the scheme, the small Water & Sewerage Employees Union has banned any work associated with the project. Unfortunately, WSEU secretary Joe Fisher says that his union's bans will probably only hold up work in Pitt Street along one section of the route.

The AMWU has also placed a ban on work on the site. Typically, the NSW branch of the right wing Society of Engineers (ASE) says it is prepared to scab on the metal workers.

The anti-monorail committee is calling for a public inquiry into the project, and very little else.

Public inquiries are almost useless in the face of a determined government. But the anti-monorail committee has ignored suggestions for more defiant action, such as a mass rally at the site which pours concrete in the holes for the track's foundations.

Mary Hudson

MONASH



Ironbar snaps in campus fap

THE WAVE of militancy continues at Monash University. After June's sit-in over library cuts, students have now driven Liberal MP Wilson "Ironbar" Tuckey off a

campus.

The Liberal Club tried to bring Tuckey, a federal friend-bender and racist, to speak at Monash. Tuckey earned his nickname Ironbar when convicted in 1967 of beating up an Aborigine in his hotel. Tuckey's brother and another man pinned the man's arms while Tuckey laid into him with an iron bar.

Two hundred demonstrating students filled the hall where Tuckey was booked to speak. When he appeared, we hooted, jeered through loud haulers and blew horns to drown him out. "No free speech for racists," we chanted. Tuckey called us dummies, dickheads and bitches in reply — powerful stuff from the MP styled as the Liberal's most rugged debater.

After being silenced by a solid hour's chanting, Tuckey left, escorted by a handful of security guards and Liberals. We followed, chanting and heckling all the way.

Tuckey got into a Commonwealth car. It turned out to be for Labor MP Gerry Hand. So he headed for the University Club for a drink, only to be denied entry to the bar by a solid wall of about thirty students. Tuckey was saved by a Liberal who drove him off in his own car. Students cheered and hugged each other. We had driven Tuckey off the campus.

The temporary victory over the library cuts, reported in last month's *Socialist Action*, has produced a layer of activists who learn an important lesson — direct action wins. Wilson and Tuckey has been the first to feel that new-found fighting spirit. It couldn't have happened to a nastier guy.

— John Passant

INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLE

FEDERAL and state public servants did not have to wait for Paul Keating's Budget to face the knife.

Labor premier Brian Burke in Perth was joined by Bob Hawke and Liberal premier Robin Gray of Tasmania in July in announcing attacks on jobs, flexitime and leave loadings.

Early in July, Burke axed 3000 state public service jobs, froze recruitment, and cut various salaries and superannuation. He suspended flexitime and lengthened qualifying periods for long service leave.

Gray followed suit when it became clear that unions in the West would make a fuss about flexitime, but not defend the 3000 jobs or oppose the recruiting freeze.

Gray told public service unions they had four days to find ways of slashing \$20 million from the state budget, or face pay cuts of 5% and the loss of 4000 jobs. He threatened to cut flexitime and leave loadings.

Incredibly, Tasmanian Public Service Association secretary Alan Evans said that he was confident his union could find \$20 million to cut, but that the four day deadline was "unrealistic". More positively, a mass meeting of Tasmanian public servants voted overwhelmingly to oppose any pay cuts.

BOB HAWKE swiftly confirmed rumours that he had a "shopping list" of similar cuts.

It included abolition of flexitime and the 17.5% leave loading, cuts to superannuation and invalidity benefits, and dismantling of the promotion appeals system. Fraser's notorious anti-union CERR Act, abolished by Hawke after coming to office, was to be revived.

Following large meetings of public servants around the country, Hawke met with union officials and appeared to back off from some of these threats, at least to the satisfaction of officials of the clerks' union, ACOA.

Officials of APSA, which covers most public servants below the rank of clerks, were less impressed. Noting that Canberra still intended to move on CERR and cut staffing and discount wages and revise promotion appeals and possibly even bring in "Essential Services" legislation, Victoria, Queensland and NSW officials were expected to draw up a campaign of industrial action.

The threats against flexitime



Fighting the CERR Act in 1981: now Labor may revive it

Public servants feel the Budget knife early

were largely diversionary tactics, according to Sydney Department of Social Security delegate and Socialist Action member, Eric Harrison. Flexitime saves the government money by reducing absenteeism and, says Eric, her own department could not function without it.

"There's so much work people can't afford to take a holiday even though they have the time up. I know people who do unpaid overtime until about 10.30 at night because it makes life easier the next day."

"Even though it's important to defend flexitime as a condition of service, it's less important than fighting for jobs. There'll be a lot of people now who sit back and say 'Oh, it's all right, flexitime and leave loadings are safe and we'll have to fight harder to build a staffing campaign.'"

A STAFFING campaign is exactly what ACOA members in Social Security in NSW are committed to. Delegates to committees from the state's 74 offices want at least 410 new staff, so that workers can work without undue stress. The campaign is limited to NSW, because federal ACOA

officials agreed with Social Security minister Brian Howe not to take action on staffing pending a review.

Eric Harrison says many officials unilaterally began a campaign for more staff by closing the counters on Wednesday afternoon. Union delegates felt it was better to lead the campaign, than to act as "policemen" and discipline "offices that were closing 'run-officially'". Eric does not regret breaching the ACOA leaders' "We believe no union should give such an undertaking, and we could not enforce it in NSW, given the severe staffing shortages."

Federal ACOA secretary Peter Robson sent a bulletin to Social Security offices telling members to lift all bans. As a result, the campaign has been patchy. But to life all bans is a concerted effort by Eric says a concerted effort by delegates will ensure that the bans stay on.

THERE IS a reason for the rift between the NSW branch and the national office of the ACOA. Rank and File Action Group

candidate Trevor Deeming beat last serving NSW secretary Barry Cotter last year for his post by about twenty votes, surviving a subsequent court challenge by Cotter.

Deeming is isolated in the NSW branch office, and gets little co-operation from the pro-Cotter officials. But Eric Harrison says he is popular with members, unlike Cotter, who used to abuse members who disagreed with him.

"Last year, Cotter got up on stage and told us we didn't want a staffing campaign. This year, Trevor is prepared to go along with the members who quite clearly want a staffing campaign. He can still remember what it's like being a worker and stays in touch with the membership. And rank and file group motions are binding on him."

Deeming's statement at the July 3 Social Security mass meeting that the branch would fight alone if necessary did much to boost morale and militancy.

But Eric has some criticisms of the rank and file group, the main one being that their major goal is to win more union positions. Historically, the union has had two types of rank and file groups. Most have been electoral blocs concerned with winning office. Others, notably the "Grey Collar" group in Sydney, focussed on building strong links between militants on the job.

Eric says that at this stage, Rank and File Action is a mixture of both. But given the left-Labor politics of most members, electoralism could well take over as the next elections approach.

An opposite tendency may flow from the contact between militants made at the Fightback Conference in Canberra in early July. A public service caucus at this conference produced motions at the national mass



Trevor Deeming: backed staffing campaign

meetings for a campaign for a \$53 wage rise. The motion got about a third of the vote in Sydney. Minister for Social Security Brian Howe specially flew to Sydney to address DSS delegates, trying to get their bans campaign called off. Clearly, the new militancy in NSW is giving the Hawke government something to worry about.

— Martin Hirst

THERE are two kinds of economics today. Both are tools in the class struggle.

Orthodox (or bourgeois) economics guides capitalist governments around the world, and aims to defend the system. Marxist economics points up the weaknesses of capitalism in order to guide the workers' struggle for improved conditions, and for the system's eventual overthrow.

Orthodox economics assumes that capitalism moves towards equilibrium: one where prices equal costs, supply equals demand, imports equal exports.

Conservative economists think that equilibrium will spontaneously generate full employment and sustain growth. Imperfections like unemployment, starvation and idle factories are the fault of wrong government policies or trade unions. People like John Howard feel that if market forces could freely operate, forcing down wages for example, all would be well.

Radical bourgeois economists talk about socialism, and John Maynard Keynes. They argue that equilibrium can occur with unemployment and little growth. But governments can change the "natural" equilibrium to fully employ resources, by increasing their own spending.

Both capitalist schools have been tested in the last 20 years, as the system struggles with its 3-5 year cycles of recession and recovery, and with its underlying stagnation since the early 1970s.

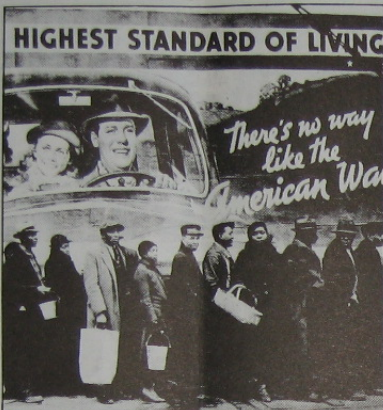
In its most radical, supposedly "socialist" form, state intervention has failed to sustain growth in Eastern Europe and China. Cuba and Hungary now allow market forces freer play, hoping they will improve things.

More moderate state intervention, inspired by Keynes, failed in France under Mitterrand and in Greece under Papandreu in the early 1980s. Both have now opted for more conservative approaches.

The conservatives did no better. Pinochet's Chile was a laboratory for Milton Friedman's Chicago school of monetarists, and ended up an economic disaster area despite infusions of US aid. Thatcher's reliance on the market place did not produce the prosperity she promised.

WEAK economic recoveries have occurred. Upturns followed the recessions of the mid-1970s and 1982-83.

They were inter-national, and occurred in countries applying opposite economic policies. But



Depression breadline: a crisis "solved" only by world war

Bad times are always around the corner

unemployment remained higher even than in the recessions of the 1930s and 1960s.

The failure of both schools of orthodox economics is only hard to understand if we accept their common assertion: that stability is sustainable under capitalism.

History shows this is nonsense. The cycle of recovery and recession dates from capitalism's beginnings. The last 150 years have seen 22 world recessions. Last century the cycles lasted a decade or so; now they last about five years.

The classic trade cycle runs as follows. A growing economy with buoyant profits leads to more investment, and more demand for raw materials, equipment and labour. As the economy reaches full productive capacity and full employment, the price of inputs rises. Raw material and machinery become more expensive, wages go up.

Higher costs mean lower profits than expected, so investment falls. Sometimes, one commodity is pivotal: the oil price rises in 1973 helped trigger the mid-1970s recession. Workers are laid off, consumer demand falls, companies are left with unsold goods, more workers are laid off. The weaker

companies fold, laying the foundations for the next recovery.

Australia's extensive links with the world economy mean that external factors often precipitate recessions here.

The one brewing now is largely due to falling receipts for our exports — coal, wheat and other primary products. Balance of payments problems also set off the cyclical downturns of the 1950s and 1960s.

CYCLIC movements in capitalist economies are inevitable. They occurred even during the high overall growth of the 1950s and 1960s.

But capitalism also has much longer periods of stagnation — crises lasting for decades.

Competition leads some employers to invest in more machinery, rather than new labour. Initially, their higher productivity yields superprofits as they take business from their rivals. The rivals are forced to mechanise too, and the superprofits dry up — but with all employers now having a larger stock of equipment compared to their workforces.

Such a process occurred, for example, when Japan's car

makers invested in industrial robots. The US and Australia had to follow suit.

The nett result is that companies make the same, or slightly higher, profits on a much bigger investment. The rate of profit per dollar invested, which is what capitalists really worry about, is ultimately pushed down by automation.

This "falling rate of profit" due to automation underlies the deepening stagnation of capitalism today.

Arms spending, by diverting capital from automation, slowed the process down after the War and prolonged the postwar boom. This mechanism faltered because it was largely sustained by the US and Russia. West Germany and Japan, which could not invest in arms, had more capital for productive investment and eroded US markets by undercutting prices. Detente in the 1960s saw a relative decline in US arms production, and foreshadowed the end of the boom in the 1970s.

Low profit rates since then have meant that even during "recoveries", unemployment remains high. The renewal of the arms race during the 1980s has provided no solution: arms spending may slow automation, but it does not make it fall and therefore reverse the whole process.

Orthodox, bourgeois economics has no explanation

let alone solution — for any of these problems. The last time the "falling rate of profit" reached an intolerably low level for investors, the world suffered ten years of the Depression, "solved" only by the mass destruction of humanity and capital in World War Two.

The problems will not go away by themselves. But the fight to defend our living standards does offer a way forward. Pay rises and better social services are not building blocks of socialism or a civilised capitalism. In fighting for them, however, workers can build up the confidence to change not just pay rates, but the very system itself.

— Rick Kuhn



Milton Friedman: policies a disaster in Chile

50 years on, Spain's revolution still teaches a lesson

IN JULY 1936, the workers of Barcelona and other parts of Spain rose in a revolt which stopped a fascist take-over.

The consequence was an explosive combination of social revolution and civil war. George Orwell described his own arrival in Barcelona in these words:

"It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with flags... every shop and cafe had an inscription saying that it had been collectivized... Waiters and shop-walkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal..."

"Practically everyone wore rough working-class clothes, or blue overalls, or some variant of the militia uniform. All of this was queer and moving. There was much in it I did not understand, in some ways I did not even like it, but I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for."

In the urban localities and in the countryside, revolutionary workers and peasants organised their own local organs of political power.

Yet within months the capitalists and their politicians had regained the initiative within the Spanish republic. And in direct proportion, the strength of the republic's fascist opponents grew also, until Franco's armies finally crushed democracy altogether.

AT THE heart of the republic's problems lay one key issue: what was to be the social content of the struggle against fascism?

The workers had not only driven Franco's forces out of sections of the country, but had placed a radical reorganisation of society on the agenda. But almost from the beginning, some of their leaders had begun to work toward an accommodation with the establishment.

The rightwing social democrats had always embraced the landowners and capitalists. The left social democrats were never prepared to break with the right. This was predictable.

A socialist revolution in Spain would have been a threat to such an alliance — and also to Stalin himself, who had long since become an opponent of democratic workers' power. He granted military aid to the Spanish republic, while sending his secret police to murder militant working class leaders.

STILL, the Spanish revolution might have been saved. The majority of the workers did not follow social democrats or Stalinists, but rather the anarchist movement CNT-FAI. The United Marxist Workers Party (POUM) was also growing.

But while in principle these organisations stood for socialist revolution, in practice they too were drawn into collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

Anarchist ministers joined national and provincial governments, under the watchword of anti-fascist unity. Yet as the radical



Anti-fascist couple await Franco's troops

More surprising, it might seem, was the determination of the Communist Party to build an alliance with capital. But it did precisely that, following Moscow's "People's Front" strategy.

The socialist inspiration of the Russian revolution had long since given way to a program of building up the country's industry at the expense of the working class. Stalin, fearing a German invasion, sought allies abroad not primarily among the working classes of Eastern Europe but among the national ruling classes of France and Germany.

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Anarchist ministers joined national and provincial governments, under the watchword of anti-fascist unity. Yet as the radical

workers' movement began to be incorporated at the official level, the government began to move against its rank and file.

In the early months of 1937, the government demanded that the workers surrender their arms. In May, three truckloads of government Assault Guards besieged the anarchist-occupied Barcelona telephone exchange. Within two hours, the city's workers were pouring onto the barricades.

The worker mobilisation was so powerful that the regime held back from decisive action. Had the anarchists and the POUM taken the offensive from here, the revolution might still have been saved. But tied still to their plan of unity with the bosses, the CNT-FAI negotiated a deal and abandoned the barricades. Immediately, the regime broke its part of the bargain and seized the vacated positions.

From here it was only a matter of time until the CNT-FAI and the POUM were suppressed. With their suppression died the last hope of resisting Franco.

"Unity" against fascism had been established over the broken bodies of the workers, but it could achieve little. Workers denied the right to organise by the republic had little incentive to die defending it against Franco.

The "People's Front" had been based on the theory that reforms could be achieved within capitalism, and that defence of capitalist democracy could defeat fascism. But Spanish capitalism, devastated by the Depression, could not grant reforms. It could only survive by smashing workers' organisations and driving down living standards. These fundamental objectives were shared by the republican bourgeoisie and the fascists.

THE ONLY real alternative to reaction was to go forward to socialism. At the local level, anarchist and other leftist workers had built the kind of grassroots organisations which was the beginning of a new kind of society.

But at the provincial level and the national level, they were never able to pose an alternative. No revolutionary political party existed which was prepared to do so.

The anarchists, despising all government, saw no point in counterposing a workers' government to that of capitalism. Then as the practical necessity of government became obvious, their leaders entered that of the bourgeoisie. The rank and file anarchist workers were repelled and a militant new current, the Friends of Durruti, emerged... but it was too little, too late.

The People's Front triumphed over the working class, only to fall victim to Franco. Spain was thrown into depression and misery, a state from which it emerged only in the sixties and seventies.

But the power and creativity of the ordinary workers and peasants which was demonstrated fifty years ago this month showed a glimmer of what might have been, had the workers' movement found a revolutionary politics to match its grassroots ferment.

— Tom O'Lincoln



1920: Armed Italian workers seize their factories

IN 1871, Karl Marx greeted the Paris Commune as the "political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour".

Marx was hailing the world's first example of a working class democracy. Since then, the expansion of capitalism has brought a growth in the international working class — and its creative power.

This century has seen workers challenge state power many times. Russia in 1917 and Germany in 1918, right through to Chile in 1972 and Poland in 1980-81. An important feature of these challenges has been the self-organisation of workers, often through workers' councils or soviets.

This form of organisation is the subject of *The Western Soviets*, a new book by British marxist Donny Gluckstein.

The book has two aims. It surveys and explains the workers' councils that emerged in Germany, Britain and Italy between 1915 and 1920. It also looks at the role of workers' councils generally in the struggle for socialism. So the book has two parts, one historical and the other theoretical.

THE GENESIS of the workers' council was in oppressive Tsarist Russia, in the 1905 revolution and again in 1917, when they gained dominance over the capitalist Duma or parliament.

In this period, Gluckstein notes:

"With the workers to the fore, the masses began to impose new institutions — an incredible flourishing of popular

When workers built soviets in the West

self-organisation was taking place. The Russian soviet consisted of rank and file workers and soldiers. It was a centralised and popular organisation to the repressive state and government. Individual factories and army units democratically elected representatives to the soviet, and could recall them at any time. With links to the major industrial centres and transport system, the soviet coordinated mass political strikes. Gluckstein writes:

"In 1917 the soviet went from disorganising the enemy to organising its own state power, not just in Petrograd but right across Russia. By March 1917, 49 cities had soviets... and by June 519."

The growth of soviets went hand-in-hand with the struggle for workers' control of production, and the eradication of capitalism.

Using the "Russian model", Gluckstein explores the Western experience. He uncovers some common features to all: an immense social crisis caused by World War One, intense pressure placed on a key section of the workforce in munitions production, the existence of a network of rank and file activists that preceded the outbreak of major struggle.

For example, the Glasgow

workers' committee, an embryonic soviet, had its origins in resistance to Taylorism (speed-ups) and the social demands of the British war economy. Gluckstein explains: "The loose network of militants was called upon to form a solid link between a number of factories, thus acquiring a permanent form. As was the case in the 1905 revolution in Russia, the first appearance of the workers' council is often a sort of permanent strike committee."

GLUCKSTEIN examines the more substantial workers' council movements in Turin and Berlin in some detail.

He explains how the councils tended to overcome workplace sectionalism, widen solidarity, and give a unified lead to workers in the area.

As shopfloor organisation and workers' control were inseparable, the councils were a radical and democratic alternative to parliament. Mass participation in workers' councils was a complete negation of conventional government, which depoliticises and atomises workers.

Gluckstein also tries to explain their eventual defeat. In this regard, the final "theoretical" chapter is perhaps the most important.

For Gluckstein, the key lies in

the Russian revolution's enigmatic character. In 1917, Russia had a mass revolutionary workers' organisation, the Bolshevik party.

This party provided the necessary socialist leadership and consolidated the workers' movement when timing and decision-making were vital. The party and the soviet were both necessary and complementary. Trotsky once described the relationship in terms of a system of cog wheels:

"The party set the soviets in motion, the soviets set in motion the workers, soldiers — the impatient attempt to connect the party wheel directly with the gigantic wheel of the masses — omitting the medium size wheel of the soviets — would have given rise to the danger of breaking the teeth of the party wheel."

Without this interaction with a mass party, the Western soviets tended to be more defensive in character.

HOWEVER, the Russian soviet is not a prescriptive form for future struggles, as Gluckstein is clearly aware.

The self activity of workers in struggle produces the organisational form. As well, the relative weakness of "reformism" in Russia contrasted it sharply to Western Europe. The Western councils were constantly confronted by ideas and organisations that tried to separate politics from the economic struggle, such as the German Social Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracies.

So, Gluckstein concludes, "The undermining of mighty reformist earthworks through mass self activity would obviously take longer [today] and be a more prominent feature of the revolution than in Russia." Overall, *The Western Soviets* is a valuable interpretation of working class history. Although Gluckstein's style is somewhat awkward and repetitive, the material is access.

The book also has a practical edge. Its political lessons aim to connect with the struggle for socialism today. Gluckstein poses the question:

"If the barely organised revolutionary groups and networks of militants can be replaced by solid organisations with a knowledge of past successes and failures, how much more powerful might they be? How much more powerful, indeed.

— Phillip Whitefield

• Donny Gluckstein's *The Western Soviets* (Pluto Press) is available through Socialist Action branches for \$12 plus postage.

The Color Purple: A black and white view of oppression

"YOU ARE black, poor, ugly and a woman."

So her ghastly husband Albert sums up Celie's triple oppression in the *The Color Purple*, when she finally summons up the spunk to leave him. He would have added that she was a lesbian, had he noticed her blossoming relationship with his live-in mistress Shug.

When white, healthy, heterosexual male Steven Spielberg set out to turn Alice Walker's powerful novel about black women's oppression into a movie, he was almost asking for criticism. Naturally, he got it. A fair amount is deserved, but much of it isn't.

Overall, I found *The Color Purple* intensely moving, absorbing and horrific. Celie suffers her oppression in the worst possible ways. She is raped by her father, given away to her husband as if she were a soiled chattel, beaten and abused by him and treated like a slave. Things are not so different with domestic violence today, in my block of flats there is just the same overbearing, self-righteous manner as Albert.

Yet the unmitigated horror of Celie's treatment is also the film's weakness. The black men we meet have no redeeming features at all. So gruesome are Celie's father and husband, that we can dismiss her plight as the product of their particular swinishness, rather than any wider social problem. And the failure to examine how black males' sexism may also largely stem from their own racial and class oppression is an unforgeable oversight.

None the less, *The Color Purple* remains truer to the novel than most Hollywood adaptations do, and it is from there that the film draws its power.

Spielberg captures the key tension in the story. On the one hand, there is Celie's passivity, rooted in economic helplessness, the female role and an ill-conceived acceptance that the family must be kept together at all costs. Such forces even today hold many women in rotten marriages, despite the most frightful humiliations and beatings.

On the other hand, Celie is pulled by two strong women, her stepson's wife Sofia and her husband's lover, Shug. She has



Albert inspects Celie (centre): a flawed study of oppression

internalised the pattern of male domination so deeply that at first she advises her stepson to beat Sofia. But ultimately, she is drawn into rebellion herself.

Feminists have criticised the film for glossing over the lesbian relationship between Celie and Shug. It was certainly young people behind me in the cinema gasp. But generally, Celie comes across as sexless. A heterosexual relationship would have been given a lot more depth.

The sloppiest part of Spielberg's adaptation is his treatment of the letters from Africa from Celie's sister. These tell, for example, of the destruction of a village by white colonialists, who build a road right through it.

In the film, this is a mere sideshow. In the book, it is a major subtheme, with detail of how the whites replaced the food crops with rubber plantations and relocated the village away from the only source of water, forcing the Olinka people to work for them to pay for water, food, rent and taxes.

Spielberg cannot plead time pressure for this omission. He introduces self-indulgent additions of his own, such as Celie twice being tempted to cut Albert's throat while shaving him, and a rubbishy scene of mass singing in a church.

It is Celie's indomitable spirit, and her ultimate rebellion, that are the main point of the film

however. Her rebellion is a personal one, to be sure, and depends on a stroke of good fortune as well as the inspiration of other rebellious women. But at least battling the oppression of black women, and showing them as positive characters in their own right, we can forgive *The Color Purple* many of its flaws. You'll find plenty to criticise, but you probably won't regret seeing it.

— Patricia Langenacker

TELEVISION

Ringside at the Cold War

HALF the men were I work seem to watch the TV wrestling. The women are mostly scathing. Still, such a social phenomenon seems worth commenting on.

It's like a flesh-and-blood version of Masters of the Universe, with gigantic men hurling each other about. To my relief, every one of the realises it's faked. Some of the wrestlers are impressive gymmasts, though others just lumber around the ring. But in any case, you soon get to know the routines and as a "sport" it has limited interest.

The appeal lies in the melodrama, the heroes and villains. "Jake the Snake" pulls out his

cobra to slither over vanquished opponents. Leaping Lennie reads poems and the crowds eat it up.

It is here that the politics comes in. When I was a boy, the bad guys reflected the chauvinism of World War II. They were Japanese and swastika-wearing Germans. Today we see the politics of Reagan's new cold war at work.

Representing the Evil Empire is Nikolai Volkoff, who carries a Russian flag and sings the Soviet anthem. "USA!" chants the crowd. His tag-team partner comes from — where else — Iran, and is called the Iron Sheikh. Domestic phobias are catered for with two gay villains, Brutus Beefcake and Adrian Adonis. It's interesting that the "World Wrestling Federation" generally avoids having black villains. That might be too sensitive.

The heroes wrestle clean, and are therefore boring. One is frightening though: Corporal Kirchner "of the 82nd airborne", who strides in with an American flag to vanquish the Russians and Iranians. As the crowd goes delirious, you can see the public being sofed up for an invasion of Nicaragua.

It's said Jacko of VFL notoriety is headed for New York and the wrestling shows. He will have to choose between the paths of Light and Darkness, put on 50 kilos or so, and lift a lot of weights. But above all, he will have to find some sensitive nerve in the public psyche to touch. Let's hope it's not too reactionary.

— Tom O'Lincoln



The Iron Sheikh hums it up

The crisis, Russian style

IS RUSSIA any better for workers than the West? Or are both sides of the Iron Curtain crisis-wracked, class societies?

A new underground manifesto suggests that even a section of Russia's bureaucracy can no longer pretend things are basically okay.

The Soviet people's standard of living is one of the lowest in the industrially developed world... The USSR is on the path to becoming one of the underdeveloped nations. It says.

The manifesto's authors call themselves only the 'Movement for Socialist Renewal' (MSR). But much in the manifesto, such as its revelation of a mutiny on a warship in Riga and its economic statistics, show that it almost certainly comes from well-placed people inside the Kremlin's bureaucracy.

Could the manifesto be a CIA fabrication? It seems unlikely. The manifesto was leaked to the London Guardian just as the US was pursuing increased wheat sales to Russia — hardly the time for anti-Russian dirty tricks.

Could the document be a hoax by anti-reform groups in the Kremlin, to undermine Mikhail Gorbachev's existing reform program? Again, it seems unlikely. Such a stinging indictment of Russian society is a very risky way to undercut what is, after all, a very limited set of reforms at present.

IT IS A deep-seated crisis indicated that the manifesto addresses, and one that shows that Russian "socialism" is not all that different in essence from Western capitalism.

Unlike Yugoslavia, which exports 'guest workers' en masse to Western Europe, Russia has no mass unemployment as such. Instead, it has massive underemployment of resources. The MSR claims that Russian industry runs at 55% of capacity, compared with about 80% in the West.

Inefficiency, absenteeism and official corruption are rife, even in Moscow. Average yearly growth across the Russian bloc has plunged from 5.7% in 1976 to just 1.2% in 1980. Russia now owes over \$US30 billion making it the world's third largest debtor nation.

Workers suffer perpetual shortages in all kinds of basic goods: cotton wool and sanitary pads were the new scarcity for July. Inflation is artificially suppressed throughout Eastern



Moscow vagrant: mass alienation in the workers state

Europe, bursting out in occasional huge price rises. In one month in 1982, for example, Romania lifted food prices 35-64%, Czechoslovakia raised meat prices 137%, and Poland raised all food prices 200-400%.

Lenin observed that any society can be judged by the status of its women. Most Russian women work — but they still do 80% of the housework, according to Russian studies. Few have washing machines, vacuum cleaners, or access to decent public laundries. Abortion is still the standard form of birth control, and low-cost nurseries cater for just a third of pre-school children. Even the much-vaunted equality in the professions is a myth: medicine and teaching, which women now dominate, have fallen sharply in status, and pay around 70% of the average industrial wage.

YET MANY Western leftists still claim that Russia is 'socialist', 'socialist-based' or a 'workers state', simply because it has state-owned production. This is a sick joke.

The workers have no control over the state, so state ownership means nothing to them.

The bureaucracy has usurped control over production. That makes them a ruling class, in Marxist terms. They pass on their privileges to their children. Less than 20% of students at Moscow and Leningrad Universities are estimated to come from worker or peasant families.

Workers have no real political

rights. Their trade unions are government puppets, the Kremlin even appointed former KGB boss Alexander Shlepin as trade union head some years ago.

Alienated, and divided by a piecework payment system, most workers react on an individual and often self-destructive level. Alcoholism and alcohol abuse affect 25% of the workforce.

Pilfering and absenteeism are common. *The right not to work hard at the factory is one of the few remaining rights that the Soviet worker holds,* explain the authors of *Workers Against the Gulag*, one of the best-documented books on workers' conditions in Russia.

Occasionally the workers rebel. The most famous case was the march by thousands of strikers in Novocherkassk in 1962, after piece rates were cut 30%, and meat and dairy prices doubled. Several hundred marchers were mown down by army dum-dum bullets.

In 1967, workers in Priuluk rioted, beating up police and keeping out the army by threatening to blow up an oil pipeline. A similar riot broke out in Brezhnev's home town in 1972, while two major strikes occurred near Kiev in 1968 and 1973.

But the jailing of strike leaders in asylums is a major risk. So "Italian style strikes" — silent sit-ins — are more common. Go-slows are the most popular action to prevent work norms being revised upwards.

BUT WHILE the MSR sees its solution is not for workers to seize the state, far from it.

The MSR correctly senses that workers' alienation derives partly



Workers read Pravda: the MSR wants press freedom

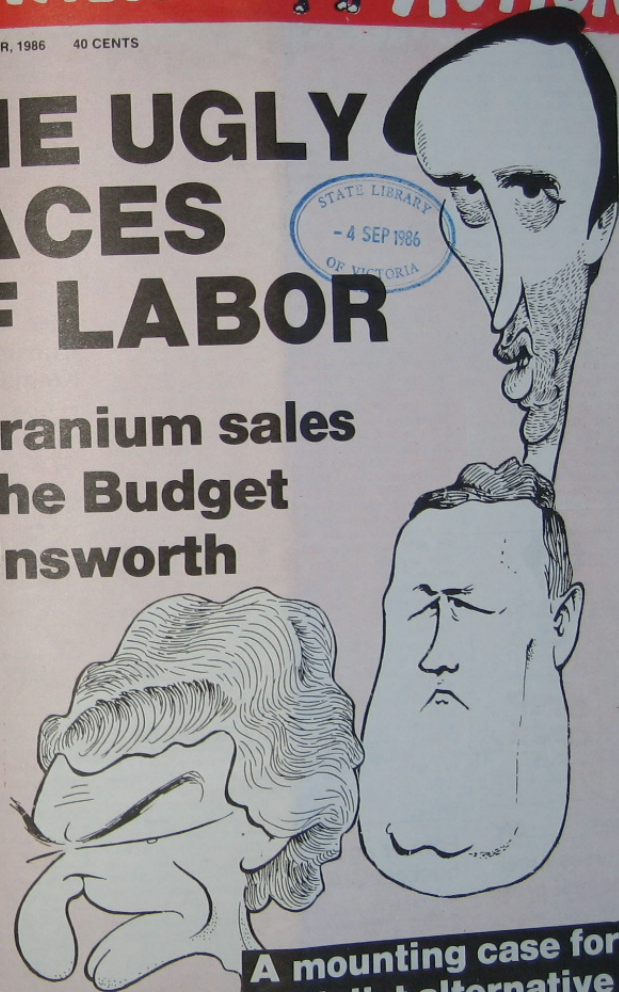


SOCIALIST ACTION

No.12 SEPTEMBER, 1986 40 CENTS

THE UGLY FACES OF LABOR

- Uranium sales
- The Budget
- Unsworth



A mounting case for a socialist alternative

PLUS: Patriarchy, BLF, Free Speech & More

CAT'S EYE

WEALTH



The richest get richer

WHILE the rest of us have to tighten our belts, the rich are getting richer.

The *Business Review Weekly* annual listing of the richest 200 people in Australia shows that their combined wealth has gone up an incredible 32% in the last year.

You now need \$20 million to make it into this exclusive club. Last year, it was \$15 million.

Top of the tree is still Robert Holmes a Court. His wealth doubled to a minimum of \$600 million. Put another way, he made over \$9 a second, every second of last year. In an average night's sleep, he made a quarter of a million dollars.

A quarter of the Top 200 got their wealth purely by being born to the right parents. The others are "entrepreneurs" — which means they ripped off the rest of us to get it.

Alan Bond's fortune has gone up from \$25 million to \$200 million since 1983. So has insurance and takeover shark Larry Adler's. Share values overall on the stock market shot up 37% last year.



MEDIA



Nurses meet the real press

LAST YEAR, Victorian nurses held their first ever indefinite statewide strike. They got a good run from the press... after all, nurses' strikes were something of a novelty.

Now, having been swindled on their pay and career structure claim by the state's Industrial Commission, Victoria's nurses



Nurses picket the Alfred during last year's strike

have moved back to direct action. With over half of them missing out on a pay rise, they have imposed bans on admissions for elective surgery. And they are discovering which side the press is really on.

Worst has been the *Bulletin*, with screaming headlines stating "Tragic victims of a union rort," "Patients suffer and die as Melbourne nurses rebel," and "Nurses force visiting to play sick bed roulette." The magazine claims the nurses are responsible for 37 deaths at the Alfred Hospital this year.

It turns out, on reading the fine print, that "union regulations restricting nurses' workloads have shut down up to 150 of the Alfred Hospital's 600 beds." Just why the hospital could not accommodate the dangerously ill in any of its other 450 beds, the magazine never quite explains. Nor does it explain why understaffed nurses should keep propping up the system on lousy pay with exhausting workloads, ad infinitum.

Instead, Irene Bolger, the RANF secretary, is interviewed... mostly about hersex life. In the finest traditions of "objective journalism," she is given a chance to reply to scuttlebutt being circulated about her, the rumours of course being faithfully reproduced for the *Bulletin*'s thousands of readers first.

SPYING



Former agent buckets CIA

ONE OF the more interesting visitors to Australia this month is Ralph McGehee, a former CIA agent.

One of the CIA's most decorated officers, McGehee retired in disillusionment after 25 years' service in South-East Asia. He wrote a book called *Deadly Deceit* in 1983, exposing CIA activities. A few quotes:

"If the Agency actually reported

the truth about the Third World, what would it say? It would say that the United States install foreign leaders, arms their armies, and empowers their police all to help those leaders repress an angry, defiant people...

"The Agency labels the oppressed as lackeys of Soviet or Cuban or Vietnamese communism... It is difficult to sell this story when the facts are otherwise, so the agency plants weapons shipments, forges documents, broadcasts false propaganda, and transforms reality. Thus it creates a new reality that it then believes..."

"The Agency's task is to develop an international anti-communist ideology. The CIA then links every egalitarian political movement to the scourge of international communism, [in preparation for] the destruction of those movements. For egalitarianism is the enemy and it must not be allowed to exist..."

Ralph McGehee will be touring on behalf of the anti-nuclear movement, as the CIA can be given notice to quit Pine Gap after October 19, we'll be listening to his comments on that subject with great interest.

CAMPUSES



Nohard feelings say students

SWIFTEST response to the Budget, in terms of direct action, came from students.

Hit with a \$250 "administration fee" for all except those on TEAS allowances, students held demonstrations in places as disparate as Canberra and Warrnambool. A national meeting of student union reps voted for a boycott of the fee.

In Sydney, 200 students staged a sit-in at the Department of Education.

The government is placing the onus on universities and colleges to collect the fee, by reducing its March payments next year to educational institutions by 90% of the expected fee income. So there could be some bitter campus battles in store, if students try to stop the

collections taking place.

In a weaselly statement, Education Minister Susan Ryan claimed the new fee was not in breach of Labor policy because it was not a "tuition fee." Does this mean that students who refuse to pay will still be given tuition? Of course not.

Even worse hit were overseas students, who now must pay \$4916 to \$5756 a year for tertiary courses. Migrant education programs were slashed.

Typically, the only sector of education to get a rise in real terms was the private schools, Paul Keating says, "I will go to my grave with the interests of working class Australians uppermost in my mind." But the interests of working class students have already been well and truly buried.

RUSSIA



Corruption, Kremlin style

RUSSIA'S crackdown on corruption has revealed some insights into the lifestyle of the ruling class.

Leonid Brezhnev's son Yuri has just been retired from his sinecure as deputy minister for foreign trade. He used his position and wealth to go hunting in Africa and night-clubbing in Paris, on one occasion tipping topless bar-girls with \$100 bills.

Brezhnev's daughter Galina had a taste for diamonds. A complex scandal led to the arrest of her lover, a purge of the state circus for foreign currency manipulations, and the "suicide" of her protector, a deputy head of the KGB.

Until the entire party praesidium was purged in Azerbaijan, the post of local police chief cost 50,000 roubles in bribes, and first secretary of a district party committee cost 200,000 roubles.

But have the purges solved anything? The Moscow press recently ran a letter from the new manager of a food store, after the previous management was purged for corruption. He details how the entire system is rife with corruption, which continues as before.

"We depend on our suppliers, and they accept our orders, but if our orders are not supported by something impressive, by this or that bribe, we can be left without products... I see the way out only in changes affecting the whole economic mechanism. I'm convinced we need radical changes in the economic system."

"Another workers' revolution in Russia, perhaps? Sounds like a good idea to us.

APARTHEID

Hypocrisy galore as sanctions draw nearer

DEBATE over sanctions against South Africa reaches a climax this month.

The US Congress is set to give final passage to a sanctions package in defiance of Ronald Reagan. A two-to-one vote will overcome any presidential veto.

To date, Australia has focussed on Margaret Thatcher's opposition. Despite her cant about sanctions being "immoral and repugnant", Thatcher's motives are coldly economic.

Britain is South Africa's largest foreign investor, with \$6.75 billion in investments. Trade between the two countries is \$2 billion a year. Thatcher's husband Dennis himself has substantial business interests there.

America's attitude is more complex. It too has large investments in South Africa. As well, it imports \$1 billion of chrome, cobalt, manganese and platinum from there. That explains some of Reagan's sympathy for Thatcher's position.

But the White House also sees the West's best chance of halting a revolution in sticking firmly by Pretoria. So Reagan argues the absurd claim that President Botha's "goal is to eliminate apartheid", even as Botha himself tells his National Party congress that segregation of living areas and schools will never change.

On the other hand, much American disinvestment has already taken place, mostly through uncertainty about South Africa's future. So most of Congress has come over to Malcolm Fraser's position, that sanctions may as well be adopted to pressure Pretoria towards reform, and, in the words of one *Washington Post* writer, "to win still the revolt seethes on."

To defuse a popular uprising, the small homeland of Kwa Ndebele in the Transvaal has dropped plans to take up Pretoria-style independence.

Thousands of students in Soweto and Alexandra boycotted classes to protest against new identity cards and the presence of security guards at schools. They burned their cards, and set up checkpoints at major Soweto intersections to enforce the boycott. The protest spread to primary schools.

The Government and local black councils have also used armed guards to start evicting blacks engaged in rent boycotts

But sanctions will not bring Pretoria to its knees, or even force it to negotiate with the African National Congress (ANC). Indeed, an economic boycott will increase the white regime's resolve initially.

For socialists, the major argument for sanctions is that most blacks actually want them. Sanctions will give confidence to blacks fighting the regime that it is Botha's followers, and not they, who are politically isolated.

For just that reason, Pretoria is vitriolic about sanctions. Botha even calls them "serious transgressing" of the UN Charter, staggering gall, given the regime's own record at home and in Southern Africa generally.

Sanctions will cost many black workers their jobs, as Pretoria has been keen to point out. The Chamber of Mines estimates that 50,000 miners out of 700,000, for West bans iron and coal.

But blacks already suffer 30% unemployment, and most live in abject poverty. And Pretoria's apologists do not mention that jobs will be created in industries which manufacture goods to replace banned imports.

No-one can guess the reaction of black miners and their unions to mass sackings. A boycott may provoke strike action, more of a threat to the regime than any sanctions themselves.

MEANWHILE, in South Africa, where the struggle that really counts is taking place, 8,500 people arrested under the state of emergency.

On past experience, this means that at least 13,000 people have been detained without trial. Yet still the revolt seethes on.

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US students demand sanctions: investment is falling

in at least 42 townships. The boycotts have cost local government \$166 million so far, and have virtually crippled the puppet councils, which rely on the income.

Some rent strikes have gone on for over two years. Most blacks support them. Of the half million residents in the Vaal Triangle townships near Johannesburg, 60% have joined the boycott.

The rent strike is a direct challenge for control of the townships. That is why Botha is cracking down on it. It is still unclear how successfully boycotters are fighting back against evictions.



Strikers at Dunlop: the revolt still seethes

Black workers seem to have gone for the moment. As we reported last issue, some unions have struck to get their leaders released. And there have been a few legal strikes over wages and conditions, for example at the Dunlop factory near Johannesburg.

But political consciousness is growing amongst black workers. A poll reported in the *Financial Mail* last September showed that 77% of urban blacks wanted socialism.

Joe Slovo, chair of the South African Communist Party and head of the ANC's military wing, explains:

"In South African conditions, you don't have to be a doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist to believe that a liberation which deals only with a rearrangement of the voting system and leaves undisturbed the white racemongers of 99% of our major productive resources is no liberation at all."

Yet the Communist Party and the ANC argue that the immediate task is national liberation, rather than socialism as such, and that this mission is achieved by a multi-class alliance.

As the squeeze on Pretoria grows, from sanctions but more importantly from the struggles of black workers and youth, the task of building a working class alternative to these "liberation now, socialism later" politics grows more urgent.

On it depends whether post-revolutionary South Africa is to be just another Zimbabwe, or a country in which black workers genuinely run their own lives.

