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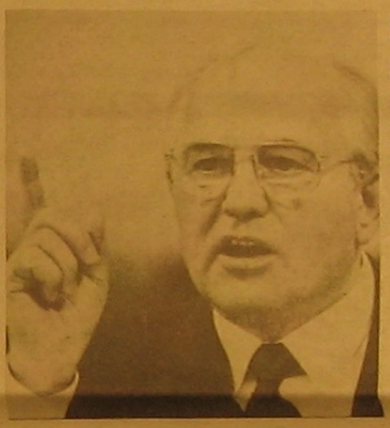
NEW WORLD ORDER

GEORGE BUSH

BUSH killed at least 100,000 Iraqis to seize control the world's biggest oil reserves and to throw off the 'Vietnam syndrome'.

Now he's resumed aid to the regime behind El Salvador's death squads.

Bush controls the world's biggest stockpile of nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional weapons. In the 'New World Order' he will be more ready to use them.



MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

HE used the Gulf War to unleash the military against Lithuanian independence. Tanks ran over demonstrators and seventy were killed.

In exchange for supporting the US in the Gulf, Gorbachev got Bush's approval for his crackdown.

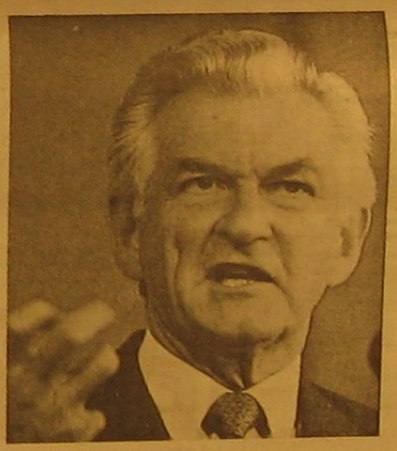
Gorbachev still has the world's second greatest military to defend the Stalinist system.

SHEIK JABER AL-SABAH

THE al-Sabah family has run Kuwait ever since the British created the 'country' in 1921. They are fabulously rich, with $130 billion invested in the West. They allow no democracy to interfere with this. The Emir has a special place in Bush's New World Order. His job is to make sure plenty of cheap oil flows to industries in the West—and not to countries that threaten US interests.

BOB HAWKE

HE rushed to offer Australian frigates to support the US invasion of the Gulf. Hawke was not kowtowing to the Americans, but defending the global interests of Australia's own multinationals Now he's turning back to attack his enemies at home—the poor and the working class who are not producing enough profit to satisfy Australia's bosses.



Same old bullies!

A war for democracy?
"Coalition political strategists do not envisage replacing [Saddam Hussein] ... with a democratically elected government even if they get the chance. In fact they see few good alternatives to the current power structures to lead Iraq after the war."
—British Guardian

Democracy Kuwaiti-style
In 1938 the Emir of Kuwait agreed to share power with a legislative council, but its first vote was for union with Iraq. Urged on by Britain, the Emir dissolved the council and jailed the councillors.

Slavery in Britain
A 29-year-old Filipina, who identified herself as Alice, told a news conference in London at the end of February that she was forced to wear a belt round her waist and eat leftovers while working for Kuwait's ruling al-Sabah family in London. She finally ran away after a rape attempt.

Business as usual
The Middle East arms bazaar is back open for business. The US plans to sell Egypt $US1.6 billion in planes and bombs. Some of the weapons shipped to the Gulf will be left for the Saudi hosts, and some Soviet-built weapons captured from Iraq will be given to Syria.

Too bad about the rest of us
"War is seldom bad for business."
—editorial in the London *Times*

He should know
"This isn't a new world order—it is a new imperialism."
—Edward Heath, former British Tory Prime Minister

Now they tell us
"Tear gas is intended to save lives. It's a way of avoiding having to shoot people."
—military doublespeak person Pete Williams, after the Pentagon authorised the use of non-lethal chemicals in the Gulf

Spoils of war
The British *Guardian* revealed that a US sergeant had to draw his gun to defend two injured civilians from looters last week when their jeep crashed in the Saudi Arabian desert.
The looters were American GIs.

Not the way we see it
"Support for the ANC, the PLO and the Sandinistas has become the litmus test of left credibility in the same way that defending Stalin was in the 1930s."
A loony right-winger? No, it's Australian Left Review writer Mike Ticher

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Goss's half-hearted reforms

WHEN it came to power, Labor promised it would get rid of the restrictions on civil liberties that had characterised the Bjelke-Petersen era.

To do this, Wayne Goss set up the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. After a long, much-publicised inquiry, EARC has come up with recommendations that in practice will mean things are hardly any different.

For instance, partly due to determined resistance to attempts to stifle free speech, some changes have been made in relation to the right to speak in the Queen St Mall.

But what are they? Now the City Council and the police have to be notified of any assembly, and an area "in or near the Mall" will be set aside as a Speakers' Corner. What this is likely to mean in practice is a remote corner of King George Square.

Restrictions on leafleting and displaying placrds over a certain size have not been changed. Both still require a police permit.

As for the "right" to demonstrate, for demonstrators to be "immune" to charges of obstruction they will have to give seven days' notice to the police of any assembly." Spontaneous" demonstrations need a court order to authorise them if the police refuse.

The same regulations will apply to pickets, including industrial ones.

STIFLE

So, far from EARC getting rid of restrictions on civil liberties, it has formalised milder versions in legislative form.

Back in the 70s and early 80s when the civil liberties campaign produced nearly 2000 arrests, people were demanding the right to march without police permits, and never applied for them.

And if protestors march after having been denied approval by a court, they are in contempt of court, a far more serious charge than any under Bjelke's law.

Other EARC recommendations focus on teaching the police how to negfotiate with march organisers. The general intention seems to be to make rallies police themselves, by tying them to a plan of action that is acceptable to the cops.

Even with changes to the law, there is still a plethora of other laws to stifle dissent, including the state of emergency imposed at the Aboriginal community at Doomagee in early March.

It's clear we will have to keep on demonstrating to get any substantial change out of the Goss government. Like the Labor Party elsewhere, once in office the priority is running the system so as not to upset the bosses.

For instance, at the end of February Goss gave notice that he would block legislation on abortion rights.

Even the ALP's (fairly limited) policy on gay rights has not been met. Aboriginal Land Rights are only on the agenda as long as mining rights and business interests won't be interfered with.

AGENCIES

Goss recently announced that the government was not going to decriminalise prostitution. "That's up to the law enforcement agencies to look after", he said.

Well, it certainly was under the Bjelke Petersen government, but we were told things had changed!

To get even the changes that the Goss government has come up with to date has meant constant pressure on the streets, through demonstrations and pickets.

More of the same will be needed to force concessions on any of these issues.

BLACK HEALTH STILL LOW PRIORITY

ABORIGINAL HEALTH standards have declined to a "shamefully unacceptable level" according to the NSW Task Force into Aboriginal Health. The problem is now so acute that the Task force is calling for nothing short of "radical reform" in the NSW Health Department.

A recent article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* describes life for one family at the settlement, New Burnt Bridge in central NSW. With no running water or sewerage, holes in the walls and a house where ice collects on the roof in winter, the people in these areas have a life expectancy of 15 to 20 years less than the Australian average. Babies are two and a half times more likely to die in their first year of life.

Three years ago the then minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gerry Hand, visited the settlement, pronounced conditions appalling and promised $1 million to get things right. To this day not one cent has been spent on the community.

—by Lindsay Munks

IN Sydney, 5,000 women marched on International Women's Day. The theme of the day was "Women united against war" and the most vocal parts of the march connected their chants for equal pay and free childcare with opposition to Australian and US intervention in the Gulf.

Magazine closed by sexist advertisers

A WOMEN'S magazine with a difference has just met its demise. Well all right, so maybe *Big Beautiful Women* wasn't so very different since it treated women as slaves of fashion and other small minded pursuits. However it did address one stereotype.

This magazine featured text and fashion spreads that referred to women who are size 16 and over. Instead of showing clothes modelled by anorexic early teenage women it had its clothes modelled by "life-sized" mature women. Over its only seven issues it achieved a regular readership of 28,000 showing that far from all women conform to the ultra thin stereotype figure of the fashion world.

The magazine folded because of prejudice. Cosmetic and fashion companies told the staff—all large women—that they did not want their products associated with fat women. Even fashion companies specialising in larger sizes wanted their clothes modelled by thin women. *Big Beautiful Women* went broke because of refusal of companies to advertise and because of high staff turnover as a result of abusive phone calls.

We have no interest in mourning a dead capitalist enterprise whatever the nature of its business. But the plight of *Big Beautiful Women* illustrates the remorseless pressure upon women to conform to stereotypes in physical as well as intellectual areas.

—by Dorothy Morgan

Rape doesn't pay

NO WOMAN in Melbourne will mourn the closing of the Cadillac Bar, which went into liquidation on 5 March.

People stopped going there because the bar had been linked to a series of assaults, particularly sexual assaults against women.

Most recently a group of men attempted to rape a young student inside the club. No one came to her aid.

There was a huge outcry against the club, including a demonstration of about 50 women one Saturday night.

The Kirner state Labor government has taken up the issue, promising an education campaign and more protection for women, such as women-only carparks and escort services to be provided by employers for women working late at night.

But isn't this the same government which has introduced vicious cutbacks over the past few years to public transport? There are now fewer staff at railway stations, and therefore more dangerous situations for women.

And didn't the Labor government try to scrap conductors on trams? Fortunately trammies resisted the cutbacks.

If Kirner was really serious about making Melbourne a safer place for women, public transport cutbacks would be reversed, taxis would be available to take women workers home after late shifts, and better lighting would be provided in public places.

And there would have to be a real attempt to turn around the inequalities between men and women—let's have equal pay for a start, followed by 24-hour childcare.

—by Judy McVey

AUSTRALIAN IMPERIALISM IN THE GULF

ANYONE WHO thinks Australia hasn't participated in the actual killing of Iraqis better think again. The Australian navy may not have been able to find an Iraqi to shoot but Bob Hawke can feel satisfied that he "did his bit" in the murderous bombing of Iraq.

The bases operated by the US and Australia at Nurrungar and Pine Gap spied on Iraq and helped to establish bombing targets even before the Gulf crisis began. Nurrungar processed information from satellites monitoring Iraqi missile tests. Pine Gap collected electronic information sent by satellites listening in to Iraqi communications.

These spy bases, run by hundreds of CIA agents and their Australian counterparts, were established in the 60s ostensibly to spy on the USSR, China and other perceived enemies. However, the spies never have "tuned out" when the satellites passed over friendly skies!

For example, all the time the US was passing information on Iranian military activity to its ally Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War it was also gathering information on Iraq which no doubt proved very useful in the Gulf War.

It's clear that Bush's vision of a "New World Order" has the US military machine as the police and countries like Australia as police informers and vigilantes. The US/Australian spy bases are not just tools in the imperialists' attack on the people of Iraq—they are weapons against oppressed people worldwide. They must be torn down.

—by Alex Damon

Racist immigration laws strike again

A WOMAN from the Philippines who had been living in Grafton was deported from Brisbane at the beginning of March.

She came to Australia six years ago to marry an Australian, and was eventually granted permanent residency. The marriage broke down due to violence inflicted by the husband. When he found out that the woman had begun a de facto relationship with another man, he told the Immigration Department that her papers were fake, and on this basis they cancelled her permanent resident status.

The woman was advised to reapply on the basis of the de facto relationship, which she did. But after severe physical abuse she left this relationship. It was then only a matter of time before she was arrested, held in jail in Brisbane without visitors, and then deported.

Few things could illustrate the racism and sexism of the immigration laws more clearly. As a woman from the Philippines, the basis on which she was allowed to enter the country in the first place was as the wife of a white Australian.

As soon as she ceased being in this kind of relationship the Immigration Department threw her out of the country.

—by Varpu Rantanen

After the slaughter in the Gulf...

The bitter price of US power

THE U.S. victory in the Gulf strips away any pretence that capitalism is in any way civilised.

In their euphoria over Bush's victory, the media named it the 100 hour war—hoping we would forget the most comprehensive bombing campaign in history, six weeks during which the equivalent of one Hiroshima bomb was dropped *every day*.

They want us to believe their victory was due to the brilliant leadership of General Schwarzkopf, when the truth is that the Iraqi army was already going home, that the US "victory" was nothing but the cold-blooded slaughter of an army in retreat—the "turkey shoot" their soldiers boasted about.

While Bush and Baker now make earnest speeches about demilitarising the Middle East, their diplomats are negotiating for new bases in Saudi Arabia and preparing to sell billions more in weapons to their principal Arab ally, Egypt.

All this savagery has but a single purpose—to entrench a system in which the US is top dog, in which wealth flows uninterruptedly from the poor to the rich.

Bush was prepared to slaughter 100,000 ordinary Iraqis to make sure that the US controlled the world's richest oil reserves, and that Western oil companies got first bite of the fabulous profits involved.

Bush talks about a "New World Order", but what does that mean to the people of El Salvador?

They face one of the most brutal regimes in the world—a regime of which has killed 70,000 in the last decade so they could block land reform and demands for democracy. Bush has just renewed aid for this regime and its death squads.

In Africa, Bush's New World Order means a new famine in Ethiopia while American farmers are paid not to grow wheat and unsold grain rots in American silos.

When the workers and students of Eastern Europe rose up to throw off decades of Stalinist tyranny, they too had hopes for a New World Order of freedom and prosperity led by the West.

What have they got? Not investment—the climate isn't "stable" enough—but advice—to cut wages, privatise industries, and slash social services.

Here in Australia, we find the same Bob Hawke who sent Australian frigates to the Gulf launching yet another offensive—against our jobs and working conditions.

By cutting tariffs, he hopes to bludgeon workers into accepting "reformed work practices" to make their bosses "competitive". Already, thousands of jobs have gone from the wharves.

BUT THERE is one difference between the New World Order and the old imperialism.

The old, optimistic, settled imperialism of the 1950s and 1960s, when the world economy was growing and US industry was dominant, is a fading memory.

AN IRAQI woman washes clothes in a rain puddle near Safwan–the price of the US victory.

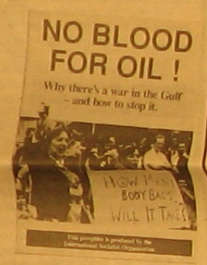
The New World Order is the threatened and desperate imperialism of the 1990s; of an era of crisis and decay, with US industries struggling to match those of Europe and Japan; with huge national and class struggles threatening the oppressive regimes in Russia and Yugoslavia.

US imperialism has won, but US imperialism is hated everywhere its touch is felt. Two hundred million Arabs feel humiliated and bitter and America's politicians wonder whether the anger can be contained.

And in America itself, once the victory parties are over, the reality of the recession will assert itself—of mass sackings, union busting and savage cuts to Medicare, schools, positive discrimination programs and public housing.

As the mass of ordinary workers come to realise that the victory wasn't theirs, they too can learn to hate the "New World Order" and the man who is trying to make them pay for it.

Every time the imperialists have a victory, they sow the seeds of future revolt against the system.



NEW PAMPHLET
No Blood for Oil
Why the US went to war in the Gulf and what we can do now to stop such wars
$3.00 (plus $1.00 post) from ISO branches or Bookmarks.

Where to now for anti-war activists?

THE RECENT anti-war movement was the beginnings of such a revolt. Millions around the world marched, picketed, leafleted and struggled for an end to the US-led war.

It was not the movement's fault that the US won.

Bush had the most powerful military in the world. He went to war with a country whose population is smaller than Australia's, with an economy 2% that of the US.

