

socialist
alliance



capitalism the barrier - bill deller - origins of bourgeois democracy - tony dewberry - workers' democracy - ken howard - south africa - peter taaffe - northern ireland - mike heaney - morality & socialism - jenny campbell - when politics got personal - mirid borke - miners' strike - john tully - the impact of kennett's cuts - kate dempsey

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capitalism still the barrier - bill deller	3
morality and socialism - jenny campbell	6
when politics got personal - sigrid borke	8
a vision of workers' democracy - ken howard	10
origins of bourgeois democracy - tony dewberry	13
miners' strike, ten years after - john tully	17
sinn fein & downing street - mike heaney	18
the impact of kennett's cuts - kate dempsey	20
new chapter in south africa - peter taaffe	23

Capitalism remains the barrier to feeding, clothing, housing, educating and caring for the world's people

by Bill Deller

Capitalists, politicians, media commentators are all talking about the recovery taking place in the economy. Since 1989 and the collapse of the former Soviet Union there has been widespread glee at the prospects for capitalism in the 1990s.

In fact, with a return to 'free market' economics in the the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and now in China, Communism has been declared dead and the funeral held several times over. The selling of pieces of the Berlin Wall perhaps symbolises the fantastic state of mind of the capitalist world.

The stock markets have been celebrating, achieving new all time record highs for the indexes of shares. The fears of a correction (the euphemism used to describe the 1987 crash) are dismissed as an over-reaction on the part of critics.

Confidence in the share market has been dented in recent weeks as corrections occur not yet of 1987 proportions, but there is increased nervousness amongst brokers and players.

Governments are excited as growth rates crawl towards 4% and yet that growth rate is insufficient to make a dent in the mass of unemployment experienced throughout the world.

In the England of 1640, capitalists, standing behind the bloody hand of Cromwell, made their revolution and in the process separated the Feudal King Charles's head from his shoulders and the globalisation of the world economy commenced. 354 years later the process is still being completed and the great gains of the capitalist period are still being enjoyed by only a handful of individuals.

According to Susan George, author and authority on debt, two thirds of the world's people are today excluded from the processes of capitalism. Over one third of the world's population are so impoverished that malnutrition and disease are ever-present realities.

Tuberculosis, which was almost eradicated in the 1950s and 60s has re-emerged as a potent killer not just in the under-developed world but within the heartland of imperialism the United States. Hundreds of thousands in New York and other major US cities suffer from new strains of the disease because economic rationalist policies have led to cutting out the preventative inoculation programmes of previous times.

Socialist Alliance Meetings

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(left hand side of the church)

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The world's farmers produce sufficient grain protein to feed the existing population and yet much of that protein is converted to meat protein to satisfy the demand for meat in the advanced capitalist countries. This is not a call for an immediate turn to vegetarian menus, but rather a simple demonstration that starvation could be eradicated if we had the political will.

In most advanced capitalist countries, the top ten percent of the people eat up over fifty percent of the wealth, whilst the bottom live on or near the poverty line.

It is indeed fortunate for the capitalist classes that they own the media and other propaganda avenues and are able to inculcate the masses with the message that the success is a product of hard work and intelligence, that any one can make it if they chose to follow the example of the great individuals of history, such as Henry Ford or Nelson Rockefeller.

Third world countries are 61% more in debt than in 1982, using more than 40% of GDP to service that debt

If, however, you are a third world citizen (or country) you might be entitled to a different viewpoint. On average you would be 61% more in debt than you were in 1982 and you would be using more than 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to service that debt to first world banks, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Third world countries are making payment to the banks at the rate of \$225,000 per minute every day, and yet they are 61% worse off than they were a decade ago.

The dollar figures of debt-servicing are staggering when seen in print; as at 1990, debtor countries were paying six billion five hundred million dollars (\$6,500,000,000) in interest alone per month. This is \$130,000,000,000 per year, and if you include payments on the principal, the figure becomes the even more absurd \$12,450,000,000 per month or \$240,900,000,000 per year.

The figures are mind-numbing unless you compare them to something else. Australia's total government outlays for the financial year 1992/3 were \$109,429,000,000 - slightly less than the interest burden per year for debtor countries and well under half of the total repayments figure including the payments on principal.