—John Passant

NATIONAL POLITICS

BARRIE Unsworth's career as NSW premier has started dismally, and gone downhill from there.

Following his by-election debacle in Rockdale and Bass Hill, Unsworth returned from dinner with Bob Hawke claiming he had won a reprieve for business on the fringe benefits tax. Hawke quickly contradicted him when questioned by the media.

Then the Darling Harbour casino blew up in Unsworth's face.

Neville Wran's swansong was to be a \$610 million casino and hotel in the controversial Darling Harbour bicentennial development. The developer was to be the Hooker Corporation, and US casino operator Harrah was to run it under government licence.

The deal came unstuck when the *Sydney Morning Herald* revealed that Harrah has been under investigation by US gaming authorities for five years, and is strongly suspected of Mafia links.

As for Hooker, it is run by George Herscu, who pleaded guilty to attempting to bribe BLP leader Norm Gallagher. A Victorian Supreme Court judge said Herscu was dishonest, and several other shonky deals have been uncovered.

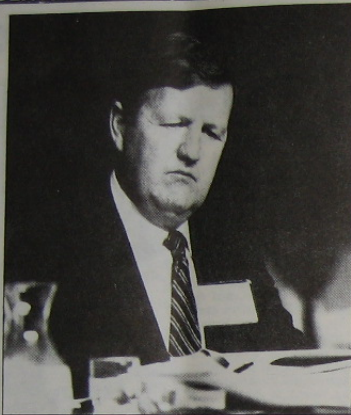
Faced with the taint of more corruption, and with opinion polls showing Labor would lose a state election, Unsworth and cabinet took the hard choice and threw out the Harrah-Hooker consortium.

This could well blow up in Labor's face if the developers pursue a legal claim for damages and breach of contract. The NSW police force has again been shown up as inept, and business will be wary of dealing with Unsworth if it thinks he will go back on a deal at the first sign of opposition.

THESE are minor irritations, however, compared with Labor's electoral problems in NSW.

The right-wing NSW machine, led by number-cruncher Graham Richardson, wanted a smooth transition of power when Wran left. The lucky deals done at the state party conference to instil Unsworth were the first signs that this would not happen.

One story is that just before Unsworth was "elected" to succeed Wran, a bitterly disappointed Laurie Brereton was taken under the Town Hall stage and threatened that if he did not stand down in favour of Barrie, his unsavory past would be



Unsworth rules by the seat of his pants

revealed. Brereton has never lived down allegations of smelly deals with Botany council in the 1970s, even though he was cleared at the trial by the now gaoled ex-magistrate, Murray Farquhar.

It is difficult to overstate the rebuff suffered by Unsworth in the by-election for Rockdale, formerly a blue-ribbon Labor seat.

Unsworth had top position on the ballot paper, the prestige of being the new Premier, and he bribed the electorate shamelessly. He offered a new football stand, an upgraded railway station, \$200,000 for the local hospital, childcare centres, land for a Macedonian church, and a freeway. Yet he suffered an incredible 16.4% swing, and an even more amazing 22% swing in Wran's old seat of Bass Hill, where Labor also had the donkey vote.

Local factors partly caused the swing. Rockdale people were furious that the ALP machine had stomped over a popular local member to make room for Unsworth.

But an ANOP poll commissioned by Labor before the by-election, which predicted a 13% swing, had Labor's national

polls as the biggest cause of dissatisfaction. Dislike of Unsworth and Wran, and Labor's corrupt image in NSW, were also factors.

Local ALP members boycotted Unsworth's campaign in droves. Head office had to bring in union officials, MPs, and members from other electorates to hand out how-to-vote cards. Even Cabinet minister Deirdre Gruson had to go out door-knocking.

Most of the swing in Rockdale went to the Liberals, either directly (4%) or indirectly, mainly through "small business" candidate Jim McLean (7%).

But the small Socialist Workers' Party polled 3%, well above its usual vote. Given that it did not even have a member in the electorate, this was an impressive result, suggesting that a substantial minority of disaffected Labor voters are prepared to look leftwards rather than vote Liberal.

UNSWORTH'S problems will continue. The resignation of former Corrective Services minister, Rex Jackson, means another tricky by-election in a seat which will fall to the Liberals with a 10% swing.

Yet the NSW machine has no answers. Neville Wran's former press aide, Brian Dale, writing in *The Australian*, says that the ALP head office does not know how to deal with a disaffected rank and file, except to go around kicking heads.

If this is the Right's response, they could well end up with bruised toes. More and more ALP members are drifting out of a party they no longer have any control over. One Perih branch's numbers have fallen from 330 to 190 recently. The Budget and renewed uranium sales to France will add to the flow.

But does the Right care? Despite calls from some national party figures for a membership drive, nothing has happened. Financially, Labor now relies more on big business; for example, the Victorian ALP recently had 350 employers to a \$150-a-plate dinner. So long as it keeps its base in the union bureaucracy, and can deliver the unions for deals like the Accord, Labor's leadership probably figures it can do without the inconvenience of a rank and file.

The NSW Left's response to Rockdale was also revealing. Leader Frank Walker, the Housing minister, made a pitiful attempt to console Unsworth. "It is not really a disaster at all," Walker claimed, arguing that Neville Wran won the leadership by only one vote, and the 1976 election by one seat.

The Left put out a tame press release, calling on the party leadership to reaffirm the platform on which it was elected.

Such lameness reflects the ALP Left's crisis nationally. It has been routed by Hawke over policy, let Bill Hartley be purged without a whimper, and its



Number Cruncher Richardson: wanted a smooth transition

economic policies are utterly devoid of radical content. And the Centre-Left has proved to be the Centre-Right in practice. Past illusions that Labor can be changed from within are now clearly pie in the sky. The task for socialists today is to build a fighting alternative to Labor, so that Unsworth and company do not just drive workers into the waiting arms of the Liberals.

Martin Hirst

NATIONAL POLITICS

Uranium sale a bombshell for ALP supporters

THE BUDGET decision to resume uranium sales to France has caused a furore inside the Labor Party. And rightly so.

David Lange's release of the Rainbow Warrior bombers to France looks positively principled and heroic by comparison. At least Lange had the excuse of a trade embargo for his backdown. Hawke and Keating's only motive was to knock the deficit down another decimal point to impress the media market.

That Labor ever agreed to pay \$66 million to Queensland Mines to, as Bob Hawke puts it, "store uranium in a shed", was itself a disgrace. It seems taxpayers have to pay Queensland Mines not to sell a metal that should never have been mined to a customer that should never have been solicited. Charming!

Hawke claims his only alternative to resuming uranium sales to France was to impose "an additional burden on the pensioners or less fortunate people of this country."

Even his own ministers had trouble swallowing that one. Bill Hayden offered another \$66 million in cuts to Foreign Affairs, only to be told the Budget papers had already been printed. The Budget had no trouble finding an extra \$20 million for ASIO and other spy agencies (a 30% rise in real terms), and an extra 13.5% for defence in raw dollar terms.



John Dawkins: \$100 million a year U-sales to France?

decision to a rank-and-file meeting.

According to one ALP source, Left MPs are talking of pulling out of all caucus and parliamentary committees. (Since that presumably means Brian Howe and Stewart West will have to resign their ministries, we'll believe such talk when it happens.)

Left leader Gerry Hand has called on people to stay in the party and fight the decision. That is a clear sign that even more of the Left's base is, like Camilleri, quitting the party in disgust, or withdrawing from activity.

Fighting inside the party, though, is not really on. Hawke has the decision sewn up at all levels, except amongst the rank-and-file — and they don't count anyhow inside the ALP.

Consider the options. Caucus is already taken care of. Despite a token protest delegation of Centre-Left heavies Peter Cook and Rosemary Crowley, the Centre-Left voted fairly solidly behind Hawke in Caucus to confirm the Cabinet decision 74-42. Just thirteen Right and Centre-Left MPs voted with the Left.

The National Executive meets in mid-September, and Hand says he will fight there. But he knows full well that the Left has just ten votes out of 28, and only one or two others might stray his way.

Then there is the National Conference, supposedly the rank-and-file's voice. The Right controls that, and it does not meet for another two years. And July's National Conference confirmed the ban on uranium sales that Hawke has just broken.

In fact, despite John Dawkins' denials, it appears the National Conference was deliberately kept in the dark by Hawke about the intended reversal of policy.

The National Times on Sunday claims that it

"... has confirmed that lifting the ban was discussed by senior members of the Government in the past month's ALP national conference which re-endors the ban. At that time, Hawke rejected advice that conference approval be sought for lifting it."

The Left's rage at this latest betrayal of party policy is certainly sincere, and justified. Nonetheless, its sound and fury on the uranium issue covers a capitulation to Hawke on the wider attacks of the Budget.



No-one expressed that more plainly than Pete Steedman, former MP and Victorian Socialist Left figure.

"The whole thing was a luck-witted political decision — political stupidity in its grossest form and it showed a total lack of understanding and knowledge of the party. It's causing great heartache at a time when we should be promoting party unity to sell the Budget."

John Dawkins, however, summed up the ultimate cynicism of the ALP leadership on uranium.

"In the end, people have to make a judgement about us and the Liberals in relation to these matters".

In other words, Dawkins and Hawke feel free to keep shifting nuclear policy to the right, so long as it remains half a step, in the left of John Howard. In Dawkins' case, that means upswards of \$100 million in uranium sales to France by the early 1990s, according to his statements on Channel Nine's *Sunday* program.

And until disaffected Labor

supporters create a genuine socialist alternative on the Australian political scene, that is the sorry reality that confronts ALP voters.

— Ken Stevens

QUEENSLAND

Cops get a hit from Drug Bill

THE notorious Drugs Queensland Bill passed through Queensland's parliament last month.

The Bill stipulates that any convicted of having more than 500 grams of marijuana must be jailed for life.

The same applies for two grams of heroin, four milligrams of LSD, or half a gram of phencyclidine ("Angel Dust").

The Bill provides even more powers for Queensland police. Search warrants will be available over the phone, and if you reveal the identity of a police informer you get a mandatory five year

(Continued page 6)



project for years without the slightest success are "outraged".

MEANWHILE, we hear that students from thousands of American schools have shown their continuing faith in the space program by volunteering their teachers for the next shuttle flight.

GOD-BOTHERERS upstaged... A Sydney church had a billboard up last month declaring, "God is a listener to every conversation."

A pub over the road replied with, "Phone tapping should be illegal."

DRINKERS at the John Curtin, a Melbourne pub frequented by union militants, were intrigued to see Simon Green and Mick Young there last month.

Peter Shaw, a locked-out builders labourer, saw his chance. Shaking their hands, he said, "I'm glad I've had this opportunity to meet people like you who attack the working class, particularly the BLF." While Green tried to look bored and Young supercilious, Shaw explained what it was like to live on \$150 a week. No comment.

Finally, a criticism of Labor's betrayals brought a response. "That's a working class cop-out," said Green, who knows all about such

things. Green and the Special Minister for Staff-ups were last seen copping out into Lygon Street.

LIBERAL Party members in NSW have been in uproar.

The Liberals' head office in Sydney sent out a circular threatening to sack party staff if members did not send in more donations. The membership did not take kindly to that sort of blackmail.

Funny about that. The Libs like to threaten the rest of us with unemployment if we don't "sacrifice". When the boot is on the other foot, they're suddenly opposed to kicking.

ALSO on the receiving end in the Liberal Party was a woman delegate to the WA branch conference.

She had the temerity to disagree with Wilson Tuckey, MP, over some issue. Headkicker Tuckey immediately turned on her and snarled, "You'll cop it, love."

Nice to see Tuckey does not discriminate. He is just as obnoxious and chauvinistic towards his own party members as he is towards the rest of us.

A SURVEY taken by a Budapest radio station has found that very few Hungarians can identify



CHEAP SHOTS

lity Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

One woman thought that Marx had translated Lenin's works into Hungarian. Another man said he must have been absent from school that day.

This is what admirers of the Russian bloc call Preserving the Gains of the October Revolution.



Karl who?

FIGURES That Figure Department...

• The US Census Bureau, after surveying twenty thousand households, has found that the average white family has twelve times the wealth of the average black family.

• The *restraint-happy Hawke* government is spending \$48.5 million on a new embassy in Peking. It includes a three storey mansion for the ambassador, 35 terrace houses for his staff, tennis courts, squash courts, a spa, a swimming pool, a health centre and a large entertainment area.

Aboriginal population. Chief of traffic police Farrah described it as "a centre of lawlessness".

These discretionary (or rather, discriminatory) powers mean the police are unlikely to err as they have in the past and pull up drunken Cabinet ministers' Mercedes.

But some police are nervous about the Drugs Misuse Bill. After all, you get a mandatory 15 years for killing a cop — and the same for having a cigarette carton of grass. Drug busts look like becoming an increasingly hazardous operation for the Queensland police.

— Rose Scott

FEATURE

Why the Budget won't work

THE 1986 Budget stank of Malcolm Fraser.

The Medicare levy went up 25%. Postal, telephone and petrol charges all went up. And \$250 fees for tertiary education have been introduced, something even Fraser did not dare try.

Talk of making youth "priority one" looks pretty sick, with CEP jobs being cut from 37,000 to 20,000. Rising unemployment is to be used as a deliberate lever of economic policy. Where have we seen that before?

A particularly Frasesque feature was the welfare cuts, which will hurt single pensioners with children the most. With them came a "crackdown on social security fraud". Workers in Social Security have been told they will have new policing functions to perform — shades of the work test. Of course, they have been given only a handful of extra staff to help with the added work.

Two thousand public service jobs will go, with warnings of "further rationalisation measures" to come.

Keating and Hawke had the cheek to pretend the Budget embodied an equality of sacrifice, because the affluent got their swimming pools taxed. But the items in the capitalist economy which count are the consumption needs of the working class, and the profits which go to capital. Here the Budget was ruthless in its logic.

Real wages will fall further, with the government aiming at another 2% "discount". Per capita household income is to fall 1.5%. The benefits will fail to increase the profit share of national output.

WILL SUCH measures

revive the economy? The employers clearly do not think so.

As we write, the money markets are still running down the Aussie dollar (now known as the "South Pacific peso"). Business bodies, after first praising the Budget as "resolute", changed their tune. Within 48 hours, some brokers were complaining that it had only "taken a pound off a brain tumour". They wanted entire government programs to be axed!

Certainly there is no reason why Keating's cuts, despite the pain they inflict on working people, should solve the problems of Australian capitalism.

The actual difference between a supposedly "irresponsible" deficit of \$5 billion and Labor's "tough" figure of \$3.5 billion is only 0.6% of gross domestic product. Economic "fine tuning" is nowhere near precise enough for anyone to really know which figure is the better one.

More importantly, it is clear from the

Budget papers that Labor does not expect the bosses to reinvest the extra profits they are about to be handed. Indeed, investment is set to decline.

Keating's prediction of a 2.25% economic growth seems highly fanciful, especially given how overseas economies are slowing down. The US has revised its own growth predictions down to 1%.

No wonder that the financial pages are full of doom and gloom.



MOST OF the desperate talk about plunging into a new thirties-style depression is phoney. Once it has served its purpose — to scare us into swallowing the Budget cuts — it will probably subside.

Nevertheless, the situation is serious. Australian capitalism is being squeezed between two grave problems.

The first is the balance of trade. As the industrialised world has modernised and modernised itself, it has become less and less interested in Australia's traditional agricultural and mineral exports. America, Europe and Japan have become more energy-efficient and have used more synthetics. America and Europe have also built up their agricultural production — indeed, they overproduce on a massive scale.

The consequences are easy to summarise. While exports as a proportion of domestic product almost doubled for most western European countries between 1958 and 1982, for Australia the rise was only about 8 per cent. Between 1973 and 1983, this country's share of world trade fell by 30 per cent.

Now this gradual trend has suddenly

accelerated, bringing economic realities home to us with a bang. The price of oil has plummeted. Returns on exports of copper, aluminium, lead, nickel, zinc and silver have declined, and in July they dropped sharply once again. Sugar and tin prices have been depressed. The US government decision to subsidise wheat sales to Russia and China has shocked the farmers.

Finally, we have just seen truly disastrous current account figures, which show that when you take both the trade of goods and the transfer of funds together, Australian capitalism is rapidly digging itself into a hole. With the major overseas economies beginning to slow down, that hole will be harder and harder to get out of.

It is this situation, and not the floating of the dollar or the machinations of the money markets, which has caused the sustained fall of the currency over the past couple of years. Unless dramatic changes occur, the prospect is for not only short-term but also a long-term decline in the Australian economy.

FOR THE most part, the measures being urged upon us are wage cuts, attacks on working conditions, a reduction in fringe benefits, and the inevitable corollary: the need to break "union power".

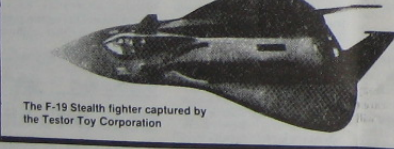
Australian workers, it seems, are a pack of bludgers who laze on the beach during overlong holidays while the industrious Germans are slaving away. We are overpaid compared to the austere Japanese, we have outrageous leave loadings which no other country would consider, and so on and so on.

What a load of tripe! In demolishing these myths, the best place to begin is with wages. Since they are extremely elusive, we reprint here the figures we published last time (taken with technical alterations for different

(Continued page 9)

ONCE again, the Pentagon has egg on its face.

Its most top-secret project in years has been the "invisible" F-19 Stealth fighter. Congress voted billions to it, yet never received any details of the aircraft. When an F-19 crashed in California in July, the Pentagon rushed in armed guards and patrol planes to enforce a news blackout.



The F-19 Stealth fighter captured by the Testor Toy Corporation

FROM PAGE 5

Drug Bill

involves less than 10% of the 14,000 charges in 1984-85.

This does not necessarily reflect the degree of usage of different drugs. Cocaine and other trendy (and expensive) drugs are more likely to be used by middle class people, who are generally less at risk from the police.

The figures for drug arrests, which rose 1300% between 1972 and 1985, do not necessarily reflect usage either. In 1984, there were 524 drug offences, per 100,000 people in Queensland, compared with 343 in NSW. Are Queenslanders 50% more likely to use drugs, or just 50% more

likely to be arrested for using them?

Protesters picketed the Fourx Brewery in Brisbane when the Bill went through. Although not the best target possible, this raised the question of the relative dangers of marijuana, alcohol and cigarettes. The Queensland government has just rejected random breath testing, but to cover itself has directed the police to begin an insidious new practice. They will now regularly stop "anyone" at will "to check their licences".

The police's first self-styled blitz was in Woodridge, a working class area with a large

FEATURE

working hours from the *Canberra Times*. These are annual rates for manufacturing:

| | |
|------------|----------|
| Canada: | \$34,562 |
| USA: | 28,425 |
| Japan: | 27,811 |
| Holland: | 23,444 |
| Germany: | 22,237 |
| Australia: | 18,237 |
| Britain: | 17,711 |
| France: | 16,039 |

Those bosses and Liberal Party hacks who are aware of these facts are increasingly falling back on a new bogey: the dreaded labour "on-costs". These includes things like paid leave, compo, super and payroll tax. Supposedly these associated labour costs are wrecking the country. But here is a comparison published by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, showing "on-costs" as a percentage of wages:

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Austria: | 93 |
| Germany: | 82 |
| Belgium: | 77 |
| Holland: | 74 |
| Sweden: | 72 |
| Switzerland: | 48 |
| Australia: | 41 |

And if you take all labour costs together you get the same result. Under the heading, "How were we winning on labour costs", the magazine *Australian Business* recently informed its readers that for spinning and weaving, hourly rates in US dollars were \$6.11 in this country. By contrast, Canadians were accounting for \$8.19, Americans \$8.60, and the prosperous Swedes a whopping \$9.09. An ANZ bank survey just published shows a similar pattern.

As for holidays and leave loadings, it is true we are well off compared with the poorly unionised American working class, and also with Japan. On the other hand, Danish workers get five weeks to our four, as do the French and the Swedes. And our

17½ per cent leave loading looks pretty skimpy compared with the 25 per cent provided in Sweden and the 30 per cent in Denmark, not to mention the 100 per cent loading paid to Belgian workers and the massive 130 per cent enjoyed by the Dutch. So it's no wonder that amongst themselves, some of the bosses are being forced to admit that our wages and conditions are not the cause of the crisis. Sir Arvi Parbo of Western Mining poses the real issues as follows:

"Australia is a high wage country. But then, so are many of the countries with which we compete and from which we import. Nearly 80 per cent of our imports come from high wage countries in Europe and Japan. Our problem is that we do not generally match the high wage with high productivity."

Similarly, a *Financial Review* correspondent wrote in August that many business advisors were "questioning what they call an Australian obsession with cutting wage costs... our young export-oriented, technology based manufacturers see wage costs as irrelevant." And he quoted one management consultant as saying that "even if you removed direct labour costs entirely, many of our companies still wouldn't compete" with foreign rivals.

Clearly, the problem is not wages or conditions. It is the low productivity of Australian industry.

At this point, of course, John Howard and his ilk will try to tell us that it is "lazy workers", not to mention "union bloody-mindedness", which holds down productivity. We must all work harder, they say. This too is a myth. Listen to Ross Gittens, economic editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

"In an industrial economy, productivity has very little to do with working harder. What increases the productivity of labour — output per person — is the increased application of capital equipment, better management practices and more effective use of labour."

Looking at steel plants here and in Japan, Gittens writes that "the main difference between the productivity of steel plants is the modernity of their machinery."

This brings us to the second dilemma facing Australian capitalism. If productivity can only be increased with new equipment and new methods (and many of the new methods are dependent on the introduction of new technology), then a lot of new investment will be needed to create viable



Anti-Budget protesters press towards Hawker's in Melbourne

new export industries. The same goes for revitalising existing industries.

But it's not happening. While business investment grew at an average annual rate of over 6 per cent during the fifties and sixties, it has fallen to a growth rate of little more than 2 per cent over the past decade.

The most recent performances are even back to the levels of the 1960s. Keating most is that for the second three months of this year, private sector investment fell by 2.4 per cent. This was the third consecutive fall.

A Chamber of Commerce survey a couple of months back showed that a majority of companies expect investment to decline further. The Budget papers confirm this, forecasting a 1½ drop in business investment in 1986-87. With an already low level of investment, this means the country is increasingly being saddled with aging plant and equipment.

These facts bode very ill for Australian capitalism. They are also the final, damning judgement on the Prices and Incomes Accord. The whole point of the Accord was that in return for "wage restraint", which would boost profits, we were supposed to see substantial new investment. The economy would enter a new golden age.

But that hope has turned to ash, as ACTU President Simon Crean recently admitted.

"We were told that if we proceeded down the path of more moderate wage claims,

then we would be laying the basis for a future investment-led recovery, and it's been found wanting."

Crean and Paul Keating are at a loss to explain this fiasco. We gave the bosses all this money, and they won't invest it! Pointing to figures which show that profits, as a share of economic output, have risen twice, curses, exhorts the bosses to invest. When they don't, he calls them idiots and worse. Simon Crean says:

"We have a management class which is, by and large, incompetent."

If so, the logical thing would be to give these incompetents the boot, and replace their class rule with working class power. But that would be a socialist solution, something that would never enter Simon's head.

HOWEVER, it is not simply a matter of employer bungling. It is a matter of dollars and cents. For while the "profit share" we mentioned has indeed gone up, that is not the thing capitalists look at when they make investment decisions.

What they look at is the rate of profit: the percentage return on each dollar invested. And measured this way, profits are still quite depressed.

To understand why, we have to consider the analysis made by Karl Marx in the third volume of his *Capital*. Along with all the great classical economists, he argued that it was the labour of the working class which created all value. Machines and raw materials, themselves the product of labour, had a value which was transferred into the new product during the production process. But the new, additional value which formed the basis of profit could only be produced by living labour.

The economists of the capitalist class soon dropped this theory, not because they could disprove it, but because the exploitive nature of capitalism emerged too clearly from it. Profits could be seen to be produced by the workers; yet the workers got none of them.

But Marx took it further and made new insights. Capitalism necessarily grows and develops through technological change, he said. Each firm must keep automating because otherwise its competitors, who will

do so, can undercut it with cheaper goods.

Yet because only living labour creates actual profits, over time the growth of plant and equipment relative to actual wage labour must tend to undermine profit rates. Of course, it's more complicated than this. Marx himself pointed to many "counter-tendencies". Nevertheless, the long-term tendency would eventually assert itself. Declining profit rates due to automation are the key to understanding the crises of capitalism.

The history of postwar Australia has borne Marx out. For two decades after World War Two, prolonged prosperity seemed to prove him wrong. It seemed the system had solved its problems. But beneath the surface new problems were building up.

With the very growth of the system came a build-up of plant and equipment relative to wage labour. In 1950 the bosses were investing about \$11,000 in these things for each worker employed. By 1977 the figure had risen to \$37,000, even allowing for inflation.

The consequence was increased pressure on profit rates. While they were around 17 per cent at the end of the sixties, they fell to around 9 per cent by the mid-seventies, and plunged to six per cent during the last recession. The recent recovery under Labor boosted them back to 9 per cent.

In other words, after all our sacrifices under the Accord, profit rates have only risen back to the level of the mid-seventies — a time of economic stagnation.

THERE is a terrible irony here which exposes the capitalist system as outdated and reactionary.

The increasingly skilled and creative labour of the working class, the marvellous new technology which results, become under this system a barrier to further progress. This is the clearest sign that if humanity is to continue to go forward, capitalism must give way to a new social system.

Wealth must be produced to meet human needs, not the dictates of profitability. This is not simply a matter of placing industry in the hands of the state. As workers in the Soviet Union, and railway workers right here in Australia, know perfectly well, a government boss can be just as bad as one from the private sector. The Russian state capitalist regime is plagued with the same falling profits as Australia, and for the same reason.

What socialism must mean if it is to solve these problems is a new kind of working class democracy, in which workers' creative talents are unleashed because they know they are working for themselves and their children.

Obviously, such a solution is not acceptable to the employing class, nor to Bob Hawke and his coterie. We will have to fight for it.

The employers and their capitalist politicians, meanwhile, will pursue wage cutting, welfare cuts, attacks on our conditions and union-bashing. As we have seen, that will not resolve the looming crisis. It is, and it never will be, the only strategy that capitalism can offer.

In that fact alone, we can see the utter bankruptcy of the much-vaunted "free enterprise system."

— Tom O'Lincoln

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to tinker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must be spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended any movement. They can only be ended by ending capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world: the point is to change it. Marxist theory and practice are only meaningful if they are a guide to action. In the unions, socialist movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. If that's where you want to be, join us today!

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Mondays: 7.30
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Sydney
Wednesdays: 7.00
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Bridge & George St, City)

Brisbane
Tuesdays: 7.30 pm
Phone 371 7114
for location

Canberra
Thursdays: 6.00
Blair Room
Workers' Club, Civic

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

THE ECONOMIC pundits on TV all share one crucial assumption.

Whether the talking head on the box is Paul Keating, John Howard or John Hallpenny, capitalism itself is beyond question. The only debate is over the "correct" economic policy to minimise the recession we are now entering.

So the basic problem, that capitalism is inherently crisis-prone, is buried under a mountain of myth-making.

Tom O'Lincoln deals with the real cause of the crisis in the preceding pages. But the myths are also worth looking at.

The number one myth, of course, is that living standards are too high, and that we need wage cuts. Tom O'Lincoln refutes that argument in detail, but some extra points are worth making.

The current slump follows three years of real wage cuts via the Accord, yet Australia enters the latest recession a little better than other developed countries. "Discounting" of wage indexation did not prevent the recession of 1978-79. And low wages have never helped Third World countries avoid economic downturns.

Conservatives also blame the recession on Government borrowing. We have supposedly "spent beyond our means". Again, they are wrong.

True, Australia's foreign debt has risen sharply in the last ten years. Yet the associated problems are just the flip side of the benefits during the recent recovery and the resources boom of 1979-81.

During those periods, overseas loans and direct foreign investment made much faster growth possible than Australia could have sustained by only investing local funds. Conservatives who condemn the foreign debt would really have the country enter the recession with an even weaker industry than it already has.

ALSO faulty is the argument from sections of the labour movement that the deregulation of banks and exchange rates is the problem.

Paul Keating has taken deregulation of the financial system much further than the Liberals ever dared. At the June ALP Conference and various union gatherings, left Laborites have blamed the recession on this deregulation. It is a long-standing hostility in the ALP left to sections of capital, rather than to capitalism itself. Bankers and the financial system have been bogeymen for almost a century.



Paul Keating: signalling a zero deficit next time?

A mountain of myth-making about the crisis

The idea that the recession can be attributed to the floating of the dollar, which "made the economy subject to the whims of the international finance markets", is silly. No alternative exchange rate policies would have prevented the collapse of the Australian dollar without even worse consequences.

Rigid exchange rate control, as in the Eastern bloc and many Third World countries, would only generate black currency markets and dual exchange rates. Australian exports would be sold at prices reflecting the real, rather than the official, exchange rate.

Such a system would also discourage exporters from bringing their earnings back into the country at the official rate, further worsening the balance of trade. With a balance of trade deficit, the outflow of foreign exchange under such a system would force the Government to

contract the economy (as it is doing now) or to introduce severe import controls.

The same problem applies to a "dirty float", where the Reserve Bank intervenes by buying Australian dollars, to prop it up to a specific level. This would iron out some of the wilder daily fluctuations in exchange rates, but could not hold off concerted market pressure on the dollar's value.

The Reserve Bank does not have the funds to win if major foreign exchange speculators decide the dollar will fall. The longer the Bank intervened under such circumstances, the more money it would lose when it vacated the market and the dollar dropped.

The banks and takeover merchants have also been blamed for the high level of overseas debt. This is supposed to have forced the dollar down.

But two thirds of the rise in the overseas debt in the last year is due to the devaluation. Most loans to Australians are in terms of foreign currency. When our dollar falls, the debt automatically rises. As we argued above, such borrowing has underpinned recent economic growth.

SO TOO has Australian involvement in foreign trade. Yet union leaders and manufacturers call for import quotas or tariffs or subsidised exports to improve the trade balance and build up industry here.

Such measures would improve the balance of trade if widely applied. They would also slash workers' living standards. We would pay more for protected goods. Most capital goods, used to set up new production, are imported, so investment would fall. Subsidies for exports would come from higher taxes.

Countries which trade with Australia would retaliate against our exports if we excluded more of theirs. We can already see the effects of the wheat and sugar war between the US and EEC, and Australia is only on the sidelines of that one. In a full blown trade war, Australian wheat, coal, iron ore, sugar and so on would not only face subsidised competition from other nations. They would also be excluded from national markets by retaliatory tariffs and quotas.

As BHP showed, the relatively few jobs saved by protection are still under threat from rationalisation and new technology, as industry tries to catch up with productivity overseas. The collaboration of union leaders with BHP over protection only crippled the struggle against the eventual loss of 15,000 jobs due to speed-up and new equipment.

A permanent strategy of minimising foreign trade and investment would condemn Australia to snail's pace economic growth and lower wages, even if the rest of the world boomed. China and Burma, who both closed the economic door in the 1960s, found this to their lasting regret.

Worst of all, collaboration between workers and employers in protection of "Buy Australian" campaigns prevents the fight for direct subsidies for jobs rather than for bosses.

Uncompensated nationalisation of threatened industries under the control of the workers in themselves is still the only answer, this work of socialism, that the working class has to economic crisis.

— Rick Kuhn

BLF DEREGISTRATION

BLF comes out fighting to face a crucial test

SEPTEMBER is a critical month in the BLF's fight for survival.

The union's memberships expire, and renewal fees are due. Builders' labourers must choose between the militancy of the BLF and the subservience of the BWIU. The BLF has been working hard in preparation.

In Sydney, a flying picket of fifteen has gone around jobs talking to workers. In one week, they visited seven major sites. All voted for 24-hour stoppages if police came on site, and 48 hours if there were arrests. These decisions are important, because police have been used extensively in NSW.

At the Sydney Cricket Ground, the flying picket encountered cops. One labourer raised a BLF flag on a pile driver, and workers walked off following several arrests.

At a Liverpool site, fifteen labourers still had no 3.8% CPI rise from last November. The BWIU, ostensibly their union, had given up, but the BLF won the pay rise for them.

In this way, the BLF is showing the value of retaining union membership.

The Melbourne flying picket has also been a success. It discusses safety and other issues with workers on the job. On some sites it has led stoppages, and on others picketed and turned away trucks.

Handing out BLF stickers and flags is also important. The blue flag fluttering from the crane is a visible symbol of fighting spirit. One boss at the Chia job in South Yarra tried to get rid of stickers, saying, "We don't want anything from the BLF around the place, because we don't want anyone thinking about the BLF."

In Melbourne at least, the hard work is paying off. For example, one group of scaffolders working for a major contractor recently voted unanimously to renew BLF membership. At a Queen Street site which was badly demoralised after deregistration, workers have now regained confidence. They walked off for 48 hours over police on site, and subsequently voted to stay with the BLF. Individual workers came into the union office as early as July to pay their dues.

Whether to fight is also an issue for BWIU members. At a

job meeting at the Melbourne Tennis Centre, a BWIU organiser boasted of the union's resolute policy against working while police were on site. This meant, he said, that it was okay to go back as soon as they left! In Sydney, BWIU and FEDFA officials actually moved a motion approving the calling of police.

On superannuation, the BWIU planned to accept the employers' first offer with no campaign. Workers would now have to wait until aged 55 to get the benefit, where previously they could get a payout on leaving the industry. The BWIU tried to sell this to members on the jobs.

So many Melbourne jobs rejected the scheme and called for a mass meeting that BWIU officials stopped holding on-the-job meetings.

There is now a backlash among BWIU members in Melbourne. Two carpenters have been taking up a petition for a mass meeting to discuss the new award, super and the BLF.

Over 1000 BWIU members from most city sites have signed the petition. On some sites, the two have had a hostile reception — until workers discover they are not BWIU officials.

So far, the BWIU office has ignored the petition, and resolutions from two shop stewards' meetings calling for a mass meeting. But the two carpenters have specific plans to intensify rank and file pressure.

The employers' main interest in deregistration was to gain "stability" in the industry. But they now accept that the BLF gives us "fight again," as the *Australian Business Weekly* puts it.

The Master Builders of Sydney have called for more government intervention. But many individual employers, particularly in Melbourne, find they get more "stability" by not calling the police, or waiting until a BLF site meeting is virtually over to do so.

Labour's assault on the BLF has politicised the whole building industry. With the plumbers' break with the Accord, the industry will become an even wider focus for worker resistance to Hawk.

Already the Plumbers' Union has been branded a rogue union, and reminded of what happened to the BLF. Deregistration is supposedly a one-only measure, is even more clearly a threat to



BLs clash with police in July: militancy or subservience?

be used against any union. Yet the "totally irresponsible" aim of the Plumbers is no more than to quit the Accord, allegedly a voluntary agreement.

As we write, the plumbers' campaign is yet to start. When it does, we can expect them to link up with the BLF and other trades, to bring the situation on building sites from a simmer to a boil.

The BLF motto, "If you don't fight, you lose", has never rung truer for rank and file building workers.

— Janey Stone

PERTH

Workers chip in \$100,000

The BLF has received a big boost in the West.

The Perth branch of the union has collected over \$100,000 on the job to help the eastern branches fight deregistration. An August meeting of all building industry shop stewards voted unanimously in support of the BLF, and declared they would not sign anyone into another

union. Kim Young, BLF shop steward at the large and militant Casino site, says workers can see that if the BLF is smashed in the east, they will be next.

"We've learnt important lessons from your experience. We do a lot of work with the rank and file, not only ours but also the rank and file of other unions." To build unity on sites, organisers involve all unionists there in any action.

The assault on the BLF in eastern states has made WA building bosses more confident. Leading rightwing employer Buckridge is trying to crack conditions and union organisation by declaring his workers "independent contractors". The Burke government has used police on the Buckridge picket line just as the eastern states have.

Brian Burke is also trying out a code of conduct. Employers must report on every industrial dispute, whether it involves a stoppage or not.

This has perhaps made builders more cautious. But workers more cautious. Still building unions are still combative and winning most disputes.

INDUSTRIAL STRUGGLE

ACOA leaders duck for cover as 2000 jobs go

OFFICIALS of the public service union ACOA put on a very pious face last July.

When Bob Hawke hinted at major cuts to jobs, and Socialist Action members and other leftists argued for mass meetings within 48 hours of any firm announcements, their answer was "Why wait till after it's happened?" They got through motions to meet again within a fortnight.

Those "meetings within a fortnight" did not actually happen, of course. Now, with the Budget cut of 2000 jobs, the threats are a reality. And the response from public service union leaders has been pathetic indeed.

Six days after the Budget, ACOA national secretary Peter Robson was claiming that he did not know what the cuts would be.

In any decently-led union, the sordid details of precisely which jobs are to go would be of secondary importance. Unfortunately, it matters in the ACOA, because four days before the Budget, union leaders want a series of poorly attended lunchtime meetings to lukewarm support of their position of department by department negotiations with the government over any cutbacks.

As with the state public service unions in July, the ACOA is also offering to do the government's dirty work for it in helping to make departments "more efficient and cost effective."

Federated Clerks Union officials have effectively taken the same path with their members in the Tax Office. They were helped by the government's offer of extra staff to administer the new taxes. This allowed them to argue that FCU members in Tax did not need to support other unionists under attack.

Officials of APSA, which covers fourth division public servants, are normally more militant. But they too have done nothing at the time of writing, though their mass meetings endorsed a campaign of industrial action.

The union officials' pleas of uncertainty about the cuts do not stand up to serious examination.

For example, ACOA official Sue Mountford admits that Social Security cannot afford to



ACOA members meet last year: leaders ducking a fight now

lose any more staff. Yet the day after the Budget, a special courier service delivered a Budget video to all Social Security offices. It announced there were 81 jobs to go — our share of the 2000 service-wide losses.

When this writer confronted Simon Crean at a chance meeting and demanded to know the ACTU's attitude, he replied that I did not understand the issues. He claimed that the 2000 jobs loss did not matter, since there was a turnover of 16,000 people in the public service annually!

From the supposed leader of the Australian trade union movement, that is an attitude of almost mind-boggling cynicism.

Public service union leaders seem to have been genuinely shocked by the initial Labor threats in July. After all, they had signed the Accord and delivered their side of the bargain: "restraint" by their members. While the more realistic had long given up on any benefits from the Accord, they did not expect to be hit by open government attacks.

But after getting assurances from Hawke and Willis on flexible and holiday loadings, they now seem to be open to Labor's arguments about the state of the economy and the Budget solutions. After all, it is the same logic of "restraint" as embodied in the Accord, taken just one step further.

Socialist Action members and other activists have argued to

mass meetings for building a campaign step by step under membership control, to culminate in the strike action needed to fight off Labor's cuts.

With the passive atmosphere of poorly-attended lunchtime meetings rather than big stop-work meetings, and the uncertainty that still lingered four days before the Budget, the support we got in Melbourne from a quarter of the meeting was one positive sign. So was the enthusiastic reception that speakers to an action motion in Sydney received.

The fight against staff cuts seems to have been seriously derailed at present. But further cuts, and the reviving of the sacking and stand-down clauses of the CERR Act, may prompt a fight-back.

Membership meetings have shown that a core of activists is prepared to struggle. From this militant minority, socialist can attempt to build a fighting campaign.

— Liz Ross, ACOA member

V-LINE Ads abstract from rail fight

OVER 300 rail workers have received redundancy notices in the first stage of the Cain Labor government's move to redepoly or sack 2000 V-line workers.

The redundancy letter sent to workers' homes says that there is a need to "drastically reduce



V-Line worker bugs Transport Minister Roper: derailed campaign

costs and improve efficiency" at V-Line, and informs workers that "your position is surplus to the authority's requirements."

The sending of the letter follows the failure of an extremely weak campaign by rail union leaders. This involved a frantic last-minute attempt to lobby Labor parliamentarians, and a \$100,000 advertising splurge in press and radio intended to pressure Cain to implement alternative cost-cutting measures without sackings.

The decision to embark on this ineffectual campaign was taken without prior consultation with workers in the industry. The first mass meetings on the issue were held a full week after the ads appeared, and only days before the sackings were due to take place.

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Lacey ruled out industrial action, arguing that any strike that affected rail services would give Cain the excuse he wanted to sack the entire rail workforce and rehire on a contract basis.

This strategy of total reliance on political lobbying, and rejection of industrial action, was doomed from the start.

Only an industrial campaign that draws on the combined weight of all public transport workers can stop the sackings and prevent further attacks on the public transport system.

— ARU member

SEXUAL POLITICS



New York abortion clinic, and Joe Scheidler with his book on how to harass it

The terrorists we never hear about

THERE is a particularly nasty group of terrorists operating in America.

They have bombed about 100 buildings in the last three years. Their ideological patron is that supporter of Contra terrorism, Ronald Reagan. Like the Contras, these terrorists claim to have the sympathy of the Catholic Church.

The military aim of these terrorists is to close down abortion clinics. As well as bombings, they kidnap doctors and harass patients. They are part of the rightwing push now occurring in the US.

Twelve years ago, abortion was illegal in America. One million women a year, and probably a quarter of women during their reproductive lives, broke the law against abortion. Of these, 300 a year died at the hands of backyard butchers.

In 1973, the Supreme Court legalised abortion. Now 1.5 million abortions are performed legally every year. The proportion of unwanted babies born to married women has fallen from 10.5% in 1965 to 6.8% today. A whole generation of women has grown up with the right to abortion.

The women's liberation movement of the early 1970s had much to do with the legalization decision. But it also came at a time when employers wanted more workers, ruling class women wanted legalization, and conservatives thought that granting abortion rights might defuse the more radical demands of women's liberation.

But what the ruling class gives

with one hand, it takes with the other. The US Congress attacked the most vulnerable recipients of the new right, women on welfare. The 1975 Hyde amendment denied them health benefits for their abortions.

Women on welfare should not have sex, should not have babies, went the underlying thinking. They are not supposed to be living with a man. They should have to live with their punishment and bear a child.

This moralistic thinking was reflected in opinion polls, too.



Even though support for abortion grew from 15% in 1968 to its current 83%, closer scrutiny reveals that this support is only where the women is a victim of rape or incest; that is, where the child is not "her fault". The number who support abortion on demand — no ifs, no buts — is 39%.