The fact that over 100,000 people in Australia were mobilised against the war is testimony to the basic humanity of ordinary people.

And the enthusiasm, the energy, the creativity of the movement—with its marches, vigils, teach-ins, workplace groups, blockades—even flour bombing the Army Reserve!—proves what socialists have always argued about the possibilities of ordinary people liberating themselves.

Nevertheless, despite a few ongoing activities, that movement has collapsed—as is generally the case when single-issue movements lose their focus.

The question is, what next? What is to happen to the anger, the energy, the radicalism generated by the anti-war movement?

The key to maintaining it is individuals generalising from the issue that got them involved, to see that it is the *system* that is the problem.

The great strength of the anti-Vietnam movement was the thousands who saw the problem as one of imperialism more generally. That broader understanding sustained their commitment to the struggle through the years it took us to win, and it gave them an ability to withstand setbacks.

Indeed, the growth of the recent movement reflected the degree to which the politics of anti-imperialism had been sustained over 15 years.

THE TRAGEDY is that by and large, the left is unable to take advantage of the anti-war upsurge.

The Labor left, which played an important (if conservative) role over Vietnam, is in disarray. Its parliamentary leaders are indistinguishable from Hawke and Keating as they preach the virtues of hard work, efficiency, welfare cuts and...war in the Gulf.

Because they identified with the regimes of Eastern Europe, most socialists outside the Labor Party were thrown into disarray by the collapse of Stalinism and are now embarrassed to even declare themselves for socialism.

It is a tragedy.

Rarely since WWII has capitalism been so clearly a system of economic crisis and war.

Rarely has Labor been more openly a party of the bosses.

To cut through the problems you have to reject the idea that socialism was state-controlled industry.

The self-emancipation of the working class has to be restored to the centre of socialist politics.

Far from undermining our politics, the revolutions in Eastern Europe confirmed much of what we had written.

Many on the left *did* finally reject the Stalinist regimes, but also gave up on fundamental social change.

A thorough understanding of Marxism, of theory and the experience of revolutionary struggle, was necessary to sustain a soundly-based optimism about the possibility of getting rid of this rotten system.

Many activists will be discouraged by the end of the anti-war movement and the victory of the US. So the same Marxist ideas are just as central now for those wanting to fight imperialism in the future.

The end of the anti-war movement does not mean the end of resistance to the system.

There are struggles in the workplaces against restructuring, delayed wage rises and sexual harassment. There are people fighting the proposed Third Runway in Sydney and the handing over of forests to the pulp mills.

Socialists not only support such struggles, but always seek to draw the link between the abuses they are fighting and the capitalist system as a whole. The more widely such an understanding penetrates, the more powerful our resistance will be.

Because the politics of the ISO have always been based on an understanding of how ordinary people can change the world in struggle, we were able to relate to the energy the anti-war unleashed.

The same analysis enables us to understand the movement's collapse—and to predict even more explosive struggles in the future.

The ISO today is too small to fill the vacuum on the left, too small to draw large numbers of anti-war activists into our ranks.

But with your involvement, we can build a bigger socialist organisation, one that can have a greater impact on the upsurge next time.

—by Phil Griffiths

The Socialist
GULF WAR FUND

TO MAKE sure that socialist arguments are heard in the anti-war movement, *The Socialist* has come out fortnightly instead of monthly.

To pay this we need your support.

In the past four weeks we've raised $70 bringing our total to $4275.

Thanks to: MR $20; IR $30; TC $20.

Join the International Socialist Organisation

☐ Please send me more information about how socialists are organising to stop the Gulf war.

☐ I want to join the International Socialist Organisation

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In the wake of Bush's desert victory...

VETERANS leading a march against the US invasion of Vietnam. Veterans played a leading role in the recent anti-war movement. Opposition such as this is critical to defeating imperialism.

Can the US be beaten?

THE EASE of the US military victory over Iraq and the scale of the slaughter and devastation has left many opponents of American imperialism feeling a mixture of bitterness and despair.

The US ruling class now feels that it has gone a long way towards ending the Vietnam syndrome. Where in Nicaragua it had to rely on the Contras to do its dirty work, now it will be much more willing to unleash the marines to prop up brutal military dictatorships and hammer regimes that step out of line.

Inside the US itself the right wing has been strengthened. George Bush's popularity has shot up.

But while Bush has won the first major war of the "post-Cold War" era he has yet to win the peace.

The situation now is quite unlike that after World War II when an allied victory and the dividing up of the world between the two superpowers ushered in a long period of economic expansion and relative stability.

The US victory in the Gulf has done nothing to resolve the long drawn out crisis of profitability in the core of world capitalism nor the long term decline of US imperialism.

These problems repeatedly drive ruling classes to desperate measures, repeatedly lead to explosive struggles from below, creating an increasingly unstable world.

The revolutions which led to the overthrow of Stalinism in Eastern Europe are but one reflection of this trend.

In the course of the Gulf War itself we have seen revolutionary upheavals in Albania, the last Stalinist bastion in Europe, and the brutal crackdown by Gorbachev to defend his empire in the Baltics.

TO UNDERSTAND the limits to America's victory, we need to understand why Iraq was so decisively beaten.

It obviously had no hope of matching the military power of the US, Britain and France backed by Saudi, German and Japanese money.

The only way to win was to spread the war, drawing into battle the tens of millions of impoverished people across the Arab world.

These were receptive to the idea of confrontation with the West as the demonstrations in Jordan, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco showed.

Saddam and his generals were utterly incapable of tapping that anger.

They engaged with diplomacy with their equivalents in other Arab states, rulers tied by a thousand strings to imperialism, instead of using this mass support to open a second front.

Saddam did realise that he would weaken America's "coalition" if he could draw Israel into the war. But the only way he could conceive of doing that was by launching Scuds against Tel Aviv—as if the Israelis were so stupid as to attack Iraq when the US was already doing the job.

Pushing for the revolutionary overthrow of King Hussein of Jordan would have produced immediate Israeli intervention. Instead Saddam referred to the king as "my brother". As a result, Jordanian demonstrators carried pictures of the two rulers together.

The original takeover of Kuwait showed the same incapacity to take genuinely revolutionary measures.

This was a country in which the vast majority had no political rights, in which a million Asian, Palestinian and Egyptian workers were subjected to low wages and unspeakable cruelty.

The complete failure of any resistance to Saddam's initial invasion showed how little support the regime had.

Rather than arouse the oppressed majority to take over for themselves, Iraqi soldiers behaved as a conventional army of occupation.

Finally, like all capitalist regimes, Saddam's relied on the principle of divide and rule, oppressing the non-Arab Kurdish minority and the Arab Shi'ite majority.

THIS IS now the fifth major war between Western-backed forces and Arab armies since World War II.

Apart from the Gulf, Arab armies have lost wars against Israel in 1948, and 1967, and against Israel, Britain and France in 1956, although Nasser was able to force Western armies to retreat. In 1973, the Arab armies secured a draw, but one which left Israel controlling huge chunks of Arab territory.

These defeats have not occurred because Western imperialism is invincible.

In the same period Western powers were defeated by liberation struggles in Algeria, Vietnam, Mozambique and Angola.

The central problem has been the social character of the Arab regimes.

In the 1948 war with Israel, the Arab forces were led by corrupt monarchies put in charge of the area by British imperialism only 30 years before. No wonder they wouldn't fight properly.

By the 1967 war, most of these monarchies had been overthrown by middle class army officers seeking to develop their countries economically through state capitalism.

But the new rulers continued to live privileged lives vastly diferent to the mass of the population. Their armies were still class-based hierarchies—the officers lived in luxury while privates did not even have proper boots. No wonder they lost.

After 1967 such rulers continued to *talk* of fighting the West and Israel, while in practice they concentrated on bolstering their power as national ruling classes, often in collaboration with imperialism.

They all sat back while Jordan's King Hussein massacred Palestinians in Black September 1970. Egypt did a deal with the US and Israel after 1973.

Syria marched into Lebanon in 1976 to smash the Lebanese left and Palestinians then on the verge of power. Saddam Hussein attacked Iran in 1980 with the blessing of the US and the Gulf monarchies.

THE ONLY victories for the local population over pro-Western forces came when movements emerged which, for a time at least, escaped the control of the existing ruling classes.

The Iranian revolution took out a major US ally.

The attempt by Israeli and US troops to dominate Lebanon in 1982-83 fell apart in the face of armed struggle from the most impoverished section of the population—the Lebanese Shi'ites.

In the Middle East things will never be the same again. We are in for a new period of turbulence and upheaval.

Amongst the Arab masses despondency and disorientation following the defeat will be mixed with enormous bitterness and anger.

This anger will push the US towards maintaining a long-term military presence in the region, yet such a presence will itself be a source of further anger and instability—especially if there are no serious concessions to the Palestinians.

Every Arab military defeat over the last 40 years has ushered in revolutionary upheavals from below. This war will be no exception.

In Jordan we have seen a new wave of demonstrations since the war ended. The regime of King Hussein is extraordinarily fragile.

Similar potential exists across much of north Africa. Southern Iraq is already in turmoil as a defeated population seeks revenge against both its own hated rulers and the West.

For decades the Palestinian struggle has been derailed by the PLO's strategy of relying on one or other supposedly progressive Arab regime to defend them. In every case they have been betrayed.

A period of political clarification which led even a minority of Palestinians to realise that they can't rely on any of the Arab rulers, and that their only genuine allies are the workers of the region would represent a gigantic step forward.

The spread of social revolt from below will be much more difficult for the US to defeat than Saddam Hussein's armies.

Superior fire power can destroy the tanks of an unpopular military dictator, but as the revolts in Eastern Europe have demonstrated even the armies of the superpowers can't prevent revolutions from leaping across borders.

Given the weakness of socialist forces in the Middle East, a legacy of the terrible betrayals of the masses by Stalinist parties, the initial beneficiaries of the new wave of revolt are likely to be the Islamic fundamentalists.

However the fundamentalists will prove incapable of resolving the problems of the region—the terrible poverty of millions while a few rich oil sheikhs wallow in incredible luxury, the ongoing imperialist domination, the dispossession of the Palestinians.

Out of a new period of upheaval the possibility will begin to emerge for the development of an independent working class movement which relies on its own strength to take on and defeat imperialism.

THE KEY to destroying Western imperialism is the working classes of the West.

This may be difficult to see in the short term as the shift to the right will undoubtedly be greatest in the US—imperialist powers that have smashing victories are not immediately overthrown by their working classes.

But even in the US, the patriotic euphoria will soon subside, especially when the deepening economic crisis means that more and more sacrifices will be demanded of them.

They will increasing resent cuts in jobs, wages, health and social services, when money can always be found for war.

These demands will come on top of 10 years of wage cuts, pathetic health services, widespread homelessness, beggars—many of them Vietnam veterans, everywhere on the streets of New York—vicious racism against blacks.

We saw a glimpse of potential working class resistance during the *political crisis over last November's* US Budget cuts aroused deep anger amongst workers. There were tax increases for the poor, but not the rich, at the same time as billions were being spent in the Gulf.

Opposition to the war was heavily concentrated amongst blue collar workers—who saw Bush as ruling for the rich and especially amongst blacks—only 52% supported the war.

Black people represent a growing section of the army which will have to die in future wars. Vietnam showed how they could turn against their own officers.

Even more importantly, their concentration in the giant US cities and in key industries means they form one of the most powerful sections of the industrial proletariat with the power to challenge American capitalism at its heart.

Another reason for cautious optimism is the size of the world wide movement that arose to oppose Bush's war drive.

Millions and millions of people poured onto the streets to demonstrate. It took took five years for a similar sized movement to emerge over Vietnam.

The rapid US victory means the movement will collapse, but it will undoubtedly leave a legacy.

After a long period of downturn in struggle a new generation has been drawn into activity for the first time, while an older generation has been re-activated. At least a minority will want to remain politically active.

The anti-Vietnam movement led to the emergence of a new revolutionary left which began to tentatively challenge the long domination of left politics by the Stalinist parties.

Now with the collapse of Stalinism the possibility exists for the rebirth of a revolutionary Marxist movement committed to genuine human liberation.

The 'liberation' of Kuwait is...

Analysis: JANEY STONE

A NEW NIGHTMARE FOR THE PALESTINIANS

THE so-called "liberation" of Kuwait has turned into a nightmare for the 400,000 Palestinians living there.

On 5 March, Kuwaiti forces drove into the Palestinian Hwali district, shooting into the air, ordering Palestinians to close their shops and beating anyone they could.

Nearby US troops did nothing.

When the mother of one asked for help from a Kuwaiti policeman he spat at her "because I am a Palestinian".

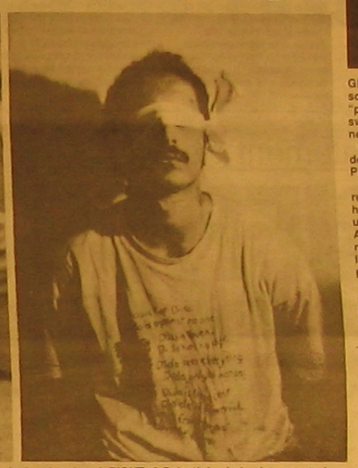
In another incident, journalists intervened to stop Kuwaiti soldiers beating a Palestinian boy on a bicycle. When asked why he allowed this, a watching American officer replied, "This is martial law, boy. Fuck off."

The attackers, supposedly members of the Kuwaiti resistance (whose numbers seemed to suddenly mushroom) claimed they were rooting out "collaborators".

As one local woman said, "The Kuwaitis seem out for blood. It is very scary".

Palestinian workers have already been expelled from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

And there is little chance that the 500,000 Palestinians in Iraq will all be able to find jobs now.



LEFT: A Kuwaiti vigilante on the rampage looking for 'spies' and 'traitors'. RIGHT: A Palestinian being interrogated.

Suffering of the curfew

IN THE Occupied Territories, the long curfew meant severe suffering.

One co-ordinating committee noted that, "the term curfew does not adequately describe the reality of what is, in effect, the imprisonment of over 1.7 million Palestinians."

People were unable to work, including the 120,000 who normally work in Israel. Restricted to their houses, they endured food shortages, limited medical care, and the loss of their crops.

Worst hit was Gaza, with only a two hour break in the curfew every five to six days.

When it was lifted only women were allowed into the streets. Since most shops are run by men, they weren't open. The women had to search for the homes of the shopkeepers and hope they were selling produce there.

Israeli officials claimed the curfew made it impossible to distribute gas masks, however it didn't stop the collection of taxes.

ARRESTED

Thousands of people were arrested in roundups of political activists. The Israeli army and Jewish settlers also shot and killed at least five Arabs, compared with only two Israelis killed by Scud missiles.

With the end of the war, the Arab allies of the US have slashed support for Palestinian schools, hospitals and factories.

40-50 thousand families were dependent on breadwinners living in Kuwait and other parts of the Gulf. Remittances and assistance contributed about a third of the territories' income—over $US450 million a year.

Throughout the Gulf crisis, the popular uprising made its presence felt at every opportunity.

On 17 January an estimated 198 people were shot and injured. The previous two days, hundreds of Palestinian women held sit-ins in Red Cross and other offices in Bethlehem, Gaza City and Nablus.

When the curfew was partially lifted in February, stonings, graffiti and protest demonstrations immediately re-appeared.

P.L.O. ON THE DEFENSIVE

***WITH THE war over, there is* much speculation in the press about the future of the PLO and Yasser Arafat.**

The Western media and pro-US Arab governments have waged a vicious campaign against Arafat for supposedly supporting Iraq—a charge the PLO vigorously denies.