If you don't pay, or if you misbehave in some way, then there are constant reminders of the strength of imperialism. The US has, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, become a corporate gun-for-hire and as we saw in the Gulf War, capable of the most brutal acts, only comparable with Pol Pot's ethnic- and class-cleansing programme or the outrage of the Nazi holocaust.

There is almost no doubt that the US government encouraged Hussein to embark on the invasion of Kuwait and then used the invasion as an opportunity to coalesce the world's military and financial might behind its attempt to bomb Iraq back into the Stone Age. The final act of the war was the refusal to allow fleeing Iraqis to surrender, burying thousands alive in trenches being covered by giant earth moving equipment just as farmers often plough in rabbit burrows to exterminate the vermin.

This exercise was designed to strike terror into the hearts of any would be rebels around the world and a sanitised version of events was presented to the world through a controlled 24-hour media coverage.

The war enabled the US to use up significant quantities of military equipment, much of its approaching its use-by date and at the same time added billions of dollars to US coffers from Japan's financial contributions to the war effort.

The invasion of Panama on the pretext of capturing General Noriega (another product of the CIA), the blockade of Nicaragua and the support given to the contra rebels to fight the Sandanista government are but a few of the examples of Imperialism's attempt to terrorise opponents of the system into submission.

During the period of its involvement in the Vietnam war, the US government spent more than enough money to rebuild every school, hospital, and every other public building in the entire world - and lost the war against a people who had nothing left to lose!

Defence expenditure continues to eat up vast sums of money, often around 10% of budget outlays, and if converted to more sensible demands within the economy could help to alleviate much of the worlds suffering.

In Australia, in 1990 2,045,000 people were living in poverty after paying housing costs.

In Australia, the so-called lucky country, in 1990 2,045,000 people were living in poverty after paying housing costs. Almost 50% of one-parent families were living in poverty, 1 in 4 renters under 24 years of age were living in poverty.

At the same time current levels of overtime being worked is the equivalent to 500,000 EFT (equivalent full-time) jobs, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in March. Average hours of work are now 41.9 hours per week.

A ban on overtime called by the ACTU would have a stunning effect.

Already practical experience in WA shows that it works. The Electrical Trades Union has had a ban on overtime in

the construction industry since 1989 and they have recorded an additional 270 electricians in employment as a result.

If we take a crude conversion of hours worked by Australian workers and reduce them to 38, 35 or 32 then some interesting figures emerge:

A 34 hour week would create 500,000 jobs.

A 35 hour week would create 1,100,000 jobs.

A 32 hour week would create 1,900,000 jobs.

1.9 million jobs, without considering the multiplier effect of creating those jobs, the income to be spent and the taxes earned by government.

Given that the real levels of unemployment is about 2 million, then the possible creation of 1.9 million jobs makes the current discussion around unemployment a farce.

There is no doubt that the preceding conversions are crude, but they demonstrate the point effectively - that unemployment is only a problem because the capitalist system makes it one. 1.9 million jobs without any public works programmes or job creation schemes!

the introduction of free 24-hour child-care, with 1.5 million kids under 12 are in child care ... at a ratio of 1 minder per 5 kids, 262,000 jobs would be created

If we take but one example of the implementation of a progressive social measure: the introduction of free 24-hour child-care. Then again, the effect on employment is stunning.

1.5 million kids under 12 are in child care of some sort. Suppose we create child-care facilities and employ staff for a further 1,310,000 kids in closed schools and new facilities, creating employment in construction, teaching and welfare fields.

At a ratio of 1 minder per 5 kids, 262,000 jobs would be created, without taking into account the indirect jobs in construction, councils, and education administration required to support such a programme.

One final 'if: if we were to collect the corporate profits from the top 100 companies in Australia, then we would have hundreds of billions of dollars available to create jobs, to improve health or education services to restore the environment or a range of desirable measures.

Capitalism remains the barrier to feeding, clothing, housing, educating and caring for the world's people, and at precisely the time when socialism is so desperately required the 'stocks' of socialists have rarely been lower.

Socialism has become a dirty word, "tried and failed". Reformists the world over are indistinguishable from right-wing capitalist parties, and economic rationalist policies prevail. The left, and particularly the revolutionary left, is

divided and in many places completely isolated from the movement of the working class.

African National Congress

The African National Congress continues its move to the right to placate the interests of imperialism and looks to Australia for how to develop an Accord with the trade unions and the working class so as not to threaten the existing capitalist arrangements too much.