Fortunately, the Hyde amendment did not have its desired results. A number of states have continued funding, especially in large city areas. The feminist health movement has

helped poorer women. The 125-250 deaths a year predicted by a government department have not happened.

The right has tried other tactics. They fight local council permits to abortion clinics. They set up bogus "clinics" of their own. Over 3000 now operate. In some, women seeking abortions are forced to wait anti-abortion films while watching for the results of pregnancy tests.

But there is a fightback. The National Organisation of Women (NOW) organised 130,000 strong marches six months ago. They argue that they represent the majority opinion in the US, and have commenced law suits against the bogus clinics.

NOW has uneven politics. The St Louis leadership, for example, marched with anti-abortion forces, whilst NOW members in Everett, Seattle, defend an abortion clinic.

Others are also fighting the right offensive. Bombed clinics are reopening, with demonstrations to show support for them. Bogus clinics are picketed, as are churches whose congregations harass women at abortion clinics.

Attacks on abortion have not been as severe in Australia. But been as severe in trying in some not for want of trying in some quarters. Joseph Scheidler, NY author of a book detailing 99 ways to close an abortion clinic, has toured for the Right to Life. Brisbane has seen police raid files at the Greenslopes clinic and arrest doctors.

The American example stands as a stark reminder of what lies in store here, should the left and women generally relax their guard for a moment over hardwon abortion rights.

— Jeff Goldhar

SOCIALIST ACTION

Defiant Budget demos

SOCIALIST Action members have been in the thick of the anti-Budget demonstrations in various capital cities.

And our student members are looking to get involved in the campaign against tertiary fees.

Socialist Action member Martin Hirst, a former editor of Sydney University's *Honey Soil*, addressed a sit-in of 200 students at the Department of Education. He argued against relying on bureaucratic channels to revoke the fees.

"The ACTU and union officials have promised a campaign around the social wage for the past three months," said Martin. "It is now up to us to organise the fightback ourselves."

Sydney school

TWENTY-FIVE people attended Socialist Action's two day school in Sydney on the weekend of August 23-24.

Eric Petersen spoke on recent class struggles in France, and Philip Whitefield discussed developments in Poland since the repression of Solidarity. Tom O'Lincoln spoke on the Nicaraguan revolution, and on the current crisis in the Australian economy.

Comrades were also entertained by two videos.

Bumper seller

LAST month's *Socialist Action* was a bumper seller. Members sold almost our entire print run of 1000 in the first two weeks.

So we're upping our print run to 1300. And we ask readers to help us circulate the magazine. Several readers already take 3-10 copies to sell to friends, workmates and neighbours. If you'd like to spread the arguments for socialism too, ring your nearest Socialist Action branch (details, centre pages).

Branch talks

SYDNEY branch meetings will feature talks this month on China and on Imperialism.

Melbourne branch also has a number of feature talks coming up, on Gays, on Imperialism and on Science.

Interested? Phone us for more details or just turn up to a branch meeting. Details, centre pages.

SOCIALIST STANDPOINTS

AT THE start of the 1970s, a new women's liberation movement developed a new terminology.

Just as blacks were oppressed by "racism", oppressive attitudes toward women needed a name. The early activists hit upon "male chauvinism." This was a mouthful, and soon gave way to "sexism", which proved a useful and enduring term.

A few years later, a new word appeared: "patriarchy". But this was not just a new term for women's oppression. It reflected claims by feminists to have discovered a new system of social structures, a "patriarchal" system in which men as a group ran the world.

Just as socialists call on workers to unite against capitalism, they called on all women to unite against "patriarchy". There was a clear implication that all men were members of something rather like a ruling class.

Socialist Action disagrees with the notion of "patriarchy." Let us explain why.

Patriarchy is supposed to be a system of women's oppression far older than capitalism. It has been operating since the stone age, we are told, or at least since the dawn of class society. So clearly it is more fundamental than class society, or at least no less so.

WOMEN may well have been oppressed since early times.

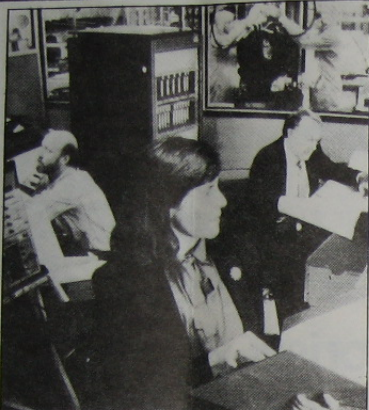
If so, that oppression arose with the first division of labour. In a world of scarce resources, any division of labour was likely to be unfair. Those whose roles gave them greater access to resources would be driven by want to seize them, to the detriment of others.

But a gender-based division of labour is not more fundamental than the division of labour between bosses and workers, simply because it has existed for longer. History is not so simple.

The rise of class societies (slave-holding, feudal, capitalist) meant the creation of a far more complex system of labour division — one which reshaped women's role over and over. Women have worked in the fields, worked at home, worked in factories.

At the core of these complex class societies was a particular division of immense importance: class division. It gave rise to great conflicts: slave revolts, peasant risings and, above all, the struggles of the working class.

By contrast, even though their oppression is very old, women as a separate group have never



Woman boss: who rules whom?

Patriarchy: Does class or sex divide us?

mobilised on the same scale.

They have been extremely important in revolutionary struggles. Women led the march on Versailles during the French revolution, and sparked the uprising which brought down the Russian Tsar. But they did so as members of oppressed classes.

And in all major social conflicts, women have been on both sides. In Chile in 1973, female workers defended the leftist Allende government, while middle class housewives demonstrated with pots and pans against it. Or contrast the BLP Women's Support Committee with the female cops who are sent in against picketing builders labourers.

THE patriarchal theory that society is run by all men as a group is also false. Not only are most men relatively powerless, but there are quite a few powerful women.

Margaret Thatcher is the most notorious case. Patriarchy theorists often try to dismiss her as an aberration. But then we need only recall Israel's war-mongering prime minister Golda Meir, or Sri Lanka's ruthless former leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike,

or Indira Gandhi with her penchant for jailing strikers.

To the extent feminism has succeeded in opening doors for middle and upper class women over the past 15 years, there are a lot more powerful women around. It was a female magistrate, Mrs Rizkalla, who put BLP organiser John Cummins in jail for six days in July, for example.

Proponents of patriarchy theory often seem to think that the capitalist class is effectively all male, with bourgeois women merely ornaments. Not so. The census figures for 1981 reveal that among 337,000 or so people who declared themselves as employers, over 101,000 were women.

Most of these would be small-time bosses. BHP is undeniably



Indira Gandhi: penchant for jailing strikers

run by men. But there are still quite a few women exploiting workers, male and female. Plenty of male bosses' wives are also active campaigners on behalf of their class, like former Liberal minister Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, wife of Hamersley Iron manager Stanley Guilfoyle.

Let us consider one more angle. We have had serious unemployment since 1975. In the time since then, women's participation in the workforce has been very stable, while men's has dropped somewhat. If capitalism were "patriarchal", we would expect women to have been forced back into the home so that all men could be employed. Yet despite occasional agitation along this line by rightwingers (male and female), it has not occurred.

BUT THE most conclusive test of a theory is where it leads in practice.

Patriarchy theory, taken seriously, would mean organising for some kind of "feminist" revolution". Yet although the term is often used, no one has ever explained what such a revolution would be like.

Compare the socialist perspective. Basing ourselves on a class analysis, we argue for a revolutionary workers' party, democratic workers' councils based on the factories and offices, a planned economy and production for people's needs rather than profit.

This in turn would create the material basis for a network of childcare centres, free abortion on demand, and real equal pay.

A socialist society could move towards more communal rearing of children, and communal cooking and cleaning services, that for the first time in recorded history could liberate women from the domestic role. The struggle to change people's consciousness, so difficult in today's society, could at last be completed.

We can show that many times in history, vast numbers of workers have mobilised for this sort of perspective, with women prominent among them.

The tradition of separate feminist organising has no comparable record, because it has no comparable struggle.

The oppression of women is a systematic part of society, with deep roots. It needs specific analysis and the struggle against it is a major priority for socialists.

It is despite all the efforts of patriarchy theorists, that a socialist class analysis which offers the best orientation for taking that struggle to victory.

— Lee Hempel

REVIEWS

New Theatre's long swim against the stream

A LOT happened in 1936 for which we are now marking fiftieth anniversaries.

The most notable events, the Spanish Civil War and the French Popular Front, are just distant memories. So it is good to celebrate something that lives on to this day.

Melbourne's New Theatre is marking its fiftieth birthday with *Against The Stream*, a series of sketches about its history and excerpts from its plays over the last half century.

New Theatre's second production, in late 1936, was one of its most famous. *Till The Day I Die*, an anti-Nazi play by leftwing playwright Clifford Odets, was banned following a protest from the German Consul.

The proposed venue, Collingwood Town Hall, was padlocked, and police thwarted the mayor's attempts to break in. A scene in *Against The Stream* portrays councillors from many suburbs refusing to allow the play in their town halls.

New Theatre was against the stream in 1936; but in 1941, when they performed *Till The Day I Die* at the prestigious Princess Theatre, they were flowing with the stream. Freedom of expression, it seems, can be turned off and on by those who control the system.

The New Theatre's postwar repertoire included a ballet and a play on discrimination against the Aborigines, the latter being tossed out of a drama festival because of its biting criticism of white society.

The stream became quite icy in the Cold War period.

The establishment shunned the New Theatre, and reviews in the daily press were critical or non-existent. Actors had to use "stage names", not because their real names were theatrically unsuitable, but because membership of the New Theatre could mean loss of their jobs.

Although it was set up as part of a push by the Communist Party to extend its influence in the arts, the New Theatre did not seem to suffer the same painful control as did CP painters and writers. Perhaps this was more difficult to enforce the Stalinist party line on a whole group of people. When, in the fifties, the CP prevailed upon a playwright to change his script to fit in more with the current thinking, the

result was not a theatrical success.

The New Theatre has run ahead of the stream in innovative theatre. Many plays were "Social Realist"; that is, they portrayed the problems and struggles of everyday life. Lack of money for fancy sets meant audiences had to use their imaginations, and plays presented in the reportage, or living newspaper style, gave them an immediacy and relevance to what was happening in the real world.

The Vietnamers saw *Mac Bird*, a Shakespearean satire on the Kennedy assassination, and *America Hurrah* in 1968. The latter's nightly audience included members of the vice squad, and attempts by the government to censor the production ensured the Theatre front page coverage.

Thankfully, the New Theatre does not just stick to the boards of its stage at the Organ Factory, its current home. The troupe performed on the barricades at an anti-freeway demonstration. More recently, they have been playing at BLP fundraisers and demonstrations.

Let's hope this continues. *Day I Die* is a welcome change of the often incoherent, ashenfaced, black-clashed street theatre that has been the boring fare at demonstrations in Melbourne for the last decade or so.

— Jeff Goldhar
• *Against The Stream* plays at the Organ Factory, 6 Page Street, Clifton Hill until Saturday 20 September. Bookings 317 7923. An illustrated history of the New Theatre is also available for \$5.

BOOK

Honest look at a revolution

ONE THING distinguishing the Nicaraguan revolution from those like Cuba or China is the much-noted political pluralism of the regime.

It is not a new kind of socialist politics, merely a version of bourgeois democracy. Yet it has the advantage that much of the serious writing about Nicaragua by its close supporters has been tolerably honest and critical. Henri Weber's *The Sandinist Revolution* and George Black's



The New Theatre's biggest hit, *Reedy River*, based on the shearer's strike

Triumph of the People were the two major studies published after the 1979 revolution, and between them you could get a reasonable picture of what was going on. Since then, not much has come out.

Now we have *Nicaragua — A Revolution Under Siege*, (not to be confused with Mike Gonzales' short piece of the same title), published by Zed Books, containing ten substantial essays. This book provides information up to 1984. Its main weakness, consequently, is not treating the economic decline of the past two years (caused mainly by the war) and the Sandinista's resulting policy shifts. Otherwise, it has a mass of information.

Despite the government's ideology, it is a pretty honest book. It contains a devastating summary of events on the Atlantic Coast, a real disaster area. But it is also clear from the account that the main villains are the United States and the opportunist Mistko leaders aligned with them.

It documents a number of things we have long argued

Nicaragua's revolution is not socialist. "It is not even possible to affirm Nicaragua... is undergoing a transition to socialism." Nor is there any real workers' control.

"Workers' participation appears as fundamentally the effective fulfilment of production goals, as political surveillance... It does not imply the involvement of workers in the decisions affecting the basic problems of units of production."

Yet it also reminds us that we are discussing a great popular revolution, for which hundreds of thousands of ordinary people continue to work, fight and die. And that it is menaced by the absolutely criminal aggression of Reagan and his Contra murtherers.

We must defend this revolution, unhesitatingly if not critically, and for that we need reliable information. This book is a good source.

— Richard Emerson

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Their free speech and ours

AN UNHOLY furore broke out at Monash University last month.

The issue was freedom of speech. Under attack was the demonstration, reported in August's Socialist Action, which prevented Liberal MP Wilson Tuckey from speaking and escorted him off the campus. What about free speech? cried campus Liberals and liberals alike.

What, indeed, about it? Did Monash's left go too far? Was it hypocritical for left-wingers, who normally claim "freedom of speech" for themselves and the oppressed, to deny it to a right-wing parliamentarian?

Hardly. For a start, different people have very different rights to free speech under capitalism. Wilson Tuckey, as an MP, and other members of the ruling class have plenty. The newspapers, TV and radio are only too eager to report what they say, which is hardly surprising, given that people like Rupert Murdoch own the press.

The rest of us have very little. In the places where we spend most of our lives as *social beings* — the factories, offices and schools — we have almost *no right* of free speech at all. The right of private property comes first, as any socialist who has tried to give a speech or distribute literature inside factory grounds can testify.

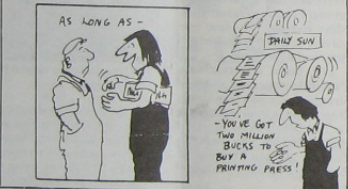
So for all the indignity that he suffered at Monash, Wilson Tuckey still has far more freedom of speech than most of us. Before we return to his case, however, we must clarify another point.

FOR LIBERALS of all shades, free speech is a much vaunted right — an integral part of the system that makes it morally superior to Russia, China and other bureaucratic regimes.

The reality is very different. Workers and the left have always had to fight capitalism for their right to speak.

For example, police broke up numerous left-wing street meetings during the Depression. In Melbourne, Communist artist Noel Counihan spoke to a crowd of 10,000 from a cage chained to a Sydney Road lamp-post to avoid being arrested. Another speaker at the meeting, Sherry Patullo, was pursued by police and shot in the leg.

Soon after the Lyons government barred anti-fascist campaigners Egon Kisch and Gerald Griffin from visiting Australia, Kisch had to jump ship, breaking his leg in the process, to enter the country. Griffin was deported but came back in disguise to



address a huge crowd at Melbourne's Festival Hall. The hall's lights were extinguished and decoys used to spirit him through the lines of police waiting to arrest him after he spoke.

The Communist Party suffered attempts to ban it and its press during the War, and again during the Cold War. In the 1960s, the Vietnam movement first had to march for civil liberties in Brisbane and defeat "Bylaw 418" in Melbourne (which banned leafletting as "littering") before it could make its case. "We will tolerate dissent so long as it is ineffective," said prime minister John Gorton, summing up capitalism's real attitude to free speech.

Even today, the left must fight for its right to speak. In 1979, the WA Liberal government amended its Police Act to ban any public assembly without a police permit. Scores of unionists were arrested, and only nationwide strike action forced a partial revoking of the measures. In Brisbane, socialists

are still arrested for giving soapbox speeches in the City Mall.

SO FOR socialists, free speech is not some abstract right granted to us by a benign system.

It is something we have had to fight for, and with good reason. For us, the right to speak is a basic weapon in the class war. The employing class has every reason to try and keep it from us, because we use it to try to get rid of them.

By the same token, we make no pretence of defending our exploiters' free speech, or any other of their rights. We aim to abolish their class, and that means taking away their rights as a class of them.

So when their representatives, like Wilson Tuckey, are shouted down, we are happy to join in. When printers go on strike, silencing the capitalist press, or refuse to compose union-bashing articles, we support them. For us, the right to struggle against the system is more important than



with Alec Kahn

the right of its upholders to defend it.

Does this mean that we want to take away the right to speak of anyone who disagrees with us? Not at all.

For socialists, there is a clear class line. There are millions of workers and other ordinary people who have been indoctrinated in capitalism's ideology. We support their rights to speak freely, and all their other democratic rights, so long as they are not threatening others by promoting racist, sexist or fascist ideas. In fact, in fighting for their democratic rights, many right-wing working class people can have their ideas changed.

On the other side of the class line, we have no sympathies. We only defend the freedoms of individual capitalists when attacks on their freedoms also threaten to restrict the rest of us — for example, when repressive libel and censorship laws are used against newspapers.

UNDER socialism, we will be able to go forward to a genuine right of free speech.

Because if free speech is anything more than the token right to stand on a street corner talking to almost no-one, it must involve access to the means of spreading ideas: the mass media.

That is why Lenin wrote: "The workers and peasants state understands by the freedom of the press... the granting to every group of citizens of a certain number (say 10,000) of the use of a corresponding share of paper supplies and printing facilities."

In other words, every political tendency in a workers' state should have a share of the media corresponding to its size. Moreover, it should have control over propagation of its ideas, rather than, as under capitalism, relying on some benign state or privately owned medium to pass them on.

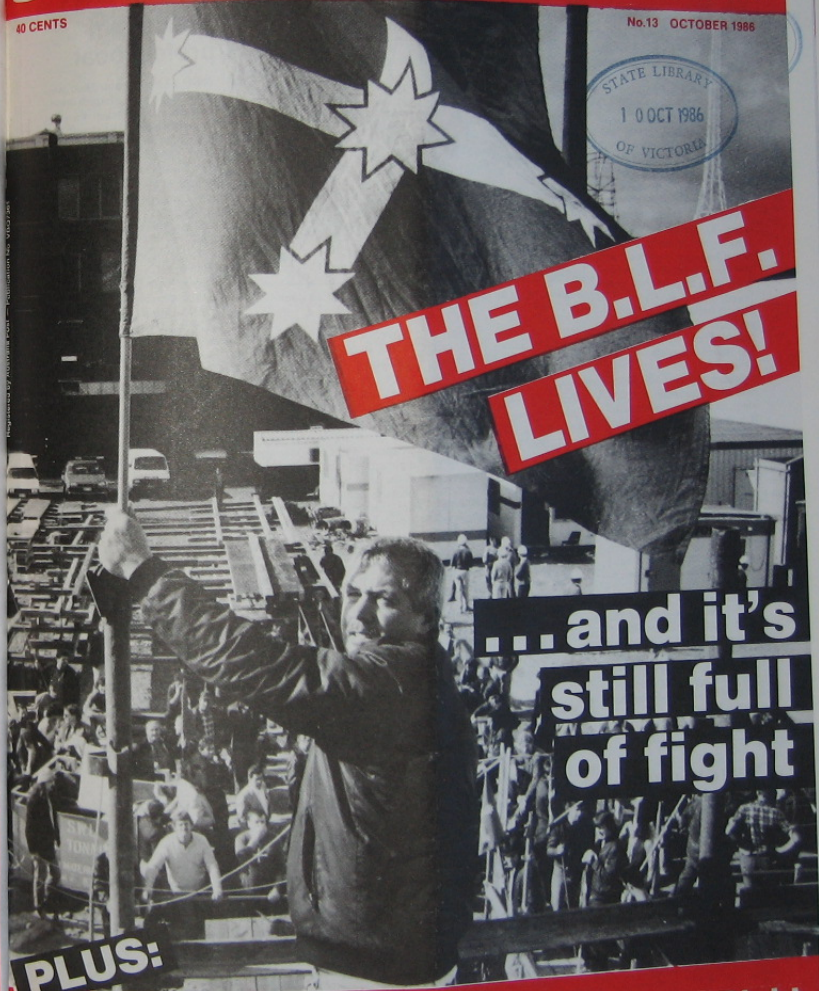
Most importantly, of all, free speech in a workers' state will actually *mean* something. Ordinary working people will also have the means to put their ideas into practice, through workers' councils and workers' control. Our ideas won't end up as mere hot air, while capitalists do as they wish with us.

So when liberals cry "What about free speech?" in injured tones as Wilson Tuckey is shouted down, our answer is plain. What about it then?

SOCIALIST ACTION

40 CENTS

No.13 OCTOBER 1986



PLUS:

Hungary 1956 remembered **Gay Liberation reviewed** **The New Right reviled**

BLACK RIGHTS

BLF lives

time to tour South African black activist Mand Jackson around building sites. Solidarity has continued to grow. In Sydney, 30 unions condemned the arrest of Black and Owens, and 200 people picketed the jail. Labourers took action far and wide against Sabemo over the jailing, including at the Hyatt site in Adelaide, and on a range of sensitive America's Cup jobs in Perth (for example, the airport extensions).

The BLF will continue to operate very effectively as a regular union. We cannot publish the exact Victorian membership figures, but we can assure readers that BWIU claims about the BLF having only a thousand members are wildly understated.

Meanwhile, the existence of many dual ticket-holders also opens up the possibility of new forms of struggle. Its "unofficial" status already means that the BLF must rely overwhelmingly on the initiative of its rank-and-file. Now it will also be possible for the rank-and-file dissent in the BWIU and FEDFA to grow, and to link up in an organised fashion with tradesmen from the more principled unions on the job. The basis is there for an industry-wide militant rank-and-file insurgency which could transform building industry politics.

The struggle in the building industry is really only beginning. *This blue could go on for five years*, says Costain picketer John O'Connor, and he speaks for many BLs and their supporters, having matured into a remarkable fighting force over the past few months, are sure to give a good account of themselves.

Richard Emerson



Unionism Labor-style: police eject a BLF member from a site

How cops and warders are killing blacks

MANY of our reports of attacks on Aborigines have focussed on the Queensland police.

The national tour last month by relatives of blacks killed in custody, organised by the Committee to Defend Black Rights, was a reminder that the genocidal process begun 200 years ago is being perpetuated Australia-wide.

Per capita, Aborigines are jailed at least ten times more often than white Australians. In Western Australia, blacks suffer 20 times the white imprisonment rate. In South Australia, the bias is almost as bad. In 1982 for example, blacks made 2% of the state's court appearances, but were 38% of those jailed.

Nine Aborigines are known to have died in custody in WA in the last five years. One of the most outrageous cases is that of 25-year-old Robert Walker, who was beaten to death in Fremantle jail in 1984. Walker was assaulted by warders for twenty minutes in full view of many cells during the early hours of the morning.

Several prisoners bravely testified about this. Subsequent intimidation included some being transferred to jails up to 350 miles away during the inquest. The *Four Corners* crew who reported much of this have been threatened with legal action.

The best known WA case is that of John Pat, who was beaten to death after drunken off-duty cops provoked a fight with a black in the Victoria hotel. Charges laid against his police were followed by their reinstatement, and the jailing of some blacks involved in the incident for aggravated assault!

Such outrages are not confined to the West.

In 1981, Eddie Murray was found dead an hour after arriving at the watch-house in Woe Waa, NSW. Under cross-examination, police agreed that Murray was too drunk to scratch himself, but insisted that he had succeeded by tearing a strip off a blanket, threading it through the bars of a high ventilation window and making a noose.

In an earlier issue this year, we reported on the suspicious death of Barbara Yarnie in the Brisbane watch-house. And there was no proper inquest into the death of Nita Blankett in a WA jail. Instances of women dying in



Blacks march against custody deaths: how many more must die?

custody have not been as widely taken up by the press as those of men.

Police are not above reprisal action against the Committee to Defend Black Rights. One speaker on the tour learned that WA police were following and harassing his sisters while he was away.

But that sort of intimidation is not working any more. The speaking tour shows that blacks are now ready to organise nationally and politically against their legal persecutors.

People who want to support their campaign should write to PO Box 498, Broadway 2007, or phone Sydney 698 9826.

— Carole Ferrier

QUEENSLAND

Police grab 60 at dance

ON the night of September 28, seventy police with dogs and guns broke up a black dance in Brisbane.

The police attack followed a Rugby League match that afternoon between the Natives and Cherbourg. The Natives won in the last minute, but several of their players are from Cherbourg and the game was quite friendly. Residents from across the road have stated that there was not a

lot of noise from the dance either. But noise was the excuse the police used to charge into the hall and cut the power to the band. They then followed blacks trying to leave around the streets with guns, saying, "Run, you black bastards." Others were dragged out of taxis and thrown into police cars.

A solicitor working for the Aboriginal Legal Service was battered over the head. In all, there were 60 arrested out of about 300 people at the dance.

Predictably, Police Minister Bill Gunn says there will be no inquiry, and that the police were "just doing their job".

While we know the police's job is to harass blacks, his advice to approach the Police Department or the Police Complainants Tribunal is just plain cynical. Blacks have never got anywhere complaining about police to police.

A black community meeting the next night demanded a Royal Commission into the police actions. Blacks are particularly concerned that there will be similar police harassment and violence when 23 teams meet for a football carnival at Toowoomba on October 18-19.

As we go to press, Brisbane's black community is organising a protest rally in Musgrave Park to mount black and white opposition to the continuing menace of police harassment.

— Carole Ferrier

APARTHEID

FOR TWO years, South Africa's black women, men and, above all, the young have stood up against one of the most vicious regimes in the world.

Two thousand are dead, 36,000 have been arrested or detained without charges, and many have been tortured. But far from retreating, anti-apartheid fighters have spread the movement in the past months to the countryside and the ban townships.

And yet, while the apartheid government is bruised and shaken, it is not that much closer to collapse than two years ago. To explain this situation, we need to look at the main forces in the anti-apartheid movement — the townships and the working class.

The townships are basically large dormitory suburbs, housing seven million black workers for the nearby white cities. They are run by elected black councils, but everyone knows that these councils are nothing more than agents for the white government. In last December's elections, only 20% of blacks voted. In the most politicized townships like Soweto, the turnout was under 10%.

When the present struggle began in September 1984, the councils were the first targets. Councillors were attacked, and rent strikes cut off their funds. Today, in parts of the country, this whole class of collaborators has been smashed. Everywhere, it is on the defensive.

IN PLACE of the councils, activists have created street committees, organs of local self-government that operate as local councils and political clubs.

The street committees have taken up the tasks of the old councils, maintaining essential services like water and drainage. They also oversee law and order.



'Comrades' tend their wounded after the raid on Crossroads



Soweto blacks: township revolt has bruised the regime

The revolt in South Africa's townships

The black police forces operated by the councils are dissolving, as more and more black police quit or are removed by their commanders.

There has been a decline in the crime rate anyway, as the rising tide of struggle draws more and more people in. One township activist from near Port Elizabeth says, "The people have stopped stabbing each other... they concentrate on one direction, fighting the government."

The committees and their activists, the "comrades", have set up people's courts to deal with criminal charges, martial law disputes, and political crimes like collaborating with the regime. It is not true that guilty verdicts are automatic — evidence is freely heard and acquittals are common. The usual punishment is a whipping. The people's courts have generally opposed the use of the "necklace" as a form of punishment, and reports of its use recently have been rare.

The street committees also work out political campaigns for their neighborhoods. They coordinate the consumer boycotts, school boycotts and rent strikes demonstrations, and collect money door-to-door.

The committees are still developing. Some are well established, and exercise real control over their areas. Others are very new and are still jostling for leadership with the dozens of other organisations that township residents have formed. In the Eastern Cape, committees from several townships have

come together to form an Area Committee.

The African National Congress (ANC) supports the street committees as the key to building "revolutionary base areas", from which it intends to launch a "People's War". Some townships already offer shelter and bases to ANC guerrillas.

AS INSPIRING as all this is, there is a serious weakness in that strategy. A group of South African socialists wrote in 1960:

"The townships can be sealed off and starved out only too effectively by small detachments of the army, and the police. [Furthermore] by staying in the townships, the worker surrenders all initiative. He cuts himself off from his fellow worker in other townships. He divides himself from his allies in the rural areas, and he surrenders the entire economic centre to his enemies."

This analysis has been brutally borne out. When Alexandra township rose in near insurrection in February, the activists sealed off the area, burnt factories, and drove out the police and army. But when the army massed on the township's outskirts and sent helicopter gunships overhead, the rising was defeated. Some of the township's best fighters died, and only an orderly retreat prevented a bloodbath.

Nor can the role of the black collaborators be ignored. The vicious fighting at Crossroads in May is a case in point.

Crossroads is actually a complex of four townships, three of which were controlled by street committees which openly supported the ANC. The other, Old Crossroads, was controlled by a right-wing gangster. This man organised the gangs of vigilantes, the "fathers", who attacked the other three townships and burnt them to the ground, backed by black and white cops.

The ANC proved incapable of defending one of its few real "revolutionary base areas" and sixty thousand people were suddenly homeless, their spirit of resistance replaced by a desperate struggle for day-to-day survival.

DESPITE the fundamental strategic weakness of the townships as a focus of struggle, the movement there, and especially the street committees, remain very important.

The townships and the committees are creating and developing new political activists. The committees show that self-rule and self-empowerment

(Continued page 6)



Neville Wran: loves that Laws-style lifestyle

BIRDS of a feather... Neville Wran has explained to radio millionaire John Laws why he prefers Sydney to any overseas posting. "This place is so far ahead in lifestyle for ordinary people like you and me."

SAME the Whole World Over Department... China's first bankrupt firm is being sold off in the country's first property auction, the *People's Daily* reports.

Any work unit or individual can bid for the Shenyang factory, which makes explosion-proof aluminium products. Meanwhile, the factory's former employees are enjoying the benefits of free market-style state capitalism. Twenty-nine of the 72 sacked workers are still looking for alternative jobs.

IT'S GETTING so even they can't tell the difference... When Sydney City Council voted recently on the monorail controversy, Labor's Alderman Murphy voted with the Liberals by mistake. Explaining his error,

Alderman Murphy said, "I'm so used to it that I forgot."

THEY just can't help themselves... 42 police officers have been injured by their colleagues during riot training in Britain's West Midlands in the last six months.

Police have been burned by petrol bombs and struck down by wooden blocks hurled by colleagues.



TRAINED POLICEMAN

WELL TRAINED POLICEMAN

Police have received head wounds, dislocated bones, and singed eyebrows. One inspector even had half of his moustache burned off. Hmm... suddenly, police doesn't seem such a bad idea after all!

BRISBANE police were in the firing line at the recent opening of state parliament.

Protest poet John Jiggins turned up as Guy Fawkes, complete with toy bombs. It was actually a soccer ball painted black, with a sparkler as a fuse. "This is not a bomb, this is a warning," began a protest poem on one side.

"Is that a bomb?" demanded a police sergeant. "No, it's only a soccer ball," replied Jiggins.

"Are you sure it's not a bomb?" persisted the officer. Jiggins read him the poem.

"The cop was taking no chances. He gingerly handed the soccer ball to a bomb disposal expert, who passed it on

to two sniffer dogs. The dogs promptly tipped the soccer ball to shreds. Such is the fate of the true artist in Joh Bjelke's Queensland, concluded Jiggins — to have one's best works thrown to the dogs!

IT SEEMS some bosses are not too fussed about Labor's fringe benefits tax.

The latest Small Business Letter, an employers' newsletter, advises on dodges. "You can keep your company car... Attend seminars at the snowfields... Enjoy your business lunch... Enjoy nights out with business associates."

Seminars at the snow-



CHEAP SHOTS

fields? Maybe that's why the economy is on the downhill slide.

LABOR'S LAMENT

(To the tune of "The Dying Stockman")

A strapping young PM lay dying, A Keating affecting his head. The leftists in Caucus were trying, So he lay on his right wing and said:

"We've strengthened the US alliance, their bases and nuclear stance, And to counter New Zealand's defiance, Our uranium's going to France.

The dollar's been deregulated, Because I'm a lover of sport, I enjoy playing ping-pong with money, And so does my mate Holmes a Court.

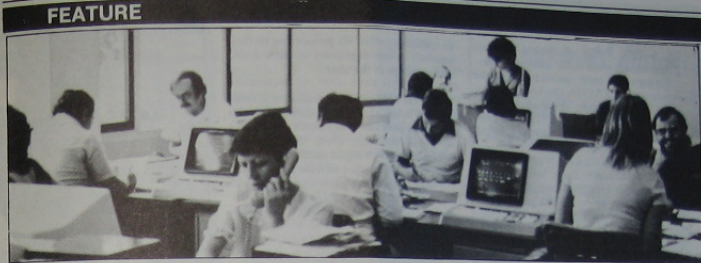
The economy seems pretty shaky, Its stability is our main goal, So we'll sack some of our public servants And cut back the pensions and dole."

The ghosts of Bill Hughes and Ben Chifley, Descended to say cheerio, Bill attempted to bring in conscription, Ben created the first ASIO.

"We'd like to invite you to join us, We respect Youth Employment' ideas, And the identity card's introduction, Is the best news we've heard of in years."

"Thanks comrades" acknowledged the PM, "But to join you I must refuse, I cannot forsake my old party, While it still has some scruples to lose."

— Red Bingham.



White collars, red ties

YOU CAN find us in banks, government offices, and insurance companies. We are even on the wharves, in hospitals and in large engineering works. We make up over half of the workforce.

We are white collar workers. Most of us are employed in purely white collar industries. We do not produce society's wealth, the commodities like food, clothing, cars, machinery and coal that are consumed or used in production every day. But our work is essential for capitalism, a system based on the shuffling of money, the tracking of investments, the allocation of profits and the administration supplied by the state. As with blue collar workers, employers of white collar labour have an obvious interest in cutting our wages and conditions. The less they pay us, the more they profit from selling the services we perform. The capitalist class as a whole benefits when public servants are squeezed; less of their profits are taxed, and more money is available for subsidies to business.

So Bob Hawke has followed Malcolm Fraser in public servant bashing. Fraser's wage freeze lasted longer for public servants than for other workers, and was continued by Hawke. Now Labor is cutting back on public service jobs, planning to cut super payments, and attacking appeal rights and other work conditions. Today's white collar unions are a major part of the labour movement. Like other workers, we are in constant conflict with management, and we have the same interest in collective organisation. Over a third of workers affiliated to the ACTU belong to white collar unions.

The differences among white collar unions resemble those in the blue collar sector. Some, like the Bank, Insurance, Clerks and Shop Assistants unions, are right-wing. Their officials make deals with employers to guarantee the flow of union dues, but do

little for members. They rarely support industrial action.

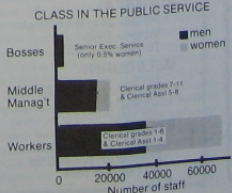
Several public service unions — ACOA, APSA and the Tax Officers' Branch of the Clerks Union — line up with the "left". The ACOA, for example, increasingly uses the left nationalist rhetoric of the Metalworkers' union, and is also imitating its use of token industrial action as a ploy in negotiations with government. Faced with the latest round of public service bashing, for example, ACOA leaders called a national half-day stoppage. That was the beginning of an industrial campaign. Unfortunately, it was also the end.

WHITE collar unions and workers have not always been so similar to their blue collar counterparts.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, white collar workers were part of management, or adjuncts to it. Office boys — at this stage, they were almost always boys — could aspire to eventually run not only their office, but even a factory or a department.

Of course, not all achieved this. There were always more Indians than chiefs. But advancement into management was generally based on performance in the office, rather than on external qualifications.

Some apprentice engineers also became foremen, or even managers. But the career



chances of clerical workers were better for a long time.

This century, the scale of clerical work has expanded, with the rise of service industries, like banking and the modern state. As factories grew, they too needed more clerical workers, to process personnel, pay and stock control. Even so, a ladder of career steps remains between clerical assistants at the bottom and management at the top. This bureaucratic hierarchy obscures some of the similarities between blue and white collar workers.

Those on the lower rungs are clearly working class. Today, they do the key board work, keep accounts or manipulate forms. At the top are bosses — in the public service, the "Senior Executive Service" — who make the key decisions about hiring and firing, pricing policies, buying and selling buildings and equipment.

A factory might have a couple of layers of supervisors or forepeople between the workers and management. In an office, the ladder can have half a dozen or more extra rungs. The Australian Public Service has ten steps in the "clerical administrative" range before the Senior Executive Service starts, each with a little more authority than the one below.

For years, such career hierarchies convinced clerical workers that their interests were the same as their supervisors'. The solution to one's problems seemed to lie in gaining a promotion, rather than in collective struggle.

As World War II expanded, especially after clerical work expanded, especially after clerical work expanded at the base. The chances of coming in at the bottom and getting to the top declined drastically. Today, for example, there are around 100,000 public service clerks, but only 1,500 members of the Senior Executive Service.

Offices became paper factories, and clerks' pay declined towards that of blue collar workers.

The industry became "feminised". More lower-paid clerical jobs were done by women, with sexist prejudices used to justify this. The graph shows the break-up of the public service hierarchy by sex.

(Continued page 8)

FROM PAGE 5 **South Africa**

tion are ideas gaining ground among sections of the working class — though still mainly students and the young unemployed.

But this highlights a great gap in the movement at the moment. The organised working class remains relatively quiet. This is especially curious, given that township residents make up the bulk of the industrial working class in South Africa.

Certainly, there have been some enormous and political strikes recently. On May Day,

1.5 million workers stayed away from work. On June 16, the tenth anniversary of the Soweto rising, an equal or greater number struck. Numerous smaller local stayaways have involved large numbers of workers, many around directly political issues.

Yet overall, these are still exceptional events, unlike the day-to-day struggles being fought out in the townships. Why is this?

For most workers most of the time, the world is divided into two distinct parts — political life, and economic. Only in struggle is this divide sometimes broken down. Workers learn that the state represents the employers, that economic

struggles are political, that their strength at work can be a political weapon.

This process involves millions of ordinary people changing their most fundamental ideas, and it is a long and complex one. When it happens, this fusion of economic and political struggle turns a period of "anarchy" into one that is "revolutionary".

WHILE we can see small signs of this shift in South Africa today, it has not gone nearly far enough.

This is indicated by the weakness of revolutionary socialist ideas among the working class, and the strength of the ANC's nationalism and cross-class populism.

Above all, it is indicated by the fact that the only real alternative to white rule is the street committees. There is still no sign of any similar organs of black self-rule in the factories and mines. We can expect that these will develop, but we cannot say when. It may happen that the present wave of struggle will die before working class self-organisation takes off, perhaps even that there will be a negotiated settlement between the white ruling class and the ANC.

But we can be sure that until the working class takes this road, the real strongholds of racism and exploitation in South Africa and its society will remain unseized.

— Graham Willott

FEATURE

AS THE status of clerical workers declined, white collar unionism grew.

Perhaps the most instructive was the experience of the ACOA, the Administrative and Clerical Officers Association, which covers public service clerks. The experience of militants there has implications for all trade union activists.

Responding to the Cold War, the ACOA banned communists from holding union office in the late 1940s. When Menzies cut the public service by 10,000 in the early fifties, the union took part in protest rallies, but did not even contemplate industrial action.

The ACOA then was more like a professional body than a union. Its leaders, and most members, saw its strength in its ability to argue with the employer, rather than in collective action. Changes to the public service in the fifties and sixties altered the ACOA. The introduction of promotions appeals procedures in the mid-fifties undermined religious factionalism in the service, and consequently in the union. By the sixties, union officials increasingly defined themselves on the basis of politics (usually National Civic Council or ALP) rather than religion (Catholic versus Mason).

In 1970, the ACOA mounted its first national campaign over a wage claim. It was only a series of stopwork meetings, but it was a start. However, the rising tide of industrial militancy after 1969 largely passed public servants by. The early Whitlam years saw Labor improve public service conditions without the need for struggle.

An influx of "veterans" of the student and anti-Vietnam war movements into the public service did eventually have some effect on the union, however. Some, especially the minority who had become involved in revolutionary socialist politics, were to have

an influence out of all proportion to their numbers as the organisers of reform and action groups in the union.

WITH THE onset of recession, Gough Whitlam's last year and then Malcolm Fraser's regime saw budget cuts and attacks on public servants. Both Whitlam and Fraser imposed stringent staff ceilings, and used Wage Indexation to hold back pay.

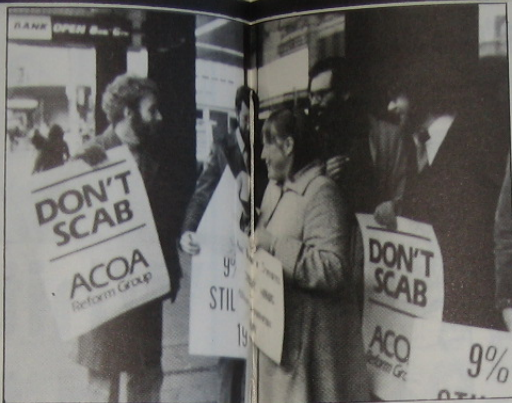
Fraser abolished paternity leave and reduced maternity leave. He made it easier to sack "surplus" public servants. Through the CEEP Act, he moved to discipline public servants who took industrial action.

The ACOA leaders, stuck in the "professional association" mentality of the Menzies era, had no counter. In 1976, the ACOA Reform Group formed in Victoria. A product of the changing nature of clerical work, a hostile employer, and the influx of militants from the movement politics of the early seventies, its activists ranged from ALP right-wingers to revolutionary leftists. Its first target was the "Grouper" leadership of the ACOA in Victoria, which invariably opposed industrial action and looked to Bob Santamaria's National Civic Council for inspiration.

Because the "Grouper" were so entrenched, the Reform Group built a democratic structure which continued between election campaigns, a regular publication, and extensive rank-and-file influence. Sometimes, it called for strike action to achieve the union's goals. This was a major departure for ACOA factions. So was its call for union involvement in "social issues".

By supporting a ticket with the ALP cliques in other states, Reform Group member Ann Ford won the Federal Vice-Presidency in 1977. The Reform Group won control of the Victorian Branch in 1979. Soon after gaining union office, the leaders of the Reform Group's right wing, like so many union officials on reform tickets, lost interest in the organisation which had won them office and eventually pulled out of it altogether.

The Reform Group, however, remained dominated by its conservative wing, for whom electoral success was everything. In the run-up to the 1979 election, it refused to oppose staff participation schemes, which were becoming a more important management technique for co-opting white collar unionists. It also refused to support abortion rights, a key issue for the increasingly female workforce.