Even prior to the the Gulf crisis, relations with Egypt were not normal. By February, an Egyptian official was saying, "As far as we are concerned, Arafat is finished. The question is whether the Palestinians are finished as well."

The PLO has lost its financial aid from the moderate Arab states and is unlikely to get it *back in the near future.*

Foreign ministers from Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and a number of Gulf states met recently to discuss how to "pick up the pieces" following the war. Their statement pointedly omitted to mention the PLO, a major break with past practice.

There is no doubt that Palestinians still continue to regard the PLO as representing their national aspirations.

But there has been internal debate. Three years of the Intifada have seen 875 dead, 93,000 injured and 75,000 arrested—1400 without any trial.

Meanwhile the PLO has given up a substantial part of their claim in accepting a two state solution.

Many Palestinians are now frustrated, because despite the sacrifices, the Palestinian cause is going nowhere.

This failure translated before the Gulf war into increased support for the Islamic fundamentalist group, Hamas.

As a journalist for the East Jerusalem newspaper *Al Fajr* recently wrote, "Hamas gained most when the PLO failed to deliver after all the concessions... (They were) challenging the PLO to produce any tangible gains as a result of these concessions."

The PLO strategy of winning support for a state in the Occupied Territories through international sympathy and pressure from the Arab countries is now in tatters.

But we should be clear that they did not make a mistake in opposing the US alliance. Although some forces within the leadership of the PLO talked about potential economic losses, the pressure from the Palestinian masses was too great.

As a Palestinian journalist commented, "it was not dislike for Arafat which led one young Palestinian to say...that Saddam Hussein was 60 times better than Yasser Arafat. It was...the long wait for a credible Arab stand against Israel."

BUSH'S 'CRUEL HOAX'

GEORGE BUSH's plea for a solution to the Palestinian "problem", his talk of Israel swapping land for peace, is nothing but a "cruel hoax".

He made it clear that any deal would not involve the PLO.

His talk of implementing UN resolutions 242 and 338, and his appeal for Israel to give up territory for peace with the Arabs and Palestinians, represents nothing new—it is longstanding official US policy.

Israel will refuse to accept any negotiations that threaten its interests. Real US policy, as distinct from the posturing, has been to apply no pressure to Israel at the same time as pouring the billions of dollars worth of arms and aid into the Zionist state, thus underwriting its intransigence. That policy too will continue.

This hypocritical posturing is for the benefit of Bush's allies in the Arab world—people like Egypt's Mubarak *—who have nothing to show to their restive populations for supporting US imperialism and Israel against other Arabs.*

***However Bush and Baker* do sense the possibility of some kind of Camp David type settlement with Syria involving the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.**

In the same way as the return of Sinai to Egypt in 1981 paved the way for the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, such a deal with Syria could free Israel to implement its cherished dream—to establish Jordan as Palestine and "voluntarily" transfer the population of the Occupied Territories there.

The possibility of any settlement of the Palestinian issue is even more remote.

While the US and its allies talk about negotiations with "moderate" Palestinians, Israel's strategy has been to step up arrests of precisely those same "moderates". Thus it guarantees there is no-one to negotiate with.

In November they arrested the head of the Arab Journalists Association and a noted lawyer. These were not anonymous underground figures, but men recognised for their dialogue with Israelis.

They had spoken in kibbutzim, universities, party clubs and private homes. One had even been invited by the Israeli army to lecture officers on Palestinian nationalism.

They were well known by Israelis to favour compromise. Their reward—administrative detention without trial.

During the Gulf war, an even more prominent moderate, Sari Nusseibeh, was detained without trial on suspicion of passing information to the Iraqis.

Even the *New York Times* couldn't swallow this, saying it was "a spy scare that smells." The US State Department, the British Foreign Office and even many Zionists argued that if there was evidence against him he should be put on trial.

Zionist left backs war

THE Gulf War has put an end to the dream that the Israeli peace movement foreshadowed the possibility of an agreement between the Palestinians and Israel.

The so-called left and "peace movement" in Israel were among the most vocal supporters of the war. Overwhelmingly they called for the destruction of Saddam Hussein, and attacked the PLO.

One of the first was Yossi Sarid, a member of the Knesset (Israeli parliament) representing the Citizens Rights Movement, and for years an advocate of negotiations with the PLO.

When the PLO announced its sympathy with Iraq, he wrote that if the Palestinians want to resume talks, they should now "chase after me". In November he demanded the Iraqi military infrastructure be crushed. In February he told the Palestinians: "Don't look for me any more", and called Yasser Arafat a "clownish, fettered apprentice".

Sarid added that if anybody wanted to throw him out of the Israeli peace camp for holding such views, they would be welcome to try. But the problem was that you couldn't throw out the majority.

Another member of the mainstream of the peace movement advocated in December that the main issue for the US should be dismantling the Iraqi offensive military capacity "in a way that prevents their being rebuilt in the next 20 years."

This "left winger" went on to say, "If such steps must be taken, it seems reasonable that the United States, France, (the) Soviet Union... should take the primary military risks, rather than Israel."

OPPOSING

Well known intellectuals including Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua, associated with the Centre for Peace in the Middle East, issued a strong statement opposing the anti-war demonstrations in Europe and other countries, and supporting the Allied forces.

Oz told the BBC that he still supported negotiations, but the Palestinian national movement was one of the most fanatic and extremist in this century. Peace would be a peace between enemies not friends.

Another Peace Now spokesperson, General Mordechai Bar-On, supported "the Israeli resolve not to tolerate the entrance of any Iraqi forces into the Kingdom of Jordan"—which simply means Israeli military intervention into Jordan.

So much for the argument that the West Bank is Israel's "buffer".

Members of the Labor Party, and others to its "left" also advocated "separation", or the idea that Palestinians from the Occupied Territories not be allowed inside Israel's pre-1967 borders.

Not all Israelis have joined in this rush to the right. A small part of the peace movement, particularly those groups who work actively with Palestinians, have continued to courageously stand against the mainstream.

Some tried to get food and medicine into the Occupied Territories.

The Committee to Prevent a Gulf War held a demonstration on 25 January outside the US embassy in Tel Aviv in solidarity with the 26 January march in Washington.

Most of the Israeli left has demonstrated that it cannot escape the implications of its support for Zionism—a political movement based on the expropriation of a people—and the consequent militarism and expansionism.

Shulamit Aloni, also a member of the Knesset for Citizens Rights, acknowledged the failure of the peace movement this way:

"Has the Israeli left done anything for the [Palestinians]? The Israeli left is a loyal part of the Israeli government...we were the fig leaf of Israeli democracy."

GLOBAL

Long time anti-Zionist activist and supporter of Palestinian rights, Michel Warschawski, explained that Zionist "leftists" look at everything "only from the point of view of Israel". He argues you must look at the Gulf War globally.

"Victory for the coalition means a blank check to the United States and a terrible blow to all the peoples around the world...

"Over the next 10 to 20 years, humanity will have to pay a tremendous price."

Greens vow to fight resource guarantees

IN THE grab-bag of measures which made up the March Industry Statement none has caused greater anger than the proposal to guarantee the forest industries access to timber by legislation.

Hawke's decision in the face of heated opposition from the environmental movement, is yet another sign of the declining electoral stocks of the greens.

Even the possible fall of the Tasmanian Labor government if the legislation goes ahead was not enough to dissuade him.

The proposal is part of the ALP's desperate bid to regain the confidence of the bosses and persuade them that the government's priority is running the economy on their behalf.

It is also an attempt to get up new projects with the prospects of jobs and exports to help dig the economy out of the hole Keating's policies have got it into.

The levels of investment needed for something the size of a world-competitive pulp mill are so high that the bosses want cast-iron guarantees they can get at the trees before they commit themselves. Hence the decision to legislate which makes it far harder for future governments to bow to the demands of a militant green movement.

The distance from a federal election makes it easier for Hawke to dismiss the fall-out from the greens. NSW Opposition leader Bob Carr is not so lucky, so he has supported the environmental movement on the question to give him something to distinguish himself from Greiner.

The federal legislation will need parallel laws in the states, which Greiner will happily enact. So should Carr win the NSW election, he can hide behind the legal guarantees already in place. The proposal clearly is a major threat to the protection won so far for the forests.

In Tasmania the increases in wood chip production which Premier Field is talking about—nearly double the current level—has galvanised the Greens in the Parliament to threaten a no confidence motion to bring the minority government down.

FEAR

Their fear is that the guarantee, whether by area or by volume of timber, cannot be supported by the existing agreed areas of logging and that National Park and even World Heritage areas will come under pressure.

The green movement is incensed by this new threat when they considered that both the Resources Assessment Commission and the Ecologically Sustainable Development working parties provided means to sort out environment disputes by "rational" discussion.

The Hawke decision pre-empts any guidelines the working parties may come up with, so Greenpeace and the Australian Conservation Foundation now has to consider withdrawing from them. This is actually a step forward, for the working parties were basically a means for co-opting the movement's right wing and discrediting the militants.

The government's decision has discredited lobbying and co-operation as a method and could make it easier for militants to get a hearing for calling demonstrations instead.

For the Tasmanian movement the possibility of an election over the resource security legislation means that electoralism is still seen as a way forward. Whichever party wins in Tasmania it is likely that the greens will have to take to the streets to defend the national estate forests.

The problem will be to mobilise people after more than a year's inaction hoping Bob Brown and co would save the forests for them.

—by Anne Picot

Industry statement pie in the sky

TARIFF CUTS AIM TO DISCIPLINE WORKERS

BOB HAWKE made a long speech, Keating followed, Senator John Button and other ministers chipped in.

But when the smoke cleared, the March economic statement offered little hope for the economy, and none for Australian workers.

Protection's being cut again, including cars, and textiles, clothing and footwear. This was predictable. Business is getting tax concessions as it always does. There are a lot of fiddly measures ranging from aid to the sugar industry to a bit of export assistance—again, money for the bosses.

Hawke admitted that his policies mean "jobs will be lost in declining industries" though he tried to mumble that bit, and offered some trivial retraining and other adjustment assistance for the victims.

There's a pittance too for people out of work more than six months, but that got far less emphasis than the need to create a "favourable climate for investment", even though 150,000 people have been out of work for a year or more and the figure is set to grow steadily as the recession drags on.

ISSUES

For all the talk about a "clever country", the central issues behind the statement are actually pretty basic. Australia's capitalists are in big trouble. Their old strategies no longer work, and they're desperate to find new ones.

They traditionally relied on exporting minerals and rural commodities, while manufacturing industry hid behind high tariff walls. But by the 1980s our rulers realized this wasn't good enough.

Minerals, wheat and wool were becoming less central to the world economy. The key to success was exporting complex manufactured exports. But decades of tariffs, bounties and quota protection had left Australian manufacturing industry fragmented and backward. It couldn't compete overseas without radical change.

Capitalist change is always brutal, and the first casualties are always the working class. So the last eight years of a "reforming" Labor government have brought one onslaught after another on wages, working conditions, and union rights.

Labor decided the high tariff walls had to go, since the longer industry hid behind them the weaker it got. A central plank in Senator Button's industry plans was to phase out protection. But if Australian capitalists were to cope with stiffer import competition as well as learn to export, they would need help.

Who got drafted to help them? You and me. While our wages were held down to cushion the employers' profits, our tax money was poured into helping them regear. And with the ACTU'S help our unions were locked into "tripartite" deals, trading off working conditions and union rights (now dubbed "restrictive work practices") in exchange for promises not to sack *too* many workers.

They promised the changes would create a leaner, meaner, "clever" economy, and eventually a prosperous one. But after eight years, as LaTrobe Uni economist John Carroll puts it, the "suffer more now in order to benefit later" school has exhausted its credit.

The plans have not come close to solving the problems, because of some simple realities the planners chose to ignore. They told us Australian industry could achieve Japanese-style success by adopting Japanese methods. They forgot that while local industry was sluggishly adapting, the Japanese ruling class was continuing to race ahead. While BHP lifted its productivity dramatically, the Japanese steel mills still far outpaced it.

So our bunyip bourgeoisie can't make the pace, and now they and their politicians are squabbling over what to do.

They can agree on one thing: the environment comes second. The decision to guarantee forest access to timber companies should be no surprise. While a green tinge might win votes at election time, Hawke would personally bulldoze the rainforests to guarantee the dividends of his millionaire backers.

But other issues are harder. So hard, in fact, that as sophisticated a writer as John Carroll wants to return to the old protectionism. There signs that the more vulnerable sections of capital are warming to this idea.

More typically, the bosses still want "industry reform", but each industry sector wants the others to make the hard decisions. ICI's Michael Deeley argues there should be no further tariff cuts until "micro-reform" cuts costs in areas like the waterfront, which requires more savage attacks on the maritime unions. Similarly, the National Farmers Federation's Peter Barnard wants the government to do on the waterfront "what it did to the pilots".

Actually, the maritime industry is changing fast. About 1000 workers have left the waterfront since an industry plan was announced in 1989, and up to 40 per cent of crew numbers has been cut from ships. A visiting Dutch delegation was amazed at the pace of the slaughter: it took eight years to slash jobs in the port of Rotterdam!

But as the overseas trade picture fails to turn around, the bosses' enthusiasm is flagging. This is where the economic statement is important: by signalling tariffs will continue to fall, Hawke and Keating are keeping the heat on the bosses. They will be forced to keep attacking us in every sphere, not wait for someone else to do it.

HAWKE wants to create a hi-tech car industry. But will the bosses invest? And will there be any jobs at the end?

The union movement will go along with the industry statement in the short run. They are too tied to the Labor government to do otherwise, and the ACTU is heavily committed to "industry reform". Over time, though, at least some unions are likely to join the voices calling for a return to protection. On past form, most of the political left will split between these two alternatives.

Neither is any good. We have seen that the industry plans bring continuing attacks on us. Yet in the long run tariffs are no protection. If they work, they simply "export unemployment" to Taiwan or South Korea, and our fellow workers in those countries suffer. More likely, they won't work: it was high tariffs that helped get Australian industry into its present crisis.

Both of these approaches mean lining up with one or another section of the bosses, instead of making an independent stand.

The same is true of the new union plan for the car industry. They propose to sign binding contracts, set up dispute settling procedures, institute a 36-hour cooling off period in industrial disputes. These features are common in America, where all they have ever done is weaken trade unionism.

What's more the union officials want to "improve quality, productivity, technology" while cutting absenteeism and labour turnover. In essence, they want to do management's job for them, and for what?—the fantasy that this will create a brave *new world of happy workers in a hi-tech industry.*

Workers in the car factories know this is bullshit. Melbourne Toyota workers returned from a recent meeting about such plans full of scathing comments. The problem is that they can see no alternative when the union is hand in glove with management.

That is the worst thing about all the plans, and packages, and "clever" policies. We have been locked into them by our supposed representatives: in the ALP, the ACTU, and the union offices. They have committed themselves 100% to capitalist measures.

The trouble is that all this ever gets you is capitalist results. In the end we will have to fight back against these results. Until we do, each step along the road to a "clever country" will make our lives that much harder.

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National independence movements are...

STRIKING BLOWS AT RUSSIA'S EMPIRE

by Ian Rintoul

FIRST Lithuania, now Latvia and Estonia have voted overwhelmingly for independence from Moscow.

The referendum still to be held in Georgia will no doubt give a similar result. No amount of bullying or presidential decrees from Gorbachev will alter the significance of the stand taken by the republics. Only eight of the fifteen republics have signed the new Union Treaty with Moscow.