The pressure that will emerge after the election will warrant close attention as the built-up levels of expectations of the masses come into conflict with the pro-capitalist 'responsible' policies of the ANC government.

Brazil, Philippines, ...

Similarly in Brazil, a coalition of left parties in the Workers Party (PT) seem likely to be elected in October. How they balance between the interests of their millions of supporters and the interests of imperialism will have to be followed closely.

An historic split within the Philippines Communist Party has opened up a discussion within Maoist circles that again has great promise for the development of a better understanding of the way forward.

There are a number of fascinating attempts at coalitions of working class and progressive parties throughout the world and one in New Zealand that shows significant promise. At the recent election, they captured 18.3% of the vote and had elected two parliamentarians.

The Alliance at the next election under a multi-member proportional representation system would, on those figures, be a significant force within the parliament, as they are at the moment in the Auckland region.

The continued existence of a range of sects on the left, all of whom "own" the correct line, needs to be understood within the historical context within which they arose. Their isolation from the working class will continue while they put the interests of their organisation before the interests of the working class.

There is no no single organisation that today can do any more than claim ownership of the correct line, and those claims ring hollow in the cold light of day.

The task is as Socialist Alliance is attempting to do, to open up discussion within the left, to examine new ways of working together, to welcome difference as a means of clarifying the way forward and to acknowledge that authority within the working class. This is not a matter of a few correct slogans but of patient day to day work, seeking to advance the struggle of the working class, wherever that struggle takes place.

morality & socialism

by Jenny Campbell

The phrase, "the personal is political" was coined, I believe, in the latest radical feminist wave of the 60's and 70's. It was directed at left-wing men whose language and sexual politics had not caught up with the changed material conditions of women, which had inevitably changed the consciousness of women. 'Chairman' were very irritating to these women. When workers were still being referred to as 'he's', women who were workers felt rightly alienated from the person talking or writing in this way. Sexual abuse within parties and domestic violence were also still being tolerated by some left parties. The women who raised these issues in the parties were told that feminism was petit-bourgeois and a secondary question to class. Racism, however, had been a political no-no for years. Sigrid will be talking about how this phrase applies to sexism and racism and I will be analysing the phrase as to its applicability in other areas of our lives.

Firstly, it was my understanding, being a socialist feminist at the time when this phrase became common usage, that it was only ever intended as a tactical slogan, not a principle, in order to push the consciousness of men (and women) particularly on the left to a higher stage. Sexism most definitely divides the working class and it is for this reason that the slogan is necessary in this context. But if it is applied to other areas of our lives it has to be examined as to whether or not certain personal behaviours advance the class struggle or not. Historical materialism and not idealism must be our starting point.

It is fairly elementary Marxism to consider where our morals come from.

Engels in *Anti-Dühring* said "Men (sic), consciously or unconsciously, derive their moral ideas in the last resort from the practical relations on which their class position is based - from the economic relations in which they carry on production and exchange. The morality of tribal life is thus different from those of civilised societies because of the differences in their productive relations and forms of property". Thus stealing seems ridiculous to the primitive tribe which has never had private property. Engels continues, "All moralities and their theoretical justifications have been products of the economic stage society reached at that particular epoch. Since civilised society has hitherto moved in class antagonisms and continues to do so all morality has been and must necessarily be class morality". Trotsky also rejects any notion of absolute morality.

This and the following article are based on Jenny's and Sigrid's contributions at the Socialist Alliance "Educational" on "The Personal is Political" in March.

Under capitalism, it seems basic to emphasise that our morality is dominated by the morality of the ruling class. I don't believe that any individual, revolutionary or not, can rid themselves of all of the morality we get propagandised with each day of our lives, despite the fact that, as Trotsky said in *Their morals and ours* "a revolutionary Marxist cannot begin to approach his historical mission without having broken morally from bourgeois public opinion and its agencies in the proletariat".

In saying this however, I don't really believe that Trotsky meant that we should be "ideologically correct" in all aspects of life. After all, Lenin made the unforgettable statement that having sex with 'promiscuous' women was like drinking out of a dirty glass. Trotsky, also, did not like swearing, yet this, in context, can be a useful weapon. Who can determine what is ideologically correct except as some form of individual morality, especially when within individuals there can be conflicting class values. Saying, as some do that all revolutionaries should be vegetarians, for example, is not to be confused with what Trotsky meant. These kind of statements verge on moralism, not proletarian morality. Nevertheless, bourgeois morals which attempt to divide the working class are those which must be rejected.