ACO A Reform Group members picket in 1980. They were just a "professional association"

The problem even reached into individual departments, particularly Social Security, where nearly all union delegates were in the Reform Group (most in its right wing). They delivered the vote for the 1979 election, but when the left tried to mobilise Social Security staff against being used to police the "Work Test" on the unemployed, the right opposed them. Challenging how public servants' labour was used was just not on.

By 1979, with the ACOA's national leadership now ALP-line and a climate of general industrial militancy, the union placed bans on Ministerial correspondence over the CERR Act, and held its first national 24-hour stoppages. In the mood of rising struggle, groups modelled on "Grey Collar" formed in Canberra and Brisbane. The "Grey Collar" style groups peaked in 1981. They held a four page national newspaper, and held a national conference which attracted sixty activists. They led a wildcat strike lasting several days in Social Security in Sydney, with picket lines and 3000 public servants marching down George Street behind the "Grey Collar" banner after a mass meeting to protest against staff ceilings.

Their goal was not so much to displace the existing officials by improved versions as to establish a militant current that could wage struggle independently of the officials if necessary. So "Grey Collar" appealed to the "militant minority" of public servants, rather than the middle ground.

With public servants under growing attack from Fraser, "Grey Collar" briefly achieved this goal several times. For example, it led a walk-out by 150 Tax Office workers when management applied stand-downs in retaliation for bans over staff ceilings in 1981.

By 1979, with the ACOA's national leadership now ALP-line and a climate of general industrial militancy, the union placed bans on Ministerial correspondence over the CERR Act, and held its first national 24-hour stoppages. In the mood of rising struggle, groups modelled on "Grey Collar" formed in Canberra and Brisbane. The "Grey Collar" style groups peaked in 1981. They held a four page national newspaper, and held a national conference which attracted sixty activists. They led a wildcat strike lasting several days in Social Security in Sydney, with picket lines and 3000 public servants marching down George Street behind the "Grey Collar" banner after a mass meeting to protest against staff ceilings.

The onset of recession in 1982 changed all this. Struggle turned sharply downwards right across industry. The circle of militants in the public service dried up. From the beginning, revolutionary socialists had played a key role in shaping the action groups. Now, only they and a few others remained active, trying to address a shrinking audience. Rather than pretend the action groups still had a wide appeal, its members wound them up. The revolutionaries remained active as members of their political organisations only.

In Sydney, some ex-members of "Grey Collar" tried to cope with the decline in militancy by setting up "Rank and File Action" around milder policies than the old action groups. They challenged the increasingly unpopular NSW leadership of the ACOA, which was associated with the ALP left. Like Victoria's reform group five years earlier, they focussed on elections and, while shying away from more controversial policies, took a position well to the left of the officials.

Rank and File Action candidates for Branch Secretary and Vice-President won office, but not control of the NSW Executive, in 1985. They supported rank and file initiatives, especially in a Social Security staffing dispute. But they came under immense pressure from other officials and they were more concerned with electoral considerations than with rebuilding a "militant minority" current in the union. Last month, they succeeded in calling off the staffing campaign in Social Security, where the national officials had failed.

Despite the Accord and the lure of such electoral "quick fixes", it was still possible in 1984 for activists to shift disputes in a militant direction, even if they could not sustain on-going rank-and-file organisations.

Militants led a series of walk-outs from Social Security offices, when Labor tried to redeploy staff in 1984. They gained support from public servants in other departments, and forced the government to seek voluntary rather than compulsory redeployments. It was the most impressive campaign of wildcat action in ACOA history.

The industrial climate has declined even further now, thanks to the Accord. Last year, more militants were demoralised when ACOA leaders, now identifying with the "left" led by the Metalworkers' union, sold out a pay campaign for a pittance to please Labor and the ACTU.

SO NOW the ACOA has completed the course. From a "professional association", it has become a serious trade union, with all the new problems that implies.

In particular, its union officials. Despite their rhetoric, they try to balance between their members and the employers in acting as brokers of labour. Independent action by public servants jeopardises their status as the recognised bargaining agents — in fact, makes them redundant.

But officials in clerical unions have one big advantage over their blue collar equivalents. Officials often control unions by playing the more militant members off against the conservative, to produce a respectable middle ground of compromise.

Clerical union officials can always balance those higher up the bureaucratic hierarchy against those at the bottom. In the ACOA, this can even take a geographic form. The public service in Canberra is more top-heavy than elsewhere, and promotion prospects are better there. So ACOA officials can generally rely on a conservative vote from the ACT branch.

In the ACOA and other white collar unions, rank-and-file confidence today is at a low ebb. As in most blue collar unions, it has been ravaged by the recession and then by the Accord. Militants have to seize on any opportunities to rebuild a fighting spirit.

To do so today, they need more than just a commitment to serious industrial struggle. They also need to be blue collar workers explain why white and blue collar workers are in the same boat, why Labor and union leaders have sold them out, and why the capitalist state, until it is overthrown, will attack its own employees as eagerly as any others.

— Rick Kuhn

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to linker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against the others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against oppression is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through ending capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world. The point is to change it. Marxist theory and propaganda are only meaningful if they are guides to action. In the unions, social movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. If that's where you want to be, join us today!

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WEEKLY MEETINGS
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Mondays, 7.30
Item 5, 175 Sydney Rd
Brunswick
Sydney
Wednesdays, 7.00
Metrop Hotel (opposite)
Bridge & George St. City
Brisbane
Tuesdays, 7.30 pm
Phone 371 7114
for location
Canberra
Thursdays, 6.00
Blair Room,
Workers' Club, Civic

We're backing the BLF

MELBOURNE members have been supporting the BLF in the latest showdown over union cards.

Our members have gone to key sites to back BLF members, and have participated in the observer teams organised by the union to monitor any police harassment.

We've also helped produce a 10 page pamphlet, *Defending the BLF Means Defending All Unions*.

Our members have been regularly visiting all city picket lines to show support, and our magazine has had a good response from BLF members when we sell it at union meetings and job sites.

Day school

CANBERRA branch has an intriguing weekend school coming up.

Talks and discussions include the New Right, State Capitalism, Australia and US Imperialism, Socialist Alternatives, and a debate on the pros and cons of voting Labor.

Interested? It's at Dickson Library community room, on Saturday November 1 from 9.15 a.m.

Hungary night

THIRTY years ago, the great Hungarian Uprising took place, showing that workers' revolution was possible even in the stalinist bloc.

"Hungary 1956" is the topic of Melbourne branch's next "Spaghetti and Socialist" night, our popular series of dinner discussions. *Socialist Action* writer Graham Willett will be speaking, and the meal will be — you guessed it — Hungarian goulash. Interested? Set aside Friday November 21 in your diary. Full details next issue.

New pamphlet

SOCIALIST ACTION has a new pamphlet out by one of its members.

The pamphlet is *The Militant Minority: Organising Rank-and-file Workers in the Thirties*. In its 32 pages, Tom Lincoln examines the Minority Movement, the fighting organisation created by the Communist Party of Australia in the trade unions. Just \$1.50 from Socialist Action (\$2.00 posted).

Public servants next in Hawke's firing line

DURING Bob Hawke's recent speech about changes in the public service, there was a passage where he stressed the importance of managers' rights to tell employees what to do. The jacksals of the Liberal back benches howled their assent.

Shortly after the speech, Hawke was invited (perhaps not-so-ironically) to join the ultra-right H. R. Nicholls society. These events tell us a lot about what Labor in power is going to mean in the near future. For the past three years we have had an economic upturn, and Labor has used subtle tricks to ensure that the benefits went to the bosses while we got next to nothing out of it.

Now the economy is heading into recession. And the ALP government is going to use very cost-able measures to force the rest of us to pay. Public servants are emerging as a major target because Labor wants to cut back the public sector.

Commonwealth public servants have been underpaid for quite a long time. Hawke is confident he has already got 2000 with his elimination of 2000 jobs. So the most important theme in his speech was the issue of power and control. Managers must be able to manage, and workers must be made as vulnerable as possible.

Removal of a range of appeal rights will increase favouritism and patronage in appointments, and will threaten equal employment opportunity. The bosses will be able to suspend clerks from duty without salary, without them being given an opportunity to put their case. The right of appeal will be abolished for some disciplinary penalties. Job security is under threat.

In the face of these attacks, the leadership of the clerks' union ACOA is hardly distinguishing itself for its fighting spirit.

At mass meetings around the country at the end of September, they moved three motions. One condemned and deplored various government decisions. Another backed ACTU-sponsored rallies proposed for November. These are sure to be poorly organised, boring affairs with an atmosphere of per-

functory protest rather than struggle. The third called for minor bans and a media campaign.

Judging by an article they reproduced in the ACOA Journal recently, it seems clear the ACOA leaders are terrified of alienating public opinion by leading real struggles, and imagine that a few advertisements paid for by members can counteract the mass-media machines of Murdoch and Fairfax.

No wonder an ABC radio journalist commented that the government "could only be heartened" by the union's response to date.

Rank and file activists, including Socialist Action members, put up some more substantial proposals. In Sydney, a motion calling for stronger bans and a further stoppage was moved by NSW secretary Trevor Deeming, who belongs to the Rank and File Action group. In the Canberra mass meeting, a Socialist Action member was prominent in arguing for a similar orientation, calling for stronger bans together with walkouts if anyone was stood down.

The more militant orientation gathered significant support: about 300 out of 800 votes in Sydney, 117 out of about 650 in Canberra, and a similar proportion in Melbourne.

STUDENTS

Demos give fees an F

FIVE thousand students marched in Sydney, 3000 in Melbourne, in Brisbane, 500 students rallied and then marched without a permit, finishing with a sitdown in the street.

YEAH FEES LOOK TOO MUCH LIKE THE LIBS. TELL YOU WHAT... WE RAISE THE COST OF PHOTO COPYING 500%... THAT 'LL SURE THE SHEET FROM THE GREATS.



NSW students rally against the new fee

The National Day of Protest on September 24 against Bob Hawke's reintroduction of tertiary education fees inspired similar demonstrations throughout Australia.

Students fear that the \$250 fee is the thin end of the wedge. In 1979, the Liberals introduced a racist "visa charge" of \$1500 for overseas students. That charge is now \$5000.

Fees directly attack poor and working class students, many of whom do not qualify for TEAS assistance. The charge will force many students to drop out, and once again education will become the privilege of the rich.

Labor has used the fee to cut funding to tertiary education. The fee is supposed to cover the shortfall.

Some ALP politicians in Queensland, now facing an election, addressed the Brisbane rally and were most apologetic about the fee.

Students cannot rely on them. After all, they have accepted everything else Hawke has done with scarcely a whimper. Students will have to use their own strength and link up with other groups fighting Labor's budget if fees are to be stopped.

WHEN IS A PERK NOT A PERK?



Peko: Against a ruthless boss, more was needed

IF THEY do drive us, they'll never mine another ton of ore at Pannowonica.

The Robe River worker was defeated. So were many of the women workers and wives hit by Peko Walsend's mass sacking. "It's a matter of principle," said one working mother.

But more than determination will be needed to win the latest onslaught on Australian workers' conditions. After SEQEB, Mudginberri, Dollar Sweets and the BLF deregistration, it has become clear that unions must meet fire with fire to defeat such employer offensives. So far, that has not been happening at Robe River.

Having gained 50% equity in Robe River, Peko Walsend management appears to have its sights firmly set on increasing profits in the face of a slump in world market prices for iron ore. To do that, it needs to dramat-



Charles Copeman: even opposes federal elections

ically increase productivity. And to do that, Peko boss Charles Copeman needs to dramatically undermine union organisation and control over jobs. To gain the upper hand in future disputes, Peko management must build up reserves of iron ore, basically

by breaking down work practices that currently prevent this.

Add in Charles Copeman's own ideological leanings—he is a vocal supporter of the New Right HR Nicholls Society, and opposes having no elections for Federal Parliament—and you have the recipe for Peko's confrontational stance. Their determination has been strengthened by the ongoing negotiations for a new two year agreement for all Pilbara workers.

AFTER spending six months reviewing operations, Peko directors made their move.

They swept the Perth office clean, sacking or demoting all six managers. Then, taking one of their trusted mine managers from interstate, they moved on the mining towns. They delivered new working conditions and a voluntary redundancy package to mine workers at the end of July.

While mining unions appealed to the West Australian Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) to restore conditions, Peko Walsend gave another 60 workers an option—work in any job we give you or be sacked. The workers refused and were sacked. The IRC ordered their reinstatement, and Peko retaliated by sacking everyone.

Management locked out the workforce for three weeks, while the unions and the West Australian government tried to pressure Copeman to reinstate the

1100 workers. Rather than comply, Peko took the dispute another step further at the beginning of September. It directed its white collar labour force to do the work of blue collar workers and start operations up again.

On the same day that most of the staff labour crossed the picket lines and began work as directed, the company finally agreed to take back the sacked workers. The question at this point was why did Peko stop there. Why did it not go for broke and try to bring in a whole new workforce of contract scab labour?

There are several reasons. Pressure was increasing on the company, especially from the Japanese partners who favoured cooperation rather than confrontation (and had the profit results to back it up). The Liberal Party began distancing itself, anxious not to tarred with the brush of ALP Right brush. The Burke ALP government was also applying pressure. The possibility of losing contracts was another important factor.

The company had also achieved its aim of dismantling some of the work practices. They had convincingly divided the workforce, and now had the prospect of using staff labour as a strike breaking force for future disputes.

WHERE does all this leave the workers at Robe River? Workers in the Pilbara have managed over the years to build

up an impressive array of health and safety provisions, better pay and, in some cases, a level of control over the work itself. For example, some workers elect their own leading hands, and make decisions over which machinery (and therefore which job) is to be used.

It is these hard-won conditions that Peko is attacking. But the official union response has been largely ineffectual. So far, the rank and file appears to have accepted the leadership's line.

First, (although in this case against official recommendations), 170 workers accepted the redundancy agreement. These workers have not been replaced.

Then Peko attempted to force more workers out on the pretext of reassigning them to new duties. Elderly canteen workers were ordered to do heavy digging jobs. The workers rightly refused to move and were sacked. The union leaders supported this course, but also advised against retaliatory industrial action.

After pickets were set up, officials recommended that workers disperse if police told them to. They argued against solidarity action; one union leader said that shutting down the Pilbara region "would be cutting our own throats" as it would unite the employers and workers would go back to fewer jobs. Apparently, pickets are not being used at the moment!

At a meeting of 40 union officials from the Pilbara, the strongest decision taken was merely to call on the Federal Government to force Peko Walsend back into compliance with the rulings of the IRC by the use of export licence regulations and legislation.

THERE does appear to have been some rank-and-file readiness to take action and spread the dispute.

Other workers in the Pilbara, themselves, and building levelled in Perth, held stopwork meetings. Actions like these could have been the beginnings of a real fightback for workers at Robe River.

Conceivably, some of the workers will now begin the difficult but necessary task of establishing a rank-and-file run campaign to restore the lost campaign to restore the lost work. Kim McEalain, an AMMU shop steward, expressed some of the anger with the press that unions have been accepting. "How much more are we supposed to take? It's about time we started doing it our way."

It was a fighting response that one unionist all over Australia would do well to take up.

— Liz Ross

INTERNATIONAL

WHEN Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge defeated US and government forces in April 1975, many Western socialists were full of hope. Over 110 years of European control and exploitation of Cambodia had ended.

Yet the next four years were the worst in the country's history. Amnesty International estimates that 1.4 million people died, mostly from disease, starvation and execution. Films like *The Killing Fields* and John Pilger's *Year Zero* documentaries have brought home the full horror to Western audiences.

The catastrophe was partly the result of economic backwardness. Cambodia's economy was based almost completely on rubber and rice. After 1963, these industries declined. During the 1970-75 war, rubber production ceased altogether and rice farming was seriously disrupted.

The Khmer Rouge refused to sign the 1971 Paris Peace Accord. American bombing of North Vietnam ceased, allowing the US air force to focus all its murderous attention on Cambodia.

By 1974, the government was importing rice to feed peasants forced into the cities by US "pacification". Severe economic collapse and starvation were problems inherited by the new Pol Pot regime.

In addition to war devastation, what distinguished Democratic Kampuchea from other third world states was its refusal to have anything to do with the advanced countries.

This separatism was a theoretical reaction to Western domination. Khieu Samphan, a prominent Khmer Rouge leader, wrote:

"International integration has apparently created rigid restrictions on the economic development of the country... Self-conscious, autonomous development is therefore objectively necessary."

AS IT was adopted by Pol Pot, however, separatism was a particularly extreme form of nationalism.

Unlike other radical nationalists, Pol Pot had nothing even faintly resembling an internationalist perspective. In fact, he was often racist. He claimed all Vietnamese, regardless of class and politics, were the "hereditary enemy". He regarded Khmers as the only true Kampuchians, ignoring many ethnic minorities.

Pol Pot's class sympathies in his own country did not extend



Pol Pot's legacy: the result of a desperate, despotic separatism

Kampuchea: The lesson of Pol Pot

beyond the peasantry. "Peasants suffered oppression by all other classes," he once argued. After their victory, Khmer Rouge cadres treated urban workers as harshly as they did the urban bourgeoisie.

Overall, Pol Pot's politics were best described as a mixture of rural utopianism and what Karl Marx derisively termed "barracks communism". His vision was of an agrarian society totally independent from the outside world.

In an economy without the industries to produce advanced farm machinery, and with food production in a state of collapse, this vision necessarily meant labour intensive agriculture. The infamous forced evacuation of Kampuchea's cities began as a response to starvation and expected American retaliatory bombing. But it became a convenient source of mass rural labour.

In the countryside, the bourgeoisie and the working class were effectively destroyed. Theoretically, workers were classified as "Full Rights", along with poor peasants and the lower strata of the middle peasants, while capitalists were classified as "Deposites". In practice,

fulfill (work) norms had their food reduced or even withheld." Such practices, in turn, further alienated the regime from peasants and workers.

Declining domestic stability was matched by increasing border clashes with the Vietnamese. This sabre-rattling was intended to discredit pro-Vietnamese opposition within the regime, but it only succeeded in provoking a full-scale invasion. The Khmer Rouge, which had earlier defeated the might of the US war machine, was crushed by Vietnam in ten days. The regime had lost the power of the peasantry and working class.

Pol Pot's ultra-nationalist vision had proved disastrous. Bourgeois economist Doreen Warriner noted long before Democratic Kampuchea,

"Where industry does not develop and there is no rural exodus, the condition of the farm population is far worse than it is in an industrial economy."

And when conditions worsen, political stability itself is often threatened.

GENUINE socialist revolutions in the third world face the same problem.

Without a developed economy, peasants and workers must work long hours just to produce life's essentials. Management of production gets left to the state, and effective control of the means of production falls into the hands of state bureaucrats. Ultimately, the bureaucracy develops interests of its own and the revolution collapses.

So the third world must link up with advanced countries. A socialist revolution will succeed only if it can spread its example to the first world, radical nationalist revolutions, like in China, are eventually forced to seek foreign investment.

Pol Pot, by rejecting both roads, had no chance.

—Geoff Rickert

however, the main division was between the peasants and the urbanites or "new people".

For both groups, self-reliance in an underdeveloped economy meant hard work for long hours with primitive implements. Labour gangs were created and given quotas of work. One refugee recalled that in Preah Net Preah, regulations stipulated:

"4 to 5 cubic metres of earth to dig each day for a man, 2.5 to 3.5 for a woman, 2 cubic metres for adolescents, or even 5 cubic metres for 2 adolescents. At night we had to dig another cubic metre."

Four years of such work produced no substantial rise in living standards. In many areas, rice replaced hard rice as a standard meal for many people in 1978.

POL POT's regime made no attempt to involve workers and peasants in decision making, let alone give them power.



A youth caught stealing food

WORKING CLASS HISTORY

30 years on, Hungary's revolt is still as glorious

IN THE early 1950s the emergence of so-called "People's Democracies" in Eastern Europe led to varying reactions among socialists.

Of course there were those who imagined them workers' paradises, especially members of the Communist Party. On the other hand, there were others who recognised these new regimes for what they were: totalitarian police states. But from this they drew false conclusions.

They saw ruthless regimes apparently able to crush all resistance. Since they felt democracy was part of socialism, and saw organising the workers as essential to it too, they thought "Communism" meant the death knell for genuine socialist aspirations. This led them to see western capitalism as a lesser evil

— at least in a place like Australia you could go on strike! The year 1956 challenged all the mistaken notions. For Communist Party members, it shattered their illusions. But it also did something positive: it showed that workers could, and would, organise and struggle despite the repression of the Eastern bloc regimes.

In particular, the workers of Hungary showed that these struggles could pose an alternative both to bureaucratic stalinism and western capitalism: an alternative based on democratic workers' power.

WHEN Joseph Stalin died in 1953, his heirs set about liberalising the Russian political system, and demanded that their satellites follow suit. They did so not out of humanitarianism but because of economic needs: only a very primitive economy can progress through terror.

In Hungary, the liberalisation process split the ruling bureaucracy. A hardline group around the traditional Communist Party leader Rakosi resisted the changes, while another led by Imre Nagy followed the Russian lead.

Nagy was not proposing fundamental changes. He just wanted to scrap wasteful projects, and make concessions to the workers and peasants so they would be motivated to produce more. He had no intention of ending the state bureaucracy's hold on political power.

But the struggle within the ruling circles gradually paralysed the regime. A group of intellectuals called the "Petőfi circle" sensed the regime's weakness and began to criticize more and more boldly. Gradually the ferment spread to the working class and the mass of students.

In October, student groups called mass demonstrations. The government granted permission for the actions, then withdrew it. Seeing the regime was vacillating, the students went ahead anyway and were joined by workers. Among their demands were political independence from Russia, new economic policies... and, most important of all: "Factories must be run by workers and specialists... The trade unions must be the true representatives of the interests of the Hungarian working class."

STILL, at this point, the demonstrators were not thinking of revolution. They made that jump in awareness when the political police opened up on them with machine guns outside the state radio station.

Street fighting began, and the news spread like wildfire. Workers raided sporting clubs and barracks for arms, and soldiers joined them. People made petrol bombs. Budapest was gripped by insurrection, and the rest of the country followed.

In the face of this upheaval, the old state virtually collapsed. Rising to challenge it was a new form of state power: democratic workers' councils. Beginning with discussions of strike action or food distribution, they moved in many places to exercise general political control.

In the town of Miskolc, the council took over control of the garrison. In Győr, it ruled from the town hall. The Hungary



A new form of rule: a revolutionary council of students meets



Young street-fighter with an obsolete machine-gun

correspondent of the London Daily Worker said of these councils:

"In their spontaneous origin, in their composition, in their sense of responsibility, in their efficient organization of food supplies... and not least in their striking resemblance to the workers' councils which sprang up in Russia in 1917, these committees were remarkably uniform. They were at once organs of insurrection and organs of popular self-government."

Horrified at the spectre of workers' power, the Russian government sent in its tanks, and bitter battles. Still the workers remained on strike, still they controlled the country's economic and social life. The London Observer reported:

"A fantastic aspect of the situation is that although the general

strike is in being and there is no centrally-organized industry, the workers are nevertheless keeping essential services going, for purposes which they themselves determine. Workers' councils in industrial districts have undertaken the distribution of essential goods and food to the population... The coal miners are making daily allocations of just sufficient coal to keep the power stations going and supply the hospitals... Railwaymen organize trains to go to approved destinations for approved purposes."

IT WAS not until January of 1957 that a mixture of repression and concessions induced them to return to work. Without a revolutionary political movement already well organised in advance, without links to workers in the rest of Eastern Europe, they could not hope to defeat the power of Russian imperialism. Even so, they did win lasting gains. To this day Hungary is one of the most "liberal" of the East European societies.

And most important of all, they established the fact that there is a third factor in world politics apart from Washington and Moscow.

That alternative is the working class, and workers' political power. In the post-war era, it was the Hungarian workers who first put it on the agenda.

Tom O'Lincoln

SOCIALIST STANDPOINTS

LIKE THE women's Liberation movement, Gay Liberation has had a major impact on mass political consciousness in the last two decades.

Gays, of course, have been fighting their oppression under capitalism long before Gay Liberation. In the 1920s, German gays had an active organisation which was crushed by Nazism. Driven into their closets by McCarthyism, US gays organised clandestinely through the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis. In July 1966, they held their first public demonstration for job security in government agencies. Many gays were active in left-wing parties, and in civil rights and anti-war movements in the US.

Such activities laid the basis for Gay Liberation to emerge.

The watershed came on the night of June 28, 1969, at New York's Stonewall Bar. Until then, gay bars had always been easy targets for police harassment. But that night, gays fought back. Lesbians, drag queens, effeminate and macho gay men joined together in a pitched battle against the cops.

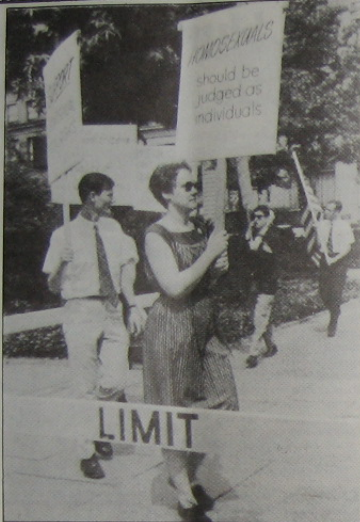
With this fiery fightback, Gay Liberation was born. It questioned existing attitudes to sexuality, and openly challenged the nuclear family. It denied that gays needed treatment or imprisonment, and marchers defiantly chanted "Gay is good!"

Most importantly, it was an activist movement. In just three weeks in 1970, for example, New York gays confronted local election candidates and leafleted polling booths, sat in and picketed three media houses over anti-gay statements and demonstrated equal time, demonstrated at a bar which had ejected a gay, picketed a gay activist's trial, and marched against police harassment.

This militancy rapidly raised support from straights as well. And while it did not achieve its goal of overturning society, Gay Liberation won vital changes. Law reform, anti-discrimination legislation, pro-gay union policies, and an accompanying decline in bigotry meant a noticeably more secure life for lesbians and male homosexuals.

SOME OF THE most important gains were won by gay workers.

Unions like the ACOA, the Theatrical Employees, the teacher-unions, and the Plumbers adopted pro-gay policies. "Homosexual discrimination is an industrial issue and has to be fought on that basis," said one



A historic picket: US gays demand equal rights on July 4, 1966

Gay Liberation: Pink triangles, red banners

Plumber's official.

Workers struck at Melbourne University's cafeteria in support of Terry Stokes, who was thrown out of a campus college. Sydney's builders' labourers fought to have Penny Short reinstated in her teacher training course, after she was expelled for writing a lesbian poem. More recently, waterfront workers were fired for anonymous "customer complaints" and so on. The Tavern Guild, the association of gay bar owners which was a powerful force in the gay community, blacklisted pro-union activists from working in their bars. The unionisation drive was defeated.

Such working class involvement raises problems for Gay Liberation's philosophy that all gays have a common struggle. Precisely because, as the slogan says, "Gays are everywhere" in capitalism, oppression confronts them in different ways.

A classic case arose in San Francisco in 1980. Gay barworkers complained of illegal practices, including the absence of lunch and coffee breaks and overtime payments, in the gay bars. Workers at Church Street Station restaurant approached

in the late 1970s. The right-wing backlash led by Anita Bryant was in full cry. Bryant herself claimed the Californian drought of 1977 was God's punishment for San Francisco housing so many gays. The backlash culminated in the Briggs Initiative, a bill that would have enabled employers to sack anyone espousing gay rights, especially in education.

Until then, gays had low key in resisting the backlash and had lost every battle. The liberal vote they had relied on had not come through. But against Briggs, they came out and fought openly. Organiser Amber Holibaugh recalls:

"It was frightening, a statewide confrontation... Doing publicly meant going to small farm towns, facing very conservative working people... We went to the farmers, to the union locals, to the schools, to the hospitals, the childcare units, all the places we hadn't been before... And we won, won in every single area of the state where we went and did work. We won because we came out and the community was politicised."

At Clapham in England, a more humorous example showed how worker solidarity could also turn the tide.

Two lesbian sanitation workers outraged a supervisor who saw them leaving the depot holding hands. He threatened them with "dire consequences". When the news got around, all 32 women working at the depot pinned on "Gays against Nazis" badges and marched out of the workplace... holding hands.

GAYS HAVE not only found support from fellow workers. In turn, they have shown solidarity for other struggles.

Gay support groups formed to back the miners' strike in Britain. They were still working recently in support of Rupert Murdoch's sacked employees at Wapping.

Locally, this year's National Homosexual Conference voted to support the BLF. Lesbians and gay men have been active in the BLF support groups and on the picket lines in Melbourne.

Through actions like these, the struggle for gay liberation remains long after the movement has collapsed. And it is by taking up the banner of working class struggle that liberation can be won for all.

— Liz Ross

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REVIEWS

Mad Dogs and Ronald Reagan in the Libyan sun

Mad Dogs: The US raids on Libya (Pluto \$10)
EP Thompson, M Kaldor et al

MAD DOGS was written after the US air raids on Tripoli last April, which killed over 60 people.

Ronald Reagan claimed the raids were in retaliation for Libyan terrorism. He quoted "telexes" supposedly confirming Libyan orders for the bombing of a West German disco. But he has released no firm evidence linking Libya with the attack.

European and Arab countries condemned the air raids, as did the non-aligned nations. So did demonstrations in Sydney and most European capitals. Only Britain, Israel and Canada openly supported them.

Mad Dogs analyses the responses and America's rationale for the raids, which forced Europe's peace movement to reassess its attitude to NATO and the use of non-nuclear force.

Founder of European nuclear disarmament, EP Thompson, suggests a non-nuclear NATO without America.

Thompson says that such a cleansed NATO could negotiate disarmament with the Soviet bloc. This ignores the reality of the Western alliance.

For example, Margaret Thatcher allowed the use of bases in England for the Tripoli raids on the grounds that NATO did not rule them out. *Mad Dogs* itself points out that Thatcher had good reasons for backing Reagan, During the Falklands War, Britain used data from US spy satellites to attack Argentinian ships and troops. Britain relies on American support to pursue its own imperialist policies.

A central argument of *Mad Dogs* is that "terrorism" has replaced "communism" as the main bogey of the second Cold War, the West seeing the dirty hand of Russia behind most terrorist activity.

To an extent, the *Mad Dogs* argument is true. But the heightened military tension in the world is not entirely due to a phony war against terrorism.

Robin Luckham places the raids in the context of the global struggle for markets, resources and areas for profitable investment.

Economic struggle becomes

military struggle in a world divided into massive blocs of capital linked to nation states. The tempo of this process picks up as economic decline gathers pace. For example, falling world prices for oil have severely weakened the Gulf states' economies, forcing several into greater reliance on the super-powers.

Countries on the "edge" of the third world, like Libya, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Grenada, Kampuchea and Afghanistan have proved particularly vulnerable as military competition replaces economic competition. Luckham points out that with the onset of economic crisis in the mid-1970s,

"International relations could no longer be managed through the dull compulsions of the market, structured through the new Cold War. As the dollar declined, US imperialism was revitalised."

Libya was the target this time because, as Norm Chomsky has pointed out, it was militarily weak compared to other states in the region like Syria, which the US has had in its sights for some time. Unlike Syria, Libya does not have sophisticated anti-aircraft radar and missile defences.

Malcolm Spavens sets the raids in the context of US military alliances. The similarity between NATO and ANZUS is striking.

American bombers were introduced to Britain when James Callaghan was Labour prime minister. Two days after the raids, Callaghan said that he never thought US forces would be used outside NATO. No doubt, we will hear similar disingenuous excuses from the ALP about ANZUS, when the roles of Pine Gap and Nurrungar are finally disclosed in full.

America probably considered the raids on Libya a useful military workout. But there were other motives too.

The US wanted a show of strength to force its more reluctant allies into tougher sanctions against Libya, and to secure approval for its unilateral use of force anywhere in the world.

Unfortunately, when it comes to offering solutions, *Mad Dogs* is not so hot. Aside from EP Thompson's proposal, one suggestion is for US missiles



Child killed by US bombing of Libya: NATO must go

key "operational system, so that European governments would have to approve the use of nuclear weapons.

The trouble with "duel key" proposals is that they still leave the military arsenals in the ruling class's hands. As European governments generally support American initiatives, they are

little safeguard at all. Like we do with the US bases here, opponents of NATO in Europe should forget about "duel keys". Far better to shut down the weapons systems lock, stock and barrel.

— Martin Hirst

TELEVISION

Yes PM — well, maybe

FOR OVER three years, *Yes Prime Minister* and its sequel *Yes Prime Minister* have provided millions of ABC and BBC viewers and belly laughs at the wheezing and dealing of politician Jim Hacker and his department head, Sir Humphrey Appleby.

The humour is simple, but pungent. Whenever Hacker makes a decision which might change anything, Appleby immediately senses a threat to his power and manipulates Hacker to preserve the status quo.

And Hacker, like any politi-

cian, realizes that it is better to do nothing and preserve a chummy alliance with his department head. This means certain protection from the media, his adversaries in the House of Commons, and a potentially hostile electorate. So much for Western liberal democracy.

Yet one cannot but notice a subtle right-wing message in *Yes Prime Minister* as well.

The public service is portrayed as the real source of power, a bloated leviathan which has become the enemy of the Westminster system. In more recent episodes, we have seen whimsy PM Hacker adopt a stronger stance against the excessive expediency of his bureaucrats.

On occasions, he has even emerged triumphant from conflicts with Sir Humphrey.

Is the message more resolute leaders, the likes of Margaret Thatcher, to discipline the public service? Perhaps reduce its size and functions, even so, with schemes Hacker can get on with, his first pet project as PM?

Maybe, as a public servant myself, I'm just being paranoid. Maybe *Yes Prime Minister* is playing it purely for laughs. But in these days of "New Rights" and "small government", it sometimes gets awfully hard to tell.

— Robert Tierney

The righteous New Right

A FRIEND of mine was watching Simon Crean on the box, expounding on—what else?—the threat of the New Right.

Wearily, he flicked it off. "You're the New Right, Simon," he said, "he said, you're the real New Right."

He was absolutely correct, of course. As the New Right itself admits, there is nothing "new" about their ideas. The Institute of Public Affairs, the oldest of their think-tanks, has been around since 1942.

What is new is the way the ALP has shifted the centre of political debate so far to the right in Australia, endowing the "troglodytes" with a credibility they have rarely had before.

Labor front-benchers Peter Walsh, John Dawkins, John Button and Paul Keating have sounded long and strong on the need for "deregulation" and "rationalisation". Labor's left has acquiesced in the Accord's agenda of wage-cutting and restraint of union struggle. Last month, we even had John Halfpenny admitting that the New Right had a point about work practices.

Now the Dr Frankensteins of the ALP hope we will rally behind them against the monster they have unleashed. A series of union advertisements is trying to rein in the beast in the Queensland election. Michelle Grattan of the Melbourne Age points out, "The New Right is a political target which unites a party now under strain." Unfortunately, both the target and the strain are of Labor's own making.

THE MOST striking thing about the New Right is its remarkable, almost breathtaking, hypocrisy.



The SEQEB dispute: industrial relations, New Right style

Take work practices, its latest flavour of the month. (To use the cliché of the month.)

Bosses have work practices too. They call them fringe benefits. The New Right is all for these; it even opposes taxing them. Founding member of the HR Nicholls Society, Sir John Kerr has run up \$174,000 in transport bills at public expense in five years. The only reason no-one calls that a costly work practice is that Kerr does not actually do any work.

Or take deregulation of industrial affairs, another New Right catchcry. At the same time, it supports suing strikers through the civil courts, like in the Dollar Sweed dispute. Andrew Hay, of the Australian Federation of Employers, says he wants the police and army used to break strikers. Some deregulation!

The New Right says it is against "union lawlessness". At the same time, it calls on business and farmers to refuse to pay the Fringe Benefits Tax. It says it is against compulsory unionism, but applauds Labor's efforts to smash the BLF by forcing its members to join other unions. Very consistent!

On social policies, the New Right is no less hypocritical. It complains about peace studies in the schools, yet groups like "Centre 2000" flood the schools with private enterprise propaganda. It complains about educational standards, yet wants to cut youth employment training schemes. Hugh Morgan even condemns trade unions for "his jealous dislike and hostility of the family" (!), while at the same time the New Right attacks family allowances and single mothers' pensions.

The most vitriolic of the New Right's attacks are reserved for



Hugh Morgan: early voice of the New Right

the Arbitration Commission, which it sees as cowards in the class war.

Arbitration was a perfectly acceptable institution for employers until 1969, of course, when the penal powers were smashed. In the preceding thirteen years, it had fined unions nearly \$300,000 for 800 industrial actions. In twice that length of time, it had fined employers just \$3000 for over 300 breaches of awards. None of today's New Right heroes ever complained about it then, the HR Nicholls Society's Sir John Kerr served on it with pride.

HOW DID such transparently pro-boss double standards come to be taken seriously in Australian politics, rather than the more subtle liberalism we are usually served up?

Many New Right ideas were originally held by Malcolm Fraser when he came to power in 1975. But Fraser's deeds never matched his rhetoric, rank-and-file militancy in the unions, while on the wane in the late seventies, inhibited him from any serious anti-union push, until his wage freeze in 1982. Fraser's inaction, compared with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan overseas, led to the formation of the "Dries" on the Liberal backbench.

Labor's election success with the Accord in 1983 wrong-footed the Dries, whose parliamentary numbers were particularly hit. But it was a hollow victory, as the recession and the Accord also instilled a deep passivity into most workers.

The New Right push began with two racial campaigns in 1984. Geoffrey Blainey crusaded against Asian immigration, and the



SOCIALIST ACTION

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I'll decide what's democratic around here !!

IS QUEENSLAND 'DIFFERENT'?

The roots of Joh's regime

mining companies attacked Aboriginal land rights, with Hugh Morgan making a bizarre attempt to portray mines as whites' own sacred sites. Committed to the politics of compromise, Labor gave ground to both. WA premier Brian Burke capitulated totally on the land rights issue.

Emboldened, the Right shifted back to the industrial sphere. Joh Bjelke-Peterson led the way, sacking the SEQEB workers. Union militants and revolutionary socialists warned that a dangerous precedent was being set, but the ACTU derailed any fight-back, relying instead on a costly lawsuit that was finally thrown out last month.

The imitators began: at Mudginberri, at Dollar Sweats, and most recently, at Robe River. Each time, the ACTU shied away from serious solidarity action. The New Right grew in confidence, forming the HR Nicholls Society last March specifically to attack the whole system of industrial awards.

With the dive in the economy, the minority of employers represented by people like Andrew Hay, who are impatient with Labor's progress in cutting wages, have found new voice. The right-wing National Farmers Federation has emerged at the head of the rural revolt. These developments have given some real social weight to an old set of ideas.

THAT THE New Right holds no answers to the economic mess is plain.

Smashing "union power", in the miners' strike and at Wapping, has done not a jot to turn around Britain's economic malaise. When you're sinking and out of lifeboats, kicking the crew to the bottom of the ship just keeps the officers' bridge above water a little longer.

However, the Left must avoid the trap of shifting focus, as some supporters of the Accord desperately want us to do, onto the New Right.

After all, the main source of danger—to our living standards—is still Bob Hawke's Labor Party.

Our answer to that must be a new Left, one that refuses to play the game of compromise with the ruling class, the game that opened the door to the New Right in the first place.

- Pope pushes his dope
- New Accord, old fraud
- Pinochet in decay



CAT'S EYE

CANBERRA

MPs posture at peace camp

FOR A fortnight last month, a large women's camp stood on the lawns outside Parliament House. The press and politicians got very upset over this "seizure of public space".

Oddly, they didn't get nearly so upset over the seizure of public space that the women were protesting about — the US bases in Australia. The agreement for the Pine Gap base near Alice Springs has come up for renegotiation, and the women were demanding that it be terminated.

There were demonstrations around Australia on Sunday October 19 on this issue. Two thousand marched in Melbourne, 800 in Canberra, several hundred in Sydney and even 300 in Dubbo. Rallies in the Philippines, New Zealand and even the US expressed international solidarity.

As a general rule, we disagree with the tactic of holding "women only" protests — even around so-called "women's issues" — since they lower the potential turn-out, and suggest that men and women have separate interests in the struggle.

But the women in Canberra were absolutely justified in excluding rightwing politicians and the press when they barged into the camp. National Party leader Ian Sinclair was there purely in search of publicity and mindless rightwing support. Conservatives who try to "take over" leftwing protests deserve everything they get.

The press used the scuffles over this attempted invasion of the camp to obscure the bases issue. While the US bases are part of its nuclear weapons system, enlightened commentators like John Laws and Mike Willesee focussed on the pushing and shoving at Parliament House. When bikies (well-known peace-lovers) set up a "lesbian-free zone" on the lawns, they attracted TV cameras like slugs to a succulent. How many items on the significance of "Pine Gap have you seen recently?"

BUDGET CUTS

Big rally for ESL

THE BIKIES also drew the press away from an impressive protest in Canberra over Budget cuts to English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching.



Peace camp women bar a Liberal staffer

The centrepiece of this 1000-strong rally was a "race for success" between kids from wealthy private schools and migrant ESL students. To match real life conditions, the referee, looking remarkably like Education Minister Susan Ryan, gave the private school contestants a five metre start in the ten metre race. The ESL students were handicapped, naturally, having to run the distance blindfolded and as a three-legged race.

The Federal government was now juggling the ESL cuts. Instead of ESL suffering one big cut, all school students will now be affected a little as general education grants have been cut by the same amount.

That's "restraint with equity", or as they called it when Labor cut wages in the Depression, "equality of sacrifice."

UNEMPLOYED

1000 calls convince boss

A PERTH employer has had to eat his words about unemployment in a hurry.

Albert Walmsley, head of Westral Sunshades, went to the *Sunday Times* last month complaining about the "mystifying" lack of response to ads he had posted for 11 jobs at this Canning Vale factory, and insinuating that there was no genuine employment problem.

The reaction started as soon as the *Sunday Times* hit the streets. Over 1000 jobless rang up, enquiring from as far away as Kalgoorlie, Albany and even Laverton.

Says a rueful Walmsley, "It started at 10.30pm on Saturday night — they found my home phone number — and went till 11pm on Sunday night, when I had to take the phone off the hook."

that the Government is taking this proactive stance when there appears to be little interest in the traineeship proposals from the private sector. As far as Council can judge, very few employers have sought to initiate discussions on the traineeship arrangements."