The results of the referenda in Latvia and Estonia are particularly significant given the large proportion of ethnic Russians in those republics.

Gorbachev had previously considered that the combination of ethnic Russian opposition to independence and the complicated procedure for the referenda (requiring two-thirds votes, a five-year cooling-off period, and insisting that the interests of "the Soviet Union and the republic be taken into account") would be enough to constrain moves for independence.

One Russian couple interviewed outside the polling booth in Latvia explained why he was wrong. "We voted for independence. After all we've already experienced communism."

What they've experienced has actually been state capitalism, not any variant of communism or socialism. No-one can blame them for rejecting that.

However Gorbachev continues to find support from rulers in the West. British Prime Minister John Major delivered the republics a kick in the teeth when, after paying lip service to their demand for independence from Moscow, he sided with Gorbachev in saying it could take years of negotiation.

Seven of the fifteen republics are boycotting another referendum on 17 March, which is sponsored by Gorbachev and is about preserving the USSR.

ABOVE: Moldovans demonstrate against the new Union Treaty. Socialists have a duty to support movements against Russian imperialism, while criticising the politics of their leaders.

Repression is not new to Gorbachev

Lithuania has gone further, declaring illegal all Soviet government structures and decrees affecting the republic. The Lithuanian parliament has even passed a law endorsing resistance to Soviet force used against the "sovereignty of Lithuania", although it only sanctions non-violent non-cooperation.

The use of repression is not new to Gorbachev. Rhetoric about autonomy for the republics, and the "new thinking" that now informed the relations between the centre and the republics, punctuated episodes of repression for a time. The leaders of the republics were drawn onto a Federation Council, subordinated to President Gorbachev but supposedly heralding a new era in collective and consultative leadership and paving the way for a new Union Treaty.

As the mass independence movements grew, Gorbachev resorted to more and more repression to hold the Soviet Union together. In the aftermath of the earthquake in Armenia in 1988, his first action was to arrest nationalist leaders who were organising relief operations.

In 1989, nationalist demonstrators were massacred by Russian troops in Tblisi, Georgia. And in 1990, troops were sent into Baku to suppress a nationalist uprising. There was nothing "new" about the "new thinking" at all.

The breakup of the empire has, however, also brought some republics to the verge of civil war. Rival militias' hatred of the old rulers of the Communist Party has sometimes given way to a virulent nationalism, producing communal violence and internecine feuding that can look worse than the stark repression of the party bureaucrats.

Georgia, for example, has stridently professed its determination for independence. However, the newly elected Chair of the Supreme Soviet of Georgia, Gamsakhurdia, has said that the rights of the Georgian minority can only be guaranteed by the "complete liquidation of the so-called South Ossetian Autonomous Region", and is waging a bloody war against the Ossetians.

He opposes mixed marriages of Georgians, and has proposed that Georgian citizenship be given only to those who can show that their ancestors lived in Georgia before 1801.

YOUNG Lithuanians seeking refuge with the Red Cross from conscription into the Russian army.

Such a turn of events has led some to consider the nationalist cure to be worse than the disease of Stalinist repression. This view is mistaken, although it is obvious that such actions in fact weaken the struggle against Moscow and will not lead to the unity of all workers that socialists strive for.

DISTINCTION

"A nation which oppresses another cannot itself be free," insisted Karl Marx, 120 years ago. The starting point for socialists is to make a distinction between the nationalism of the oppressed and the nationalism of the oppressor.

Lenin and Trotsky, the leaders of the Russian Revolution in 1917, fought for that idea against all opposition, denouncing the Great Russian chauvinism demonstrated by Stalin.

They insisted that nations which wanted to separate from the Soviet state must be free to do so. With the rise of Stalin, however, subordinated nations lost their rights (as did workers and peasants), as the last gains of 1917 were destroyed and the new state capitalist ruling class came to power.

In a deal with Hitler in 1940, Stalin extended the Russian empire to incorporate the Baltic States. The development of the republics and, after the second World War, of Eastern Europe, was subordinated to the needs of the Russian state.

There is nothing progressive about the Soviet Union. It remains a "prisonhouse of nations" created by Stalin, who sometimes moved whole populations, creating a patchwork of nationalities that made patronage and domination by Moscow easier.

This is the Union that Gorbachev today is determined to maintain by force if necessary. And this is why socialists support the nationalist movements.

It is not that we think there is a nationalist solution for the workers of Russia, Lithuania, Georgia, etc. But we recognise *that only on the basis of supporting* their national rights can we break the vicious circle that sees minorities turn against each other rather than against their common oppressor in Moscow, and build a socialist movement based on the unity of all workers regardless of nationality.

The votes in Latvia and Estonia show that the divisions caused by imperialism can be overcome. In some measure at least, ethnic Russian workers have recognised that they and the oppressed nationalities share a common enemy in Moscow.

This has been more a result of good luck than design on the part of the nationalist leaders in the Baltic States. Their own nationalist outlook leads them to shrink from calling for solidarity action from other republics, appealing to Russian workers, or consistently mobilising the mass demonstrations and mass strike action that could seriously challenge Gorbachev. And they are unlikely to do so, for such action would challenge their position as well.

Nationalism that fights for independence from Moscow only to repress minorities inside its own boundaries is no solution at all. While socialists in Russia must argue for the rights of those oppressed by Russia, inside Georgia for example we must fight for the rights of those who would be oppressed by Georgian nationalism.

The collapse of the Soviet Union will weaken one of the world's major imperialist powers, and open up the possibilities for mass struggle from below. To win the argument for a socialist solution to this crisis, however, we have to stand unconditionally (but not uncritically) with those who struggle today to break the shackles of the Russian Empire.

Fighting Australian apartheid in Fiji

AUSTRALIAN firms are as imperialist and as disgusting as any other. Just ask the 600 miners on strike against Australia's Emperor Gold Mining Company in Vatukoula, Fiji.

The Fiji Mineworkers Union (FMU) accuses Emperor of unfair labour practices, exploitation, lack of controls on pollution in the mines and failing to supply protective kits to miners using dynamite.

"Some of the houses the miners live in today were built by the American air force in 1939," according to FMU secretary Kavekini Navuso. "The company has refused to do any repairs and only recently they repainted."

Twelve families were *sharing bathroom and toilet facilities in a building he* described as a barracks. A scheme introduced by the company to encourage home ownership on a new housing estate was out of the reach of local workers, whose real wages have not risen since 1984. Some of them receive only $A23 a week.

All this is made more galling by the "apartheid" practised by the company. European and part-European mineworkers get better wages, conditions and housing than the locals.

This has enabled the company to successfully divide the workforce, with about 100 European or part-European workers still working.

But the strike is still crippling gold production. 500 workers who are not on strike are respecting the strikers' picket lines.

Particularly inspiring is the way the strike has brought together the usually divided ethnic Fijian and Indian communities in Vatukoula, both of whom suffer from Emperor's discriminatory practices.

The company refuses to recognise the union, and has sacked 400 strikers. But the FMU is fighting on, and has so far resisted government pressure to compromise. "We are not prepared to negotiate with Mr Veitata [the Industrial Relations Minister] because we want the company to negotiate with us over our demands," said Navuso.

Australian workers can only wish them well in their struggle against our bosses. And the Australian left has yet another reason to recognise that Australian capital is every bit as bad as "foreign" bosses, and stop trying to help it at the expense of workers' conditions here and abroad.

—by Robert Stainsby

AFTER THE WAR:

Why you should be a socialist

THE US victory in the Gulf confirms the utter bloody barbarity of our rulers.

It has nothing to do with justice, freedom for small countries or challenging aggression.

The US won in the Gulf because it had the brute military power to crush a much smaller, weaker and poorer country whose people had no confidence in the tyrant who ruled them.

If that was all there was to the Gulf war, you'd be pretty depressed. But there was another side—as there always is when our rulers go on the rampage.

Around the world, millions of ordinary people marched, picketed, and went on strike to stop the war.

The central question now is: how do we stop this every happening again? How do we build a world free from the scourge of war and oppression? How do we get rid of US imperialism?

Throughout the anti-war movement, there were essentially two different approaches.

One looked to the existing institutions of society—such as the United Nations and the Australian Parliament—to stop the war and resolve such disputes.

Socialists disagreed. We argued that the problem wasn't a breakdown in an otherwise workable system; the problem was the system itself.

Capitalism is a system of competition. In the modern era, that competition is global. And it is military as much as it is economic.

The US did not go to war because the United Nations "failed", it went to war to stop its own decline in the face of competition from Germany and Japan and it did this by reasserting its military supremacy.

And it's not just a question of war and imperialism. All the systematic problems ordinary people face are produced by the capitalist system.

Why are our living standards being cut?—because of the capitalist drive for higher and higher profits, and the threat of bankruptcy hanging over any business—or country—that fails to match its competitors.

Why are women oppressed?—at root, because the capitalist system needs their unpaid labour to raise the next generation of workers.

Why does racism debase and divide every single country?—because dividing the working class is an excellent way to maintain profits and keep control.

Why is the environment being destroyed?—because in a brutally competitive system, maintaining profits are more important to the class that controls industry.

To be a socialist is to want to smash this whole system of capitalism and imperialism with its exploitation, its wars and its oppression.

FIGHTING

It means fighting for a world run by the ordinary people who do the work, who have no interest in exploitation, racism or war.

All this is possible because capitalism has a fatal flaw. At the end of the day, the great powers rely on the labour of the workers of the world to generate their wealth and military muscle.

Time and again, the working class has brought the bosses to their knees.

The First World War was ended, not by negotiations but revolution—first in Russia in October 1917 and then in Germany in November 1918.

THE explosion of demonstrations, vigils, teach-ins and other actions drew tens of thousands into action and political debate, often for the first time.

It brought to life what revolutionary socialists have long argued about the potential of ordinary people to change the world.

Indeed, the scale of the international movement was a real factor in restraining our rulers—for instance forcing Bush to continually delay the "ground war" for fear of the political impact of high US casualties.

But precisely because it was a real movement, it contained a myriad of ideas about the war and how to stop it—including a series of quite coherent, right-wing tendencies.

The first division in the movement was the demand made right at the start that we condemn Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and insist that it had to withdraw—and that this was essential if we were to build a broad movement.

ISO members argued in response that once the US got involved, the central question became the attempt by the world's greatest power to impose its will on the people of the Middle East.

To condemn Iraq, to demand it leave Kuwait, could not win the "middle ground" or persuade waverers, since in doing this you fail to take on the core of the pro-war argument and, indeed, add weight to the idea that the US was justified in its actions since Kuwait had to be liberated.

PRACTICAL

Our argument received some practical confirmation. The fact that the Bring the Frigates Home Coalition in Sydney refused to condemn Iraq did not stop it organising by far the biggest rally in the city—30,000 on 19 January.

As the US imposed its deadline, this difference emerged in a new form when people like Tom Uren, the Democrats, and most of the left, argued that "sanctions should be given time to work"—along with the laughable claim that sanctions didn't kill.

Again, we were almost alone in arguing that the result of this position was legitimise the Allies' actions by accepting that Iraq had to be driven from Kuwait and the only argument was over how.

We also had an answer for those like Terry Flew, who used the columns of the *Green Left Weekly* to support the call for a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement.

If there was a ceasefire, it would leave the US and Allied troops in place.

If there was a negotiated settlement, it would inevitably favour the Americans while they had half a million troops in the Gulf.

The best slogan—and one that was popular with the mass of people on the demonstrations—was *US out of the Gulf*, since it was clearly directed against the imperial ambitions of George Bush.

A Marxist world view helped on other questions, too.

When the Scuds began landing on Tel Aviv, socialists were able to explain why Israel was no innocent bystander in the region.

When Gorbachev backed the US, we were able to link it to his crushing of independence moves in the Baltic and his desire to prop up his own, state capitalist empire.

And while many opposed to the war felt there were only two positions on Saddam—outright support or outright opposition—the ISO argued that giving the US a bloody nose was the best way to open the road to revolt from below in Iraq, in the rest of the region and in the West as well.

When it came to practical proposals, all kinds of right-wing ideas from the 1980s threatened to hold the movement back.

Some people argued that we had no right to organise sit-downs in the middle of the road in defiance of the police. Others argued that demos were a hangover from the 1960s, and that militancy had to be curbed to get good media coverage.

Others were opposed to frequent demonstrations—with Senator Jo Vallentine in Perth arguing that once-a-year Palm Sunday marches were too much.

Yet in Sydney, a rally a week after the huge 19 January demo saw another large turnout—around 10,000—with almost no media or poster advertising. This in turn drew more new people into the struggle.

And despite the media's hostility, many activists discovered—as socialists had argued—that militancy *enthused* new people, that the sense of power that flowed from even the smallest march *built* the movement.

THE NEED FOR SOCIALIST ORGANISATION

War raises questions of politics to the highest and most urgent level.

So while a broad movement against the war was essential, it was not enough.

A single-issue approach could not deal with the complexities of the situation.

Take the Green movement. Many thousands of those who marched against the war were also concerned about the fate of the forests, plans for a third runway in Sydney or mining in Kakadu.

Yet the major Green organisations played little role in building the anti-war movement.

Being opposed to the destruction of the environment tells you very little about stopping the war.

By contrast, Marxist politics can draw the links between the two issues—how a defeat for the world's major superpower would have made it *easier* to fight the polluting bosses who were cheering George Bush on.

Despite our group's small size, ISO members were able to have a modest impact on the anti-war campaign.

Providing clear arguments on the major questions of the war, such as sanctions, negotiations and attitudes towards Iraq, helped sustain confidence among a layer of militants.

If the right wing of the movement had not been challenged on the *political* questions, it would have made it much easier for them to suffocate the movement in respectability.

To have that impact involved a second factor over and above a revolutionary socialist world view—organisation.

Because we could publish a national paper and because we could make a *co-ordinated* intervention into the campaign, we could carry much more weight than if members had been active simply as individuals.

For nearly two decades, ISO members have been building an organisation that attempts to relate the Marxist tradition to the key political questions of the day.

In our weekly meetings we both educate ourselves in the ideas that help make sense of the world around us and discuss in a democratic and open way our work—on the campuses, in the workplace or in campaigns.

The meetings have been important, too, in sustaining confidence at times when socialist ideas have seemed marginal.

They will prove invaluable in the coming weeks as we set about analysing and clarifying the implications—and the limitations—of America's victory.

Thousands are confused, bitter and angry at the useless savagery of the war.

Revolutionary politics can help prevent that bitterness turning into cynicism, can turn that anger back against the system so that next time it's *us*, the mass of ordinary people who win.

To help make that possible the ISO needs you. But, just as much, you need the ISO.

Why not join us?

How we fought the war...

AUGUST 1990: 'The UN is not an instrument of peace but ...the status quo.'

SEPTEMBER 1990: 'Forget the hypocritical posturing: George Bush wants war in the Gulf.'

OCTOBER 1990: 'Unlike Hitler's Germany, Iraq is a small and purely regional power.'

NOVEMBER 1990: 'Sanctions are not a peaceful alternative to Bush's war.'

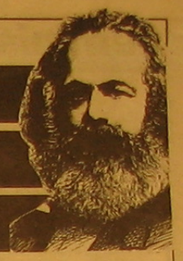
DECEMBER 1990: 'A defeat for the US war drive—that's the only road to real peace.'

JANUARY 1991: 'This is not a war against aggression, but a war for oil.'

FEBRUARY 1991: 'The war is now openly a campaign to crush and dismember Iraq.'

MARCH 1991: 'George Bush wanted a slaughter in the Gulf... Bob Hawke backed him...'