As Trotsky says in *Their Morals and Ours*: "Only that which prepares the complete and final overthrow of imperialist bestiality is moral, and nothing else. The welfare of the revolution - that is the supreme law".

It is idealist to project upon the working class, values which may well be socialist ones, while the class still lives under capitalism. This is predicated on the utopian view that if all individuals change, then society eventually will. What is meant by idealism? The big question in philosophy is the question: which comes first, morality (and all mental constructs) or the material surroundings? More precisely, is our morality the product of our class divided society or is class society the result of our ideas/values and moral stances?

Christians clearly believe the last option. That is why sin is so central to religion. They believe that society must live by a morality which is fixed and is derived from outside the material world. The utopian socialists are of the same philosophical school. Robert Owen believed that the power of the idea of socialism meant socialism was just a matter of education. It also meant appealing to the rich in the name of morality. The classic example of how idealism works was when the Chartists presented a petition to Queen Victoria to alleviate child poverty.

We come then to the question of consciousness and how human beings change. Do they change by the use of moralism? by someone telling them they should not smoke, for example. Obviously not. In fact, I believe that this new militant anti-smoking campaign comes from the bourgeoisie. Corporations do not care for our health, but care only for their profits. They do not want to be sued. If we were wealthy enough and had all the benefits that medicine and counselling can provide perhaps we would have a chance of giving up the habit. But material conditions for the working class mitigate against this.

Should we become non-racist? Obviously yes, or we retard the struggle of the working class. But to state the obvious, being deterministic consciousness, and not the other way around. As revolutionaries we must always propagandise and agitate against racism, but the workers who feel their jobs are at risk because of immigration, need to experience that migrants are not what has made them insecure in their jobs, but capitalism. Lynn Beaton's book on the miners' strike in England, *Shifting Horizons* shows how consciousness changed for both men and women as a result of the struggle and the support they got from many sections of the oppressed. I doubt if the miners would hold now the same bourgeois prejudices they once had.

Once changed, too, it is difficult to go backwards. Similarly, in the Richmond Secondary College struggle, many people changed, including radicals. We may not agree with every decision made but it had an effect on many people's consciousnesses, whether they were directly involved or not. Working people certainly learnt that the state was not neutral. Similarly, in the Brunswick anti-fascist rally in March, everyone there and media listeners and viewers saw the police protecting the Nazis. Interestingly, I hear that the young people thought it wrong that during the Richmond S.C. struggle, protesters went to Macdonald's. Well, what else is open late and is cheap? Of course if we had choices of better foods and non-exploitative, non-capitalist enterprises to go to we would, but we don't.

I want to address another confused idea of when the personal is the political when it is applied to social class status. It seems to be moralistic to judge a revolutionary's credentials according to what class they may have been born into. It seems that those who were born into the working class and always have had to struggle, somehow have more credibility than others who may have been born into the upper class or the middle class (a term much misused, which I won't go into now). Both Lenin and Trotsky were born into a highly educated layer of the middle class, but do we doubt, even if we don't agree with their ideas, that they spent their lives devoted to the bringing to power of the proletariat, suffering along the way exile, jail inside and outside of Russia, in this fight? No. It is the class that one identifies with that matters, the work that is done by revolutionaries in the working class that is important. If the personal is the political and this means the more privileged of us cannot ipso facto be revolutionaries, the struggle will never bring in possible dedicated people. Also, it supposes that consciousness does precede being. As I said before, consciousness can and does change. As Engels again said the only thing that is absolute is change.

Another moral that needs addressing is that of workerism. Some revolutionaries believe that the only 'real' workers are those in heavy industry at the point of production. Maoists, particularly seem to hold this view. But most industrial capitalist countries now have smaller heavy industries and more telecommunication and service industries.

Women make up a large part of these industries. So it is not only workerist but sexist too to rely only on workers in heavy industry. We make a mistake if we ignore women workers as throughout history they have almost invariably been the ones to start a resurrection or revolution. We also make a mistake if we rely only on workers in heavy industry, because this reduces the size of the working class and

ignores its allies. What is moralistic about it too is that revolutionaries can often be categorised and judged according to what work they do. It remains a Marxist definition of the working class that those who work for a wage are workers. Of course those in high wage brackets may be more easily co-opted by bourgeois ideology, but we must not discount them. The pilots did attempt to defy the Accord after all.