Nice, isn't it? A Labor government even more eager to cut youth wages than the employers are, simply because its Priority One hokum has not been working.

SPORT

The true Olympic spirit

WE CAN'T say we were shattered when Mayor Sally Anne Atkinson's grandstanding bid to bring the 1992 Olympics to Brisbane flopped.

But we thought the true Olympic spirit was summed up by the city of Birmingham in England, another town that at one stage this year had fantasies that it might get the Games.

In huge ads, the Birmingham Olympic Committee went bunkstering for corporate support and sponsorship for its application.

"The country that hosts the 1992 Olympics stands to gain an estimated 3 billion pound boost to its economy ... The Olympics are shown on 54 TV stations in 45 countries. They will also be covered in almost every newspaper and magazine printed.

What better way to get your company's name across ... Now imagine the impact a 3 billion pound influx of cash would have on the shops, hotels, restaurants and many other businesses in the heart of England ... The millions of visitors who will flock to see the games will generate revenues for businesses of all kinds throughout Britain."

Millions of visitors? Billions of pounds? We suspect that Robert Maxwell, chairman of the financially disastrous Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh this year, might disagree.

It might be time, however, for the International Olympic Committee to change the Olympic slogan. In these days of commercialism, "Citius, Altius, Fortius" is Fatter, Higher, Stronger — is definitely old hat. Fatter, Louder, Richer seems far more appropriate.

Sally Anne Atkinson: Olympian grandstanding

It is of significance to Council



NATIONAL POLITICS

New ACTU wages system will end in tiers

"WHAT WE want is for the so-called entrepreneurs in the community to indicate what they are aiming for and how we can assist."

That bizarre statement from ACTU president Simon Crean really sums up what is happening on the wages front. In 1983, "how we can assist" was the Accord. Today, as the Accord crumbles, it is the two-tier wage system.

It's not just pressure from the Right that is burying the Accord. Worker disillusionment is widespread. And pay movements are starting to occur, especially in the metal trades, where some trades are in demand. For example, electricians at GMH in Melbourne recently gained a \$60 rise.

In building and construction, the plumbers' campaign is gathering momentum, with bans on eighty sites in Brisbane alone. Early indications are that some sites are making gains.

Under the new system proposed by the ACTU, the first tier of wage adjustments would be for partial cost-of-living rises. The maximum total rise in March and September would be 4% for the lowest paid, dropping down to 2% for the highest paid. Coming on top of a 2.3% cost-of-living increase this year, this would mean a discount of around 10-12% in our wages, since CPI increases for 1986 and 1987 will total around 16%.

It is estimated that over 50% of workers would only get the first tier rise.

The second tier allows under a certain rises up to 4%, under a set of very restricted criteria limited to the industry or workplace. Built into this tier would be what are politely called "safeguards" to prevent a wages blowout.

Public sector workers will remember their battles in trying to win a pay rise under the Accord's "second tier", the anomalies provision. This time, the government is ensuring the

Arbitration Commission will be fully armed to prevent any union effectively using the second tier to make major gains.

So the first tier cuts wages even more than current "discounting" would. The second tier breaks the flow on principle, which has been a major safeguard for less organised workers.

"The fact is that the working class Australia will be sold out by what's going on," admits WA TLC secretary Rob Meecham.

Indeed, we are returning to the wage-fixing formula of the 1950s and 60s, but with workers even more hamstrung. That period saw Australian workers come second bottom in real wage gains, compared to 17 other Western industrialised countries.

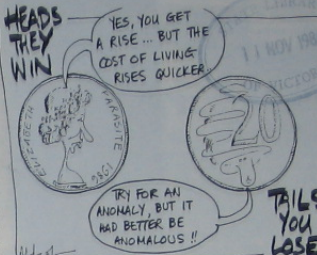
The much touted AMWU alternative does little to challenge this. It leaves the second tier untouched, thus accepting the abandonment of flow on. For the first tier, it sets a dangerous precedent by only arguing for the full CPI increase for "low to middle income earners" (\$409 a week has been one cutoff point mentioned, hardly a high income.)

The exact status of the AMWU alternative is unclear as we go to press. But as the AMWU proposes no actual struggle for full CPI rises, even just for lower-paid workers, it will inevitably fall in behind the ACTU's "common position" in the end.

The major public service union, the ACOA, also has reservations about the two-tier system. National delegates' meetings totally rejected the approach and called for full CPI increases.

There are two signs so far of serious resistance to the ACTU's latest scheme.

The first is from the Plumbers Union, whose bans campaign for a major job of claims is proceeding apace. Union leader George Crawford has promised letting unions to fall in behind a unified ACTU position at the National Unions Conference. This may have been merely a ploy by Crawford, and rank-



and-file plumbers will have to make sure the promise is not honoured.

The second sign of spirit came from 200 delegates from twenty leftwing unions, calling themselves the Workers Campaign Council, who met in Melbourne on October 28.

They resolved to resist the two-tier system, called for a full at present. More training for the unemployed may increase their level of skill, but it will not solve the capitalist market conditions that are the fundamental problem.

Their first proposed action is a rally for higher wages on November 11. That is the same day sacked SEQEB workers are rallying in Brisbane, and public sector workers are demonstrating around Australia against cuts to their conditions.

— Liz Ross

DOLE

Workfare is work unfair

IS THERE no end to the ACTU's gormlessness?

As part of its package for the Accord Mk 3 it has proposed a "train or work for the dole" scheme. The proposal is:

"For 16-19 year olds ... Income maintenance is to be related to school work or vocational training which will not be paid (otherwise) unless such opportunities are not available."

ACTU president Simon Crean

Asked if the "dole" for the unemployed to get jobs by providing work experience, they replied, "Is a foot in a door with a 50 foot drop on the other side. There are no jobs."

— Stephen Bayce

has protested that this "Workfare" scheme should not be compared to "compulsory work for the dole". Of course not. It is compulsory schooling or work for the dole — some difference!

As a method of reducing youth unemployment, the scheme has nothing going for it. There are about 23 unemployed on every job that comes out of the market at present. More training for the unemployed may increase their level of skill, but it will not solve the capitalist market conditions that are the fundamental problem.

In fact, Workfare may make things worse. South Weipa, a Queensland town, already has such a scheme in operation. Some 250 "unemployed" Aborigines work a two day week for their dole. Without such a scheme, the government would have to employ 100 of them full time to get their work done, and pay dole to the other 150. The exploitation and destruction of jobs is obvious.

Fortunately, Workfare is not yet a foregone conclusion. Brian Howe, Minister for Social Security, estimates the cost of a \$700 million Workfare program at \$700 million, mainly for insurance, transport and supervision of workers.

A group of unemployed demonstrated against the proposed scheme last month inside the Sydney Trades Hall. They were particularly incensed by ACTU vice-president John MacBean, a strong supporter of the scheme, whom they described as a Judas.

Asked if the "dole" for the unemployed to get jobs by providing work experience, they replied, "Is a foot in a door with a 50 foot drop on the other side. There are no jobs."

— Stephen Bayce

NATIONAL POLITICS

STRANGE things are happening in NSW. The judges seem to have flipped their wigs.

Supreme Court judges are holding stopwork meetings. A Labor Party government is actually taking on a section of the establishment. One District Court judge lectured a captive audience of corporate solicitors that this was intolerable and he was resigning.

In the midst of the flying horsehair, the Chief Justice had one of those useless operations for RSL. Maybe it was all too much for him.

The origin of this confrontation between Parliament and judiciary is an attempt by the State Government to further centralise power.

Just as economic power tends to centralise, so does the capitalist state's power. The Federal Labor Party has accelerated this process by establishing the Director of Public Prosecutions and ID cards.

Attorney General Sheehan's planned Judicial Commission is a similar project at state level.

The object is to create a Star Chamber type of centralised control of judges.

Not that judges tend to be a rebellious lot. They all come from privileged and upper class backgrounds, and usually interpret conservative law in a conservative way. But stormy times are coming and the system is less able to tolerate the odd maverick here or there.

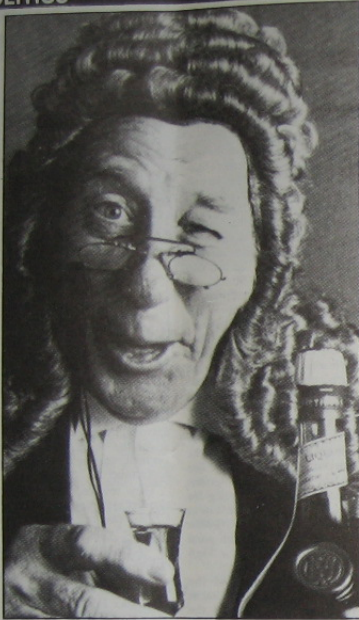
Superior court judges can already discipline inferior court judges by overturning their decisions on appeal. Sheehan wants to give them — while wearing the "Judicial Commission" hat — the power of hire and fire over inferior judges.

WHAT has surprised everyone, including himself, is Sheehan's speed. There are two reasons for it.

Firstly, the State Labor Party badly needs to win a round in its electoral sparring with the Liberal Party.

The Liberals agree in all essentials with Labor's economic program, so they distinguish themselves on nebulous issues such as "corruption". Coming from the political descendants of a John Askin, this is a bit rich, but it has Labor worried.

By-elections are showing huge swings to the Liberals. Labor is therefore hoping to impress a bored electorate by giving itself a medal for "judicial reform". More by-elections are coming, so time is short. Hence the swift preparation of Sheehan's legislation.



Justice for just us, say NSW judges

tion.

Secondly, there was the leaked report, entitled "Accountability and the Legal System" by former Corrective Services Chairman, Professor Vinson. The report alleged that District Court Judge Foord was, in some criminal cases, too lenient (shock, horror). The statistical evidence for this allegation was dubious, but never mind: the law-and-order preachers of the Fairfax press demanded a governmental response.

Sheehan, never one to stand up to the proprietors of "public opinion", was goaded into action. His plans for a Judicial Commission, which had been quietly gestating since his study of the Californian model, were accelerated. Judge Foord was appointed

case number one.

District Court Judge Williams was a witness for Foord at Foord's recent trial, and was no friend of the District Court Chief Justice Staunton. He was next in line. His resignation deprived Staunton of the pleasure and triggered off the numerous muttered threats of other judges to do likewise.

ONLY a few other mavericks would be under immediate threat, and some law-and-order dinosaurs such as retired Judge Moffitt support the Judicial Commission proposal in principle. But most judges have perceived it as a threat to themselves.

Their complaints about "indecent haste" and "impossible time frame" are mostly camou-

flage. This is merely the kneejerk complaint of unelected politicians who are dragged into the timetable of the elected ones.

What they are really worried about is the horrible prospect of working under a boss.

Most judges have spent their working lives as self-employed barristers, taking fat fees but no orders from their clients. By becoming judges they acquire the easy life, a huge salary, and the power to fill prisons and shift money. They sum up their numerous privileges with the word "independence".

This word is their real battle slogan as Sheehan tries to squeeze them into the hierarchical structures that shape most of the state machine.

The maverick judges were clearly first in line for the chop, but they are few in number. After Foord is thrown off the District Court and say — Staples is thrown off the Arbitration bench, who is next? Most inferior court judges have had their decisions overturned on appeal at least once. This experience would be far more painful if the superior judges had the power to dismiss.

Chief Justice Street would be the boss of any Judicial Commission and was at first attracted to the idea. Since then, however, his brethren have pulled him into line. He now speaks on behalf of the 32 Supreme Court judges by writing curious letters to Sheehan that not even a lawyer could interpret.

SHEEHAN'S proposals for centralisation of state power are a threat to any political activist.

But the judiciary are not our protectors. They have never resisted verbals, phonetaps, ID cards and increased drug penalties.

The waffly tone of their letters is proof enough that they are concerned with protecting not us, the plebs, but themselves. This "arrogance" did not distract them from their more normal function of incarcerating BLF officials Black and Owens for weeks.

Nor did it distract their opponents in the law-and-order brigade from their ongoing and stiffer criminal justice powers.

At the time of writing, the most likely outcome is some sort of compromise between Parliament and judiciary. There is no need to take sides.

With the sharks fighting the crocodiles, just get ready to spear the survivors.

— Denis Alpop

INTERNATIONAL

Chile feeling runs up Pinochet's spine

ON a recent flight to the Philippines, Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet dozed off in his seat.

An embarrassed pilot woke him to say that they had been refused permission to land. Pinochet's wife immediately exclaimed: "That's it, you have been deposed!"

Chile's first family has every reason to feel panicky. An assassination attempt against Pinochet overshadowed the thirteenth anniversary of his seizure of power on September 11.

The attack was part of a turn to armed struggle against the regime by a number of groups, including the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front, which claimed responsibility for the attack. The Front is identified as the armed wing of the Communist Party.

Pinochet has also been under pressure from his friends. The US has threatened economic sanctions — at a "later date", of course. The US is supporting more moderate rightwing groups, especially the Christian Democrats, associated with the Acuerdo Nacional, a document calling for the military junta to negotiate a return to parliamentary democracy.

Despite US pressure, Pinochet rejected the Acuerdo Nacional and hinted that he would be the junta's candidate for president in 1989. Under the current constitution, the vote for the presidency will be a yes-no plebiscite for the junta's approved candidate.

The regime is split over the elections. Some elements of the armed forces want direct elections, and have negotiated with rightwing and centre politicians. Short of another coup by Pinochet, the junta seems unlikely to endorse him in 1989; 75% of the electorate oppose his government.

There are even suggestions that elements of the armed forces gave tacit support to the assassination attempt, as they warned Pinochet to change his attitude. When Pinochet imposed a state of siege immediately afterwards, General

Antony

Antony

Antony

Antony

Antony



Pinochet votes: will the junta let him run again?

Mattei of the air force and General Stange of the military police at first refused to sign the decree. Each was persuaded to do so, only by the old ploy of being told that the other had signed.

BUT the biggest threat to Pinochet has come from the urban working class.

The last three years, and especially the last twelve months, have seen an upsurge in opposition from all sections of society.

Last November saw a 48 hour protest against the regime. Over half a million people took to the streets, calling for Pinochet's overthrow. The junta arrested 900 people, but bowed to one of the demonstrators' demands and released Rodolfo Seguel, the president of the copper miners' union.

Then the Asamblea Civil, a national assembly of social, professional and trade union organisations representing the centre and left, called a general strike for July 2 and 3. According to Seguel, 80 to 100% of textile, print and leather workers in the capital Santiago struck. Public transport stopped, and hundreds of thousands took to the streets.

When the military occupied Chuquibambuta, Chile's largest copper mine, the workers held a protest march and boycotted the works canteen. Workers at the state steel plant in Huachipato and the state oil refinery, Petrox, took similar action.

The junta replied with repression. In Santiago, the army teargassed demonstrators, kill-

ing several. The four opposition radio stations were banned from broadcasting anything but official bulletins, and 17 of the Asamblea's 22 leaders were arrested.

More militant sections of the Movimiento Democrático Popular (MDP) wanted further strikes. The MDP groups the Socialists and the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR). The Asamblea itself backed down from calling a two day protest on September 4 and 5, fearing further repression.

Instead, it preferred a day of remembrance.

The September action went ahead. Militias and street defence committees in some neighbourhoods used road barricades, trenches and Molotov cocktails to try to keep the troops out. The normal small army and police patrols proved useless.

But most workers ignored the strike call. MDP secretary Gerardo Torres admitted: "The German Correa admitted: 'The work stoppage as such did not happen.' Most workers followed the Asamblea's moderate lead.

SO CHILE's radical left does not yet have the support of the mass of the working class. Most workers still hope for a peaceful transition to democracy, and many union leaders are in fact Christian Democrats.

The left's problems are not just numerical, however. Most of the political as well. Many of the left's policies are similar to those of the conservatives.

For example, the MDP, which is the largest coalition on the left, believes that social protests and peaceful disobedience are the only way to end the dictatorship.

It is also willing to accept a military-led overthrow of Pinochet as a transition to "free elections". Another of its demands is that a transitional government implement the short term proposals of the conservative Acuerdo Nacional. One of that document's major thrusts is that no land or factory takeovers will be tolerated from workers or peasants.

On the other hand, some in the MDP have adopted a strategy of making the country unmanageable. They argue for taking over large areas of the cities and preventing the army from entering. This is seen as somehow forcing Pinochet to resign, allowing elections soon thereafter.

The MIR has put forward a proposal to "arm the masses". The call to arms was appropriate in the months before Pinochet seized power in 1973, but the situation now is quite different. The army is still in control, and the working class is largely quiet.

Workers are not yet threatening to overthrow the regime, for example by occupying factories as they did widely in 1973.

Both strategies — arming the masses prematurely and making the cities unmanageable — fail to mobilise the working class at its most powerful points, in the factories and offices where it can control the means of production.

(Continued page 6)



Enrile and Aquino: no amour here

FILIPINO defence minister Juan Enrile was recently asked by an interviewer whether he had learnt any French to impress Cory Aquino, who majored in French at university.

Just a few words, replied Enrile. For example, 'coup d'état'.

MACDONALD'S MacDiddle... Potato growers in central Victoria have fallen on hard times. The ABC program Countrywide has revealed why.

LAST month's vigil against Pine Gap outside Melbourne's Victoria Barracks was rudely interrupted. A Defence staff suddenly leant out of a window and shot down a weather balloon bearing the protesters' message.

The protesters' belief that the nation's security was in such capable hands was short-lived. Military police called to investigate claimed to be unable to find the culprit. "It must have been a phantom," said one. "There's nothing we can do."

"Good," replied a protester. Then you won't take any action when we send in a few phantoms of our own to occupy your office."

BUT THEN, the upper classes are also having to cut back.

SEVEN terrorist attacks occurred in the United States in 1985. The FBI believes that four

had tried to wrest the initiative from his opponents; in August the government "found" huge arms caches, supposedly hoarded by leftwing groups. Pinochet twice sought state of siege powers to combat "terrorism" and Marxism, but the junta rejected his demands.

After the assassination attempt, Pinochet tried to unleash a wave of repression, imposing a 90 day state of siege which gives him powers to detain, exile, and suspend freedom of the press and of assembly.

The day after the assassination regime arrested dozens of leftists and closed six opposition newspapers. By September 15, it had arrested 64 opposition figures.

The fight has formed death

LABOR has always had a fair sprinkling of small-time capitalists in its parliamentary ranks. This can have its problems, as Barrie Unsworth is finding out.

There are strong rumours as we go to press that Richard Mochalski is about to resign his state seat of Bankstown on the grounds of ill-health. The ill-health is actually in Mochalski's bank account. He ran up big legal costs after the Balanced Property Trust that he founded and directed collapsed in 1982. In the same year, he had to pay off bookmakers' debts of nearly \$35,000. Mochalski wants his fat parliamentary superannuation cheque to bail himself out.

The last thing Barrie Unsworth needs right now is yet another by-election. The last thing Richard Mochalski needs right now is Barrie Unsworth. Stand by for further developments.

of them were committed by extremist Zionist groups.

AT LEAST the Reagan-Gorbachev summit managed to settle one thing.

A major dispute broke out between negotiators beforehand and over which leader would use the better of the two bathrooms at the Hofli mansion where Iceland's government lodged them both.

Eventually the two sides compromised. Both leaders could use either toilet. The same Department that is supposed to promote joint government-employer-union consultation nationwide!

CANTON say we were shocked to hear allegations that millionaire quack Geoffrey Edelstein had bought the services of Hanny Christopher Flynn to help him the way that he normally buys up footballers.

But we liked the comment of this vacuous wife Lesaine when he told her the news: "Has he got a nice house?"

squads to liquidate leftists. Already, these have murdered four people, at least three of whom had ties with the Communist Party. Many leftists have gone into hiding.

The assassination attempt was a mistake. It has allowed Pinochet to go on the offensive. He now warns Chileans that "We are in a war between Marxism and democracy." In this "war," Pinochet holds most of the guns.

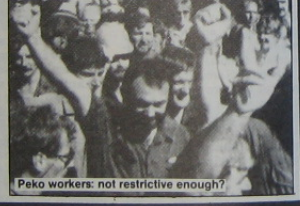
He does not control the working class, however. When workers exert the strength they have been used like a house of cards. But workers will have to regain their confidence through everyday struggles before they



CHEAP SHOTS

the extinguishers were empty. "You'll have to get them filled," said the Wormald courier.

"How?" asked the staff. "You'll have to send them back to us," said the courier.



Peko workers: not restrictive enough?

are ready to take on the junta. It is a process that is only just beginning.

It is a process that could explode, however, because the economic and the political are so intimately linked in life in Chile under Pinochet.

— John Passant

Movement Against Uranium Mining
MELBOURNE XMAS FAIR
 Saturday November 29
 10am-4pm, Church of All Nations,
 Palmerston St, Carlton
 (near Lygon St.)
 Bargains, music, food, fun for kids
 (Includes donations of goods, phone
 MUMM 663 1428 or Val Macarone
 555 5625)

COVER STORY

Is Queensland really so 'different'?

GERRYMANDERS, corruption, Cronyism and economic crisis — election time in Queensland is always something special. Inevitably, the question arises: Is Queensland different? And why?

Critics of Queensland's somewhat quirky politics tend to have two views. Some blame Job Bjelke. Petersen personally. He is a fascist, or at least a redneck fundamentalist, who has almost singlehandedly made Queensland what it is.

More serious critics give a sociological explanation. Queenslanders are more backward and more conservative than "normal" Australians. They are "much less educated, very much less urbanised, more likely to be Australian-born, and less likely to work in a factory", as historian Humphrey McQueen puts it. You wonder why Job needs a gerrymander at all, and why in a 1979 survey Queenslanders proved to be more liberal on a range of social issues (marijuana, censorship, abortion, homosexuality) than other states.

In reality, to the extent that Queensland politics is different — and the differences should not be exaggerated — the causes can be traced initially to peculiar features of the state's economy.

Queensland's rural sector, and especially its mining, is much more central than in the southern states. And capital in the state tends to be smaller, more fragmented, and therefore weaker than in even a similar sized economy like South Australia's.

This problem stems from Queensland's early development last century. The sheer size of the state (Brisbane is closer to Melbourne than to Cairns), and the curious location of its capital city in the far south-east, meant that the economy developed in a decentralized fashion.

For example, in Queensland alone of all the states, railway lines do not converge on the capital city. Instead, four spur lines push from the inland direct to the coast. So industry tended to grow up outside Brisbane, either near to raw materials, along the railway lines, or on the coast near to railway depots and the ports.

This historic decentralization of production remains very strong. In Victoria and South Australia, 15% of the manufacturing workforce is based outside the capital city. In NSW, with the great Newcastle and Wollongong complexes, the figure is 24%. In Queensland, it is a remarkable 34%.

Dispersal of production and of commerce meant that the centralization of profits in the hands of big corporations and banks was retarded. Even today, Queensland companies are still, on the whole, quite small and fragmented. So the state has become dependent on outside investment,

mostly from NSW, Victoria and overseas. Since outside investors tend to ship their profits back home, Queensland is even less able to become "self-supporting".

The flip side of the coin is Queensland's reliance on rural products. Wool, meat and sugar were the mainstays until the late 1960s. The minerals boom added coal, copper, lead and so on, but the picture

1949 to favour rural seats. Job Bjelke Petersen uses the same system to this day, modified only slightly to favour the Nationals over Labor.

Labor fell from office in 1957, when the entire Cabinet bar one Minister quit the ALP to join the DLP split.

Frank Nicklin's Country Party-Liberal Party coalition took over. Nicklin launched an enthusiastic campaign to revitalise the state economy, and especially to build an industrial manufacturing base. He aimed to break the dominance of southern capital, and Nicklin's approach was ad hoc and, in the

end, not very successful. Certainly, industrial output increased to almost equal rural production in value in 1968. (In 1957, primary production earned 50% more than manufacturing.) But most industry remained small-scale, primary processing and of low productivity.

LABOR ruled Queensland from 1915 to 1957, apart from the three years 1929-32. Its long reign was to reinforce the pattern of development, rather than threaten it.

"Primary production is the natural occupation of mankind. Nobody would desire for this state the industrialized type of civilization that exists in many countries today."

Labor drew its support from the rural working class and its main union, the Australian Workers Union (AWU), so such an attitude was no surprise. The AWU's attitude was no surprise. The AWU's attitude was no surprise. The AWU's attitude was no surprise.

Even small farmers. It provided the Queensland ALP with money, personnel and votes. In return, Labor spent most of its time protecting and encouraging rural production. To ensure its grip on power, it introduced the infamous gerrymander in

1949 to favour rural seats. Job Bjelke Petersen uses the same system to this day, modified only slightly to favour the Nationals over Labor.



Job Bjelke Petersen: turning the clock back to the Dark Ages?

end, not very successful. Certainly, industrial output increased to almost equal rural production in value in 1968. (In 1957, primary production earned 50% more than manufacturing.) But most industry remained small-scale, primary processing and of low productivity.

IN 1968, the Bjelke Petersen era began. The new premier turned to forestry investment and the expansion of the mining industry in the quest for development.

Bjelke Petersen continued to cosset the rural sector — which was, after all, his voting base — but was quite happy to import most of the state's manufactured imports, especially heavy industry parts, from the south. The real engine of growth was to be unlearned "free enterprise" was to be mineral resources.

This shift in economic strategy transformed Queensland's politics. From being a rather sleepy backwater through most of the fifties and sixties, the state has become richer and swifter, where many of something of a storm coalition of southern capital, and Nicklin's approach was ad hoc and, in the

(Continued page 6)

FROM PAGE 5

Chile feeling

CHILE'S crisis will continue. Economically, it is in deep trouble.

The junta's ten year experiment in Friedmanite economics has failed. Growth slowed from 6.3% in 1984 to just 1.9% in 1985. Inflation last year ran at 25%. Over 20% of the workforce are unemployed or under-employed. Real wages fell 5% last year.

The attempt on Pinochet's life occurred against this background of economic crisis and political struggle. The dictator

COVER STORY

Australia's most important political and industrial struggles are fought out.

What was the connection?
Queensland's vast mineral resources put it in a very strong position to supply the world market. But local capital was too small and fragmented to take full advantage of the opportunities. To attract the foreign capital it needed, the state government set out to keep the costs for potential investors low in mining as low as possible. It provided cheap electricity, an extensive rail network and a host of other facilities.

All of this had to be paid for. And by and large, it was paid for by the urban working class in Brisbane and in the main provincial cities.

This required that the cities did not exercise their full weight in state politics, for fear that Labor or even the Liberals might shift the burden back towards the mine owners. (Neville Warburton, for example, had promised to cut electricity charges in Brisbane, where they are the highest of any capital city, if elected.)

Hence the continuing gerrymander. Hence, too, John Bjelke Petersen's attacks in the 1970s on Brisbane City Council, one of the few areas where the working class had any real electoral weight. In the early seventies, it was reduced from 29 councillors to 21 with a corresponding drop in efficiency. In 1976, it lost control of Brisbane's electricity supply (and the income from that) to a new, supposedly independent body, SEQEB. Control over the city's water supply and bus service have also been threatened.

HAND in hand with this political squeeze on the cities has come a general social repressiveness as well.

For twenty years, Queensland governments have fought to hold back civil liberties and raided against permissiveness.

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Conversely, in the absence of any parliamentary solution, thousands of Queenslanders have confronted these attacks in the streets.

In 1966-68, the government faced down a challenge from the anti-Vietnam War movement to the requirement for all marches and leaflet hand-outs to have a permit. In 1971, it declared a State of Emergency to outlaw protests against the South African rugby tour.

Police physically attacked anti-freeway demonstrators, student protesters and the Cedar Bay community. By 1977, the anti-uranium movement had become so strong that the permit system for marches was tightened up. A two year campaign, involving scores of protests and 2000 arrests, failed to defeat the changes. The government spent \$5 million to ensure "law and order" and unhindered uranium shipment.

Queensland's laws on Aborigines have been among the most racist in the world outside South Africa. The Queensland Act, repealed in 1984, under which blacks on reserves were subjected to dictatorial control by government managers, was not so archaic hangover from the past. It went through state parliament in 1971 and was a blatant attempt to control Aborigines and keep their lands open for mining.

When Aurukun and Mornington Island blacks resisted white intrusion to "develop" their land, their reserves were simply abolished. In 1982, a special law was passed to contain expected land rights demonstrations against the Commonwealth Games. The Community Services Act of 1984 made cosmetic changes to Aborigines' status, but did virtually nothing on basic issues like land rights, health and education.

Unions, too, are under constant pressure, the aim being to minimize wage claims that may increase employers' costs.

In 1977, John Bjelke Petersen tried to revive the power to jail unionists, defeated by the General Strike over Clarrie O'Shea, when he had union organiser Ted Zaphir charged under the criminal code with "threatening to cause detriment" with a black-ban.

More recent was the sacking of over a thousand SEQEB workers for striking in defence of their working conditions. The government's ruthless desire to provide a cheap, secure power supply to business was never made clearer.

THE ECONOMIC strategy of handouts to the mining industry and the political strategy of implacable hostility to anyone who might inhibit the free enterprise spirit — workers, blacks, urban liberals, environmentalists — produced some great successes in the seventies.

Average wages were well below the national level, and real household incomes actually declined. Spending on social services was very low.

Based on the highest profitability of any state except WA, the mineral sector boomed. Value leapt from \$109 million in 1963 to \$514 million ten years later, and then doubled to \$1136 million in the three years to 1976.

The state government extracted large revenues from the mining sector through leasing fees, licences and, above all, railway freight charges. But with other costs so low



Brisbanites take off on an illegal street march

and profits so high, there was little complaint from the companies.

Even during the recession of 1974 the minerals sector remained strong and was able to support Bjelke Petersen's policy of "soft", low-tax budgets while other states were cutting back severely on spending.

The resources boom of 1981, while it never lived up to the wilder projections, brought many projects to Queensland and again protected the state from the worst of the 1982-83 recession.

TODAY, the picture is very different. Queensland's rising economic fortunes, which underpinned Bjelke Petersen's vice-like grip on power, have once again slumped.

The state did badly during the 1983-88 recovery. While the rest of the country was enjoying relatively good times last year Queensland had very high unemployment and bankruptcy levels and low investment.

The glamour projects of the resource boom, which had kept many workers employed and suppliers busy, were finished. With no more starting up, jobs and orders disappeared.

Despite his rhetoric about sturdy individualism, Bjelke Petersen tried to create demand by filling the investment vacuum with government spending. A Special Capital Works Program ploughed \$600 million into construction in 1984-85. The Queensland Industry Development Corporation has been set up to provide cheap loans to risky ventures, especially in manufacturing. Preference in government purchasing will go to Queensland-based suppliers. Suddenly, all the talk in government is about "broadening" the state's economic base.

Such schemes are unlikely to solve Queensland's crisis. The problem is more fundamental than a mere economic downswing.

World demand for the sort of raw materials that Queensland produces is very low. Copper and lead prices have hit their lowest level since the Depression, coal prices are declining, and sugar is almost worthless

at the moment.

The state's manufacturing sector, having been grossly neglected during the minerals boom, is in terrible shape and has been shedding workers continuously for five years. Turning that around will be very difficult indeed.

Not only is Queensland's economy in no position to break out of the present world crisis on its own — no economy can do that — but it is not even in a position to buffer itself against the coming recession or to take advantage of any recovery.

SUCH A situation, and the unease it has produced in the state's ruling class, has led to an unstable political scene.

The Liberals walked out of the coalition in 1983, expecting to provide a pole of attraction for discontented employers. Instead, they were devastated at the next election, gaining just 6 seats out of 83.

Since then, the Nationals have been rocked by a series of scandals that even the Queensland media have delighted in publicizing.

The ALP, meanwhile, needing 55% of the vote to win government, has confined itself to whining about corruption, the gerrymander and the economy. It has been unable to frame any real alternative policies, maybe because it knows that it would

matter little if it did.

But if parliamentary politics offers no hope of solving Queensland's problems — its economic mess, its deeply-rooted racism, a ravaged environment, an uncontrolled police force — what about the working class? A fighting working class, even if not directly active politically, can create a climate that encourages activism and struggle.

Queensland workers have a long history of political involvement. The street march campaign drew much of its strength from union support. So did the anti-uranium movement, with the state's railway workers initiating the world's first strike over nuclear issues in 1976.

As in other states, there has been less industrial action in the last few years, especially since the wages surge of 1981/82 ran out of steam. The defeat of the SEQEB workers, one of the most militant union shops in Australia, has accelerated the decline in struggle, especially amongst government-employed workers.

What keeps Queensland strike figures the highest per worker of any state is, to a large extent, the mining industry, where militancy remains exceptionally high. Strike figures are ten times those of other workers, and growing. But the coal industry in particular is geographically isolated, and this limits the impact on other workers of the miners' example.

LIFE in Queensland now that the election over will not be easy.

John Bjelke Petersen has held back recently from moving against holiday pay loadings and penalty rates. He has resisted mining industry demands for a cut in freight charges, because the loss of revenue would necessitate higher taxes elsewhere.

With the election over, the state government may well move onto the offensive. Unions and the left will again be under challenge.

So is Queensland all that different? Not really. After all, the attack on SEQEB workers was not so different from the attack on the B.L.F. Queensland's "cronyism" policy, next to the systematic corruption in NSW, the Racism, police brutality and rape of the environment are not unknown in WA and elsewhere.

The pressures of its economy have given Queensland politics a particularly intense twist. But none of its ugliness is all that unfamiliar to workers in the rest of Australia, unfortunately.

— Graham Willitt

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to tinker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Class Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must be spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight against them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary party. They can only be ended through ending capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world; the point is to change it. Marxist theory and propaganda are only meaningful if they are a guide to action. In the union, in the movements and wherever people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. If that's where you want to be, join us today!

SOCIALIST ACTION

EDITORIAL

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WEEKLY MEETINGS

Melbourne
Monday, 7.30
Rm 5, 118 Sydney Rd
Brunswick

Sydney
Wednesday, 7.00
Metro Hotel (opposite)
Bridge & George St, City

Brisbane
Wednesday, 7.00
Phone 371 7114
for location

Perth
Thursday, 6.00
Blair Room,
Workers' Club, Civic

BOB HAWKE looks like **B**egging away with his "reform" of the Public Service.

Huge meetings of public servants met the Labor government's first threats to their working conditions in July. But the union meetings were much smaller when Hawke made his September statement on reform. And public service union leaders could only come up with empty threats and squeals of outrage as a response.

Labor's threats are real enough. In July, rumour had it that leave loadings and flextime were to go — a rumour confirmed by state government moves in Perth and Hobart. The mass discontent in public service ranks forced Labor to back off temporarily.

Instead, we are getting cuts to staffing and Departmental spending, the removal of workers' a review of flextime, and an Efficiency Scrutiny Unit.

The latter is based on a similar unit set up by Margaret Thatcher in 1979, under Lord Raynor. Don't expect any dramatic results from it, though. The Raynor unit met so much stalling from Ministers and top bureaucrats that Thatcher demanded a special report on its inefficiency in 1985.

The media focussed on getting rid of inefficient public servants. Frankly, we'd have nothing against this if it was confined to the top layers, and left the people at the bottom — who work bloody hard — completely alone.

But this was not the thrust of Hawke's statement at all. Public servants, he said,

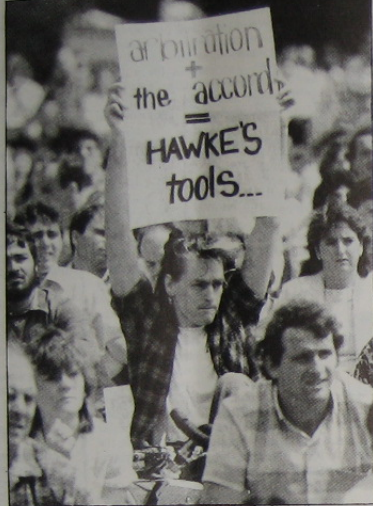
"do not have the right to continued employment where there is no real work for them to do, or where they are not performing satisfactorily."

It has always been possible to sack public servants. The "reform" simply removes one level of appeal. The real aim is to get rid of staff that Labor considers "surplus". With cuts in health, welfare and education, it is fairly obvious where the surplus staff will be.

THE UNION response to all this was remarkably feeble.

The ACOA (clerks' union) leaders met for five hours, and produced motions which devoted the maximum number of words to the minimum amount of action.

They correctly described Hawke as promoting "cuts in our conditions of service" and threatening "longstanding con-



Public servants meet last year. more action needed now

How the public service unions are being 'done'

ditions of employment". Yet if they really believed this, the action they proposed was quite inadequate. Their motions merely expressed anger, threatened unspecified action, and called on workers to attend ACTU-convened rallies.

The APSA (clerical assistants' union) officials did little better. In Victoria, they urged their members to go back to their workplaces and "implement work bans and other appropriate industrial action." No further guidance was forthcoming.

Unfortunately, APSA does not have the strength or organisation at workplace level to carry off this sort of approach.

If APSA officials are unaware of this, it is high time they were. If they are aware of it, their motion was a serious abdication of responsibility and leadership.

The Victorian meeting was poorly attended. So that motion, and its threat to give "no further commitment to the wage-fixing

principles", are likely to carry little weight anyhow.

WHY WERE the September meetings so much smaller?

One reason was the widespread relief that the threats to flextime and the leave loading had been removed. And after its big build-up, Hawke's statement was less dramatic than many expected. Some of his changes are relatively obscure and do not impinge on key working conditions.

Clearly, though, they are only the beginning. Public Service Board chairman Wilenski has foreshadowed more to come. But officials of both unions neglected to make that warning long and loud enough to get their members out to the meetings in serious numbers. Once there, they presented them with such windily empty motions that many members went away wondering why they had turned up in the first place.

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The ACOA officials, like many other union leaders, find themselves in a difficult position. They are tied hand and foot to Labor and the Accord (marks I and II). The deal they thought they had — wage indexation with all the exciting glitter of occupational health and safety and industrial democracy — seemed a triumph of the negotiating process to them.

But what happens when those with whom you negotiate suddenly tip over the table? What happens when they say, as Hawke said at his press conference, "The negotiating process is now over"? What happens when they attack your members, threaten your position, and force you into a response?

The officials could not ignore Hawke's statement — but they did not want anything getting out of hand. Hence both their rhetoric, and their lack of action.

BLAMING the officials, however, only gets you so far.

It takes two to tango, and up to now most ACOA and APSA members have been willing to trip the light fantastic with the union leaders. A motion, put by socialists and militants, for a one day strike followed by a campaign of bans, went down overwhelmingly despite receiving a respectable vote in Sydney and Canberra. Members voted to gab debate and end meetings early.

The reasons are not hard to find. In the present climate, the idea of resisting the government is not an easy one. Workers' victories are rare, and public servants do not have a long tradition of taking on their employers and winning.

Public servants may well be discontented with working conditions, staff shortages and wages. They may well be discontented with the strategy of their union leaders. But until they have confidence in their own ability to fight, and an alternative strategy which they think can win, they will continue to go along with the union officials.

Socialists in the public service must argue for such an alternative in every forum, from the individual workplace to the mass meeting.

At present, we can only hope to rally a minority who want to fight. With the next round of attacks, however, that minority may be able to put a fighting strategy in serious opposition to the empty rhetoric of the union officials.

— David Lockwood, ACOA member

Having shown that it can survive, the BLF looks ahead

SINCE the big battles at the start of October, building industry politics has been less in the news. Yet the BLF continues to fight for workers' interests, in stark contrast to their rivals in the BWIU leadership.

In Canberra, the Builders Labourers have been visibly strengthening their position. Buoyed by a quite satisfactory renewal of financial membership, the union has been asserting itself on more and more sites.

In fact, so worried have management become at the Tuggeranong Town Centre projects that they hired bouncers as security guards. After a site meeting was addressed by BLF officials, the workers walked off for the day. Subsequently the bouncers were relocated outside the gate, after rank and file pressure forced BWIU and FEDFA officials to stir themselves and talk to management.

At Parliament House, the BWIU's Rod Driver has faced three motions of no confidence, and at a recent meeting two officials were present, physically protected by a cordon of rank and file building workers. At the Churches Centre on October 15, the BLF's Dusty Miller likewise attended a meeting. When BWIU officials put a motion to exclude him, it was lost by a three-to-one majority.

On the latter occasion, management called the police and Miller was arrested. A petition protesting the arrest received overwhelming support at the ACT Labor Council.

Miller's supporters are encouraged by the recent dismissal of two charges against other officials of the BLF, Peter O'Dea and Nick Harris, and especially by the release on October 20 of Steve Black and Ron Owens in Sydney.

The latter had been gaoled for five weeks because they would not accept bail conditions preventing them from representing their members on site. The Court of Appeals overturned the bail conditions and awarded costs to Black and Owens.

In Melbourne, the most visible area of struggle has been the South Yarra project, where the BWIU instigated the victimisation of eight militants, including shop steward Ivor Lawrence.



The BLF: reports of its death are greatly exaggerated

While the "B-buffs" claim they are unable to get them reinstated, they have had no trouble planting their own agents on the site.

One of these gets special treatment from management and talks openly about getting "Communists" off the job.

The eight South Yarra labourers have been picketing both the main gate at the site (including occasional forays onto the job) and the offices of the BWIU. There is no more revealing spectacle than watching BWIU honcho Ray Collins crossing a picket line to enter his own office.

Meanwhile, the BLF in Tasmania and South Australia have placed bans on Leightons' jobs in protest against the company's refusal to pay compo to Dave Kern.

While the building industry in Melbourne has been a bit quieter over the past few weeks, this is largely because the Builders Labourers have taken the opportunity to review strategy. The union believes it has won a real battle to prove it is still a real union, and now has a responsibility to devote increased attention to representing workers around more forward-looking issues.

The BLF is considering a draft log of claims, to include a cost-of-living catch-up, a cost of living adjustments, super and a 9-day fortnight. It is also looking at a "building industry charter" which would demand such things as no blacklist, union democracy, right of entry to sites for union officials, no cops on site and the right to take industrial action.

The latter point is decided

especially toward the right to walk off the job over safety issues, with no loss of pay. This right to take a "homer" is under threat from an increasingly blatant BWIU campaign.

— Richard Emerson.

ACCORD

Plumbers plug wage leak

WHILE the BLF battles the Government on one front, the Plumbers and Gasfitters Union has moved into action on another.

The Plumbers have a log of claims that directly confronts the wage-cutting Accord. The Workplaces can help by sending motions of solidarity to the Plumbers Union in their state. Further support is needed if this is to happen.