The real Marxist tradition



Reform or revolution?

"I BELIEVE in evolution rather than revolution." That was the reply of Jordan's foreign minister when asked his opinion of the possibility of revolution in Iraq.

And it's hardly surprising that the representative of a corrupt and reactionary monarchy should hold revolutions in horror.

Nevertheless you don't have to be an Arab potentate to be wary of revolutions. The debate between reform and revolution has gone on within socialist movements for over 100 years.

One of the most famous arguments took place inside the German Social Democratic Party around the turn of the century.

The party had been founded with the support of Karl Marx's collaborator, Friedrich Engels, and had a Marxist programme.

Despite being banned at one stage by Bismark, the SPD grew massively as Germany industrialised.

By 1900 it was a legal party with hundreds of thousands of members, a large parliamentary wing, and a daily paper in every major town in Germany and a trade union federation uniting millions of German workers.

But along with growth had come conservatism and bureaucracy. The party drew a wider and wider distinction between its "minimum" and "maximum" programs.

The minimum program demanded reforms like shorter working hours, pensions, and universal suffrage. The maximum program, which contained all the talk of socialism and revolution, was increasingly relegated to May Day and other ceremonial occasions.

It was not surprising then that one of the party's leading theoreticians, Eduard Bernstein, should want to make this process complete and ditch the maximum program altogether.

Revolution, he argued, was no longer necessary. The contradictions of capitalism, far from becoming sharper, were gradually disappearing.

The task of socialists was now to gradually improve capitalism till it naturally grew over into socialism.

Bernstein met resistance from two sections of the SPD. First, from union officials and MPs who couldn't see the point in rocking the boat over a maximum program they were happy to ignore.

But there was also a principled opposition, most importantly from the great Polish revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg.

She laughed at Bernstein's touching faith in bourgeois democracy, and its capacity to transform capitalism into socialism. She wrote:

"...as soon as democracy... [becomes] transformed into an instrument of the real interests of the population, the democratic forms are sacrificed by the bourgeoisie and its state representatives."

Now, over 90 years on we can see only too clearly how reforming governments have come up against the real, extra-parliamentary power of the capitalist class—the banks, the bureaucracy, the press or the Governor General.

And if a government goes too far there are always the ultimate sanctions—the army and police.

In Chile in 1973, the capitalist class happily abandoned a 100 year old tradition of bourgeois democracy and let loose their dogs in a military coup that cost 30,000 lives.

BUT Rosa Luxemburg didn't just argue that revolution was necessary because of the power of the capitalists.

In the most famous passage from her pamphlet, *Reform or Revolution*, she declared:

"That is why people who pronounce themselves in favour of the method of legislative reform in place of...social revolution do not really choose a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the same goal, but a different goal."

For a revolution is not just a means to an end, but a means that by its very nature defines its ends.

Socialism is not just a more equal distribution of wealth; nor simply a society with nicer welfare provisions and a pleasant police force.

Socialism is a society of human liberation, where ordinary people control their lives and their world.

It can't be legislated for. It can't be introduced on our behalf by reforming leaders.

It can only be won through an upheaval that involves the mass of the population. For a revolution does more than replace a government; it transforms the people who make it and makes them fit to rule.

Even the recent anti-war movement shows us how thousands of people have confronted far more political issues and forced themselves to do far more demanding things than they would in quieter years.

But the bulk of Rosa Luxemburg's polemic against Bernstein was directed at the idea that capitalism was overcoming its contradictions—that wars and economic crises would become a thing of the past.

Today, just after a hideous war and in the midst of a recession, it's not hard to see that she was correct.

But Bernstein is not the only renegade socialist to predict that capitalist crisis could be overcome. The great post-war boom of the 1950s and 60s led to a whole crop of such predictions.

It was only when the US bogged itself down in a failed war in Vietnam that the arguments about "managed" capitalism were undermined.

When Bernstein made his claims, capitalism had enjoyed a period of prosperity not unlike the 1950s and 60s.

The colonial scramble of the late 19th century had staved off economic crisis in Europe. But once the world had been divided up, the same colonial scramble became instead a trigger for the First World War.

The apostles of peaceful reform in the SPD and similar parties throughout the world, far from admitting that capitalism was *still* a system of crisis, blood and filth, endorsed the war.

The war ended with a revolution in Germany that nearly added a mighty ally to the fledgling workers' state in Russia.

The question was no longer reform or revolution, but whether the actual revolution would win.

With only a few comrades Luxemburg had stood against the slaughter. Now she began to organise a new party, in the midst of the revolution.

To hold the system together, the German bourgeoisie brought the SPD to power, and they showed where they really stood by crushing the revolution.

Within a month, Rosa Luxemburg was dead.

The moderate, "evolutionary socialists", who had ridiculed her as a wild extremist—as "Red Rosa"—had proved their moderation.

They had sent the soldiers to murder her.

—by Robert Bollard

Feminism and the class struggle...

Alexandra Kollantai (Left) and (Right) women workers in the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Kollantai and women's liberation

IT IS A common idea that the socialist movement has never had much to say about the question of women's liberation.

Alexandra Kollontai, a Russian Marxist at the beginning of this century, was a pioneer who forged much of our analysis of feminism and women's liberation.

She said in 1913, "the fate of women has interested me all my life, and it was this that drew me to socialism".

She looked to women as workers, the growth of women's strength in the workplace and in the unions, as the way to smash women's oppression.

Only with the total destruction of the economic and social forms of capitalism, and the construction of a world in which the economic exploitation of women is impossible, could women become truly free and equal.

For this reason she argued that it was as members of the working class as a whole that women could challenge their oppression. Working class men were therefore seen as common allies in the fight against capitalism, while ruling class women were ultimately enemies.

In 1908 she wrote,

> For feminists, the immediate enemy are men... who have arrogated to themselves all rights and privileges. The proletarian woman however, has a completely different attitude...in her eyes men are not her enemy and oppressor but... first and foremost a comrade in sharing a common, joyless lot, and a loyal comrade in arms in the struggle for a brighter future. The same social relations enslave both the woman and her comrade; one and the same hateful bonds of capitalism oppress their will and deprive them [illegible] a woman. I had much more in common with my male workmates in our section than with her.

There have undoubtedly been major advances for women in the past decade, but these have been nearly all for bourgeois women. A minority of women have gained access to the once-closed worlds of business, finance, journalism and higher education.

At the same time there are less real gains for working women, and some major attacks on hard won rights.

In a recent dispute over penalty rates in Melbourne University library, the Industrial Officer attacking overtime for library workers was [illegible]

Alexandra Kollantai always stressed the importance of organising working class women, around working class demands.

In the strike movement which turned into the Russian Revolution of 1905, she noted how women not only played central roles, but how they glimpsed in united working class activity the hope of their own liberation.

> At a time of unrest and strike actions the proletarian woman downtrodden, timid and without rights, suddenly grows and learns to stand tall and straight...participation in the worker's movement brings the woman worker towards her liberation, not only as the seller of her labour power, but also as a woman, a wife, a mother and a housekeeper.

Demands in the factories for pregnancy leave, nursing breaks, laundry facilities and an end to sexual harrassment by foremen, accompanied almost every strike and were fought for by men and women alike.

Bourgeois feminists like Ispolateva, a leading member of a Russian feminist organisation, were absolutely hostile to Kollantai and the idea of women workers raising class demands.

She refused to allow her maids to hold union meetings outside of the servants's quarters!

THE MAIN Idea of patriarchy; that all men oppress all women, and that all women are sisters, leaves ruling class women and the capitalist system blameless.

For example at a recent Melbourne women's meeting I attended some women argued a purely feminist interpretation of the Gulf War, concentrating on male ego.

The war was portrayed, not as the product of the capitalist drive for profits, but as the product of aggressive male values. You often heard the slogan "take the toys from the boys".

But what are the passive female values which are superior?

Are they the traditional ones associated with the roles of wife and mother? Why should women be better equipped to campaign for peace?

Alexandra Kollantai by contrast argued that war was the product of class society rather than of male biology.

As a Marxist she analysed the social causes of war in the age of imperialism and helped to organise the masses for a struggle against it. She said in a speech delivered in Stockholm on May Day 1922:

> ...the proletariat knows no national frontiers. It recognises only two "nations" in the civilised world: the exploiters and the exploited... And if the bourgeoisie talks of war, then we answer with the thousands of voices of the organised workers, "We do not want war! We demand peace!"

Kollantai argued that working class activity which united both men and women was the key to disarming the capitalist class. At a time when the bourgeois women of Russia slavishly supported WWI, Kollantai recognised its imperialist nature and organised women workers against it.

As early as 1915, women workers in textile mills and other factories were striking against the war and the Tsar. It was defiant women textile workers in Petrograd who began the revolution of 1917 which disarmed the bosses, pulling the country out of WWI.

By leaving capitalism intact, feminism cannot point a way forward. Only a revolution which challenges the whole class system can do that.

This is why women who are state premiers, or our bosses at work, are enemies as much as their male counterparts in the ruling class.

Only a revolution which liberates woman from class oppression, will lead to genuine emancipation. Alexandra Kollantai argued that,

> ...(Marxists) fully recognise the existing differences between the sexes and demand only one thing... that each individual, man or woman...be given the real possibility of achieving the freest and fullest self-determination, that the widest possible opportunities be provided for the development and application of all natural talents.

—by Melanie Lazarow

New books from BOOKMARKS

Sex, class and socialism
by Lindsey German
Women's lives have changed enormously this century, but their fundamental oppression remains.
This book analyses the roots of women's oppression today, arguing against patriarchy theories and in favour of a socialist strategy.
$13.00 plus $1.50 from Bookmarks.

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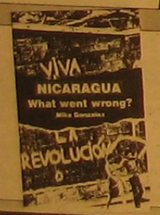

NICARAGUA: What went wrong?
by Mike Gonzalez
The defeat of the Sandinistas in the elections of February 1990 was a terrible blow for the Left.
This book shows how the roots of the defeat were laid from the beginning in the Sandinistas' strategy, and points an alternative way forward.
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By Alex Callinicos
Karl Marx is one of the handful of people who fundamentally changed the way we see the world. This book presents his basic ideas in as clear and straightforward a manner as possible.
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our history

The Qld Railway strike of 1927

IN 1927 the Australian Railways Union (ARU) was Queensland's most militant union.

It had won worker's admiration for its week long strike in 1925. This strike forced the Labor government to reverse its decision to cut the basic wage by 5/-. For 3 years the unions had fought the reduction within the ALP but had gotten nowhere. The standard argument was that Cabinet could not interfere with an Arbitration Court decision.

But 18,000 striking railwaymen made them change their minds. In a single sitting of Parliament Premier Gilles rushed through a Bill to restore the 5/-. The Tories were outraged. The ALP dumped Gilles for hardliner William McCormack. The ARU's membership reached an all time high of 11,000 as workers joined the union.

McCormack came into office as the economy began sliding into recession. To protect profit rates, the employers demanded reductions in wages and conditions which meant an attack on the trade union movement.

McCormack was the man for the job. He immediately went on the offensive inflicting a series of defeats on various sections of the working class. First waterside workers in Cairns and Bowen, then railway workers in Bowen, then building workers employed by the Public Works Department in Brisbane.

OFFENSIVE

Then, in 1927 McCormack used a dispute by workers at the South Johnstone sugar mill to start an all out offensive. The mill had recently been privatised and the new management, breeching tradition, refused to re-hire all those employed in the previous crushing season. This provocative move threatened the job security of all seasonal workers.

Workers at the mill and in the surrounding district had a long history of militancy. Annual reports by the mill management constantly complained of industrial action. The 1921 report said "the services of the men were not available some 64% of the total time". In 1922 there was a 5 week strike of canecutters; 1923 a waterside strike at Mourilyan Harbour held up the shipment of sugar; 1924 there was an overtime strike at the mill; 1925 the railway and waterside workers strikes held up the shipment of sugar again.

It was not surprising that the sugar mill workers—members of the Australian Workers Union (AWU)—declared a strike which demanded that management rehire all previous staff. They soon got support from other unionists.

The Brisbane and Innisfail Trades and Labour Councils declared the mill and its produce black. Mourilyan waterside workers and railwaymen resolved not to transport the mill's sugar. Every worker in the sguar industry in the Babinda area contributed 10/- a week toward the strike.

As the dispute continued the AWU officials tried getting a return to work, afraid that it was going to get out of their control. But the workers remained solid.

AWU officials even tried using racism, blaming rank and file intransigence on migrant workers. They denounced the "flooding" of the north with "foreign labour

However they were unable to end the strike.

They were also unable to confine the strike to the South Johnstone region. McCormack and the mill manager conspired to move the sugar out using scab labour on the railways.

McCormack put himself in personal control of the Railway Department. On 3 September he gave the railwaymen an ultimatum to either carry the sugar or face dismissal.

When the railway workers refused to comply McCormack closed down the railways, locked out 18,874 workers and advertised for strike breakers.

REVOLUTION

For McCormack there was no room for waverers within the ranks of the ALP parliamentarians. He said if any member,

> ***believes that a principle of unionism...is at stake, and that, because he is a member of a union, he is compelled to give allegiance to some outside body...then he ought not to be in this Parliament.***

He went on to say that if the government gives in to the will of the unions "the final result will be revolution".

The Tories supported McCormack. One of them said that McCormack,

> ***...Is a good Tory. Would any Tory Government have dared to sack 18,000 men? The Premier and the Cabinet are bigger Tories than ever we on this side dreamed of being.***

The lock out led to a wave of outrage and hostility toward the Labor government. Mass meetings around the state condemned McCormack. A demonstration of 6,000 in Brisbane called for his sacking. Other unions called strikes in support of the ARU. At Innisfail 900 workers marched behind a red flag at an anti-government rally

FASCISM

The NSW Labour Council condemned "that despicable act of the Fascist Premier McCormack" and supported the ARU. The Melbourne Trades Hall Council took a similar position.

Despite this support however, the union officials did not build on it. AWU officials caved in to the Arbitration Court which threatened to deregister them. The leaders of the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen, ordered their members back to work.

Within a few days the mass strike had collapsed. The defeat of the ARU sapped the confidence of the labour movement. As the recession deepened into depression and the employers continued their attacks, strike days fell and so did union membership.

Despite their services to the Queensland bosses, the ALP was dumped at the next election.

But the strike need not have ended in defeat. The 1925 basic wage strike showed that the Arbitration Court and government could be defeated. The power workers exhibited in the mass strike was far greater than the power of the courts and government. More importantly it held within it the alternative to the capitalist system of depression, unemployment, wage cuts, poverty and hunger.

—by Beris Penrose.

REVIEWS

Finally: A good film about gays

Graham Willett reviews 'Longtime Companion'

IN LOTS of ways this is the film gay liberationists have been demanding for twenty years.

Longtime Companion is a mainstream film in which all the central characters are gay, but where their gayness is not the central issue. This is remarkable because what drives the story is AIDS, the so-called "gay plague" of the 1980s.

It begins in 1981 at the gay annual pilgrimage to the Fire Island resort. While it is in full swing there appears a curious little article in the New York Times about a mysterious cancer which has been killing gay men.

The disease advances, tearing into the lives of a circle of seven gay men and their straight woman friend. Curiosity turns into confusion, to anger, to denial.

Longtime Companion is not an explicitly political film and lots of the important issues to do with AIDS are not dealt with.

This is hardly surprising. The writer and director had enough trouble as it was getting money and actors for a film about homosexuals, and dying homosexuals at that.

But it is is not just about the fortitude, humour and caring grace of a group of people struck by AIDS.