I would like to quote once again from Trotsky. When Trotsky was exiled by Stalin from Russia he was first welcomed by the Social Democrats in Norway. This did not last long as Stalin threatened trade with the shipowners and fish merchants of Norway. Marin Tranmael, the leader of the government was "not only an authority in the moral sphere but openly a righteous person: he (did) not drink, he (did) not smoke, (did) not indulge in meat and in winter bathed in an ice-hole. This did not hinder him, after he had arrested us upon the order of the GPU, from inviting a Norwegian agent of the GPU, one Jacob Fries - a bourgeois without honour or conscience - to calumniate me". I think this demonstrates the possible idealist basis of the virtuosity of some of us on the left and makes it imperative to avoid using the slogan "the personal is the political" in moralistic and hypocritical ways.

Morality can never be separated from material circumstance. Only mass action on a political level can change these conditions. 2000 years of Christianity has shown that personal behaviour by itself can not nor is it intended to change anything. We cannot be mentally socialist in a capitalist world.

In using this slogan it is important to see it as a tactical one to be used only to unite the working class, not to divide it.



when politics got personal

by Sigrid Borke

'In 1993, "the personal is still the political"' stated part of the editorial of a *Victorian Women's Liberation Newsletter*.

The slogan 'the personal is the political' is a relatively recent term and it's important to look at where 'the personal is the political' idea came from.

Amidst the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, the Black movement in the US, the Vietnam war, the students uprising in France, the women's liberation movement also emerged. Women's liberationists and the new left were involved in many of the struggles, but were also concerned about the individual and self-emancipation.

This was the time of consciousness raising groups (rap groups) formed by women who felt their problems and ideas were dismissed, particularly in the male dominated left organisations.

In these consciousness raising groups, experiences and grievances were discussed in a non-threatening environment. I'm talking about women in the Western world, particularly that strata of young educated women who had entered tertiary institutions in large numbers. The mass of working women did not take part in these groups. However, the ideas that flowed from the women's liberation movement, reached many parts of the world.

Personal experiences of all kinds were being aired in women's groups, and one of the most important issues that women came to understand was the social reality of housework and the sexual division of labour.

The personal became such an issue among the newly aware young women because the older socialist groups almost dismissed the individual and the problems of personal daily life.

Feminists in western countries, including Australia, wholeheartedly took up the slogan 'organise around your own oppression' which was coined by the Black movement in the US. It was also generally agreed that all women were oppressed, and some feminists believed, and some still do, that women were a separate class.

Most Marxist groups of the time argued purely on the basis of class without taking into account the complex and specific ways women are oppressed under capitalism. They were unable to take up women's concerns, the concerns of women who believed their subjective oppression was part of the wider social oppression.

One of the major areas of discussion was around unpaid domestic activity. Women began to demand a change to the sexual division of labour. At the same time making connections between the inequalities of home and in the workplace. Generally the women's movement tended to be more concerned with daily life, whereas political parties concentrated on the question of taking power.

Many women's liberation groups armed with self-help ideas aimed to live the ideal of future relations today. Somewhat like the utopia of having socialism in a capitalist society. It took the form of experiments with communes, cafes, bookshops, publishing, women's centres and so on.

As a general strategy it had many problems, because the means became an end in itself. The earlier more radical feminists emphasis of revolutionising the world was replaced by a cultural feminism and changing oneself as the aim. Rather like religious beliefs that if you become a better person, the world will be a better place.

Some women in England are now asking the question 'has the movement for the liberation of women now really become a movement of liberated women?' (*Women in Movement!* Sheila Rowbotham) We can see how many feminists nowadays are content to move up the career ladder and as femocrats, like Anne Sommers, Germaine Greer, Joan Kirner and Jeanine Haines, believe they are making changes and providing role models for women. We don't hear too much nowadays from gender based feminists about organising against oppression.

That's a real shift from the heady days of speaking for all women. The idealistic notion of one unified sisterhood, didn't take too long to show up in splits and differences. After all whose interests were being represented in these groups? Blacks, the indigenous, migrants, lesbians, heteros?