The Plumbers' ban campaign has been particularly intense in Queensland. State Industrial Relations Minister, Vince Lester, threatened on September 19 to give a 35-36 hour week. They are still waiting.

The Plumbers' ban campaign has been particularly intense in Queensland. State Industrial Relations Minister, Vince Lester, threatened on September 19 to give a 35-36 hour week. They are still waiting.

anyhow, and as we go to press, Lester has applied for a Supreme Court injunction against further bans.

Lester is urging plumbers to go along with Bob Hawke's "treatment with equity" and the Accord. Says John Thompson, Queensland secretary of the Plumbers Union, "If anyone had doubts about how bad the Accord was, they should have gone out the door after that."

Plumbers have little reason to listen to Lester. In 1983, his government tried unsuccessfully to deregister their union after action at Logan City, outside Brisbane.

Canberra is after the plumbers too. "The Hawke government threatened to invoke the Code of Conduct if our demands were pursued," says Thompson. "They said originally that legislation was to fix Norm Gallagher up."

As predicted, the BLF turns out to have been just the first union in Labor's sights.

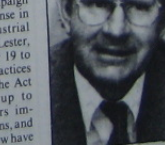
Queensland Labor, as always, is rumoured scared. "They told me we'd lose Warburton the election," says Thompson. "I told them Bob Hawke would have to take most of the credit for that!"

More seriously, the Plumbers could be undermined by pressure from other building union officials, who fear stand-downs and are unwilling to fight.

The Fightback Committee in Brisbane has made support for the Workplaces can help by sending motions of solidarity to the Plumbers Union in their state.

Further support is needed if this is to happen.

— Carole Ferrier



Lester: no plumber's mate

Coming to camp?

SOCIALIST Action is holding its annual summer camp and conference this coming New Year's weekend at Camp Gundiwindi at Wandin, in the Dandenongs just 58 kilometres from Melbourne.

The event runs for four days, from Thursday January 1 to Sunday January 4, 1987, and is full of interest for any leftwing person.

The camp, set in a beautiful forested area, has numerous recreational facilities, including archery range, a camp fire, walking tracks, sports areas and lots of things to keep both kids and adults amused.

Camp activities include talks, a trivia quiz, and on the Saturday, our yearly conference where we discuss our organisation and make policy.

The talks are a mixture. Some are historical, some are contemporary, but all are thought-provoking.

- **Russia Today** — is Gorbachev's regime any different to its predecessors?
- **Women and Education** — how does the education system affect women?
- **Slave Revolts** — the super-oppressed can organise against their exploiters; a few examples from history.
- **Industrial Democracy** — Management's attempts to make workers participate in their own exploitation are many and varied. The latest is industrial democracy.

• **Management's attempts** to make workers participate in their own exploitation are many and varied. The latest is industrial democracy.

• **Simon de Beauvoir** — the writer of *The Second Sex* in 1949, she was the first woman to examine and write about the female sex in all contexts.

• **Revolutionaries and Trade Unions** — how Marxists look at the relationship between union officials, the brokers of labour, and their members, who have only their labour power to sell.

• **Ata-Rosa Luxemburg**, Journalists and South Africa.

If you're interested in leftwing politics, the summer camp will be a fascinating and informative four days for you. If you've been thinking about joining Socialist Action, it's a great opportunity to meet our members and learn more about us.

So come for the whole four days, or for any part that you feel like. Prices are cheap, and concessions are available. For more information, contact your local Socialist Action branch as listed on page 8.

INTERNATIONAL



Comrades in arms: Reagan and Gorbachev agree to disagree

There ain't no cure for the summit time blues

IT'S UNBELIEVABLE but true. Less than a year ago we had a Soviet-US summit meeting, the media gushed with hope, then everyone was disappointed when it led to absolutely nothing.

Yet when the Reykjavik pseudo-summit blew up out of nowhere, we went through it all again.

The result was nil, and that's no surprise. The superpowers always find some reason not to agree, and until we are in a position to force them to do so — or better still, get rid of these governments and do it ourselves — they are likely to keep it up.

The arms race is not some strange mental illness. It arises out of the economic systems we and the peoples of the Russian bloc live under. The western economies are heavily dependent on arms spending for their stability, and their ability to keep the lion's share of the world's wealth depends on their military might. The Russian rulers' ability to keep control of their bureaucratically managed empire similarly rests on armed force. In practice, this has meant a polarised system of nuclear weapons.

The media are anxious to convince us that Reykjavik was different, that Reagan and Gorbachev were close to ending the nuclear nightmare. What a pity that Star Wars got in the way!

Yet Gorbachev obviously knew that it would be a sticking point. He could offer sweeping offers of deep cuts in offensive weapons, knowing that the whole thing would come to nothing. He did so, and was left

with a propaganda coup.

Reagan, by offering to postpone Star Wars deployment for ten years, was really offering nothing. It is very unlikely that the US will be able to deploy the system that soon anyway... always assuming that it works at all.

The most important points about the summit have little to do with technicalities about "intermediate range nuclear forces", or particle-beam sensor devices. They are political. A careful look at the events surrounding the summit shows that none of the big powers wants to end the arms race.

There is a minority section that wants to slow it down, and these are the people who criticized Reagan for his "unreasonable attachment" to Star Wars. Democratic Presidential hopeful Gary Hart speaks for them. But even he doesn't call for disarmament, only "arms control". Others in US ruling circles praised Reagan for holding on to Star Wars, because using it as a perpetual threat allows Washington to put Gorbachev on the defensive.

After all, a lot of people in Washington think that Russia's economy can be wrecked by an all-inclusive of the arms race.

The various European governments, who sometimes toy with schemes like the "zero option" which would remove missiles from Europe, showed their true colours when it looked for a moment as if the talks might lead somewhere. They were all in a flap, and Margaret Thatcher spoke for many of them when she flew to America to warn Reagan not to go too far.

The Kremlin probably does want to slow down the arms race, even to reduce the scope of superpower armaments systems. They too fear that the unequal battle to maintain nuclear parity with a much bigger US economy will ultimately wreck their economy.

They do not want an end to nuclear weapons, because their position as the second strongest power in the world depends utterly on them.

So the arms race continues. And as the Star Wars program develops, it gets more worrying. It always raised the threat of destabilisation, for would not a power which was able to fend off attacks be tempted to launch a pre-emptive strike of its own?

Now, even the conservative US magazine *Newsweek* is having doubts about White House claims that the Strategic Defence Initiative is purely defensive:

"Nobody seems to know for sure whether Reagan really believes that... the actual program his people are planning is far from the one he describes. The SDI is shifting fast from a population shield to a defence for missiles, instead of doing away with the balance of terror, Star Wars will preserve it."

Australia is intimately tied into this program by the Nurrungar base in SA. Nurrungar is a key ground station for the early warning satellites that will trigger any Star Wars weapons.

Forget about waiting for more Reagan-Gorbachev summits. It is time we took a "strategic defence initiative" of our own. That means closing Nurrungar and the other US bases here.

— Richard Emerson

WORKING CLASS HISTORY

Against the fascist tide, French workers reached for the future

IN THE early 1930s, the international picture looked bleak for socialists.

Fascism was on the march. Workers everywhere were in retreat under the onslaught of the Depression. Jobs and wages were being ravaged in some countries, unions smashed in others.

The workers of France were amongst the first to counter-attack, with the spectacular General Strike of June 1936. It was a struggle still rich in lessons for us today.

French workers had seen their German and Austrian counterparts fall divided before fascism in the early thirties. Determined to avoid a similar fate, they pressured their leaders to narrow the sectarian divisions between the Socialists and Communists.

The result was a huge anti-fascist march in February 1934. One account recalls:

"That afternoon the Socialist Party demonstration took place in Paris. The previous day the Communist Party had decided to take part. In one unforgettable moment the two columns joined together to cries of 'Unity! Unity!' Social and Communist workers were marching side by side."

A million workers marched. France only had two million trade unionists at this time, yet 4.5 million workers struck work, such was the enthusiasm generated by this new movement.

THE ANTI-FASCIST movement prompted the Socialist and Communist Parties to form an electoral alliance.

The Communist International, still head-scratching after the appalling failure of the German Communist Party to resist Hitler, approved this alliance in 1935.

The problem for the Comintern, however, was to prevent this alliance from upsetting the French imperialists and Russian Communist alliance which was urged to subordinate itself to "democratic" bourgeois parties. The "Popular Front" was born.

The Socialists and Communists allied with the Radical Party, a middle class party drawing votes from the peasants.

When the Popular Front won the general election of May 3, 1936, workers rightly saw it as their victory.

The Popular Front's leaders

had promised business as usual, but the workers had other ideas. Six years of Depression, of wage cuts, of mass unemployment had welled up discontent and anger. The electoral victory inspired a flood of industrial action.

On May 11, aircraft workers at Le Havre struck against the victimisation of two unionists. The strikers had already learned that if they went home, the boss could always find scab labour during a Depression. So the strikers adopted a new tactic. They remained on the job.

Similar strikes broke out all over France in the next few days, against victimisations, against wage cuts, against speed-ups and years of employer arrogance. Most involved the occupation tactic.

ON MAY 28, the strike movement escalated decisively. At Renault, 35,000 workers downed tools and a majority occupied. Dozens of other factories in the Paris region had been watching Renault. They struck next day.

By June 4, the strike wave had reached an unheard-of peak. Two million workers were occupying their workplaces. Strike committees organised pickets, banned alcohol, secured food deliveries and maintained complete order in the occupied workplaces.

Unions were occupied workplaces joined in. Thirty-two thousand shop workers occupied the department stores of Paris.

A participant described the strikers' feelings:

"The very act of striking is a joy. A pure and unalloyed joy. What joy to enter the plant with the smiling authorisation of a worker guarding the gate. What joy to find so many smiles, so many friendly words of welcome... Joy to roam freely through the shop where we were once chained to our machines... Bosses looked on with helplessness, but with promises of negotiations, but with promises of negotiations they sought to get out of factories back."

Most workers knew they were in a position of strength, however. Only if some of their wage demands were met first would they end their occupations. The strike committees were usually held to this position, even when union leaders advised otherwise.



1936: French workers demand a 40 hour week

The employers turned to their last line of defence, the new Popular Front government. At their behest, Socialist premier Leon Blum convened a meeting between union and employer leaders. The employers promised union recognition, no victimisation, and wage increases to be determined later. The union leaders promised to argue for a return to work, and to keep trade unionism within legal limits.

Yet everything unionists have ever won has been gained outside or near the margins of legality. The union leaders had just negotiated away the very power that had forced the employers to the meeting!

Many strikers regarded the employer promises as inadequate. As some occupations quieted, others started. But the Communist Party endorsement of the return-to-work call on June 12 was decisive, and the movement ebbed.

STRIKERS could claim some impressive achievements all the same.

Many won union recognition for the first time. They could face the boss in a dignified organisation rather than as patronised individuals. Most won real wage increases and two weeks annual leave. The French

was born! The fascists had been driven off centre stage. Only under Hitler's protection in 1940 did they regain their earlier confidence.

The employers, however, had regained control where it matters most — in the workplace. After 1936, they used inflation to whittle away the wage increases, and capital strikes to discipline the Popular Front discipline.

The Popular Front introduced a system of wage fixation — known to Australian workers — arbitration. Wages were pegged, prices were not. Union leaders urged workers to be passive in the face of attacks by "their" government. Union membership, which had boomed in 1936, plummeted again.

The aftermath of the General Strike may be depressingly familiar. But it should not blind us to the achievement of France's workers.

After six years of grinding Depression, they struck back and scored the panis off the ruling class. Their mighty movement gave us a tantalising glimpse of a whole new society, run by workers themselves.

Who knows? It could happen here too.

— Eric Peterson

SOCIALIST STANDPOINTS

WITH YITZAKH Shamir taking over as Israeli Prime Minister, attention is focussing again on the reactionary currents he represents, including his past association with the German Nazis and with terrorism.

It is easy to lose track of the fact that the whole Zionist state and its history have a reactionary, racist and pro-imperialist logic to them.

Zionism set out to colonise Palestine and establish its own state there: a state that would have Jewish capitalists exploiting Jewish workers, with no room for anyone else. This inevitably meant driving out the Palestinian Arabs who had lived there for centuries.

The head of the Jewish Agency's Colonisation Department in this was abundantly clear:

"In this country there is no room for both peoples together... The only solution is Palestine without Arabs and there is no other way but to transfer all the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries... not one village, not one tribe should be left behind."

Such a project could not work if it were left entirely to the Zionist settlers to carry out. They ultimately needed a vast military apparatus to take and hold the territory they sought. But the huge Israeli war machine has always been beyond the resources of the country's economy to maintain. It has had to be paid for by the United States, and there is a quid pro quo: Israel has played the role of local policeman for imperialism.

In 1956 Israel joined together with Britain and France to seize the Suez Canal from Egypt, after Nasser nationalised it. This adventure was unpopular in Washington and the Israelis had to pull back, but in 1967 they launched another war aimed at intimidating the radical nationalist regimes in Egypt and Syria.

(There is a widespread myth



A Palestinian youth is arrested on the occupied West Bank

The case against the Zionist state

according to which Israel was faced with destruction by the Arab states in 1967, and therefore had to strike first. But prominent Israeli military figures have admitted that the Arab forces were really far too weak to jeopardize the country's survival.)

Most recently Israeli forces invaded Lebanon in 1982, in an attempt to smash the Palestine Liberation Organisation and impose a government dominated by the fascist Phalange organisation.

SO ISRAEL has served imperialism well. But it would be a mistake to view its rulers as mere puppets of the western great powers.



Victims of the Deir Yassin massacre in 1948

to the notorious massacre of Deir Yassin. In 1981 I visited a refugee camp in Beirut where I met Arab boys in Jerusalem, who were unable to return. Two weeks later I was in Jerusalem, meeting Zionist immigrants from Australia who lived in relative luxury on what had been Arab land.

By the time of my visit, of course, the growth of the PLO had forced world public opinion to recognize the existence of the Palestinians. Most sensible people had come to agree that "something should be done for them". Much discussion these days focusses on the idea of a separate Palestinian state in the West Bank.

THAT, however, would not solve the problem, even if Israel were to agree to it.

Such a "mini-state" would be economically dependent on Israel, and politically and militarily it would also be subjugated. Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, aimed at dispersing the meagre forces possessed in that country by the PLO, make it clear that the Zionists will never tolerate a viable, independent Palestinian military force.

Certainly, the Palestinians won't get much help from the existing Arab states. The governments of Syria and Jordan have both used their armies to inflict major military defeats on the PLO, and they treat Palestinian refugees with callous disregard.

The only force that can transform this situation is the working class throughout the region. Primarily, that means the Arab workers both inside and outside Israel's borders. Both the reactionary Arab regimes and the racist, pro-imperialist Israeli state would have to be overthrown. That would be a socialist solution — one which is remote today, unfortunately.

Without it, the existing Zionist state will continue to oppress its neighbours. And in the process, it will continue making life fairly unpleasant and insecure even for the Jewish colonists who once imagined that Zionism offered them a solution for their problems.

Given this situation, our sympathies and whatever support we can offer go to the Palestinian resistance. While we oppose the terrorism to which some Palestinian groups resort from time to time out of desperation, we always place the blame where it belongs: on the Zionist war machine which is the main source of terror for the inhabitants of the Middle East.

— Tom O'Linn

REVIEWS

America's Cup mini-series just mythed out

I CAME across a ridiculous looking crowd in Melbourne's City Mall the other day.

There were several hundred of them, gazing adoringly. The object of their veneration was a large glass case, or rather, its contents—the America's Cup. The crowd stared, the Cup stood, the crowd stared some more. Behind the Cup, four security guards shifted and squirmed in embarrassment.

I mention this curious scene, because it was the perfect postscript to *The Challenge*, last month's TV mini-series about the Cup. After the event came the myth, and after the myth, the adoration of the myth.

The Challenge set out to recreate the myth. And, let's be fair, it was slick. Even the race scenes were exciting, if only real yacht races took two minutes instead of five hours.

The star, of course, was Alan Bond. Bond was portrayed just as the ruling class would like to see itself: as an aggressive go-getter who gets the job done for Australia.

"Bondy" has the rat-cunning to outsmart the Yanks, like when he keeps Ben Lexcen in hospital to deter them from attacking a sick man. He has the ruthlessness required with his own underlings; he hides from Lexcen the accusations that the New York Yacht Club has made against the originality of his designs. Only once is Bond's character passingly questioned, when he arrogantly takes a ticket from a crewman so that a Perth socialite can attend a ball.

The real Alan Bond is undoubtedly a ruthless go-getter. But these qualities are less admirable than *The Challenge* makes out.

Prior to the last America's Cup, Bond sacked 7000 Walton workers. Crying poor mouths, he claimed he could not even afford decent redundancy pay. Latest estimates of Bond's wealth are \$200 million.

Self-aggrandisement was Bond's prime motive in contesting the America's Cup. His first challenge in 1974 aimed to promote his speculative Yanchep Sun City venture in WA. That failed, but he candidly admits his challenges all paid off in giving him credibility and contacts in the British and US money markets. These have doubtless proved handy in recent tacker

triumphs.

Eileen Bond is portrayed just as Australian bosses would like to see their women: a sort of upper-class Drover's Wife. She stoically cops the bitchiness of the New York Yacht Club matrons, is uncomplaining when Bond sits up to fret all night before the final race, and generally dispenses bonhomie like a priest with holy water. She like a very model of what a *Reader's Digest* wife should be.

Ben Lexcen comes across as a bit of a bozo. He thinks he's had a heart attack when the doctors just had the wires crossed, and he sulks below deck during the final race. Since Lexcen is not exactly renowned for his left-wing views, you wonder what he did to cop such treatment. But it's all part of yet another myth. Creative minds like Lexcen are so surely that we need entrepreneurs like Bond to bring their ideas to fruition, don't we?

Since *The Challenge* is not intended for US consumption, the writers bravely save their big serve for the Yanks. The New York Yacht Club are scheming charlatans, out to disqualify Bond by any means. Denis Conner is a swaggering cock of the wharf, bellying insults at John Bertrand from his boat. Even his tears at the end are those of a playground bully who has received his comeuppance.

Now I've no particular brief for the New York Yacht Club or Conner, but why this over-the-top Aussie chauvinism? The answer, I suspect, lies in the symbolism of the Cup itself.

It started out, remember, 135 years ago in races between US and British millionaires. It was the perfect stage for the American Old Rich around Newport to play out their schizophrenia. They assiduously aped the manners of the British establishment—the mansions, the social whirl, the languorous pastimes like yacht racing. Yet the show was a chance to symbolically show Britannia that it no longer ruled the waves. It was a chance for a rising imperialist nation to give the Mother Country a good hard kick under the skirts. And none kicked harder or dirtier than the New York Yacht Club.

Today, the America's Cup lets our bourgeoisie play out its schizophrenia towards the US. It needs the US as an ally, to provide an umbrella for its own



Alan and Eileen Bond exult over the Cup: a new mythology

interests in South East Asia. Its popular culture emanates from the US.

Yet Australian nationalism needs to assert its own identity separate from America's. Hence, the ferocious portrayal of Americans in *The Challenge*. Hence, too, the worship of the America's Cup in the Mall, just as an earlier generation went wild over winning the Davis Cup.

With any luck, the New Zealanders will take the damn Cup. And then off we nest February and then their ruling class can act out its neuroses towards the rest of the world.

The Challenge for us will be to ignore the whole bloody thing.

— Ken Stevens

TELEVISION

'Dizzy' spins a fine yarn

A HIGHLIGHT of my TV viewing week is *Five Times Dizzy* on SBS on Thursday evenings. Mareeka's yaya (grandma), recently arrived from Greece as central to the story as young Mareeka herself.

Newtown is in stark contrast to yaya's island home, so Mareeka must find a diversion to lift her mind from her depression. A grandmother's depression. A grandmother's depression. The CBS shows the there's nothing for Greeks, and little

more for anyone else.

The TV version captures the whimsy of Nadia Wheatley's book. Yaya's magic saves Mareeka from total preservation by the blond Wilsons.

Wheatley says her writing is for anyone who enjoys it — the casting of books into children's and adults' lessons both worlds. Her central characters are years apart in age. But, unlike in most kid's books, both grownups and children are fully developed people.

For showing how life is in working class Newtown, Wheatley has been denied as a mere propagandist. *The House That Was Eureka*, which came out last year, brings to life a Depression eviction struggle as a ghost story, interwoven with the present.

However, *Five Times Dizzy* is optimistic. From the bright colours to the steadily increasing solidarity of Smith's Sid, it must be a real delight for inner Sydney kids to see themselves and their (only slightly idealised) lifestyle on TV for once. Let's hope that SBS survives to bring us more of this kind of program.

— Mary Gorman

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SOCIALIST ACTION — PAGE 15

The Pope pushes his dope

IF RELIGION is the opium of the people, then Australia is playing host to the world's biggest dope peddler.

But the Pope's tour has very little to do with religion, or at least with what religion professes to be. Its commercialism is rampant.

The tour is being sponsored by such divinely inspired organisations as SA Brewing, Mercedes-Benz, and those friends of Aboriginal sacred sites, Gonarc Rio Tinto. A director of the Pope's tour, Father Anthony Kain, heroically defends the booze sponsorship (complete with souvenir Papat beer cans) by saying, "Alcohol is a gift from God and part of the Christian tradition. Jesus drank ... He turned water into wine."

Tour merchandisers are flogging over 100 souvenirs, ranging from rosaries to Papal tea towels, so that you can wipe your dishes with the Pope's face. These are "a must for every Catholic," according to the catalogue. They are certainly a must for the Church, which will earn a million dollars from its ten per cent cut.

The Church is quite shameless about milking its parishioners. Last year it began a special collection from Catholics, called "Peter's Pence," because the Vatican's earnings from tourism could no longer finance its lavish lifestyle. Its billions worth of art treasures and landholdings could not be touched, because these "constitute a treasure for all of humanity." (Presumably, paintings have to be in the Vatican's hands rather than some public gallery's to do so.)

Quite a few Peter's Pence will be spent on such essentials as a specially sculptured, one-use-only \$350,000 podium for the Pope's mass at Randwick racecourse. Eight hundred priests, all in specially designed vestments, will be on the podium with him. The extravagance and wastefulness are mind-boggling.

THE PRIME purpose of the Pope's trip, however, is to rally the faithful rather than to just rip them off.

Rallying the faithful has become an almost full-time task for John Paul II, when he is not trying to patch up scandals involving the Vatican Bank. In his eight years as Pope, he has made over 25 overseas tours. In the next ten months, he is also due to Chile, Argentina, Germany, Poland and the US.

This is not just as some cynics suggest, because he is a compulsive globetrotter. It relates to the particular historical circum-



The Pope, upright and ailsrick

stances that the Church finds itself in today.

Back in the good old Dark Ages, Popes had it pretty easy. Church and state were inextricably intertwined. The state guaranteed the Church its power, and in return the doctrine of "the Divine Right of kings" guaranteed the monarchies theirs. For the peasants, the Church's message was, in the immortal words of poet Joe Hill, "Work all day, live on hay, you'll have pie in the sky when you die."

All that changed with the advent of capitalism. The rising bourgeoisie, based on industrial production, overthrew the old religious dogmas. "Science" and "enlightenment" were the words inscribed on its bannerhead. The Church was reduced to a support act for the system, defending the institutions of the family, marriage and sexual repression.

Since the War, the Church's problems have multiplied. The long boom in the West and the anti-colonial revolution in the Third World have made its promises of a better life after death even more irrelevant. Bloody science stepped in again, with the birth control pill, and then along came Women's Liberation. The effects inside the Church were shattering.

POPE John XXIII tried to absorb the growing pressures on the Church by the second Vatican Council in the early sixties.

Vatican Two trifled the Church a little, opening the door



with Alec Kahn

Instead, John Paul II is trying to hold the whole show together with sheer Papal authority. Hence the frenetic trips, especially to the Third World, to draw out the crowds and reinforce his standing. Hence, too, the calculated acts of humility — the ground kissing, the beatific smiles, the greetings in the language of his host country — to show that he is a man of the people, even if he is a miserable reactionary.

BUT THERE is another side to the story.

Many struggles against oppression have taken on religious forms. Iran, Poland, and Northern Ireland are all modern examples. As Leon Trotsky observed:

"The attempt to disguise its first rebel steps with 'legality, both sacred and secular' has from time to time immemorial characterised the struggle of every revolutionary class, before it gathered sufficient strength and confidence to break the umbilical cord which bound it to the old society."

The Catholic Church, with its penchant for doing deals to remain legal under hostile regimes, is especially prone to become such a rallying point. So it is critical that socialists do not take a sectarian attitude towards its followers.

On the other hand, the Church will invariably try to derail such revolutionary movements. That is why, with the rising ferment in Poland, a Polish Pope was elected to reinforce the Church's authority. It is why John Paul II counselled such extreme moderation to Lech Walesa, never the most radical of leaders in the first place.

Philippines in 1980, one dismayed radical priest said, "He was so pro-government I couldn't believe it."

Of course, this does not always work. Solidarity in Poland went a good deal further than the Church wanted it to. The Pope was drowned out by angry crowds in Nicaragua when he criticised the revolution. And recently he was greeted by riots in Holland by dissident Catholics wanting liberation over sexual issues.

Australia, by contrast, will be a holiday for him. The most dissension he will meet will be from the dignitaries falling about to kiss his hem. He had better enjoy it while it lasts.

Me, I'll just wipe my hands on a Papal tea towel.

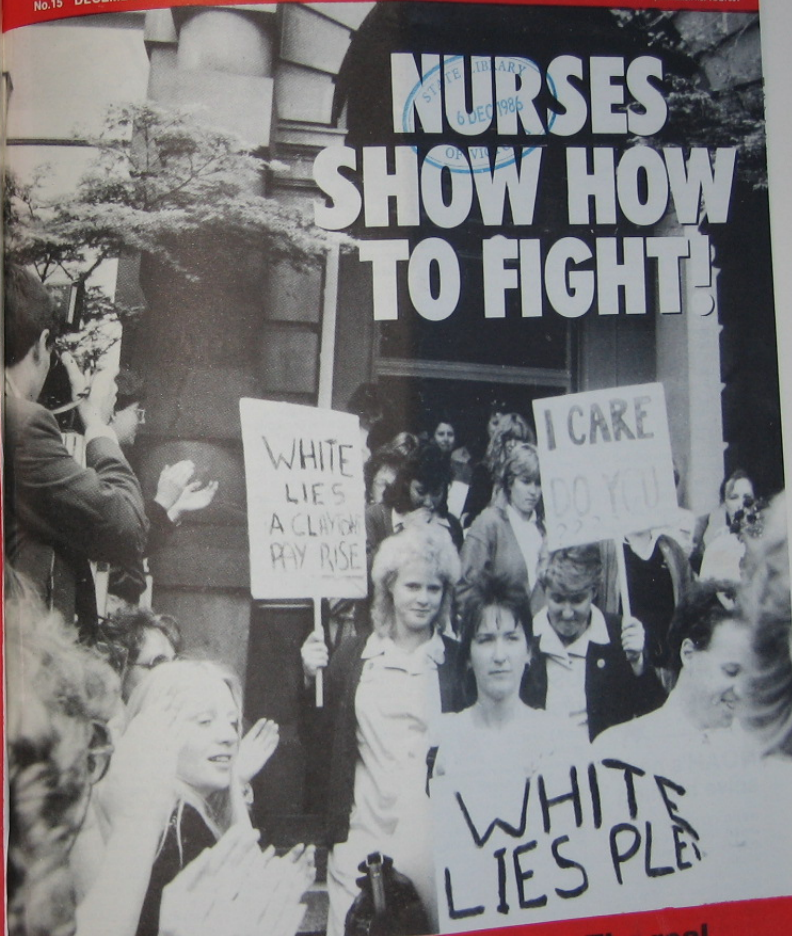
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• Cory picks her side
 • Kids, sex and Alison Thorne
 • The real Xmas story

PLUS: BUMPER HOLIDAY TRIVIA QUIZ

CAT'S EYE

RHINE RUIN

A profitable poisoning

LAST month a Swiss chemical company produced West Europe's answer to the Russian nuclear accident at Chernobyl.

A fire at the Sandoz warehouse in Basle sent 30 tonnes of deadly chemicals pouring into the Rhine river. Within days, 300 kilometres of the river was completely lifeless.

Half a million fish and uncountable numbers of smaller creatures were dead. The river's whole food chain has been completely shattered and it will be five to ten years before it begins to return to normal. The lives of millions of people in four countries have been disrupted.

That may not be the end of the story. The chemicals may yet seep into the region's water table and emerge in the future in irrigation and drinking water.

Like most of these "tragic accidents", Chernobyl (as the episode was quickly dubbed) was all too avoidable. Swiss government safety standards are notoriously slack. It was only days before the fire and spill that the Sandoz warehouse had been inspected and declared safe!

But the company itself shares the blame. In 1981 it rejected an insurance company's recommendation that it upgrade its safety measures and found itself a more pliant (and cheaper) insurer.

Similarly, within days of the spill, other chemical companies down river were pouring their waste into the water assuming it would go unnoticed.

While these industries are run not for the usefulness (if any) of their products, but for the profits they generate, these ecological crimes will go on recurring.

DRUGS

NOAH's marks solve nothing

OPERATION NOAH, the annual reunion of police and drug informers, was held last month.

Commander Eric Sutton, Federal Police coordinator of the exercise, claimed a national total of 8000 calls. Sutton commented that 61% of the calls provided vital information "about the identity and location of drug traffickers".

Of course, the threshold at which a user becomes a trafficker

is very low, according to the law. Drug-related information provided by "ordinary" people is largely about other "ordinary" people.

The day also saw two anti-NOAH exercises. A Sydney road station staged a mock Operation NOAH which invited people to do in major crime figures.

In Melbourne, 30 demonstrators gathered in the City Square. A speaker from NORML (National Organisation for Reform of Marijuana Laws) said that NOAH was a "witchhunt" against people who grew their own marijuana, rather than hard drug dealers.

Any genuine crackdown on hard drug trafficking is not, of course, too many business figures, police and prison authorities would themselves be implicated. With charming hypocrisy, the system locks up prisoners for drug-related crimes. Then prison authorities line their own pockets by permitting regular supplies of drugs to jails as a means of managing them.

Operation NOAH, like the Neighbourhood Watch scheme, is far more about co-opting sections of the population into helping the police with surveillance, than about solving drug and crime problems.

What we really need is an operation to get rid of the poverty and alienation that cause drug addiction and petty crime. That's called Operation Socialism, and we all know where the cops stand on that one.

As for NOAH, it's a definite no-goer.

LABOR GOVT

US bosses reassured

HOWEVER much they may grumble publicly about the "socialists" in Canberra, amongst themselves the employers sing a different tune.

Will Bailey of the ANZ Bank recently addressed the American-Australian Business Association on the subject of the Labor Party.

"It's nothing to be frightened of. Itudes have a vast minority, a socialist left wing, which has been well reported but hasn't been listened to. In fact, in recent times the economic behavior of the Labor Government has looked more like the policies of the conservative Liberal Party."

With praise like that from its enemies, no wonder Labor is so busily ditching its friends.



Poisoned eels: 300 km of river rendered lifeless

READERS WRITE

Ill judged

I cannot agree with Denis Alsop in his article "Justice for Just Us" (*Socialist Action* No. 14) that Terry Sheahan's Judicial Commission is "a threat to any political activist".

Frankly, I don't give a damn what happens to the members of the judiciary, whether they be right-wingers like Street or "progressives" like Murphy.

Indeed, I disagree with Denis's main idea that the Judicial Commission should be seen as a centralisation of state power. To my mind, the Commission is a cosmetic political device aimed at rebutting the Liberal Party's accusations of judicial corruption, nothing more, nothing less.

The history of the last few years — the election of Reagan and Thatcher and the course of the Nicaraguan revolution — indicates a turn away from state centralization rather than towards it. Denis recognises that judges all come from "privileged and upper class backgrounds."

The truth is that the judges are already totally integrated into the system. They are already part of the state power.

Denis also talks about "maverick" judges. He mentions Foord, and Staples in passing. Presumably he would also regard Murphy as a maverick.

The point, it appears to me, is that so-called maverick judges, like Murphy in Australia, and Denning in Britain, actually perform a valuable role for capitalism. To a limited extent they give the legal system ideological acceptability whilst

at the same time making it more responsive to the present day needs of capital.

The ruling class doesn't need judicial commissions to deal with the Murphys, the Foords and the Staples of this world. They can hound Murphy to his death, force Foord off the bench through ill health, and as for Staples — he hasn't had an Arbitration case for years.

It's just that this process is a bit too messy politically for the NSW Labor Government. The Judicial Commission is designed to make the job a clean one.

John Ryan,
Canberra

More, please

We were pleased to see your article on the bread and butter issue of the proposed two tier wage system.

We would like, however, to see a follow up of this article from a workers' perspective which:

- Demystifies the co-optive jargon of conciliation and arbitration
- Provides some explanation of the day to day mechanics of such a wage system and its effects on union officials, delegates and rank-and-file militants

The article would hopefully suggest feasible analyses and strategies for workers to fight against such a system rather than within it.

Looking forward to the next copy of *Socialist Action*.

Lisa Ward, Pam Gregory,
Barry Lewis
Sydney

SOCIALIST ACTION welcomes letters from readers. Please try to keep them under 300 words. Address all correspondence to P.O. Box 274, Brunswick, Vic. 3056.

COVER STORY

Nurses' strike: Sisters are doing it for themselves — and us

AS WE go to press, Victoria's nurses are in week five of their epic strike, with the result still in the balance.

Whatever the outcome, the strike has assumed historic dimensions. It will shape the industrial politics of a whole profession for a generation to come.

The nurses' grievances are undeniable. The job is overstressed, underpaid, and under-recognised in terms of a decent career structure. The result is a staggering turnover of nurses, and an endemic shortage. A Royal Children's Hospital picketeer said:

"Hundreds of beds have closed here due to the shortage of nurses. The waiting lists are getting longer and longer. Nurses with very little experience are being left in charge of whole areas — it's physically and emotionally exhausting."

The story is repeated at the Alfred and the Royal Melbourne, which have had 250 unfilled beds. The strain on nurses is the same at all of the forty-odd hospitals which have struck.

After last year's strike, the state's Industrial Commission handed down a new award to supposedly solve all this. Nurses sat down in working parties with hospital administrators to make submissions grading themselves into the award's new career structure.

DAVID White's Health Department treated these joint submissions with contempt.

At Royal Melbourne, nurses and administrators agreed that only one job fitted the Grade supervision needed). All others were Grade Two or above. White's department came back with the stunning decision that 254 jobs in the hospital would be Grade One only. Aside from the insult, it meant a maximum pay rise for those nurses of just \$7 a week.

It was the same elsewhere. A nurse at one hospital found herself a charge nurse at one pay, a deputy charge nurse at the next, and a Grade One at the next.

Midwives were worst hit. They were all classified as Grade One. In the past they could boost their pay up to 15% with their certifications. Now they could only get



Nurses at a RANF rally: an epic struggle

5% extra.

Labour had clearly set aside a certain sum of money (probably not the \$54 million it claims) and manipulated the classifications to fit it.

AT FIRST, the RANF went on a skeleton staff strike. Then Western General and St Vincents walked out on total strike, staffing only the critical and casualty areas.

Both hospitals reflect the new mood amongst nurses. Both have become militant in the last three years. St Vincents took industrial action just two months before the walk-out. Even so, nurses there discussed their action for 1½ hours before an overwhelming mood to go out became clear.

The strike snowballed, more hospitals joining in every day. Box Hill, which met early and voted not to strike, changed its mind with the gathering momentum. Pickets sprang up outside every hospital.

Talk to any picketing nurse for ten minutes, and you will be told: "We're pretty naive industrially..."

The strike has been an object lesson to many supposedly more militant unions. Despite the nurses' lack of industrial "tradition" — or perhaps because of it — the dispute has been one of the best-run in years.

It has centred on rank-and-file activity: meetings, picket lines, marches and fund-raising. Members who, after five weeks, there is little sign of demoralisation and Irene Bolger gets standing ovations from mass meetings.

The marches have been quite remarkable. For those of us used to passive parades up the street, the sight of 100 exuberant community nurses chanting,

"What do we want? Wage justice! When do we want it? A year ago!" and thrusting leaflets into every hand and onto every windscreen that they pass is quite

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inspiring. The pickets have had a dual role. Increasingly, they have entered the hospitals of medically non-essential supplies. And they have been a continuing public focus. Supporters have been able to drop in with donations, food, wood for fires, or just to chat. The "Toot To Support Us" signs got so much response that one administrator at St Vincents could not work because of the noise.

Like most public sector workers, the nurses have had few illusions that their strike is "non-political". Mellon community nurses, for example, leafleted in Health Minister White's electorate. Nurses peppered the press with letters, rang up talk-back shows, and the RANF has had a daily radio program with strike news and arguments on 3CR.

This battle to win public sympathy has paid off.

Some random examples from amongst many: two nurses collected \$800 for the strike fund in a day in Melbourne's Mall; wharfies addressed by two nurses gave \$2300; workers in the Department of Industrial Relations in Canberra sent \$800; and a benefit concert raised \$3200.

MOST impressive of all has been the nurses' disrespect for the sacred cows of industrial relations.

Early on, Trades Hall got other hospital unions together, hoping to take the dispute from RANF hands and give it to the readily Disputes Committee, which DLP unions set up 30 years ago for just such contingencies.

A thousand nurses marched on the meeting, chanting "No interference!" A couple of hundred went inside, making sure that the gathered union officials voted to support them.

Just as impressive was their refusal to go back "so the case can proceed" in the Industrial Commission". The RANF had bitter experiences of being run around by deputy commissioners Rousey and Garlick (both ex-union leaders), who was then adjourned their case before the strike.

The RANF's resoluteness forced the Commission to drop the bluff that no negotiation or arbitration could occur while the

(Continued page 4)

DEEP down, he's such a sofie ... Dona Avelina, mother of tottering Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, described his problems last month.

"To get on, he must kill all his enemies. He isn't strong enough of them. But he's always been like that."

VICTORIA'S police force is changing the words on its badge. The motto used to be the French "Tenez le Droit". Now it's the English "Uphold the Right". Nice to see they're being frank about their biases at last ...

A BRISBANE reader reports that the National Party has chosen the condom as its official emblem.

The reason is that it stands for inflation, halts production, gives protection to pickets, and gives one a false sense of security while being screwed.

"LISTEN my dear, what you must realise is that I make my decisions based on political reality — not some notion of what's right or just."

—Victorian Education Minister Ian Cathie telling gay rights activist Alison Thorne why she will never back again.

CAPITALIST ethics can be so tricky, can't they?

In a sidelight to Wall Street's insider trading scandal, R. Foster Winan, the "Head on the Street" columnist for the Wall



CHEAP SHOTS

Street Journal, has admitted that in 1983 he agreed to give advance notice of his column to a stockbroker.

Winan rejected an offer of \$25,000 per leak. He

•DIRECTOR of Queensland Institute of Technology, Dr Gibson, is almost along amongst academics in supporting Alan Bond's plan for a private university on the Gold Coast.

Come America's Cup finals firm, one of the privileged guests aboard Bond's new \$30 million motor yacht Southern Cross III will be — you guessed it — director of Queensland Institute of Technology, Dr Gibson.

Question: Is this just a pay-off for services rendered? Or is it an early fringe benefit of the vice-chancellor's job at Bond University?

demand a portion of any gains instead. Winan explains, "Paying per story I knew to be the same thing as a bribe. Our arrangement was profit-sharing. I don't take bribes."

LABOR zealots who think ID cards will stop tax evasion, might like to think again.

A shop in Times Square, New York, will furnish anyone with a fake ID for \$15. Phoney birth certificates cost \$27.

THE STATE capitalist regimes of Hungary and Yugoslavia have each contracted with McDonald's to set up five junk food restaurants next year. Profits will be split 50-50.

Rumours that the Big Mac will be renamed Big Marx in honour of its advance for "socialism" are definitely untrue.

INTERNATIONAL

CORAZON Aquino's government has not suffered a sudden crisis of instability over the past month. It has been unstable from the start.

Brought to power by the contradictory forces of the military and "people's power", it is a fragile coalition of the anti-Marcos ruling class and sections of the left, the right and the armed forces. Its programme getting rid of Marcos — could not hold it together for long.

It finally busted apart when Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile began his long-expected moves toward power. Enrile, a left-over from the Marcos clique but powerful in military circles, was never particularly loyal. It seems that he knew in advance of a theatrical "coup" attempt by pro-Marcos forces some months back, but did not inform Aquino. He probably saw it as a dress rehearsal for his own manoeuvres.

Enrile attacked Aquino some weeks ago over the prolonged negotiations with the insurgent New Peoples Army (NPA) and over her refusal to call new elections. He also hinted darkly about government corruption, but that was just populist window-dressing.

Both sides began to seek military support. Aquino met with key military leaders. Enrile toured the provincial military commanders, seeking support and if necessary, guns. One commander estimated that he had 70% support in the military.



Aquino views Olalia's body; on the army's side

Philippines: Cory chooses her side

publicity cultivated by Enrile. General Ramos was against it. Most importantly of all, the US was against any attempt to destabilise Aquino. It rushed to declare its support when Enrile was gone.

Enrile was just outmanoeuvred. His provocations were turned against him, and Aquino and Ramos emerged the winners.

YET AQUINO has taken up Enrile's programme with a vengeance.

Aquino was saved by a deal struck with General Ramos. The price was an attack on Filipino workers and peasants. The purge of "incompetent" (read leftwing) ministers has begun. The NPA and the National Democratic Front (NDF) — the coalition presided over by the Communist Party — were given a week to come to terms.

Aquino declared, "It is clear the extreme Left has no interest in the peace I have continuously offered."

This was simply untrue. As Aquino's position on ceasefire

talks has hardened, the NPA/NDF has become more conciliatory. This is because they believe that "Cory Aquino and some liberals in her government are more open and receptive to the democratic aspirations of the people."

Earlier this year, they may have been some truth in that. Today, Aquino has placed herself firmly on the side of a military machine that is just as brutal as it was under Marcos. When the Filipino ruling class decides that firmer action is needed against workers and peasants, this machine will carry it out.

The disastrous economic situation pushes them that way. The foreign debt is over \$40 billion. Negotiations to reschedule it collapsed in November. The World Bank is demanding a 20% devaluation and an end to local protection.