As the disease advances it exposes the raw reality of American life. John's twenty-eight hour wait for a bed in a hospital because he has no insurance, is contrasted with Sean who dies at home because his lover is rich.

John spends his last hours in terrifying loneliness hooked up to a towering barrage of machines; Sean is with his lover and his nurse. Even at the hour of our death, in this society money speaks.

But there is resistance, too. Fuzzy moves from his plush and comfortable legal practice to work at a cramped and cluttered desk for the Gay Man's Health Crisis.

And in the final scene three of the friends walk on deserted Fire Island beach and talk about their part in the growing fight back. They re-live the blockade of the Brooklyn Bridge; they anticipate the coming sit-in of Manhatten streets.

That this film has been made at all is a tribute to gay liberation's long fight against the oppression that cowed so many into silence and self-hate. The film itself is part of that struggle. It has blazed a trail that other filmmakers may yet follow. It is worth seeing for that alone.

Discussing resistance by the gay community to AIDS

Tearing up the lies about Marx

Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Vol IV: Critique of Other Socialisms* (Monthly Review Press, New York 1990).

IT'S SOMETIMES very hard to know what Marxism is really about.

Decades of Stalinism, reformism, and Third World nationalism have plastered Marxism over with layers of contradictory ideas.

The work of generations of academic "marxologists", keen to discredit socialism have added to the confusion.

The fourth volume of Draper's account of *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution* appeared in 1990, not long after his death.

Since 1977 these volumes have made Marx and Engels' politics, more accessible. Draper has pieced together their scattered statements to draw out the real meaning of their works.

The latest book looks at Marx and Engels' criticisms of other approaches to socialism: utopian, sentimental and state socialism, anarchism, reactionary anti-capitalism and the proto-fascist politics of the Boulangist movement in France between 1886 and 1891.

Draper brings alive Marx's politics and the context of its production. Not only does he explain and document Marx and Engels' ideas in detail and with an extreme thoroughness, but Draper does this with a dry sense of humour.

His books also undertake impressive weeding operations. The Eastern European revolutions of 1989-90 led many of the privets, paspalums and bindiis in the Marxist field to transplant themselves into social democratic, liberal and even conservative pastures.

But for many years Hal Draper has been extracting vegetation that passes for "Marxist" theory. Draper tears up lies, fabrications, falsifications and half-truths that have passed for scholarly work on Marxism and finishes them off by exposing their roots to the light of day.

Karl Marx and (Right) Friedrich Engels

REJECTED

When most people think about socialism, state ownership and activity spring to mind. Marx and Engels rejected this approach.

They tried to counter-act the influence of Ferdinand Lassalle when he saw an opportunity to harness for "socialist" purposes the autocratic German state.

Bismarck nationalised the German railways and introduced a variety of welfare measures which offered some protection to workers.

Engels made clear in his *Anti-Duhring* and *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* that this sort of statification of industry does not equal socialism.

If this was socialism, Engels argued, then the old Prussian state was socialist by virtue of its state owned brothels.

Bismarckian state socialism or state capitalism was politically reactionary. It reinforced the existing state and was associated with a ban on the social democratic party, in an attempt to eliminate independent working class political action.

Such state capitalism weakens the struggle against the capitalist state and for the democratic control of society.

Today, particularly on the Labor left, state intervention is identified with socialism. So the ALP left has pushed for interventionist industry policies. They sacrifice independent workers' action and even jobs and living standards to the promotion of Australian industry and profits.

Reactionary socialism and Boulangism found supporters inside the working class movement. People keen to take short-cuts to socialism and especially to seats in Parliament, may hitch themselves to the rising star of politicians with an anti-capitalist or "socialist" rhetoric.

Draper points out that Marx and Engels did not come up with any dogmatic formula. They did however emphasise the principle of independent working class action.

In Germany after the 1848 revolutions Marx and Engels opposed both the Kaiser and the liberal capitalist opposition.

Engels rejected any deals with the proto-fascist Boulangist movement despite its support amongst workers disillusioned with shady politics and a depressed economy under a government of liberal capitalist parties. This did not mean going quiet on workers' demands for the sake of an alliance with the liberal parties.

His alternative was to promote independent working class struggle and candidates in elections.

Whether dealing with state socialism or the politics of self-proclaimed "libertarians", Draper draws out the uniqueness of Marxist socialism. Classical Marxism sees socialism as only possible through the independent actions of workers to emancipate themselves.

Using the existing state to transform society, anarchist conspiracies, appeals to abstractions like "love", "peace" or "freedom", these are not short-cuts to socialism, but dangerous deadends.

—by Rick Kuhn

New World Order: seeds of self destruction

DIANE FIELDS looks behind the rhetoric of the New World Order

WHILE LONG on rhetoric, George Bush's talk of a New World Order is short on detail. According to Bush it consists of a world in which international disputes are settled peacefully and the UN acts as the keeper of the peace.

All this appears arrant nonsense after the Gulf War. The "international dispute" over Kuwait was settled at the cost of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives and with the aid of 735,000 US led troops.

Bush's New World Order is in reality an attempt to reassert US hegemony.

However a re-run of the 1950s and 60s is not possible. The pressures that led to the winding down of the rivalry between the US and the USSR are also responsible for a degree of instability not seen since the end of WWII.

Five factors are responsible for this instability.

Firstly, the relationships between the major powers have shifted. Both superpowers have declined, and other powerful economies like Japan and Germany now threaten US hegemony.

Secondly, within the Eastern Bloc, a more dramatic recasting of relationships and the end of Stalinism have created internal upheaval.

Thirdly, industrialisation in the outlying sectors of the world economy since WWII, has created a number of Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) and sub-imperialisms which threaten to destabilise any settlement both economically and politically.

Fourthly, economic crisis has now become an almost permanent feature of both blocs. Low investment returns, unemployment and slow growth rates are now considered "normal", despite the stabilisation of the 1980's.

And finally there is the massive growth of a militant working class in countries like South Korea, South Africa, Poland and Brazil. Combined with the continuing revolts of the oppressed nationalities such forces threaten to bring any New World Order tumbling down.

US F-16s: Military intimidation still a major bargaining chip in world politics

Military's role still central

THE Cold War was noted for the huge military expenditure extracted from the economies of the US and USSR.

Many now draw the conclusion that the end of the Cold War means a decline in military tension.

Even on the left, illusions in the UN, peace conferences and "negotiated settlements" are based on the the idea that military rivalry can give way to political stability.

On the contrary, the superpowers' economic decline places a premium on military power. While it is true that their economic problems are exacerbated by high arms spending, the superpowers cannot solve economic problems by giving up military power. John Rees sums up their dilemma.

> To weaken the arms economy in the name of international competition is to run the risk of being pushed to the sidelines of great power politics and thus to risk the very economic weakness the state had hoped to avoid. But to maintain an arms industry is to risk further economic decline, which in turn threatens to undermine an effective arms industry.

There is pressure on the US to make the most of its military superiority which has not suffered anything like the economy. Military might can be used as the draw card which keeps its main economic rivals, Germany and Japan, reliant on the old set up with the US as world cop.

In December 1989 Secretary of State James Baker was talking about the "New Atlanticism"—US and German hegemony in Europe without Britain. It was an attempt to curb the independent role Germany was playing in the East.

But successful negotiations between Kohl and Gorbachev about NATO caused unprecedented US displeasure at the prospect of an emergent Germany breaking through the bipolarity of the Cold War.

In this situation military superiority is the one decisive advantage that the superpowers have, and the greater is the temptation to use it.

The war showed how far Japan and Germany would have to go to match the US militarily and sustain an operation like the one in the Gulf. It was also made clear that the major powers could not stand aside from conflicts in the less developed countries, especially where vital commodities like oil are concerned. The fact that the US imports only 10% of its oil while Japan depends on external sources for at least 70%, only served to drive home the point about the importance of military power.

How will Hawke's new-found popularity as a "war-time leader" stand up to unemployment heading for the one million mark?

As the renewed strikes by miners in the USSR show, resistance to the imperialist powers at home will continue.

In the Middle East, will King Hussein of Jordan be able to control his largely Palestinian population when the Israelis let loose on the Occupied Territories? The anti-imperialist hostility that spilled over in Egypt and Morocco into class struggle against repression, unemployment and price rises, shows that the New World Order contains the seeds of its own destruction.

Appearances can be deceptive

THE aftermath of the war gives us a look at what the emerging New World Order could be like. The immediate picture in the region can look bleak.

The "liberation" of Kuwait has meant the imposition of martial law by Bush's "legitimate" government of princes, with pogroms against Palestinians. US forces occupy southern Iraq threatening economic misery for the population if they don't replace Saddam Hussein with a more compliant ruler.

But appearances can be deceptive. Even victories for the ruling class can contain the seeds of future trouble. If we look back to the 1980s we can see how imperialism remained unable, even in that period, to crush resistance.

After the crushing of the Polish trade union Solidarity in 1981, militant rank and file activity returned with a vengeance in the late 80's forcing the ruling class to try a different tact. Bitterness from the defeat of the British miners' in 1984-5, exploded against Thatcher in 1990 in Poll Tax demonstrations which led to her demise.

Internationally, it took the US almost a decade to subdue Iran and Nicaragua. The rebels in Afghanistan, Eritrea and Tigre weren't beaten by the Russians or their clients.

However, in the 1990s prospects for economic stability in the world system are even less than they were in the 1980s.

The largely speculative investment that took place in the late 1980's could not provide the basis for any sustained pattern of real growth. This means the foundation for reform has been significantly eroded, and all the national and class tensions within the world system will intensify.

When the war euphoria wears off in the US, the reality of retrenchments in hospitals and schools, while the military budget consumes 4 times the entire Iraqi GNP, will eventually be driven home.

Bukharin's theory of imperialism

TO MAKE sense of all of this we need to understand the age of imperialism.

Over seventy years ago Lenin and Bukharin analysed the way in which capitalism scoured the planet in an endless drive to accumulate profit. They observed two simultaneous and yet contradictory processes.

On the one hand they noted how the world system became increasingly **international**. Overseas markets, foreign finance and raw materials were becoming more important for each nation state in its struggle to survive.

On the other hand, only large corporations backed by the machinery of state could marshall the resources required for this kind of competition. So capitalism was also becoming more **nationalised**.

Lenin and Bukharin argued that the logical outcome of this process was the "state capitalist trust" for which military might was essential. The new era was marked by the way in which military competition both reinforced and even replaced economic competition.

It is this which helps to explain the carnage of WWII. Countries like Germany and Japan emerged on the world scene late. In order to catch up the ruling classes turned to state capitalism and military expansion to carve out an empire for themselves. This happened in Stalin's Russia in the 1930's, and to a lesser degree in America during the Depression.

It didn't take long before these new rivals began clashing with eachother and with the older ones like the British empire. Territorial conflicts between old and emerging imperialisms in South East Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East and Eastern Europe finally led to the full scale conflict of WWII.

It is only on the basis of these theories that we can understand the world, and the turmoil it has bequethed to us today.

The US and the USSR emerged from WWII as the most powerful nations, greatly enhanced to differing degrees by the methods of state capitalism. Between them they carved up the world into spheres of influence. But the apparent harmony which reigned between 1943-45 did not signal some new era of peace.

It reflected a crude calculation by each superpower that it was not strong enough to deny the other what it wanted. Economic power underpinned the military success of the Allied camp and it enabled them to dominate the politics of the new era.

However this power was unevenly distributed. The position of Britain and France was weakened as a result of the war. Of the two superpowers which had emerged, the US was by far the strongest. By 1952 nearly 60% of total production in the West took place in the US. Its military dominance was affirmed in the post-war period with a series of overseas troop placements, bases and treaties, from Europe to the Pacific to the Middle East.

In the other camp, the USSR also stood head and shoulders above the rest. Military strength boosted its economic power within the bloc, firstly by enabling it to remove Eastern European plant and equipment, then through the imposition of unequal trade terms on its satellites. Combined with massive state direction of all resources this process meant the USSR had replaced Britain as the second economic power in the world by the 1950s.

Domination of their respective blocs set the bipolar pattern of political relations during the Cold War. In addition, the arms race that was a necessary part of this set the pattern of economic growth in both camps.

Contradictions of the arms race

BUT there were contradictions involved. Despite the importance of arms spending, over time it became a drain on the further development of their economies.

While Japan and West Germany surged ahead economically, the US share of world manufacturing sank from over 50% in 1945 to 31% in 1980 and is now about 25%. The US still remains the world's largest economy but it has undergone a serious decline vis-a-vis the others.

For example, in 1960 Japan was responsible for 3% of world production. By 1990 the figure had risen to somewhere between 15 and 17%. It is also now the world's third largest military spender, with an annual arms budget of over $US60 billion. But while Japan's defence force may be well-funded, it is no match for the superpowers. It has no aircraft carriers, no long-range bombers, and its main fighter aircraft have a range of only 500 kilometres. This is an indication of the unevenness and tension created during the Cold War.

The other feature of the Cold War period which is partly responsible for instability today, was the creation of a number of regional powers armed (if not created) by one of the superpowers. Countries such as Iran under the Shah, Indonesia under Suharto, and Iraq itself, were seen as useful watchdogs for imperialism. Part of the competition between the US and the USSR involved the attempt to gain strategic influence on this basis.

These "sub-imperialist" powers were inherently unstable. They could never simply be the puppets of their creators. The attraction of resolving economic crisis, under-development, and internal unrest via regional expansion remained, regardless of superpower wishes. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait demonstrated this completely.

The other contradiction involved in the post-war boom was shown in the way it ended. In the US the connection with arms spending was very clear. The costs of the Vietnam War (10% of US GNP) did not reach the level of the Korean War (15%). But decades of high arms spending had sufficiently undermined the US economy so that the strain of war magnified the emerging crisis of the late 1960's.

The New World Order–seeds of self-destruction...

Demonstration in Cairo: struggles will explode as economic problems worsen

IF THE burden of military expenditure weakened the US relative to Japan and West Germany, its effect on the USSR was even greater.

Because its military competition was with an economy twice its size, the USSR suffered under an even greater drain. About twice as great a proportion of its economy had to be spent on the arms race. The USSR's rate of growth began to slow dramatically in the late 1960s. According to Gorbachev's chief economic adviser, Abel Aganbegyan, growth slowed from 30% in 1966-1970 to zero in 1981-1985.

The autarchic nature of Eastern bloc state capitalisms meant that the continued internationalisation of production created additional difficulties.

It was the pressures generated from these sources which underlay both the economic "liberalisation" and reductions in arms spending in the Eastern bloc. Significantly, most of the Eastern European troop cuts were announced by the old regimes before the revolutions in Eastern Europe. As a result of these economic pressures both the USSR under Gorbachev and the US under Bush have moved to reduce the burden of arms spending on their economies.

Even while the Gulf War was going on, Bush announced a further reduction in the US defence budget.

Disarmament a fantasy?

IT IS This real change that gives the appearance of an era of disarmament and declining military tension.

But as soon as you look at the nature of the superpower arms reductions the idea is revealed as a fantasy.m

The first thing to remember is how huge the superpowers' arsenals are. The US alone outweighs NATO plus Japan. Even if the percentage of GNP devoted to arms declines, as long as the economy grows the actual number of weapons, tanks, warheads and so on can still increase. For example, if Bush's budget cuts go ahead, the US defence budget will still be 19% bigger in 1995 than in 1980.

Secondly, neither the US nor the USSR are prepared to cut back areas they see as vital, especially their most advanced nuclear weapons. In fact, the various anti-ballistic missile treaties are better seen as arms control, rather than arms limitation. They have cut the number of old weapons but allowed an increase in new ones.