So life for ordinary Filipinos has changed little in bread and butter terms since Marcos left. Pressure on unionists has certainly been kept up.

Since Aquino came to power, at least 15 people have died on picket lines. Armed thugs still attack strikers. Despite a "leftist" Labour Minister, the military still intervenes in strikes.

Most notably, the head of the KMU union federation, Rolando Olalia, was brutally murdered on November 12. Again, it seemed to have been an Enrile-inspired provocation, designed to see how the workers' movement reacted.

The result was disappointing. The day after the murder, a leader of the left People's Party said:

"We call on all freedom-loving Filipinos to once more leave their homes and pour onto the streets to defend our newly-gained freedom from these forces in the same manner we did last February."

Next day, 3000 marched on Enrile's headquarters. By "people's power" standards, that is not very many. A general strike on November 17 brought out far fewer workers than its organisers predicted.

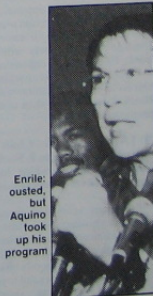
The ruling class could only draw one conclusion: the workers' movement was unable to retaliate against the murder of one of its leaders. Perhaps the fact that many KMU leaders went into hiding created problems of organisation. Perhaps workers were afraid to expose themselves while a military coup seemed possible. Perhaps they were waiting for Aquino to call the "people's power" legions into the streets to reach the military a lesson.

She did not do so. Instead, she relied on one section of the military to deal with another.

Filipino workers can no longer expect the re-formed Aquino government to help them; they must now rely on their own strength and mobilisation.

Mrs Aquino has chosen her side. The workers' movement must do likewise.

— David Lockwood



Enrile ousted, but Aquino took up his program

FROM PAGE 3

Nurses' strike

strike went on.

That pressure already appears to have persuaded White to capitulate some what on the claim for student and first year nurses.

IF THE strike has had a weakness, it flows, paradoxically, from one of its great strengths.

Irene Bolger's leadership to date has been better than any comparable leftwing official's in recent years. Despite the magnificent rank-and-file involvement, this has created a somewhat excessive reliance on her.

For example, moves to get solidarity action from other unions have occurred only at the official level. The Latrobe Valley power station operators, who wanted to go out, were stalled by their leaders. Joint action has probably not even been seriously broached with the Hospital Employees Federation, which has had poisonous relations with the RANF at official level. Yet at individual hospitals, such as the Royal Children's, HEF members could be reasonably approachable if rank-and-file nurses did it.

To their credit, Bolger and her fellow officials began a strike bulletin and daily meetings of the picket line reps in the third week of the strike. This is important in creating a layer of activists who are informed on a day-by-day basis of the detailed running of the strike, so that any ground given by Bolger to any pressure from the Commission and ACTU can be critically assessed.



Nurses march through the centre of Melbourne

AS IN any great struggle, the nurses are finding some of their own ideas under challenge too.

For example, as a traditionally "conservative" profession, many nurses accepted what they had read about the BLF, even when the press began giving them some of the same treatment. Some nurses even asked BLF members to leave one early RANF rally which they had turned up to support.

But BLF members continued to support the picketers, dropping in fire wood daily and the like. Slowly, attitudes are changing, at least amongst a minority. Said one nurse at the Queen Vic:

"I feel so guilty. I never supported the BLF. I never went and talked to anyone about what I was doing, I just believed what I read."

Likewise, many nurses had great faith in the police — an

attitude born of working with them in casualty areas. The police did their best to encourage this, even reducing their numbers at the Western General picket line from ten to one when nurses complained. Commissioner Mick Miller told David White he could not count on police to break the pickets, a statement that rallying nurses loudly cheered.

By the fourth week, the attitude was slowly changing. Some nurses at the Royal Women's, for example, were getting sick of the constant police presence.

Finally, the charade ended. Without warning, 50 police dragged picketers at the Royal Melbourne aside across the gravel, bruising and choking them. Twice they escorted linen vans through the picket.

Since the linen was not an essential supply, this was un-

doubtedly a manoeuvre by the government to demoralise the strikers just before a key mass meeting. It failed, but it showed nurses just where the police really stood in a crunch.

Most of all, however, the strike is challenging nurses' own ideas about themselves as workers and as women.

One feminist nurse summed it up best:

"For centuries, women have been told that they are submissive and powerless, and nursing just reinforces that. For the first time, thousands of nurses here are finding that they do have power, that they can change their own lives, and that's what I find really exciting about this strike."

That, too, is what every supporter of striking class struggle finds exciting about the RANF's stand. Win, lose or draw, nursing — and nurses — will never be the same again.

— Alec Kahn

INTERNATIONAL



Chun and Reagan embrace, police teargas Seoul marchers

LAST month's arrest of 1,200 students occupying Konkuk University has again focused attention on the seamy side of South Korea's "economic miracle".

The country's campuses have been in turmoil for a year. There have been hundreds of protest marches and thousands of arrests. The Konkuk arrests alone inspired protests on 19 other campuses.

The student unrest is a symptom of a far deeper crisis in South Korea. It is a crisis that is the regime of Chun Doo Hwan is desperately trying to hide under a veneer of "stability" as Seoul prepares to host the 1988 Olympics.

The last thing Chun can afford between now and the Olympics is a repeat of the 1980 revolt that seized the city of Kwangju. Then, students and workers occupied factories, schools and public buildings, and raided the armories. Only the firepower of the US-armed Seoul regime defeated them, and the event still inspires protestors.

At the moment, Chun is succeeding in keeping the lid on. Before hosting the Asian Games a couple of months ago, he arrested over a thousand students workers and opposition party members. The foreign press dutifully called this "a forbearing attitude". Immediately afterwards, Chun arrested opposition MP Yoo Sung Hwan for urging him to stress reunification with North Korea rather than anti-communism.

UNDERLYING Chun's political problems is South Korea's economy, which has begun to look far less miraculous lately.

For many years, low wages and little government control made Korea seem a good place for foreign capital, especially in cheap consumer goods like clothing, textiles, shoes and toys. Korea had a thriving export-

Is Chun's Korea slowly coming to an end?

oriented economy and political stability. But in the 1980s, all this is changing.

Many shipbuilding and construction companies almost went bust last year, along with the government banks which were forced to support them. Without the intervention of the banks and the government, the economy would have collapsed.

It is no secret that South Korea, along with Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand, is in America's front line against "communist" expansion in Asia. America (and Britain in the case of Hong Kong) poured capital into these countries after the Chinese revolution in 1949.

The US cannot afford to let these countries go bankrupt and default on their massive debt to American banks, which now stands at \$43 billion.

The Korean ruling class has willingly allowed foreign banks to operate, even though it keeps its stock market out of bounds to foreigners. With its reliance on exports, South Korea's economy is heavily bound up with the world market.

The downturn in international trade has affected the shipbuilding industry in Britain, Europe and Japan, and Korea has not been immune. New orders have dropped 58%, and South Korean shipyards have laid off thousands of workers.

Many displaced workers found jobs in the textile industry, but that now faces similar problems. The US, previously a big importer of Asian textiles, is now trying to cut the entry of these products to the big

American market. Korea also developed an electronics industry. But low wages were not enough to sustain growth, because the high level of technology required massive capital investment. Now that prices for microchips are falling, Korea's electronics industry, just like Silicon Valley in the US, is in trouble. The downturn in the world economy is exacerbating the problem.

WORKERS in South Korea face particular problems which have made their response to this crisis somewhat sporadic.

Chun Doo Hwan's military regime introduced labour laws in 1980 which make it an offence for individuals or political parties to help workers organise at the shop level.

But interestingly, when strikes do occur, workers are usually charged with unlawful assembly or violent behaviour, rather than with breaking the labour laws.

Union membership has fallen since 1980. But the number of strike days last year was at the high levels of the late 1970s. Most of the militant workers are in the electronics and textiles industries, where women are 50% and 80% of the workforce respectively.

The prospects for women after they leave school are considerably lower than for men. Nine out of ten low-paid workers are women. So they have little to lose and a lot to gain by militant action.

One reason for the rising militancy among women and young workers is the influence of

ex-students, who were radicalised on the campuses in the 1970s.

A strike at a car plant last year saw a split between the older workers and the younger militants, who decided to take the lead in a fight over wages. While the strike was partly successful, the young leaders ended up in jail.

POLITICAL opposition to Chun's military regime largely centres on the New Korean Democratic Party (NKDP) and the Korean National Party (KNP).

Both are middle class parties, with no formal links to the labour movement. The NKDP, the more liberal of the two, is more interested in constitutional change that will allow it to capture political power than in defending workers' interests. (Yet ironically, it was the arrest of NKDP leader Kim Dae Jung that sparked the Kwangju uprising in 1980.)

So it is to smaller groups like the semi-underground Seoul Labour Movement and the church-backed Urban Industrial Mission that socialists must look to for any radical potential. Both have forged tentative links with the South Korean working class. But they have been hampered by the laws against "outside interference" which have built a legal wall around the unions.

The authorities recently raided the SLM and arrested 15 members for allegedly "serving the interests of North Korea". Two leaders of this group were ex-students who got jobs in factories after graduating.

The real opposition to South Korea's oppressive system is going to come from these rebellious layers of workers and students, who are not prepared to put up with economic crisis and state repression and who see through the constitutional manoeuvres of the NKDP and KNP.

— Ross McKenzie

THE RULING CLASS

The FBT: Bosses stand up for their rorts

WHAT is the Fringe Benefits Tax about? And why are bosses like Bob Ansett getting so hot up about it?

Imagine for a moment that you are a middle ranking executive earning a relatively "modest" \$60,000 per year. This means you pay 60 cents in the dollar tax on everything you earn above \$35,000.

Till now, there has been an easy way to lessen your tax burden. It's called a tax package. Instead of getting a straight \$60,000 in cash, the company pays you, say, \$40,000 plus fringe benefits to the value of \$20,000.

Fringe benefits come in many forms. It may be that you, the executive, are buying a house. The company could lend you \$50,000 interest free. And your children go to a private school, don't they? Well, the company can pay their school fees.

You'll obviously need a car for "business" reasons. (On the quiet, you can also use it for private purposes and charge the petrol to the company.)

There is also a lot of entertaining associated with your job. The company can give you an allowance to cover any costs and will pay your spouse a tax-free \$80 per week to prepare meals. You'll also be making a lot of work calls from home. The company will pay all your telephone charges.

In reality the list of fringe benefits is only limited by imagination.

Technically, these fringe benefits were taxable. But the particular provision of the law covering them was badly worded, and in any event the Tax Office did not have enough staff to enforce the tax.

Both the boss and the executive gained through the use of fringe benefits. Going back to our original example, the executive ended up paying \$12,000 tax each year by not declaring fringe benefits.

The employer ended up paying \$60,000 (itself tax deductible) for an executive whose after-tax salary was over \$45,500. Without fringe benefits, the boss would have had to pay around \$90,000 home the same amount after tax. So thanks to fringe benefits, a company gets a \$90,000 executive for \$60,000.

A 1979 Australian Bureau of Statistics survey showed that most of the people who received fringe benefits are the rich — company directors and executives and their professional advisors. A 1981 University of NSW report estimated that these ruling class bludgers were avoiding around \$5 billion (yes, billion!) in tax each year through fringe benefits. Even the Government's modest Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) will raise \$700 million each year.

The new tax has sent shock waves through the tax planning industry and employer circles. The thrust of the FBT is to force the employer to pay the tax on behalf of the employee. After all, the bosses already have to take tax out of ordinary wage earners' pay packets.

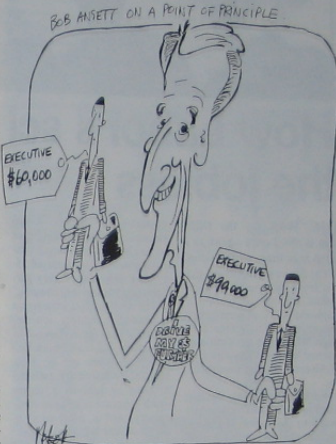
Sections of the ruling class have mounted a vicious and virulent campaign against the FBT. Mostly this is just self-interest on their part — they don't like paying tax. Some also object to the extra paper work.

The campaign of lies and misinformation is having an effect. Even some ordinary workers, who won't get within a bargepole of paying the FBT, are now opposed to it. And the Government has relaxed some of the more restrictive FBT rules, which means \$100 million less tax.

The Labor government, in introducing the FBT, should not be seen as a knight in shining armor attacking nasty tax avoiders. The FBT is a revenue measure. In particular, the Labor government needed extra money for the tax cuts it promised the ACTU as a trade-off for wage cuts.

Yet the major beneficiaries of the tax cuts will be the people who pay the FBT. Under the tax cuts, the top marginal rate, 60 per cent, will fall to 55 per cent from December 1 and to 49 per cent from July 1. In contrast, the lowest rate, 25 per cent, will reduce to 24 per cent from December 1.

The FBT will hit some workers. For example, banking staff have traditionally received low interest loans as some sort of recompense for their low wages. Because of the FBT, the major banks are trying to phase out these loans, without increasing wage rates. Meetings of bank workers have decided to take



industrial action in December if the banks refuse to negotiate.

Workers in the past have actually defeated the old fringe benefits tax. In 1979 and 1980, Queensland miners went on strike over the Taxation Office's attempt to tax them on the cheap rents they paid for housing. The strike was so successful — it cost the Queensland government alone \$1 million a day in royalties — that the then Fraser government was forced to amend the law to exclude such subsidised housing from tax.

This action shows the way forward for bank and other workers who may be affected by the FBT. As for the ruling class, the more tax they pay the better. They live off our sweat and toil without doing anything productive.

We look forward to the day when a worker's government places a 100% tax on their assets.

— Anna Wolkienhaar

CHRISTMAS



What the rich are buying

AS IMELDA Marcos used to say, "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping." Just the way the filthy rich strutted off for Christmas in these braintuned times?

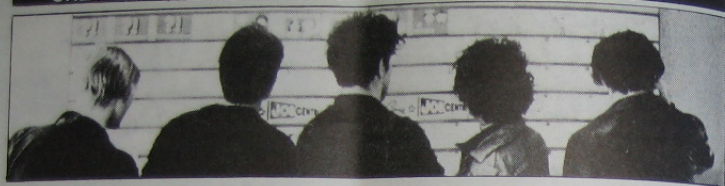
The America's Cup set is buying \$8,000 yacht-shaped brooches from Sydney jeweller Kenneth Marks. For budding Lucretia Borgias, Christian Dior has a new "Poison" perfume out at \$518 a bottle. Remy Martin is retailing a prestige cognac at \$660 a bottle.

For those who prefer a more functional opulence, George's in Melbourne has a silver coffee pot at \$642. David Jones has champagne coolers at \$980, and knick-knacks like silver tea strainers (\$105) and gold-plated wine thermometers (\$135) for the more distant uncles and aunts.

The children of the rich will be getting toy Alfa Romeos, complete with two stroke engine and automatic gear-box, at \$695. Don't mark that, there are cuddly toy lions at \$395 and hand-made rocking horses at \$480. For babies born with a silver spoon (\$38) in their mouth, there are \$335 sterling silver hairbrush and comb sets.

Our favourite gift, though, comes from a New York shop catering exclusively for rich infants. For just \$30, Wall Street executives can dress their offspring in a bib with grey and white pinstripes, collar and cuffs, and a red bow tie. Name of the shop is, appropriately, Tyke-oons.

— Beth Jones



How Labor's schemes are doing the jobless

THE "Work for the Dole" idea is afoot once again, as it often is in times of recession.

The difference this time is that it is being presented as a benevolent scheme to train unemployed youth, in keeping with the cynical Priority One campaign which has accompanied cuts to education, the youth dole, TEAS and homeless youth benefits.

Working for the dole was first raised in Bob Hawke's austerity speech to the nation last June. The idea came straight from the Liberals, and was a natural progression from earlier Hawke ideas about setting up "kibbutzes" to get the young unemployed working in the countryside.

Hawke's election pledge was to raise the dole to the level of the old age pension, which was itself set to rise to 25% of average earnings. Senator Peter Walsh, Hawke's finance spokesman, also promised to save \$100 million over four years in a crackdown on "dole bludging".

Neither of the first two promises have materialised. But the third has been transformed into a crackdown on unemployed youth.

The work-for-dole proposal was that unpaid part-time work would be advertised through the CES. It would be voluntary — unless "hot enough volunteers" came forward to take up the work, in which case it would become compulsory. Hawke himself wanted the scheme to be compulsory at the outset, but Cabinet opposed this.

The work-for-dole scheme is now in temporary suspension, because of the financial difficulties in operating it. Social Security Minister Brian Howe estimates it will cost \$700 million to establish. It has also met resistance from various government departments who do not want to be saddled with supervising it.

Despite these bureaucratic

obstacles, the ACTU — that champion of the working class — has indicated its support for paying dole to unemployed 15-19 year olds, only if they participate in "traineeship schemes."

The ALP may yet settle for an expanded volunteer scheme, leaving a basis for the Liberals to introduce full-scale work-for-dole when they get in. John Howard has described the scheme initiated in June as a "damp squib" because it was not compulsory, and a firm work-or-stay scheme is Liberal policy.

Howard now also wants the Liberals to endorse a policy of abolishing the dole completely for under-18s. He says that some of the money saved would be used to help parents keep their children at school.

The work-for-dole scheme may be temporarily suspended, but it is far from forgotten. Even now, it is being smuggled in the back door by means of the Australian Traineeship Scheme and various state programs.

Death of a fighter

JOHN O'MALLEY, unemployed activist and Australia's first heart and lung transplant patient, died on November 26.

John was a committed revolutionary socialist, who played a leading role in Victoria's Unemployed Workers Union. He helped democratise the UWU, defended its offices when they were demolished by the police and local council, and fought in many UWU campaigns. And he was always there to do the back work, print the leaflets, screen the posters.

When his declining health forced him to withdraw from active politics, John continued to follow the fortunes of his comrades on the Left. He was an affable man, and the inter-

One such state program is WA's Westtek scheme. This virtually conscripts unemployed youth into live-in work camps, in return for bare subsistence.

Traineeships are more insidious. They continue the tradition of the SYETP and CEP programs in cutting youth wages and undermining conditions won by the permanent workforce.

CEP produced a temporary, unorganised workforce which lacked decent safety standards. The new traineeships are worse, since CEP at least paid award rates. The Australian Traineeship Scheme allows trainees to be paid as little as \$90 a week, when the Henderson poverty line is \$140.

Under this scheme, trainees are paid for three days work, and must undergo unpaid training for the other two days. The employers benefits by paying under-award wages, does not have to pay training costs, and save a \$1000 "training fee" from the government into the bargain.

Trainees get slightly more than the new youth dole of \$88.20 a week for 18-20 year olds. But

they end up poorer by the time they pay for lunches, fares and clothes for work.

The traineeship does not guarantee a job at the end, and most trainees make up a quick turnover, underpaid workforce which can weaken union muscle. For example, the BWIU in its campaign against the BLF supports new legislation which forces trainees in the building industry to do crane and scaffolding jobs formerly performed by skilled BLF members.

In spite of the incentives to employers, only about 2,000 traineeships have been offered out of the 10,000 originally planned. These are mainly in the public service, where "trainees" get little training and usually do filing, opening of mail and running of errands.

Contrary to agreement with the ACTU, trainees have been used to replace permanent and fully-paid positions for youth vacated through natural wastage. For every 100 trainees in a public service area, 40 permanent positions are destroyed. So traineeships are actually reducing chances for youth to get permanent jobs.

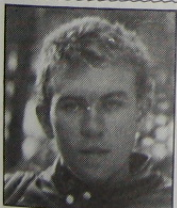
The whole idea of working for the dole should be opposed. It does nothing to reduce unemployment, which is structural to capitalism, in fact, it reduces real job opportunities. The "training" it provides does nothing to tackle the basic problem of not enough jobs. It undercuts the conditions won by full-time workers.

And worst of all, "work for the dole" implies that the unemployed have a debt to pay society. It is a classic example of attacking the victim rather than the system.

Work-for-dole scheme should be rejected in all their guises. We should support the unemployed's demand for permanent, socially useful work on full pay.

Slavery, after all, was supposed to have been abolished in 1863. "Work for the dole" merely reintroduces the concept with a slightly longer chain.

— Dorothy Morgan



minable wait for organ donors never dimmed his spirit.

John faced his final battle with typical courage and realism. To Donna, who stood beside him throughout his loneliest struggle, the many members of Socialist Action who had the privilege to call John "comrade" send their heartfelt sympathy. The Left can ill afford to lose such a fighter.

Nationalism: A trap for the Left

ACCORDING to one left newspaper, there is a relatively simple solution to the ongoing malaise of Australian capitalism.

This is "the people's demand for the complete, clean independence of Australia." Apart from "developing trade on mutually beneficial terms with the Third World and socialist countries" and "seeking genuine friendship with our neighbours", the paper didn't spell out just what independence would mean in economic terms.

But others have. A majority of the left have long pointed to foreign ownership of large sections of Australian industry as representing imperialist domination of the country. More recently, they have seen the admission of foreign banks and the floating of the dollar as a cave-in to further foreign domination.

Turn this around, they say, and our problems could be largely solved. Kick out the "Yankee multinationals" and their ilk and we could fix things up. A recent meeting of hundreds of workplace delegates called by Melbourne's Workers Campaign Council applauded union leader Len Cooper when he demanded the re-regulation of the dollar. Cooper was careful not to say what value should be placed on the dollar, or to mention that the last government to implement his proposal was that of Malcolm Fraser — well known friend of the working class. In reality, nationalist arguments of this type have always been economic quackery, offering no lasting solutions for workers' problems.

LEFT nationalists often attempt to base themselves on Marx and Lenin. So let us first consider the classical Marxist tradition.

"The workers have no country", wrote Karl Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*, and he went on to conclude: "Workers of the world, unite!" Yet in fact Marx supported many national movements. This was because capitalism itself was still partly progressive in his day, and historic gains could still be made within the system on a national basis.

So Marx supported the movement for the unification of Italy, in order to help the advance of capitalism in that country. He supported the Polish independence struggle, which he saw as threatening the power of the Russian Tsar. Marx saw the Tsar as the main enemy of democracy in Europe.

But national independence was not to be a principle in itself. He opposed the national movements of the southern Slavs because he saw them as a stalking horse for the Tsarist regime.

By 1871, Marx was arguing that capitalism in Europe had exhausted its progressive tendencies. From then on, national wars were a "mere governmental humbug, in-



Nationalism on the picket line: what about American workers jobs?

tended to defer the struggle of classes."

Lenin accepted this basic framework, contending that nationalism was inherently capitalist in its logic. He did contend to defend the right of oppressed nations within the Tsarist empire to self-determination, but it simply as a means to an end; if Russian workers campaigned for the rights of the oppressed Poles and Finns, they could win the confidence of the Polish and Finnish proletariat, and thus form an alliance with them.

After 1914, having elaborated his theory of imperialism according to which the modern world was divided into oppressor and oppressed nations, Lenin developed the argument further. The anti-colonial struggles of Persia or Egypt could threaten the imperialist bourgeoisie, which was the main enemy of the international working class. European workers should defend the rights of these countries, aiming to build an alliance with them.

On this basis, Lenin argued that the "nationalism of the oppressed" could have a progressive dynamic. But the end goal was never national independence.

"If we demand freedom of secession for the Mongolians, Persians, Egyptians and all other oppressed and unequal nations without oppression and we do so not because we favour secession, but only because we stand for free, voluntary association and merging as distinct from forcible association. That is the only

reason . . . "The aim of socialism is not only to abolish the present division of mankind into small states and all national isolation; not only to bring the nations closer to each other, but also to merge them." (Lenin's emphasis)

LENIN's formulations make sense. We are not nationalists, but nevertheless we do support national liberation movements: in El Salvador, Palestine, Ireland and so on. This "nationalism of the oppressed" has a progressive thrust to it, since its cutting edge is directed against the imperialist powers and their local agents.

Some would argue that Australia is in a similar position, dominated by US or Japanese imperialism. This country threatens the nationalism in this country invariable to the nationalism of the oppressed? The answer is an emphatic "no". Not only is nationalism in this country invariably harnessed by the bosses and the ALP to their own ends (you need only think of the America's Cup hysteria and over by racists. For manipulated over and over by racists. For example, one fascist group likes to display quotes from Henry Lawson on its posters.

There is a good reason why Australian nationalism cannot lead in a progressive direction. While this country is not a big imperialist power, and while it is certainly locked into a particular subordinate position

(Continued page 10)

PERSPECTIVES

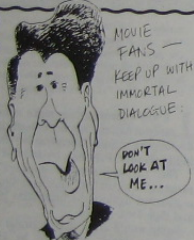
in the imperialist pecking order, it nevertheless does not qualify as an oppressed nation.

All the progressive features of capitalism have gone as far as they can go in this country. We are a relatively affluent industrial society. We have as much democracy as capitalism ever provides. And relative to our neighbours, we have always been comparatively well off.

Consequently, Australia's own national aspirations have never led to anything very progressive. As a colonial settler state last century, the country's national sentiment was for deepening the penetration of British imperialism in the region. The most famous case was the Queensland government's attempted seizure of part of New Guinea, undertaken in the "belief that once the flag has been hoisted it would never be hauled down." Queensland wanted to force Britain to seize the island.

Australia did also clash with Britain, and there was plenty of hostility to the mother country in the labour movement. But as leftwing historian Humphry McQueen has written, it was all too often simply on the grounds that Britain was selling out the white race by not being imperialist enough. "Like the whites in Southern Rhodesia today, the Australians before 1920 were suspicious of Britain's loyalty to the empire."

SINCE 1920, the situation has not been so very different. America has replaced Britain as the "great and powerful friend". Australia continues to be more pro-imperialist than the great powers themselves. In the early fifties, when the Dutch still held Irian Jaya (West New Guinea) and the Indonesians wanted them out, Canberra was more anxious than Holland to maintain the status quo. The Labor Opposition's Arthur Calwell called for war on Indonesia.



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Then there was the Vietnam war. The left nationalists of those days called the Liberal government puppets of US imperialism, and blamed America for dragging Australia into the war. A mass of documentation has since emerged to show that Canberra itself enthusiastically dragged America deeper into the conflict. In early 1965, when the Americans were uncertain whether to escalate the bombing of North Vietnam, the Australian embassy in Washington was secretly instructed to press the White House to escalate.

The reason was that Australia, as a third-rate local imperialist power with interests in Papua New Guinea, southeast Asia and the Pacific, needed a big brother to back it up in the region. If the US could be driven out of part of southeast Asia, that boded ill for Australian efforts to exploit the area.

Even when it has been directed against the imperialist powers, Australian nationalism usually has reactionary implications. When Bob Hawke was whipping up chauvinism against America over wheat deals with the USSR, he shamelessly used Cold War anti-communism to embarrass the White House. How could Reagan do a deal, Hawke asked, with the Evil Empire at the expense of loyal allies?

IF THE political implications of Australian nationalism are reactionary, what about the economics?

The demand for "economic independence" today draws inspiration from two sources. One is traditional reformism. People like Andrew Theophanous of the Labor Party want the national state to step in and regulate the economy in favour of local interests. The aim is to defend local capitalists as well as workers.

At first glance it seems plausible: why not let our government build a protective wall around us? Then we'd all be better off, and the internal class struggle could proceed against the likes of Alan Bond without the interference of foreign capital.

Yet problems immediately arise. Australia cannot survive without selling wheat, wool and minerals. World foreign states sit idly by while Canberra legislated them out of markets here? Obviously not. When Bob Hawke threatened to cut steel imports from South Korea two years ago, Korea immediately threatened to halve its orders of Australian iron ore and coal in retaliation. Hawke had to back down to avoid a disastrous trade war and thousands of sackings.

Such a retaliatory trade war did occur in



Trail-blazing for imperialism: Queensland annexes half of New Guinea for Britain in 1883

the thirties. Each nation, hoping to build itself off from the Depression, restricted imports. The result was a ruinous 25% drop in world trade, which made the Depression worse for everyone.

Or take the recent demand for re-regulation of the dollar, to remove the pressures on us from the latest bogey: the foreign money markets.

Actually, the dollar is being regulated at present. The Reserve Bank intervenes to keep it around 60-65 US cents, which Labor regards as economically realistic. So demands for re-regulation really mean pegging it at an artificial value to disadvantage foreign competitors.

Lowering the dollar's value means increased inflation, while raising it hurts exports. But leaving aside these negative implications, and assuming the overall effect to be positive... how long can it last? After all, Malcolm Fraser pursued just such a policy in the seventies. He kept the dollar

element of truth.

China has simply dumped the rhetoric of self-reliance in favour of frantic promotional pitches to attract foreign capital into the country. To get it, they offer cheap labour and other incentives.

CALLS for economic independence are reactionary, in the literal sense of the word. One of the historic accomplishments of capitalism is the creation of a world market and an international division of labour. With it has come the growth of an internationally linked capitalist class and an international proletariat.

Contrary to the mythology put forward by the nationalists on the left, the Australian capitalists are very much part of this process. Not only do "foreign multinationals" penetrate this country, but our local employers play the same game overseas — and increasingly so.

In the past year, Hoyts has bought the American "Cinema Centers" chain, Elders has acquired Britain's Courage breweries for \$3.32 billion cash, and Hooker Corporation has purchased 23 commercial real estates from the US giant Merrill Lynch. Australian property developer Essington Ltd is planning a \$45 million acquisition of three Wyoming banks.

The Westpac and ANZ banks, both based in this country, recently bought financial institutions in Britain. Westpac operates in 22 countries. And everywhere they go, these companies exploit the local working class, just as General Motors or MacDonalds do here.

If we are to combat this international bourgeoisie, the working class must look to building a world-wide movement itself. That was the perspective of the Communist International led by Lenin, and it is a crying need today.

Instead of demanding increased tariff protection for local companies, we should heed the words of Filipino union leader Bob Ortal:

"The workers of my country have been accused of stealing jobs [from Australia] by way of the so-called runaway shops. But if Australian workers gave us support to have our wages increased and conditions improved, it would make it more difficult for the runaway shops to dump goods in Australia."

Instead of calling on the government to give our tax money to the bosses, in the form of "industry plans", we need to fight for nationalisation of Australian industry under workers' control. Then we might make a genuine start toward the "mutually beneficial trade with our neighbours" which we mentioned at the beginning.

Instead of seeing the increasing productivity of our fellow workers abroad as a menace, we could begin to unite with those workers to fight all the bosses, domestic and foreign.

We live in one economically and socially integrated world. Socialism, or human progress generally, cannot come through turning back the clock, through trying to shut out that world. It can only come through transforming it, in the course of the class struggle. And if it is to be successful, the class struggle must begin with the starting point of Karl Marx: "The workers have no country... workers of the world, unite!"

— Tom O'Lincoln

SOCIALIST ACTION

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Socialism

We fight for socialism: the creation of a classless society in which the economy will be democratically planned, and workers themselves will make the key decisions about economic and social life. Countries like Russia and China are bureaucratic class societies, and have nothing in common with real socialism.

Revolution, not Reformism

We are revolutionaries. The experience of Labor in power has shown the bankruptcy of attempts to tinker with the existing capitalist system. The capitalists will not allow a peaceful parliamentary road to socialism. Their state is a weapon of class rule, and must be smashed.

A Mass Workers' Party

Workers need a revolutionary party. The working class cannot make a revolution through spontaneous upheavals. The bosses are organised, and we need to organise too. Today we work to build a stronger revolutionary movement out of the struggles being waged on the job and around social protest issues. Tomorrow we must create a mass workers' party to lead the struggle for socialism.

Internationalism

We are internationalists. The working class exists in all countries, and the struggle for socialism knows no national barriers. A socialist revolution cannot survive within a single country. It must be spread to other countries or it will fail. For these reasons we are for building a world-wide movement, and we oppose measures like protectionism which turn the workers of one country against others.

Liberation from Oppression

We fight for liberation and against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and gays. All of these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. The fight to divide is an essential part of building a united revolutionary movement. They can only be ended through ending capitalism and building socialism.

Socialist Action

We are for Socialist Action. It's no good just talking about the world: the point is to change it. Marxist theory and propaganda are only meaningful if they are a guide to action. In the unions, social movements and wherever for people are fighting for a better world, socialists are in the thick of the fight. If that's where you want to be, join us today!

WEEKLY MEETINGS

Melbourne

Monday's 7:30

Rm 5, 175 Sydney Rd

Brunswick

Sydney

Wednesdays 7:00

Adelphi Hotel (upstairs)

Briggs & George St, City

Brisbane

Wednesdays 7:00

Phone 371 7114

for location

Canberra

Thursdays, 6:00

Blair Room,

Workers Club, Civic

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Leederville, WA 6007

Tel (09) 443 3040

We support the nurses

SUPPORT for the Victorian nurses' strike has been a key focus for Socialist Action in November.

Melbourne members have regularly visited picket lines to show support, collected money at work for the strike fund, and attended solidarity barbecues and concerts.

Brisbane members attended a solidarity picket called by women unionists, while Canberra comrades collected \$75 on the job. Canberra members have also actively supported the local garbage workers' strike.

Sydney members, meanwhile, have been active in three other campaigns: the fight to protect workers' compensation rights, anti-apartheid activity, and the "Fightback" campaign against Labor's general anti-worker push.

Come to our Summer Camp

OUR summer camp program is now finalised, and it has plenty for anyone interested in leaving politics.

The camp runs from January 1-4, at Camp Gundwindi, in Lewis Road, Wandin (58 km from Melbourne). The campsite has swimming, beautiful bush walks and many recreational facilities, and we'll be having campfires and a hilarious political trivia quiz.

There will be speakers and discussions on a wide range of topics. On Thursday January 1, in the afternoon, these commence with Industrial Democracy and Australian Unionism in the 1940s and 50s.

Friday's talks are: Simone de Beauvoir, Women and Education, Art and Revolution, Slave for a Day or Two at \$15 daily (\$12 concessions).

The Sunday's talks examine Russia Today and the Struggle in South Africa.

Cost is just \$45 (\$35 for non-employed), including accommodation and meals. Or come on a day or two at \$15 daily (\$12 concessions).

Interested? Contact us now — phone numbers p.10.

BLF DEREGISTRATION



High spirits on Melbourne's Banana Alley BLF picket line

Good news and bad for building trade militants

THE BUILDING industry is moving towards its summer shutdown, but a lot is still happening. Unfortunately, not all of it is good.

In Melbourne, builders' labourers and other militants have struck some solid blows against the employers and their BWIU agents. But in Sydney, the BLF has faced a major crisis. The victimised labourers from Jack Chia's South Yarra project had big smiles on their faces after stopping concrete work at the Market Street site where Chia has an interest.

Having prevented one concrete pour, the BLF discovered that management were planning to have another go... at 5:30 am the next day. The idea was to get it over before picketers arrived. But the picketers were there, vehicles blocked truck access, and two commercial tow-truck drivers who were called to remove the union vehicles departed after hearing the union case.

By the time the police arranged their own tow-truck, workers on site had banned concrete work and management had been forced to negotiate. Later, the bans spread to other jobs.

Meanwhile, the media gave a lot of play to decisions by the BWIU to back striking nurses. The union announced it would donate \$10,000, and call a stop-work to be followed by a rally.

What was not reported is that these moves were forced through by dissidents within the union, including builders' labourers. Originally, a motion was carried at the monthly branch meeting

to donate \$20,000 and the officials were less than happy about it.

The BWIU officials later tried to call off the stopwork and lot, but the BLF and militant tradesmen still pulled out six sites and led a march around the city.

There has been a great deal of sympathy for the nurses among rank and file building workers. At the Trueman's site in Collins Street, banners reading "RANF" declared support for the nurses' union. RANF speakers have toured building sites such as the Riverside project, accompanied by officials of several unions including the BLF.

Unfortunately, the situation in Sydney was not so happy. At a tumultuous BLF branch meeting, a sort of coup was attempted by dissident forces led by the union's workers' compensation officer, Paddy Brennan.

Brennan was backed by a crowd of people, some of whom were clearly not financial union members and one of whom, Arthur Nesson, had resigned from the union before deregistration to act as an industrial consultant for the employers. The insurgents attempted to hold an "election" for state secretary. Current secretary Steve Black declared the meeting adjourned and walked out with his supporters.

As opponents of the original 1974 federal intervention which brought him to power, Socialist Action members hold no special brief for Steve Black. And it is clear that the difficult position of the NSW branch of the BLF fits itself in has led to dis-

satisfaction among some of its members.

On the other hand it is equally clear that Black's opponents are using extremely dubious methods.

And the most important question for any group that wishes to win leadership of a beleaguered union is what strategy it can offer for advancing the struggle. At this stage, the most the dissidents have said is that they hope to be readmitted to the NSW Trades and Labour Council. That is no way forward.

The TLC is controlled by rightwing bureaucrats, and is widely known in Sydney as the "graveyard of disputes". It is the power base for the odious NSW premier Barrie Unsworth and his obnoxious sidekick John MacBeane. Rank and file building workers have few friends in this Labour Council.

It is true that the Victorian BLF is in a stronger position because it is much less isolated from other unions. But the union support that has mattered most is not at the Labour Council level.

Job action by plumbers and electricians, participation by a wide range of unions in the October observer teams, and the supportive presence of non-BLs on picket lines has counted for far more than any backscratching with Trades Hall bureaucrats ever could.

Steve Black told Socialist Action on 30 November that the efforts of the Brennan forces were beginning to "fizzle" and the situation on sites was improving.

— Richard Emerson

INDUSTRIAL ROUND-UP

Insurance sharks circling around NSW/compo

A SMALL group of greedy militants are holding NSW to ransom.

The insurance companies in NSW's workers' compensation system have told the government that unless their profits are boosted they will withdraw from the industry.

The state Labor government has already capitulated and has promised to "reform" the compensation system to the benefit of insurers.

Hoping to overcome resistance, the government has issued a Discussion Paper. It contains four options.

Option D is based upon proposals by the Law Society of NSW and would be an improvement upon the present system. This is the furthest thing from the government's mind.

The other three options seek to reduce payouts for insurers and premiums for employers. All abolish the right of an injured worker to sue their boss for negligence. All reduce the compensation paid during the first 26 weeks of incapacity to 80% of pre-injury earnings, or \$400 per week, whichever is less. All withhold compensation from the worker who is injured travelling to or from work.

Worst of all, all three options impoverish workers suffering from long term partial incapacity — eg workers suffering from RSI or from a slipped disk.

At present in NSW these workers are paid, after the first 26 weeks, a weekly sum proportionate to their loss of earning capacity, up to a maximum of \$155 per week. However, if their boss fails to provide them with suitable employment, they are deemed totally incapacitated and are paid the full \$155.

All three options abolish this incentive upon bosses to provide suitable work to injured workers. They instead appoint a panel of doctors to proclaim what a partially incapacitated and unemployed worker is "capable" of earning, and pay the worker no more than the difference between this amount and pre-injury earnings — probably about \$40 per week in the case of most process workers with RSI.

The Discussion Paper says 95% of workers on compo are only partially incapacitated. So such a measure has massive implications.

The workers' compensation

system in NSW, for all its faults, is the best such system in Australia. This is due solely to the efforts of unionists who have fought bosses and insurance companies for the right to be treated as humans, not cattle. Building workers in particular have won benefits for all other workers. It is no co-incidence that these proposals are being made soon after the BLF has been pushed onto the defensive.

The likely results are already known in New Zealand. When NZ bosses were given immunity from negligence suits in 1974, safety standards immediately nosedived, and the death rate soared. In the last five years, 36 cranes have collapsed on NZ building sites.

The Committee For The Protection Of Workers Compensation Rights is organising a demonstration outside the NSW Parliament in early February. For more information contact Jane Thorn 212 2558, Georgina Siambi 267 3933 or Jenny Haines 267 9934.

— Eric Petersen

CES DISPUTE



Staff hit roof over ceilings

SO MUCH for "industrial democracy"...

The Federal Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) is about to bring you a green paper on the subject. Yet it has just suspended its own formal consultative arrangements with the ACOA, the union covering most of its employees.

Reason for the suspension was campaigning for more staff in CES offices. Despite department-union "consultations" and an elaborate formula that is meant to ensure fair staffing based on workload, the CES is being squeezed by public service staff ceilings and cuts.

This is particularly the case in CES offices in areas of high unemployment in the western suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne.

ACOAs members banned liaison with the Department of Social Security on the cutting of dole payments, and the collection of statistics. The DEIR would not negotiate while bans were



Building workers march for compo in a 1979 national campaign

there, and was miffed when industrial action escalated, closing some CES offices in NSW.

The dispute has gone to Arbitration, and bans have now been lifted.

Meanwhile, many union delegates have enjoyed the break from the DEIR's "industrial democracy", which ties them up with a diary full of elaborately titled committee meetings, mountains of agenda papers to be read, and an increasingly cynical membership.

— Sarah Dinning

CANBERRA



Garbos clean up

GARBAGE collectors on the south side of Canberra went on strike for a fortnight in early November. They won an important victory on long-service

leave for themselves and other private sector workers in the ACT.

Over four years ago, the Transport Workers' Union, which covers the garbos, served a claim for portable long service leave of two months after ten years on the Department of Territories.

Because they are employed by contractors, lack of portability meant that garbos lost their long-service leave entitlements each time the contractor changed, even though the Department provides the contractors with the trucks, tyres and maintenance services.

Many other workers employed by contractors are in a similar position, especially cleaners in schools and Government offices.

The garbos were out for a week in October, until the Department agreed to respond to their demands within a week. After a fortnight without the promised response, the workers went out again.

This time, they mounted pickets on the rubbish tips and north side train depots to prevent scavenging. On the north side, each truck is run by an individual contractor, and neither the contractors nor their workers are unionised. On the south side, one contractor, WasteHawke, employs all the workers.

After a week, Territories Minister Scholes offered portability. But he held out for two months leave after ten years.

Public servants get three months after ten years. But the garbos and other private sector workers have only been (formally) entitled to three months after fifteen years. Garbage worker Dave Cooper explained Scholes' resistance: "The Government is frightened of the carry over for other industries."

Both the Hospital Employees' Federation and the Federated Firefighters' Union made contributions to the strike fund. The Parliament House building site raised a bumper \$4000.

Two members of Socialist Action managed to collect over \$40 for the fund in their public service workplaces.

The end of the second week of the strike saw the Department agree to a joint working party with the TWU on long-service leave. The union believes this will result in all its demands being implemented.