For example, the START treaty cuts the superpowers' ICBMs by 4,476 but increases the number of air-launched cruise missiles and short-range attack missiles by 2,990.

According to the Defence Planning Guidance (quoted in *The International Herald Tribune* on 14 February 1990) the US is looking to a "worldwide contingency force, with more emphasis on airborne, air assault and light infantry" necessary for curbing "regional instability, terrorism and drug trafficking".

The situation is somewhat different for the USSR. Its inability to maintain military domination of the Eastern bloc received symbolic expression in this month's dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

But this does not mean it has turned its back on military action. Rather, the economic constraints have restructured the armed forces into other areas. When Gorbachev announced unilateral cuts of 500,000 troops in 1988, he neglected to mention that 300,000 of them would find their way into the Interior Ministry and KGB forces currently being used for crackdowns inside the USSR.

In other words, the superpowers are using "disarmament" which leaves 96% of nuclear weapons intact, to restructure their arsenals, not to dismantle them.

The class struggle continues

EVENTS in Eastern Europe have made their own contribution towards greater instability.

Intractable economic problems, exacerbated by arms spending, have not been solved by the introduction of the market. There has been resistance from both major classes in the USSR—the bureaucracy and the working class—to "reforms" that are against their interests.

As in the US, state capitalism in the East has been unable to solve the economic problems which so worry its rulers, and which mean declining living standards for the population at large.

This has in turn fuelled what is for socialists an encouraging form of instability—the class struggle. The rebirth of Polish Solidarity in 1988, militancy in the East German car industry and Russian miners in 1989 and 1991, clearly show that strikes have become commonplace in the East. And with them has emerged an awareness of the power of the workers have to change the system.

Finally, and central to the instability of the USSR today, there are the struggles of the oppressed nationalities.

This instability has not come completely out of the blue. Within the apparent stability of the Cold War there were developing all the economic and military tensions which we see on display today. World imperialism has not changed its spots. The "balance of terror" between the major players was dependent on two things—the predominence of two superpowers, neither of whom could push the other out, and the post-war economic boom.

Both are well and truly things of the past.

Labor's rotten imperialist history

ANYONE who has voted Labor but opposed Australia's involvement in the Gulf couldn't help feeling nauseous watching Hawke the war-monger during the months of the Gulf crisis. But the history of the ALP shows we shouldn't be surprised; it has always been a party of war.

In 1910 Senator George Pearce, Defence Minister in the Labor government during WWI said,

> It would be a calamity to the British speaking people and the world if the Union Jack should be humiliated by any foreign Power. They had to look further afield than the mere defence of Australia, and be prepared to defend that flag and all it represented.

This has been the attitude of the ALP ever since. The flag simply changed from the union jack to the star spangled banner after World War II. This is why they supported Australia'a involvement in the Gulf, and have supported all the imperialist wars of this century.

It was Andrew Fisher, Labor prime minister during the war who in 1914 promised to "fight to the last man and the last shilling". And it was Billy Hughes who split the party over conscription attempting to fulfill it.

However the split was over conscription, not the war per se. Frank Anstey, the left wing MP declared;

> We have a personal interest in what is taking place, and to that extent it becomes our duty to furnish all the aid we can, whether in arms or men.

After the split Frank Tudor, who had opposed conscription was for prosecuting the war "with vigour and determination". Other leading figures such as the Queensland leader T.J. Ryan were prominent in recruiting campaigns for the war.

This was not colonial servility, but a strategy for Australian capitalism against Japan. The Australian ruling class was worried that Japan, an ally of Britain, would become a rival in the Pacific region. The ALP accepted this.

In World War II the ALP formed a government with the backing of A.W. Coles, head of the retailing empire.

Billy Hughes in 1919: Labor leaders have always backed imperialist war

Coles could see that if they were to get workers mobilised for the war, the Labor Party was absolutely necessary.

The conservatives were discredited because so many of their members had been sympathetic to the Nazis. It was difficult to sell the war as "anti-fascist" when it was really about imperialist rivalry.

The ALP established state control over labour and conscripted 900,000 men to serve overseas. In March 1944, they conscripted striking miners.

The Labor government whipped up racism to justify the war. Labor Prime Minister Curtin appealed to white supremacist sentiment;

> ...this country shall remain forever the home of descendants of those people who came here in peace [something the Aborigines would be surprised to hear] in order to establish in the South Seas an outpost of the British races.

It was not sycophantic support for Britain or the US which underpinned this stance. It was the desire to establish Australia as an imperialist power in the Pacific.

Dr HV Evatt, the Foreign Minister, lobbied the US for Australian domination of the Solomons, the Hebrides, Fiji and the Pacific below the Equator.

After the war, the Labor government refused to grant independence to Papua New Guinea. They supported the US war in Korea, and the British effort to crush the independence movement in Malaya.

Many in the left of the ALP opposed Australian involvement in Vietnam but not US intervention. Gough Whitlam never opposed the war and was only wanted Australian troops withdrawn because the Americans were pulling out.

This history undermines the idea that Bob Hawke's government is not a *real* Labor government.

REVOLUTIONARY socialists do not relate to the ALP because it has ever been serious about fighting for socialism, but because in the absence of a revolutionary alternative, the mass of workers identify with the ALP.

They often do so *in spite of*, not because of its policies, in government. It is the only party based on the trade unions.

We disagreed with activists who argued that the anti-war movement should have *no* dealings with the Labor Party. Left-wing Labor MPs and union leaders like Joan Coxsedge and John Halfpenny were crucial to winning rank and file trade unionists to an anti war movement, in a way the Democrats could never be.

In Melbourne there was some opposition to allowing left-wing Labor MP Joan Coxsedge to address one of the early rallies. At Monash Uni, activists were reluctant to set up an anti-war group because the Labor Club would want to join.

The reaction is understandable. After all, the ALP president of the Melbourne Uni Student Union was prominent in one of the city's small pro-war demonstrations.

But at the same time Melbourne, Socialist Left members were prominent from the beginning in organising against the US war drive.

The Socialist Left-dominated council in the suburb of Brunswick came out against the war. Local members helped launch an anti-war group that attracted 400 to a public meeting in mid-February.

A member of the North Carlton branch of the ALP told *The Socialist* that members had called for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of the Australian warships. Most active members had been on the anti-war demonstrations.

The gap between the leadership and the members reflects the ambiguous nature of the ALP.

Labor is a *capitalist workers party*. It defends the bosses' system—to the point of busting strikes and supporting imperialist wars.

We need to build a socialist alternative which will be consistent in its defence of workers and in its opposition to imperialism. But this does not mean ignoring the ALP.

—by Sandra Bloodworth

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE LUCKY COUNTRY...

STUDENTS DEFEND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

OVER 100 students at Queensland University rallied to defend the Women's Rights area of the student union on 6March. The Women's Rights area is currently under attack by the new "better management team" (a front for the National and Liberal Parties) student union executive. After the rally the students marched and occupied the student union building.

It seems a new idea has hit these student politicians. The old scheme of using union executive positions for experience to secure a good seat in Parliament is passé. This executive is laying the groundwork for top rate managerial positions — excellent cadre for the receivership companies now pushing thousands onto the dole.

They've already axed the organiser's position for external, part-time and overseas students. Organisers of the Orientation Week sexism and racism workshop have had their funding threatened.

The executive knows they won't get away with abolishing the Women's Rights area altogether, so they've figured out now how to restrict the funding and dictate functions. *In 1989, the same executive members refused to set up an Aborginal and Torres Strait Islander's student area, and they've abolished services to other marginalised students. They figure if they shove all these groups into one area (currently the Women's Rights area) they can save heaps and avoid dealing with such messy issues.*

The Women's Rights area has in previous years operated a counselling service, organised workshops and lobbied for services on campus such as the night security bus. Workshops and campaigns have covered things as diverse as car maintenance, women's studies, women's health and childcare. The area is open to all women and has promoted discussion amongst women and men about issues. There is a diversity of political opinion in the area yet the union president claimed that it's too "left wing". In other words, he'd like to dictate the political nature of the area and stifle open political discussion of women's problems and how to resolve them. The executive has already proved they're not beyond censorship by preventing the English Students Association from mentioning the Gulf war in their publication.

At this stage support for the Women's Rights area is strong and can only grow as more people find out what's going on (both Women's Rights supporters and the executive had articles in the student paper *Semper*. Many people realise the harassment women face on campus, in the media, under the law, and the barriers we'll face in a few years in the workplace. Friends of the area are organising to mobilise this support into a strong campaign of rallies and occupations to force the vultures to back off.

The contempt the executive has for women's rights is reflected by one member's joke about "good excuses" for rape and harassment (in mockery of the campus campaign against rape called "no excuses"). These attitudes have no place on our campus. No doubt the executive will understand that after our campaign.

—by Ruth Bird

Students at Queensland University occupy the Union Executive Building

Anti-war protests continue on campuses

THE SUDDEN end to the Gulf war cut short some of the most militant activity the campuses have seen in the last couple of years. Anti-war protests drove army reservists off campus in Sydney and in Brisbane. Melbourne saw some of the most successful actions.

Due to a militant demo outside the stock exchange the week before O-Week, the left at Monash felt confident enough to plan a radical action on the first day of O-week.

The idea was to disrupt the Vice Chancellor's address to the first year students, demand that military research at Monash cease and that the army reserve be removed from campus.

People wanted also to lead a walk out from the V.C's address to the army reserve, remove their tent and burn it on the steps of the admin building.

The disruption of the VC's address was successful. It was interrupted on three occasions. A large banner was held up, the academics were leafleted as they paraded onto the stage and the action was clapped by the first year students!

Although the attempt to move the army off campus was unsuccessful, the anti war stalls attracted heaps of people, and there was chanting around the army tent.

Oil barrels were used to block access to the tent.

At LaTrobe University anti-war activists attracted media attention when physically attacked by right-wingers for burning the Australian and the American flags.

At Melbourne Uni too the local Students Against War group marched through hundreds of first year students to interrupt the speech by the Vice Chancellor's representative. Water pistols were used to douse the speaker because of the VC's refusal to take a position against the war.

The army reserve didn't even dare to turn up during O-Week, fearing that anti war activists would protest their presence. A theatre group did an anti-war satire and the Students Against War table collected over a hundred names.

—Based on reports from Judy McVey, Tony Martin, Daniel Sammu, Kristine Konings, and Rupert Smith

Heinz workers get raw deal

AN 11-day dispute at the Heinz factory in Dandenong, Melbourne, ended with the workers being sold a raw deal by their union officials.

More than 450 members of the Food Preservers Union began the strike on 19 February after two workers were sacked after returning four minutes late from a meal break.

The agreement to end the strike did not include the reinstatement of these two, even though union leaders had said previously that it was a pre-condition of a return to work.

The real reason for the dispute ran deeper than the sacking of the two employees. Last December, the company removed 31 long-standing site agreements without even consulting the workers. Heinz managing director Terry Ward disclosed that the "changes would lead to a call for up to 80 voluntary redundancies at the end of the peak tomato season".

He added that the plant had lost 80,000 work hours through strikes between April 1989 and April 1990 and concluded: "How much longer do we have to put up with the ridiculous, mindless industrial action we are subjected to time after time?"

Most of the other workers at the plant refused to cross the picket, despite the bosses' attempts to discredit the strike. On the day the mass meeting decided to return to work, demands were raised to dismiss a woman laundry worker who had scabbed during the dispute.

The Murdoch-owned *Herald-Sun* repeatedly told stories about how tomato farmers were losing thousands of dollars, continually showing photos of loads of rotting tomatoes. All this, of course, is the fault of "bloody-minded unionists".

The paper seized upon comments made by the Victorian Minister for Labor, Neil Pope, who said that militant unions were ruining the country and forcing companies overseas. Remarks such as this were praised by major employer groups, as well as the Socialist Left Premier, Joan Kirner.

The Liberal Party used the dispute to once again criticise the Government for not "taking on the unions", and has talked about the need for tougher penalties for unions who dare to use industrial action as a way of defending worker's conditions. The Libs even hinted at the possibility of using the army to break strikes!

When National Party leader Tim Fischer attempted to talk to the striking workers, he was booed and heckled down at the picket-line.

On top of giving some people an opportunity to go union bashing once again, and showing us what grubs the bosses and politicians are, this dispute also underlined a few other things.

As far as strikes go, the Heinz strike was fairly small, yet it received an amazing amount of coverage, even being described by the *Herald-Sun* as "one of Victoria's worst industrial disputes".

It's clear that the ruling class is going to pounce on any dispute it can to scapegoat workers and unions for causing the recession and driving the country into bankruptcy. It will use any chance it can to raise the idea that the unions are too strong, that we all have to sacrifice in these hard times, etc, etc.

But most importantly, the strike shows us the best way for workers to fight back against attacks on their working conditions and to defend their jobs.

Over the last nine years or so the argument has been put forward by both union leaders and the Government that workers' interests can be looked after through negotiations and consultation.

As the recession takes hold and thousands of jobs disappear and wages continue to be held back, it's not hard to see what a lot of bullshit that argument is.

Although in the end this strike ended with a defeat for the workers, mainly because of the role of their union officials, it also cost Heinz an estimated $9 million.

It is action like this, that hits the bosses where they feel it most, that will force them to sit up and take notice, not by doing deals that leave the workers with less than what they started with.

—by Craig Kendal

CHEAP SHOTS

Tender bender

EVIDENCE given to the Royal Commission into the NSW Building Industry suggests that employers don't really believe in competition at all.

Apparently successful bidders for major NSW construction jobs pay "losers' fees" to their unsuccessful rivals, ostensibly to compensate them for the cost of tendering. These costs, according to NSW Master Builders' Association chief Ray Rocher, amount to a staggering $35,000 on a $20 million project!

Not many builders in Sydney town could do a $20 million job. So presumably the big builders decide who's getting the contract. Those missing out put in an unattractive bid to ensure they'll lose it.

We've got no doubt that such deals are illegal under Trade Practices legislation. But will the courts attack the bosses the same way they do the unions under that Act?

Party poopers

THE Australian army is 90 years old this month. Its troops have fought in seven imperialist wars on three continents. Each time, as Sydney's International Socialist (no relation) said in August 1914, "They will march, freeze, hunger, sicken and die for glorious war. They will either be killed or kill other men whom they have never seen before; and who have never done them any injury."

But the army isn't celebrating. In fact it has cancelled a special float for Melbourne's Moomba parade, changing of the guard ceremonies and open days.

According to an army spokesperson, it's because they don't want to face anti-war protesters. "We don't want to put our members on the street to be the target of an angry and negative crowd," she said. "It would be a bit provocative."

Good to know that we're having some effect.

Straining the quality of mercenaries

EVER wonder why you didn't hear too many stories about brave young Kuwaitis fighting for their country? There were only 7000 Kuwaitis troops involved in the Gulf War. The rest were in the lobbies of luxury hotels in Europe and Asia.

Many young Kuwaitis were in Egypt. The only attacking they did was to invade Cairo's discos. And according to locals, made a bloody nuisance of themselves.

Kuwaiti leaders in exile were worried. "It is real, this discotheque problem," admitted Ahmed al Nafisi, a former Kuwaiti MP. "There's so much money in Kuwait we are used to having many non-Kuwaitis doing many jobs for us," he added. Kuwait also hired lots of mercenaries to fight for them.

We wonder if the US will send a bill for $77 billion to Kuwait for the cost of the war? It would only take 10 years for the ruling al Sabah family to pay it if it diverted the $20 million a day it receives from its foreign investments.