— Rick Kuhn

Promises, promises: Will Labor ever deliver?

WHENEVER politicians, economists or leftist "friends" tell workers they must make sacrifices, they always say it is only in the short-term; in the longer run, the whole country will benefit.

The sacrifices involved in the 1982-83 wage freeze and the Accords mark Land II were all supposed to deliver "sustainable economic and employment growth". Those sacrifices were made during the recently expired recovery, for the sake of Government support for wages and employment in the next recession—that is, now.

Is there any more reason to believe this line from Bob Hawke, Laurie Carmichael and the economic pundits today than three and a half years ago? What are the assurances from the Government's economic policies are based on? Are they plausible?

The first and crucial assumption is that the international economy will not just remain stable, but will pick up. For the balance of trade to improve significantly, world demand for Australia's main exports will have to expand. And if the Government's industry policy is to work, then demand for the manufactured goods which Australia might export will have to be buoyant too, even if these are highly specialised "niche" products.

SUCH an expansion in world trade is not impossible. But the signs are not very encouraging.

Australia's main customer, Japan is experiencing very slow growth, paradoxically because of the very strength of its economy. That strength has led to a surplus of exports over imports for a considerable period—the opposite of Australia's problem.

The value of the yen has risen as a result. Now Japanese products are much more expensive elsewhere in the world.

So the demand for the raw materials from Australia, which go into those exports, has shrunk. The Japanese economy has slowed. The Nakasone government has been reluctant to stimulate domestic demand to re-activate growth.

The underlying rate of growth of the US economy is also



Two hitches to Bob Hawke's plans: Nakasone is reluctant to stimulate Japan's economy, and the US is dumping its grain

slowing. Recent promising indicators were distorted by several large, one-off defence expenditures and the bringing forward of spending in anticipation of tax changes from January 1987.

Dumping by the USA and European Community has affected Australia's rural exports large, and Russia, the world's largest wheat importer, is expecting a bumper grain harvest.

It is not likely that our mineral and rural exports will face sellers' markets for quite some time.

THE SECOND assumption of Labor's "sacrifice now for prosperity in the (not too distant) future" line is that improvements in the balance of payments will result in investment-led growth.

High interest rates have been necessary to prevent another free fall in the Australian dollar by attracting in foreign capital. Lower interest rates will, the Government hopes, encourage productive investment. Without investment in export-oriented and import-replacing manufacturing, there will be no long-term improvement in the balance of trade, given the long-term downward trend in primary export prices.

Despite the rise in profits under Labor, the rate of profit remains below its levels during the 1960s and early 1970s. For business, current and expected rates of profit are the crucial determinants of investment. As a proportion of real Gross Domestic Product, business investment has not picked up under Hawke. This year, it has

fallen significantly. Economic recovery next year is unlikely by itself to persuade businesses to make large, new investments. Before that occurs, bosses will have to be confident that lower interest rates and the recovery will have for a significant period.

At present, economic signs are only very mildly encouraging. A recent survey predicted a substantial percentage rise in investment over the next year, to take advantage of manufacturing opportunities open up by the devaluation. The rise would be small in absolute terms, though.

The latest balance of trade figures show some improvement too, while interest rates have fallen slightly. There has been successful rationalisation of industry in some sectors, notably steel production.

FOR THE economy to return to a rate of growth of 2-3% a year, however, developments not only have to continue in this direction but accelerate.

Any significant deterioration in the balance of trade will dramatically undermine the prospects for recovery.

Interest rates and international market problems are

not the only ones that Labor faces. Investors will also be demanding that the Government holds the line on wages.

Acquiescence in wage restraint is declining in the union movement. Only one union voted against the original Accord. Now a significant minority of union officials are, at least rhetorically, opposing wage restraint. A still smaller minority are opposing it in practice—most notably the Plumbers Union and the Victorian RANF Leaders.

Even small victories on wages outside the Accord framework will encourage other workers to act on the healthy skepticism most of them have about the Government's promises to improve living standards over time.

A pick-up in the economy will make it easier for them to take the future of their living standards into their own hands. Such a justified move would, like uncertainties about interest and growth rates, discourage investment and undermine the Government's strategy.

But it would mark the revival of a fighting spirit that can genuinely defend wages and conditions in the short-term, and do away with this crisis-prone system in the longer run.

—Rick Kuhn

HECATE

An Interdisciplinary Journal of Women's Liberation ...

VOLUME 12 1986.

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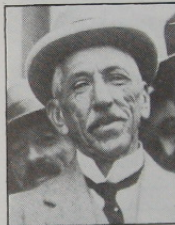


Holiday Trivia Quiz

The trouble with Trivial Pursuits is, it doesn't test the trivia that really matters. So for all you trivia buffs — and isn't everyone at heart? — here's a bumper holiday quiz on the obscurities of class politics. Test your knowledge ... solutions are on page 16.

THE RULING CLASS

1. Which media magnate did not get his first newspaper from daddy?
 - a. Rupert Packer b. James Fairfax, c. Kerry Murdoch d. none of the above
2. Which anti-procrustean crusader copped a custard pie thrown during an Australian tour?
 - a. Which Aussie jingoist has dogs named Victoria and Albert?
3. Which world leader is related to Ronald Reagan and Sarah Ferguson, all being descended from 11th century Irish king Bryan Boru?
 - a. Fidel Castro b. Helmut Kohl c. Mikhail Gorbachev d. Margaret Thatcher
4. Which millionaire was booked for having bald on his forehead? And which was fined \$60 when his poolies attacked a passerby?
 - a. John Laws b. John Singleton c. Allan Bond d. Lang Hancock
5. His rebranding and jailing of union strike leader Harold Christoffel launched which US politician to prominence?
 - a. Joe McCarthy b. Richard Nixon c. Ronald Reagan d. John F. Kennedy
6. When Labor tried to nationalize the banks in 1947, National Bank deputy chairman Sir Frank Clarke set a historic political precedent. How?
 - a. The anti-conscription fight b. Arson by the IWW c. The 1917 railway strike d. Someone threw an egg at him
7. What prompted Billy Hughes to set up the Commonwealth Police?
 - a. The anti-conscription fight b. Arson by the IWW c. The 1917 railway strike d. Someone threw an egg at him
8. Anti-fascist campaigner Egon Kisch spoke 9 European languages. Yet immigration authorities barred him in 1934 for failing a White Australia dictation test in what language?
 - a. Police produced a "Light Up A Consulate" badge as evidence in student leader Albert Langer's trial for "inciting a riot". How was this refuted?
9. Why did the Fairfax press oppose Menzies?
 - a. The anti-conscription fight b. Arson by the IWW c. The 1917 railway strike d. Someone threw an egg at him
10. Which Kennedy was suspended from Harvard for cheating?
 - a. Brian Loton & John Spalvins b. Brian Loton & John Mac Bean c. Robert Holmes a Court & John Elliott d. Simon Crean & Bill Kelly
11. Why did the Fairfax press oppose Menzies?
 - a. The anti-conscription fight b. Arson by the IWW c. The 1917 railway strike d. Someone threw an egg at him



Billy Hughes

1. Queenland once elected a Communist Party MP. Who?
2. Victoria once elected a self-proclaimed fascist. Who?
3. Which reigning Australian PM lost his seat at a Federal election? Which one lost his shire council seat whilst PM?
4. Which NSW premier went bankrupt three times?
5. Which policy was in Labor's first Federal platform?
 - a. socialisation of industry b. nationalisation of the banks c. White Australia d. all of the above
6. What did Gough Whitlam eat for lunch on November 11, 1975?
 - a. nothing b. a cold chop c. a steak d. humble pie
7. Which Liberal leader vowed to catch Gough Whitlam with his pants down?
8. Gough, Joh and Vince Gair figured in the Night of the Long a. Knives b. Lunch c. Prawns d. Memories e. Black Coffees
9. Which Minister in the Cain government has not been involved in a major union dispute this year?
 - a. Tom Roper b. Steve Crabb c. David White d. Ian Cattie e. none of the above
10. Who allegedly made money out of
 - i. a funeral parlour
 - ii. Stumpy Gully
 - iii. Mungana
11. Fraser lost his pants in Memphis. Who "lost" a ring to a Berlin call girl?

12. Which showbiz figure was dubbed 'Hanoi Jane'? Joanie Phoenix?
13. Why was 'Robin Hood' banned in Indiana, USA, in the 1950s?
14. Why was Turkish leftist Yilmaz Guney's feat in directing 'Yol', screened here in 1983, notable?
15. The Rockefellerers commissioned a huge mural by Diego Rivera, then ground it to dust. Why?
16. Which communist became the first singer to sing at the Sydney Opera House? How come?

17. There's nothing the bourgeoisie loves more than a dead communist. Name the Hollywood movies based on these leftwing martyrs: Joe Hill, Nicola Sacco & Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Julius & Ethel Rosenberg, Frances Farmer.
18. Which rock singer declared public support for Labor (during withdrawal of WA Labor jingle) he'd just sung and been paid for?

CULTURE

1. Which events or struggles do these song songs refer to: Ohio, Chicago, Whatever Happened to the Revolution?, Hurricane, Smiley, Solid Rock, We Work the Black Seam Together, The Summer of His Years, Long Hot Summer, Sunday Bloody Sunday?
2. Which showbiz figure was dubbed 'Hanoi Jane'? Joanie Phoenix?
3. Why was 'Robin Hood' banned in Indiana, USA, in the 1950s?
4. Why was Turkish leftist Yilmaz Guney's feat in directing 'Yol', screened here in 1983, notable?
5. The Rockefellerers commissioned a huge mural by Diego Rivera, then ground it to dust. Why?
6. Which communist became the first singer to sing at the Sydney Opera House? How come?



Frances Farmer

WORLD POLITICS

1. Australian troops have never fought on home soil, but they have fought in 9 imperialist wars overseas. Name them.
2. General Galtieri was Argentina's leader in the 1982 Falklands War. What is he doing now?
3. Which country fired the British Empire's first shots in World War One? Where?
4. What country was not allowed to join ANZUS?
5. What is the more common name for Cochinos Bay?
6. Which fascist leader was expelled from school for stabbing a fellow pupil in the buttocks?
7. Who was called "the man who Red" by Jimmy Carter b. John Kennedy c. Henry Kissinger d. General Westmoreland
8. Apart from Nixon's 5 o'clock shadow, the Nixon-Kennedy

THE PARLIAMENTARY CIRCUIS

1. Who are the Drover's Dog, Kerr's cork, Ironbar, the Toe Cutter, the Iron Butterfly, Mouth from the South, George, Biggles, Colossus of Roads, Chicken Man?
2. Who were Pig Iron Bob, Big Ears, the Big Fellow, Black Jack, Judge Glenn Waldron jailed Norm Gallagher. What else did he do for John Cain 30 years earlier?
3. Who did the CIA plan to destabilize by making his beard fall out?

THE STATE

1. Where did ASIS bungie an "anti-terrorist training exercise" in 1983?
2. On what colour alert was the army put during the Kerr/Coupp?
3. Judge Glenn Waldron jailed Norm Gallagher. What else did he do for John Cain 30 years earlier?
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Trivia Quiz

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 - Electric Pandas
 - I'm Talking
 - Midnight Oil
- Your brother's bound and gagged and they've led him to a chair - sang Crosby, Briles & Nash. Who was the brother on trial?
 - Fraser
 - Hawke
 - Fraser, 1977
 - Hawke, 1986
- Who said, "In the Orient, life is cheap"?
 - Pol Pot
 - John Wayne
 - General Westmoreland
 - Geoffrey Blainey
- Who said, "Gaiety is the most outstanding feature of the Soviet Union"?
 - Neil Brown
 - Leon Trotsky
 - Joe Stalin
 - Aeroflot
- Who said, "I didn't come to Westminster to join their bloody club"?
 - Bernadette Devlin
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- Who said, "You can't mine coal without machine-guns"?
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 - Complete these quotes from Liberal leader Bill Snedden:
 - "I am the candidate who is on

SPORT

- Which tennis great had a state premier for father-in-law? And which one had a noted anarchist for a brother?



- Which two black athletes gave the black power salute at the 1968 Olympics?
- Which boxer defied the draft, saying, "No Viet Cong ever called me nigger"?
- The West Indies began playing Test cricket in 1928. Who was the first black man appointed to captain them, and in which famous Test?
- Which Australian cricket captain was president of the student union at teachers college?

- Who said the America's Cup was "as exciting as watching grass grow"?
 - Allan Bond
 - Groucho Marx
 - Bob Hope
 - Ring Lardner
 - Sinclair Lewis
- Cricketer writer CLR James was
 - Trotsky's secretary
 - A campaigner for West Indian independence
 - A Marxist historian
 - all of the above
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 ii. "We were not defeated. We just didn't win enough —"
 iii. "Woof, —"

- Who said, "Herr Hitler is doing a good job"?
- Who said, "Were I Italian, I would don the black shirt and follow Mussolini"?

THE LEFT

- Three of these are ex-Communist Party. Who is the ex-Young Liberal? Jean Melzer
 Philip Adams, Justice Staples, Bill Hartley?
- Who applied for a reader's ticket at the British Museum, using the false German name Julius Richter?
- Where did William Lane establish the utopian socialist colony New Australia? Which noted literary figure edited the news-paper there?
- Who was S.K. Gil?
- A shearer's leader in 1930
 b. Lenin's chauffeur
 c. An WW cartoonist
 d. He threw an egg at Billy Hughes
- Who were Dimitroff, Taneff and Popoff?
- German rice bubbles
 b. Lenin's first publishers
 c. The Reichstag Fire accused
 d. Bolshevist Central Committee members not killed by Stalin



Leon Trotsky

- Leon Trotsky told his wife he was in love with
 - Rosa Luxemburg
 - VI Lenin
 - Alexandra Kollontai
 - Federick Engels
- Its workers seized this city in the year shown: True or false?
 - Paris 1871
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adolescent Trotskyites?'
 a. The Dunstan government
 b. The ACOA Reform Group
 c. Victorian Young Labor
 d. Royal Park Reds Cricket Club

SOLUTIONS

THE RULING CLASS 1-1-d 2-Mary Whitehouse 3-Bruce Ruxton 4-a 5-c 6-d 7-a As Victorian Upper House Opposition leader, he blocked Supply and brought down the state Labor government 8-c 9-b Because Menzies had an affair with Sir Warwick Fairfax's wife 10-Edward
 THE STATE 1-Melbourne's Sheraton Hotel 2-Gray 3-He was best man at 8-Menzies' wedding 4-Castro 5-c 6-c 7-d 8-Scottish Gaelic 9-The tagmenager testified that the badge was made after the riot

PARLIAMENTARY CIRCUS 1-Hawke, Fraser, Tuckey, Winzer, Guilfoyle, Hodgman, Sinclair, Evans, Hines, Goodluck 2-Menzies, McMahon, Jack Lang, John McEwen, Ted Theodore, Snedden, McMahon, Billy Hughes, Jack Beasley, Menzies 3-Chifley 4-Fred Paterson 5-Wilfred Kent-Hughes 6-Stanley Bruce, Chifley 7-Sir Henry Parkes 8-c 9-c 10-Fraser 11-12-13-Ian Sinclair, Philip Lynch, Ted Theodore 14-Bill Snedden

WORLD 1-Sudan, Boer War, Boxer Rebellion, World War One, Russian Intervention 1919, World War Two, Malayan Insurgency, Korea, Vietnam 2-Saving 8 years in prison 3-Australia, led by Phillip Bay (at a German steamer) 4-Britain 5-Bay of Pigs 6-Mussolini 7-c 8-Disputed islands near Formosa 9-d 10-b CULTURE 1-Kent State killings, trial of the Chicago 8, the Vietnam controversy, the fanning of Heuben Carter, Vietnam conscription, the land rights claim on Ayers Rock, British miners' strike, assassination of John F. Kennedy, Stonewall riots, Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry 1972 2-Jane Fonda, Joan Baez 3-Sleazing from the riot to give to the police was 'communism' 4-He was in jail at the time 5-Lenin's head was in the centre 6-Paul Robeson, he gave a free concert for the workers building it 7-The Ballad of Joe Hill, Sacco and Vanzetti, Daniel, Frances 8-Doug Parkinson 9-d 10-Bobby Seale 11-Only Bruce Springsteen

SPORT 1-Margaret Court, Rod Laver 2-Tommy Smith, John Carlos 3-Muhammad Ali 4-Frank Wherrell, Ted 1960 5-Kim Hughes 6-d 7-d 8-Neville Wran
 QUOTES 1-Reagan 2-a 3-a 4-a 5-c 6-c 7-a 8-d 9-Billy Hughes, Bob Menzies 10-c 11-b 12-b 13-John Gorton 14-a democracy, seats for men in government, wool 15-Menzies 16-Churchill

THE LEFT 1-Hartley 2-Lenin 3-Paraguay, Dame Mary Gilmore 4-b 5-c 6-d 7-Paris 8-Trotsky 9-Budapest 10-Peking (to tell to Mao's army) 11-Mao 12-Ava F. (to tell to Castro's guerrillas), Kwangju 13-B

HOW DID YOU SCORE?
 There are 147 questions in all. If you scored
 0-50 Not good enough. A year's remedial reading of Socialist Action required — see page 10
 51-80 A good work knowledge of politics. Now you need to put it into practice by joining Socialist Action
 100-147 A regular little left-wing gossip, aren't you? But if you join Socialist Action, we'll soon have you out of that armchair!

WORKING CLASS HISTORY

REVOLUTION is not just a thing of the past. A revolution which took place in our time occurred in Portugal in 1974.

Several Socialist Action members were there. One, Janey Stone, wrote about a 100,000 strong radical demonstration: "The demo moved all through the back streets of the inner working class area of Lisbon. We all chanted non-stop 'Stand on the side of the road to clap and chant were working class people — thousands of them, little old women in black, workers, children — everything. For the first time in my life I really felt that a workers' revolution was actually possible and not just something that could happen in theory'."

Workers seized control of 300 factories. Peasants took over land in the south of Portugal. Typical was the Corame metalworking factory, which was run by a workers' committee elected by mass meetings of all workers.

Many decisions were taken by mass meetings themselves. For example, they decided to build an insulated booth for sandblasting. There were numerous meetings in the evenings at the factory, discussing not just workplace matters but also transport, housing, education and the problems of the district.

ENGELS once said, "Revolution is the most democratic thing there is."

Mansions, hotels and other buildings were occupied and turned into nurseries, social centres, clinics and so on. One exclusive sports club was turned into a day nursery. The workers in the shanty town of Bairro da Boavista in the outskirts of Lisbon took over a housing estate owned by speculators that had been empty for three years.

In another suburb, Setubal, a Committee of Consumption obtained food directly from farm co-operatives, bypassing middlemen and merchants. For the first time, demand and supply started to meet. The old merchants' prices were halved. Cabbages came down from 110 to 3 escudos. Any food left over was distributed free to old peoples' homes.

The workers took over sections of the media, such as the paper Republica and Radio Renascenca.

SUBSCRIBE to Socialist Action



The workers' committee at Corame: 300 factories were seized

Portugal 1974: Revolution in our own time

Portugal's soldiers supported the workers' actions. Demonstrations included tanks flying red flags, and soldiers and sailors bearing banners openly expressing support for the workers. In confrontations with the right, the soldiers joined the workers on the barricades. Revolutionary councils of workers, soldiers and sailors were set up.

PORTUGAL'S revolution began in Africa. In 1974, Portugal was engaged in protracted colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. The wars were expensive, costing over half of the budget.

It was a price that Portugal could ill afford, as it was an economically backward country with low wages, 30% inflation and the lowest life expectancy in Europe.

The army was a conscript army. A group of middle-level officers called the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) wanted to end the wars and grant independence to the colonies.

The fascist dictatorship, which had ruled Portugal since 1926, refused. With the economic crisis of the 1970s, the multinationals and big monopolies decided to

oppose the fascist regime too. On 25 April 1974, the MFA overthrew the regime.

Despite fifty years of repression, the people exploded



Leftwing soldiers gather to view a mass march

interaction. Workers won higher wages, causing many bosses to take their money out of the country and to close or abandon their factories. Bank workers blocked some of these attempted money transfers.

Faced with unemployment, many workers occupied their factories, running them themselves and demanding nationalisation under workers' control. Yet the factories still had to function within a capitalist system subject to market forces. And the workers did not have control of the state.

The government was controlled by the Socialist and Communist Parties and right-wing army officers, none of whom were prepared to overturn the capitalist system. The nationalised banks cut finance to occupied factories. In some cases, with inadequate finance, the workers were forced to give the factories back to their owners. The Socialists gave back occupied land in the countryside and encouraged the bosses to return.

THE Socialists also regained control over the army.

Initially, the officers in the MFA had supported the workers' occupations and the seizure of the housing estates and media. But they were not prepared to challenge capitalism itself. They argued that things had gone too far. Eventually, the officers decided to support the government.

The soldiers who had supported the workers were not organised sufficiently to act independently of the officers.

The revolutionary left was not large enough to counter the influence of the Socialist and Communist Parties, by arguing for a more radical direction in every workplace and in the ranks of the soldiers and sailors.

Portugal showed that soldiers can unite with workers and that the people can organise factories, food supplies and housing much better without the burden of bosses, speculators and profiteers.

But revolution needs more than that. It is not an easy step to overturn capitalism, especially in one small, backward country. Workers need their own mass revolutionary political organisation to ensure that it happens. Still, Portugal proves that even today, even in the West, the contradictions of capitalism, poverty and war can push people into fighting for a better world. It is an inspiring revelation of those who would defeat the socialist revolution dead.

— Patricia Langenacker

SUMMER SPECIAL

FROM PAGE 15

Trivia Quiz

- Which group does ex-NPD candidate Peter Garrett sing in?
 - a Split Enz
 - b Electric Blues
 - c I'm Talking d Midnight Oil
- "Your brothers bound and gagged and they lie him to a chair," sang Crosby, Stills & Nash. Who was the "brother" on track?
 - a The following artists have not toured South Africa: Rod Stewart, Shirley Bassey, Frank Sinatra, Margot Fonteyn, Sammy Davis Jr., Elton John, Queen, Ray Charles, Bruce Springsteen, Joan Armatrading?

SPORT

- Which tennis great had a state premier for father-in-law? And which one had a noted anarchist for a brother?
 - a. Bernadette Devlin
 - b. Margaret Thatcher
 - c. Ian Paisley
 - d. Enoch Powell



- Who said, "You can't mine coal without machine-guns"?
 - a. UK coal boss Ian McGregor
 - b. NSW mine boss Steven Pratt
 - c. US private agent Allan Pinkerton
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- Who was Eddie Ward discussing dinner because I don't eat cheese?
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- "Such a resort to the tactics of the industrial jungle ill becomes men and women who perform a vital public service." Was Melbourne's Age editorializing about the 1923 police strike?
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- Who was Bill Waterhouse's lawyer at the Big Philo doping inquiry after the 1969 Melbourne Cup?
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QUOTABLE QUOTES

- Which President accurately said, "The US has much to offer the Third World War"?
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- Who said, "Herr Hitler is doing a good job"?
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- Where did William Lane establish the utopian socialist colony New Australia? Which notable literary figure edited the newspaper there?
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THE LEFT: 1-Hartley 2-Lenin 3-Paraguay, Dame Mary Queen of Sheba 4-Budapest 1919 5-Shanghai 7, Barcelona 7, Shanghai 7, Sholapur 7, Barcelona 7, Peking 7, Kwangju 7, I fell to Castro's guerrillas (fellow to Mao)



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- Rosa Luxemburg
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WORKING CLASS HISTORY

REVOLUTION is not just a thing of the past. A revolution which took place in our time occurred in Portugal in 1974.

Several Socialist Action members were at here. One, Janey Stone, wrote about a 100,000 strong radical demonstration: "The demo wound all through the back streets of the inner working class area of Lisbon. We all chanted non-stop..." Standing on the side of the road to clap and chant were working class people — thousands of them, little old women in black, workers, children — everything. For the first time in my life I really felt that a workers' revolution was actually possible and not just something that could happen in theory."

Workers seized control of 300 factories. Peasants took over land in the south of Portugal. Typical was the Corame metalworking factory, which was run by a workers' committee elected by mass meetings of all workers.

Many decisions were taken by mass meetings themselves. For example, they decided to build an insulated booth for sand-blasting. There were numerous meetings in the evenings at the factory, discussing not just workplace matters but also transport, housing, education and the problems of the district.

ENGELS once said, "Revolution is the most democratic thing there is."

Mansions, hotels and other buildings were occupied and turned into nurseries, social centres, clinics and so on. One exclusive sports club was turned into a day nursery. The workers in the shanty town of Bairro da Boavista in the outskirts of Lisbon took over a housing estate owned by speculators that had been empty for three years.

In another suburb, Setubal, a Committee of Consumption obtained food directly from farm co-operatives, bypassing middlemen and merchants. For the first time, demand and supply started to meet. The old merchants' prices were halved. Cabbages came down from 10 to 3 escudos. Any food left over was distributed free to old peoples' homes.

The workers took over sections of the media, such as the paper *Republica* and *Radio Renascenca*.

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The workers' committee at Corame: 300 factories were seized

Portugal 1974: Revolution in our own time

Portugal's soldiers supported the workers' actions. Demonstrations included tanks flying red flags, and soldiers and sailors bearing banners openly expressing support for the workers.

In confrontation with the right, the soldiers joined the workers on the barricades. Revolutionary councils of workers, soldiers and sailors were set up.

PORTUGAL'S revolution began in Africa. In 1974, Portugal was engaged in protracted colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. The wars were expensive, costing over half of the budget.

It was a price that Portugal could ill afford, as it was an economically backward country with low wages, 30% inflation and the lowest life expectancy in Europe.

The army was a conscript army. A group of middle-level officers called the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) wanted to end the wars and grant independence to the colonies.

The fascist dictatorship, which had ruled Portugal since 1926, refused. With the economic crisis of the 1970s, the multinationalists and big monopolies decided to

into action. Workers won higher wages, causing many bosses to take their money out of the country and to close or abandon their factories. Bank workers blocked some of these attempted money transfers.

Faced with unemployment, many workers occupied their factories, running them themselves and demanding nationalisation under workers' control.

Yet the factories still had to function within a capitalist system subject to market forces. And the workers did not have control of the state.

The government was controlled by the Socialist and Communist Parties and right-wing army officers, none of whom were prepared to overturn the capitalist system. The nationalised banks cut finance to occupied factories. In some cases, with inadequate finance, the workers were forced to give the factories back to their owners. The Socialists gave back occupied land in the countryside and encouraged the bosses to return.

THE Socialists also regained control over the army.

Initially, the officers in the MFA had supported the workers' occupations and the seizure of the housing estates and media. But they were not prepared to challenge capitalism itself. They argued that things had gone too far. Eventually, the officers decided to support the government.

The soldiers who had supported the workers were not organised sufficiently to act independently of the officers.

The revolutionary left was not large enough to counter the influence of the Socialist and Communist Parties, by arguing for a more radical direction in every workplace and in the ranks of the soldiers and sailors.

Portugal showed that soldiers can unite with workers and that the people can organise the factories, food supplies and housing much better without the burden of bosses, speculators and profiteers.

But revolution needs more than that. It is not an easy step to overturn capitalism, especially in one small, backward country. Workers need their own mass revolutionary political organisation to ensure that it happens.

Still, Portugal proves that even today, even in the West, the contradictions of capitalism, poverty and war can push people into fighting for a better world. It is an inspiring revelation of those who would defeat the socialist revolution dead.

— Patricia Langenbucker



Leftwing soldiers gather to view a mass march

EVERY year, the churches complain, "Let's put Christ back into Christmas."

But they never tell the true story of the man whose birthday they celebrate.

The gospels were composed between roughly 70 and 150 AD. They are not, therefore, contemporary accounts of Christ's "miracles," but products of the early Christian church which gave Jesus, and thus the church, a superhuman imprimatur.

Contemporary confirmations of Christ's "miracles" are remarkably hard to find. As Gibbon remarked 200 years ago: "During the age of Christ the lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of nature were frequently suspended."

But the ages of Greece and Rome appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world.

Under the reign of Tiberius, the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event... passed without notice in an advanced science."

Christ's "miracles," of course, meant he must be the messiah, whom Jerusalem under the Roman yoke was anxiously awaiting.

The messiah had to be a descendant of King David under Jewish law. The early Christians tried to show this by claiming that Jesus' family came from Bethlehem, David's city, and not Nazareth, where he probably came from. To do this, they concocted the idea of a great imperial census which required everyone to return to their ancestors' home. That is why Joseph dragged pregnant Mary back to Bethlehem.

In fact, there was no general census. There may have been a local one, but there is no way that the vast, cosmopolitan Roman Empire would have required its subjects to return to their birthplaces just to be counted.

THE DAVID ancestry, and the controversy over Jesus being the Son of God, were major problems for a religion trying to take root amongst the monotheistic Jews.

They only became irrelevant when Christianity overrode its Jewish framework. Pagans did not know or care about the David ancestry, and one god begetting another was quite normal.

So why did Jesus catch on at all amongst the Jews?



"They're simple decent people, if somewhat communist inclined!"

Nothing sacred: The real roots of Christianity

The Roman empire was in decay. Its expansion had finished, and agricultural production declined as the large slave-run farms became more and more inefficient. In a decomposing society, a new way of explaining things, a new religion, had fertile ground.

Why Palestine, though? Unlike other Roman outposts, Palestine's political life had not declined. Jerusalem was wealthy due to the influx of temple taxes and pilgrims. The Jehovah cult supported the priest class and the tourist trade. (Pilgrims also had to change currencies, so what better place for the money-changers than in the Temple?)

The priests, a hereditary aristocracy, were Judaism's ruling class. They controlled the Temple taxes, ate the sacrifices (not human), and took the tithes.

The city proletariat, who did not share in these material benefits, became Jesus's audience. They included peasants forced from their land to become day labourers, slaves who had won their freedom, and Jews returned from exile in Babylon who were used to city life and disdained farm work.

Jesus' powerful propaganda was aimed at them. His line that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven

damned the rich for their wealth. The Sermon on the Mount said:

"Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. . . . Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of ye kept back by fraud, crieth. . . . Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton."

Such class hatred became an embarrassment within a few decades. Matthew revised the Sermon on the Mount to:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Blessed are they, who do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

The "poor in spirit" — whoever they are — get blessed, not the poor. The hungry become those "who hunger after righteousness." The blessing of the poor and the cursing of the rich just got the flick.

THE CLASS hatred of the early Christians gave them a universal propaganda, which roving, penniless agitators carried outside Palestine.

But the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD snuffed out the last centre of popular rebellion in the empire. Christianity became subservient and obsequious to the now relatively calm Roman Empire, its new protector.

It transferred the guilt of the crucifixion from the Romans to the Jews. It accepted slavery. It rendered unto Caesar the taxes which were Caesar's. The doctrine of life after death attracted the rich, who could purchase eternal bliss and avoid the torments of Hell.

The class composition of the Christian community changed, as did its organisation. Originally it was without hierarchy, without doctrinal agreements. Anyone could become a teacher or agitator, and most worked for a living at the same time. But some devoted themselves entirely to agitation, renouncing possessions and marriage. These "saints" became the leaders, at first surviving on alms. Paul argued that the community's duty was to relieve him and the other apostles of the need for manual labour.

Supervising the collection of alms and their distribution and the arbitration of disputes, soon became a paid job, performed by a bishop. A bureaucracy grew up of bishops, deacons and priests. Bishops were chosen for their commercial attributes and their ability to keep the rich happy.

The itinerant apostle ceased to be the link between communities. From the second century on, bishops from communities met. Increasingly the moral authority of majority decisions bound all the participants. The Catholic Church came into being.

NO RULER in the Empire could ignore this authoritarian organisation, with its mass following. They did not have to fight it, so they allied to it.

Emperors presided over the councils of bishops, and put the state at the disposal of the Church, the strongest supporter of their despotism.

By 366 AD, when there was conflict over the succession to the seat of Peter between Damasus and Ursinus, Damasus became Pope by the simple expedient of hiring gladiators; 137 corpses were counted in the cathedral after his victory.

The community found three centuries earlier by the proletarians of Jerusalem and the poor peasants and fisherfolk of Galilee had turned into its exact opposite.

—Jeff Goldfarb

Communist author tells her own tale

Point of Departure by Jean Devanny (Old In Press, 1986)

JEAN Devanny was a Communist activist and the author of fifteen novels, including the recently republished *Sugar Heaven*.

Her autobiography, *Point of Departure*, centres on her political life from the late 1920s to her death in 1962.

Jean was the daughter of a poor New Zealand miner, a strong unionist. She herself married a miner at 17. She quickly developed both physical and mental strength, and a fierce sympathy for the oppressed. Even when ill to the point of collapse, she possessed remarkable drive.

Devanny joined the Communist Party after moving to Sydney in 1929. She covered thousands of miles, year after year, in its service, making speeches, selling political literature and recruiting members.

She received little thanks from the Party leadership for this dedication. In the early 1940s, she was expelled after scurrilous rumours were spread by some vindictive male chauvinists attached to the Cairns branch. Devanny was given no chance to defend herself.

Jean remained loyal to the Party, refusing to criticize it to outsiders. Reinstated in 1943, she later resigned over serious differences in attitudes to culture and a petty, spiteful review of one of her books. Finally she rejoined the party after Stalin's death and remained a member until she died, saying:

"My political philosophy was not based on sentiment. . . I still believed that the struggle of mankind against nature made inevitable the evolution of capitalism through socialism to communism."

Although not in agreement with all of Devanny's ideas (for example, that workers should shelve their own struggle in the common battle against fascism in World War II), I was constantly impressed by her intelligence. She was humane rather than rigid, and always prepared to defend her views.

She had wide interests: she once stayed several weeks in an unbearable job with a tyrannical boss, largely through curiosity



Jean Devanny and striking canecutters: politics came first

about ousting Australia's flora and fauna.

Because of this, her books have widely ranging settings, but their overriding theme is the struggle of the oppressed and the need to crush prejudice in order to unify workers.

Devanny gave much time to setting up writers' groups, which she insisted should be non-1940s and 50s, however, was strongly Stalinist: content was the sole criterion for judging literature.

Indeed, many regarded writing novels as worthless. One young comrade asked Devanny why she didn't "get down to some important work." "Such as?" she asked. "Well," was the reply, "we need speakers and paper sellers, you know!"

Jean Devanny was both of these and more. But she alienated the Party leaders by her belief that propaganda should be inherent in the text of a novel rather than bluntly stated, and that an attractive style drove the message home more forcefully. She was eventually removed from office in the Party-dominated writers' groups (which soon collapsed).

Devanny's writing, unlike fellow Communist Katherine Susannah Pritchard, often came second to political activity. She wrote *Sugar Heaven* to left writing *Sugar Heaven* to help organise the canecutters' strike on which it centres. She is matter-of-fact about herself: "I . . . might have been a good writer if I had put writing first."

Do not be misled, though. *Point of Departure* is crisply told and difficult to put down. It is also Devanny's own history. He deflected to make allowances and smile. "Laughing so many times when he should have struck," her

daughter comments in the epilogue.

As an account of the conflicts of being both an artist and an activist, and as an object lesson against doctrinaire bureaucracy, *Point of Departure* is well worth reading. It is a fine statement by a determined woman of the Left.

—Eric Harrison

TELEVISION

Did Oswald do it?

23 YEARS on, the killing of John F. Kennedy remains a source of fascination.

Almost 500 books have been written on it. The death of Kennedy — the "liberal" who brought us the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban missile crisis and the first Vietnam buildup — was a deep shock to millions of fans.

But the holes in the official explanation are the real fascination, and what they may say about the "democratic" system of the Warren Commission finding in a courtroom situation.

As a real trial, the case that famous Book Depository that took his life there. The case he took his gun into. He used it against him rested heavily on the Marxist leanings. He deflected to Russia, cried prosecutor Bugliosi, he must have been

demoted. Even weaker was the finding of no conspiracy — a fourth shot fired from in front of Kennedy. The most conclusive refutation of this was the film shot by bystander Abraham Zapruder, which clearly showed Kennedy being jerked back by the fatal head shot.

As some writers (but oddly, not the *On Trial* defence) point out, the film also showed how co-ordination of the shots from front and behind was possibly achieved. It showed an open umbrella being raised at the crucial moment, despite the day being fine and with no prospect of rain.

If there was a conspiracy, various "oversights" by the FBI and Dallas police take on a new light: the destruction of a note from Oswald, the easy entry of Jack Ruby to Dallas police station to kill Oswald, the failure to follow up a cop's sighting of man resembling Ruby leaving the assassination scene.

On Trial missed one intriguing oversight: the FBI arrested three "hoboes" in the rallyard behind the famous "grassy knoll," drove them from the area, then released them without taking their names.

Would the FBI or CIA be party to killing Kennedy? The Dallas jury in *On Trial* didn't dare find that way. But Kennedy's bungling of the Bay of Pigs made the CIA look stupid and caused considerable right-wing ructions.

This is the real significance of the Kennedy case. We know the CIA and co conspire against overseas leaders. But would they kill their own elected President? Because if they would, the arguments against trying to work within such a "democratic" system become irresistible.

—Denis Allop



Ruby shoots Oswald: just a police oversight, or more?

Kids, sex and Alison Thorne

WOWSERISM is alive and well and living in Victoria.

That is the only conclusion you can draw from the latest kerfuffle over Alison Thorne.

Alison Thorne, you may recall, was the Melbourne teacher who three years ago created a furor when she spoke on a radio talk-back show on behalf of the Gay Legal Rights Coalition.

In the interview, which followed the arrest of nine alleged gay paedophiles, Alison committed the crime of suggesting that some children aged between 10 and 16 were capable of consenting to sexual acts. She said that age of consent laws were reactionary.

The press, MPs, and parents at Glenroy Tech, where she taught, reacted as though she were about to personally molest every child in the school. Her views were branded "revolting" and "repugnant".

Within a week the Cain government had pulled her out of the classroom and banished her to an office job, despite the admission even from complaining parents that Alison was an excellent teacher. Three years later, she finally got some measure of justice with the Equal Opportunity ruling that she had been discriminated against.

All hell broke loose once again. A television phone-in poll ran 3-to-1 against her being allowed to return to classroom duties.

The Cain government, abetted by the Liberals, rushed to draw up legislation to overturn the decision.

Alison was forced to accept an offer of "only" being banished to post-secondary teaching.

I THINK Alison Thorne had every right to say what she did. And despite all the hysteria against paedophiles, I think her views are still absolutely correct.

First, let's dispel the idiotic notion, endorsed by both Labor and the Liberals, that teachers should not express such views on the age of consent because they are entrusted with the care of children.

According to this bizarre logic, parents should not be allowed to comment either. After all, society entrusts them with the care of children even more than it does teachers.

And all the evidence is that they are less worthy of this trust, since most adult-child sex and child abuse occurs within the family.

So to follow the logic through, no-one can express opposition to the age of consent laws unless

they've got nothing to do with children. Shades of the Vatican on contraception!

But really, the hysteria against Alison Thorne goes far deeper than that specious argument.

At its root is the wowsery prejudice that sex is intrinsically dirty, and therefore children must be sheltered from it. (The use of words like "revolting" and "repugnant" about the thought of children having sex is very revealing.)

Closely allied is the reactionary myth of childhood as a Golden Age of Innocence. A time when it is okay to fill their minds with irrational guilt and fear of the Devil under the title "Religious Instruction", but terribly wrong for them to encounter one of the more pleasant and interesting human activities.

THE TRUTH is that children are not necessarily interested in being the "innocents" some make them out to be.

Sex between children below the age of consent is widespread. So is sex between girls aged 13-15 and boys just above the legal age limit.

And almost every older schoolchild has had intensely sexual "crushes" on teachers of the same or opposite sex.

Nor are adult-older child sexual relationships necessarily one-way affairs. Take the case of Clarence Osborne, a paedophile who was studied in depth by Queensland sociologist Paul Wilson in the book *The Man They Called A Monster*.

Over a period of 25 years, Osborne had sexual relations with about 2000 boys. Yet not one of them ever "dobbed" him in to parents or police. Wilson found

There is not a single bit of evidence to show that Osborne



Alison Thorne: banished

used force. There is a lot of evidence to show that many of the boys voluntarily came to Osborne for sexual relations and for emotional support as well.

So forget the "innocence" myth. Children, especially older children, are sexual beings, quite capable of having sexual urges towards other children and adults.

SHOULD children be allowed to act on those urges? Or do age of consent laws protect them from the trauma of emotional experiences they cannot handle?

Psychological evidence suggests that, in fact, the trauma suffered by children involved in non-incestuous sexual contact with adults (eg "pick-ups") — and certainly with other children (eg brother-sister and playground sex) — is far less than is widely believed, provided no coercion is involved.

Mostly, trauma occurs later due to the reaction of other adults when the relationship becomes known. It is precisely the wowsery



A strange man tries to win the confidence of children below the age of consent. It only the law could stop this sort of thing!



with Alec Kahn

"repugnance", legally enshrined in the age-of-consent laws, that damages such children the most.

Worse, by allowing the state to step in and deny children any sexual rights, the age of consent laws play a positively reactionary role.

Each year, hundreds of early teenage girls around Australia are shunted off to institutions as wards of the state, on the grounds of being "exposed to moral danger".

This is usually just another way of saying they are about to exercise the sexual rights that age of consent laws deny them. Often just by running off to live with their boyfriends.

In one particularly vicious Queensland case recently, a pregnant black girl was made a ward of the state and held in a home, primarily to stop her from obtaining an abortion.

AGE of consent laws also produce monstrous acts by the state against adults.

In 1982, Melbourne high school teacher Alison Cottier, 24, received six months jail for having intercourse with some boy students. Some years earlier, an 18-year-old inmate of a Queensland mental institution received seven years jail for carnal knowledge of a consenting 14-year-old girl.

Gay paedophiles, of course, are treated brutally by the law, regardless of the circumstances.

Obviously, we can only be in favour of children having sex when they freely consent to it. No-one supports adults seeking to take advantage of children too young to know what is happening to them.

The trouble is that age of consent laws go much further than this. They "protect" children by denying their sexual rights altogether.

It seems to me that, to the extent the law protects anyone, children should be adequately covered by the laws against rape, indecent assault and child abuse. We should have no truck with the state denying them sexual rights if they wish to exercise them.

The sooner we can throw off the artificial barriers between childhood and adulthood, and turn sex into a mutually pleasurable activity between any consenting human beings who want to engage in it, the freer we will all be.