Lawyers, guns and money

IN 1989 bank robbers netted $50 million from US banks. In that year banks lost $1,000 million through fraud and embezzlement. And American workers are paying for the cheating by directors of savings and loan (building societies) as the Bush administration has authorised a $64 billion bail-out from taxpayers' money.

The pen is not only mightier than the sword, it's much more profitable.

Green queen

LIKE Phil and Charlie, the Queen is an environmentalist.

She spends more a year on buying and maintaining her horses and carriages that she does on cars—£165,000 to £73,000 to be exact.

May we quote you?

"THE plan is an attempt to treat employers as a criminal class per se."

Chamber of Manufacturers chief, Ken Crompton, on plans to charge executives with manslaughter if workers die on unsafe jobs

"DO they suppose that it is no punishment to a ... gentleman of education in society... to be dragged into a court of justice...and to have his name entered on a register of criminals?"

English manufacturer, R.H. Greg, opposing legislation to charge factory owners with manslaughter if workers died due to unfenced machinery, in 1837

"I am one of the people who will not hesitate to impose martial law."

Kuwait's Crown prince and prime minister Sheik Saad al-Abdullah al-Salem al-Sabah

"THOSE who are able most effectively to undermine national security are those who least appear to constitute a risk to it."

—Senior British judge Lord Donaldson, justifying the detention and deportation without trial of Iraqis and Palestinians

Socialist meetings & ISO branches

MELBOURNE
Phone (03) 629 3148.
Write to: GPO Box 1473N, Melbourne, 3001.

PUBLIC MEETING
Wed 27 March: Bush's New World Order—the Marxist alternative
At YWCA, 489 Elizabeth St, 7.30pm

CENTRAL BRANCH
Meets every Monday night, 7.30pm, at Bookmarks, 1st floor, 328 Flinders St, City.
Mon 18 March: Germany 1918: How workers stopped WWI
Mon 1 April: Class struggle in the US
Mon 8 April: Australian militarism
Introduction to ISO politics: informal discussion group every Sat, 2pm.

NORTH BRANCH
Meets every Thursday night, 6.30pm at Meeting Room 4, LaTrobe Uni Union Building. Details 387 2053.
Thurs 21 March: Germany 1918:how workers stopped WWI
Thurs 4 April: Class struggle in the US
Thurs 11 April: Australian militarism

SYDNEY
Phone (02) 261 4862.
Write to: PO Box A338, Sydney South, 2000.
Meets every Tuesday night, 7.00pm, Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City.
Tues 19 March: Women's Liberation in the 1990's
Tues 26 March: The Relevance of Trotsky Today

BRISBANE
Phone (07) 229 8832
Write to: PO Box 329, Woolloongabba, 4102.
Meets every Tuesday night, 7.00pm, at Bookmarks, 2nd floor, 99 Elizabeth St, City.
Tues 19 March: Gorbachev: The New Stalin?
Tues 26 March: The Militant Minority

CANBERRA
Write to: PO Box 17, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.
Meets every Monday night, 7.00pm, Blair Room, Canberra Workers' Club, Childers St, Civic.

HOBART
We hold regular Marxist study groups. Details: GPO Box 1898, Hobart 7001.

PERTH
We hold regular Marxist study groups. Details: PO Box 521, Wanneroo 6065.

letters

PO Box A338, Sydney South, NSW 2000

Please include a contact address and phone number so we can verify authorship and discuss any changes.

Environment: blame the capitalists, not 'humanity'

I THINK Phil Shannon's letter (*The Socialist*, #248) missed the point of Dave Glanz's article about why human beings are the most important animal.

Self-consciousness, language and culture are not intrinsically good qualities; they're essential to our ability to transform the natural world.

Soil microbes don't create nuclear bombs, go to war or destroy the ozone layer. They also cannot irrigate deserts, plant trees or clean oil off dying cormorants.

If the Greenhouse effect is stopped and the rare eagle saved, it will be because of the conscious struggle of human beings like Phil and ourselves.

Phil's mistake is to look at the state of the planet without considering the type of society that produced the crisis. To simply state that "humanity" is usurping 40% of the earth's land ecosystems for our industry, cars, food, cities, etc is too easy and wrong.

Who was it that refused to clean up the mess caused by the Exxon Valdez? Who demands the right to spew poisonous muck into the waters around our cities? Who brings in the police to protect their nuclear power plants? Who dumps radioactive waste on Pacific islands?

It's capitalist companies and their governments, and they're not doing it for humanity, they're doing it for profit.

The people who are razing the Amazon aren't doing it because they believe human beings are superior to animals. If they did, they wouldn't treat people the way they do—just look at the murder of Chico Mendez.

Phil doesn't talk about there being any conflict within human society—instead his letter kept counterposing the interests of human beings and the environment as if they were *necessarily* in contradiction.

But this is back to front. Was the death of thousands of people after the release of dioxin from the Union Carbide plants at Bhopal necessary to human society? Ask anyone in Mexico City if they think they need air pollution.

The environment continues to be destroyed, not because people want it (that's why there's a green movement), but because we haven't yet been able to stop it.

The alternative to seeing capitalism at the root of the problem is to accept a horribly distorted idea of humanity. That's what I think Phil does when he rejects the idea that genetic engineering could be used in a positive way.

Of course, in a world where arms manufacturers have the money and medical researchers don't, science and technology can seem worse than useless.

But to reject the possibility of a society where science could be used to liberate us from Downs Syndrome and a host of other genetically linked diseases is the worst kind of cynicism about the possibilities of rational thought. It certainly doesn't reflect any "reverence for life"—quite the opposite.

The reason that Marxism, as Phil acknowledges, is the best theory for understanding the Gulf War is that a class analysis enables us to go beyond the rhetoric about stopping the "new Hitler", about the rights of small nations, to see what really caused the war—the real economic interests of the ruling classes engaged in it.

A class analysis of the environmental questions we face allows us to do the same—to see through the lie that the arms race is necessary for our protection, that the destruction of rainforests is necessary for us to have shelter, that industrial pollution is a "necessary evil".

Once we understand that the destruction of the environment under capitalism is not in the interests of the majority of human beings, then we can see why workers' struggles for "meat on the plate" and the struggle to save the environment go hand in hand.

It's in the interests of human beings to live in harmony with the natural world, but to be able to do so we have to fight against capitalism for our right to control the environment. It is as workers fighting against the bosses to improve our lives that we have the power to do that.

—Barbie Russell, Brisbane.

2XX under attack over its anti-war position

I DON'T agree that the Albert Langers of the world "should not concern us" (*The Socialist* #247). They can, because of their bankrupt politics, cause all sorts of trouble.

Here in Canberra we have an avowed Langerite, one David McMullen. David used to run a spot on 2XX, the local community radio. David thinks we should support the right the Kuwaiti people to self-determination. He therefore in practice supports US imperialism in the Gulf.

After the outbreak of the Gulf War 2XX workers met and decided that the station should adopt an anti-war position. In a broadcast a few weeks ago dear sweet innocent David contravened the spirit of that motion. So 2XX gave him the boot.

The mainstream media have taken up David's cause, claiming that 2XX hafe denied poor old David his right to free speech. Even worse Labor Party heavies like Collins and Beazley have begun talking about revoking the station's licence. All that is needed is a formal complaint from McMullin to be lodged with the Australian Broadcasting Tribunals and that becomes a possibility.

And what does our man of principle say to this? He says he's not going to complain to the Tribunal "at this stage". After all Mr Sweetness and Light says he's not really about knocking 2XX off the air. All he wants is to exercise his right to free speech. But if the station doesn't change its policy on the war then, according to the Canberra Times, David would "have a look at" taking his complaint to the Tribunal.

There is one radio station in Canberra that has taken an anti-war position, and that's 2XX. Every other media outlet supports the war in the Gulf. That's not surprising because almost every other newspaper, radio and TV station in Canberra is privately owned or like the ABC, under tight government control. All the media bosses, and their warmongering Labor government, support this war. None of their workers ahve had a chance to vote on what the editorial policy towards the war should be. *Rather they receive none too little subtle hints from their masters about running a pro-war line.*

David knows as well as I do that free speech under capitalism is a nonsense, precisely because private (or government) ownership of the media means that the mass of the people are denied an outlet for their views.

2XX is under attack because it is the one outlet for the truth in Canberra about this rotten war. David's actions have played into the hands of those who want to suppress opposition to the war.

The David McMullens of this world are aiding the class enemy. We need to fight against them and the best way we can do that is by defending 2XX and building opposition to the imperialist slaughter in the Gulf.

—John Passant, Canberra

Anti-war debates

I AGREE with Mick Armstrong's article "Can Negotiations Stop the War?" (*The Socialist* #247). Those who remember the struggle to end the Vietnam War will indeed recall the sharp debates over which tactical demands to raise and the rather fundamental conflict within the anti-war movement between those advocating the slogan "Stop the Bombing: Negotiate", and those urging the movement to adopt the central demand "Out Now", ie for the withdrawl of all imperialist forces without conditions.

I would recommend the excellent account of the history of the anti-Vietnam War movement in the USA written by one of its leaders Fred Halstead: "Out Now: A Participant's Account of the American Movement Against the Vietnam War." (New York, Monad Press, 1978)

—Graham Milner, Perth.

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What we stand for

SOCIALISM

Capitalism is a system of crisis, exploitation and war in which production is for profit, not human need.

Although workers create society's wealth they have no control over production or distribution.

We stand for socialism, the creation of a society in which the workers will make the decisions about the economy, social life and the environment.

Countries like Russia, China and Cuba are not socialist. Workers under these state capitalist regimes also face the task of building their own revolutionary movement to smash the system and take control into their own hands.

WORKERS' POWER

Only the working class has the power to create a society free from exploitation, oppression and want.

Liberation can only be won through the struggles of workers themselves, organised independently of all other classes and fighting for real workers' power—a new kind of state based on democratically-elected workers' councils.

REVOLUTION, NOT REFORMISM

Socialism cannot be created by gradual reforms as some in the Labor Party believe. The capitalist state—parliament, the military, the law—is a weapon of class rule and must be smashed. There is no parliamentary road to socialism.

INTERNATIONALISM

The working class exists in all countries and the struggle for socialism knows no national boundaries. We are for building an international movement organising to overcome national divisions between workers.

Socialism cannot be built in a single country; socialist revolutions must be spread if they are to survive.

We oppose imperialism, East and West, and support all national liberation struggles against imperialist domination.

Australia is not an oppressed country, but an imperialist power in its own right. This means we are opposed to Australian nationalism and immigration controls.

The threat of nuclear annihilation is a product of capitalism and only socialism can end it.

LIBERATION FROM OPPRESSION

We fight for democratic rights and liberation. We are against the oppression of women, blacks, migrants and lesbians and gay men. All these forms of oppression are used to divide the working class. Combatting them is an essential part of building a united revolutionary struggle, that can create a socialist society free from oppression.

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Crucial to a workers' movement smashing the capitalist state is a revolutionary workers' party built out of the day to day struggles around economic and political issues. We are taking the first steps towards building such a party.

Our task today is to argue for the ideas and traditions of revolutionary socialism, while fighting alongside militants and activists who are challenging the system.

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PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANISATION | No 249, 15 MARCH 1991 | 60 CENTS

Industry statement heralds new attack in...

Hawke's new war on workers

By Tom O'Lincoln

BELOW: thousands of car industry workers have been thrown onto the dole by Keating's recession.

THE RECESSION is gathering momentum.

Already 8.4% of the workforce are officially unemployed. And these are only the advance guard of the legions of unemployed. Hundreds of thousands more who were sacked over Christmas and are only just becoming eligible for the dole will soon show up in the figures.

The Australian Council of Social Services estimates that by the middle of the year over one million people will be dependent on the dole.

EMERGENCY

The Smith Family has reported a doubling of the numbers coming to it for emergency help. These people don't find the Smith Family by accident either. They are sent there by the DSS.

This is the background for the industry statement launched by Hawke. It comes amidst a savage recession that has left his and Keating's reputation in tatters, and left Australian workers bleeding.

A year ago Keating claimed he could avoid a recession. In August he said it was only a "slowdown". In November he confessed: "I knew there had to be one, but I didn't want to tell you."

So now unemployment is heading for double digits, financial institutions have fallen over like ten-pins, and carworkers are on a four day week...if they're lucky. We're seeing what a pack of lies Hawke fed us, when he said wage restraint and cosy deals with the bosses under the Accord would guarantee us economic security.

Actually the sacrifices, and the deals, paved the way for today's crisis. They boosted profit rates dramatically, and Hawke and Keating hoped this would fuel stronger investment and rebuild Australian manufacturing. But what did the bosses do with the profits?

For a while most of the dough was used for speculation. After the difficulties of the Fraser era, few capitalists had enough confidence in their own system to engage in serious investment. Finally investment began to flow and Keating thought he'd succeeded.

But the investment boom of 1988 and 1989 was a double-headed disaster. Business spent heaps of money, much of it borrowed, but what was it spent on? OECD figures show that Australia's rate of investment in new plant, equipment and machinery has been among the lowest of the larger industrial economies.

Whereas Japan spent nearly 20 per cent of GDP on business investment over the past three years, Australia spent about 13 per cent.

The rest went into unproductive investments like office buildings, bought at inflated prices. Then the property boom turned to bust, and a big chunk of that investment was wiped out.

Just as serious, it is now clear that far too much of the investment in equipment went into office computers rather than "deepening capital" on the factory floor.

So much for the idea, continually drummed into us, that the capitalists are specially competent at running industry. They've made such a hash of the Australian economy, that opinion polls show 75 percent of people think management should take a pay cut!

If the investment boom didn't revive industry, it did lead to a huge surge in imports, raising the current account deficit to crisis levels. The government slammed on the brakes, pushing up interest rates to slow the economy and the drift toward recession began.

Once again, Keating had a plan. The world economy seemed to be holding up, so Australia's domestic economy could be slowed while exports stayed relatively high. This would cushion the recession and fix the trade balance.

Again the plan flopped. Major overseas economies like America and Britain have also gone into recession, Europe and Japan have slowed down dramatically, and this has rebounded on Australian exports.

Of course the situation wasn't helped by our great "entrepreneurs" like Alan Bond and Bill Farrow mismanaging billions of dollars.

So the recession is here and Keating is under pressure to do something. But his strategy for economic recovery just amounts to finding new ways to make workers' pay.

Interest rates have finally come down. But while the government has eased up a lot on monetary policy, it appears that the banks haven't passed on all the benefits. They prefer to fatten up their own profit margins, and let working class homeowners continue to struggle.

INFLATION

Keating says inflation is coming down. While he's said that before, this time it might be true, but only because workers have been forced onto the dole, and can no longer scrape the money together to pay rising prices. What's more, the lower inflation rate probably won't last.

Keating claims that he's cushioning the economy by running down the budget surplus, and leaving more money out in the private sector to boost activity. But isn't this the same Mr Keating who told us last June that his big surpluses were almost the only thing keeping foreign lenders happy with the Australian economy?

If the surplus is slashed, or becomes a deficit, it's likely they'll lose confidence in us, and the dollar will collapse. That in turn would mean a new surge of inflation. We pay again.

Worst of all, when the recession finally ends, we will still have an economy with the same fundamental structural problems.

The latest trade figures showed a current account deficit still around $1.8 billion, with imports falling only a little in dollar terms despite the recession. When the recovery finally arrives, those figures will balloon out again.

Remember only a couple of years ago politicians, business and the media were touting the virtues of the free market? Now we see just what a fiasco the capitalist market and rightwing government policies can create.

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