The concept of female equality certainly came up against the notion of who had access to resources - particularly when looking at the scarcity of resources Blacks and other minority groups have to contend with, compared to the relatively privileged Anglo women.

When looking at the question of equality, one certainly needs to ask equality with whom? In Australia, it is with an Aboriginal male, jobless, dispossessed, alienated, with little access to education, unskilled and with a mortality rate 20 years below a white Anglo male?

"Men who do not act in ways which both acknowledge and redress their enormous economic, social and psychological advantages over women are refusing to accept responsibility for their role within the patriarchal capitalist society".

This feminist position in a 1993 the *Victorian Women's Liberation Newsletter* editorial appears not to have taken account of the fact inequalities are not always simply gender based.

The idea of women speaking on behalf of all women effectively denies conflicts of power among women themselves, such as colour, ethnicity or class. However, debates about issues of race, ethnicity, lesbianism and disability were discussed and this is certainly one of the positive aspects of the women's movement.

Likewise the question of internal democracy in meetings which attempted to allow all women to speak, as opposed to the stifling and formal meeting procedures

How we relate, live and love, dress and how language was used was all part of the democratic debate. However self-righteousness, and authoritarian attitudes also developed alongside and it had the effect of ignoring real inequalities. The structurelessness of organisations tend to conceal the hidden forms of power that the more educated, articulate women have.

The women's movement, and other left organisations, environmentalists and so on, began politicising 'the personal' and personal issues into politics. The slogan 'the personal is political' was coined by the American new left.

The idea arose because there was no political definition for some of the problems people faced. In the women's movement it dealt with issues like inequality in sexual relations, the body, abortion and women's lack of control over fertility.

One of the main differences among feminists was the explosive issue of sexual practices, behaviour and attitude. The most zealous considered relations with men meant sleeping with the enemy.

Like religious or other sectarians claiming the high moral ground disapproval was rife of anyone deviating from the 'line', ie dressing down, not shaving one's body, not wearing make-up or flirting. What was expressed was the fear that physical desire is opposed to women's freedom. The women's movement has made important break-throughs for lesbianism, but couldn't and still can't come to terms with heterosexual passion. It poses the question 'do women have the right to assert their own desires and passions or do women need to be protected from themselves?'

Another effect of focussing mainly on 'the personal' for some women who could not resolve the conflicts that arose around the areas of desire, sexual love and fantasy was to head to the psychologist or go into spirituality. You can hardly negotiate these complex issues like a wages contract. This is where the strain between personal liberation and social liberation shows.

Can being personally aware of inequalities alone change the real world? This is the snag for most of us who want to bring about the distribution of wealth and resources.

The limitation of personal awareness alone in changing real society was made clear when a group of 40 women met in Victoria in 1988 in an all day 'racism awareness workshop' and drew the conclusion - that they 'needed to face the fact many feminists were racist and also there was much to learn if they wanted to be politically active and personally conscious about our responsibilities towards the Aboriginal people in particular'.

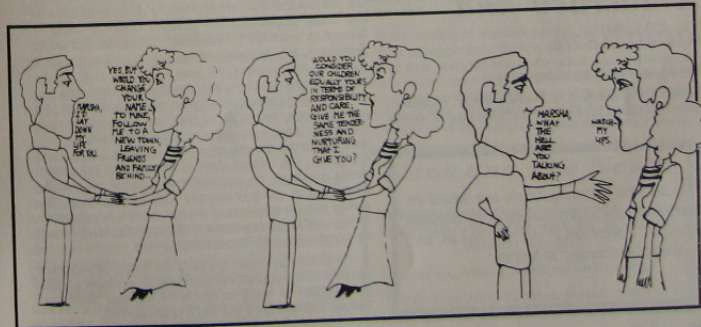
At about the same time a Royal Commission Report was made public which showed how a community of 500 Aboriginals living in Toomeah, NSW could only get water two times a day for 15 minutes, and the most appalling housing conditions existed, where a three bed-room house contained 30 people, the average houses had 12 to 20 people living in them.

The idea of the personal is political is not expressed in the women's movement alone. Environmentalists believe if we all made the decision to ride bikes, we'd make a personal contribution to stop polluting the environment. Some women in unions make decisions based on gender and often in their own personal interests.

At a time when millions are starving around the world, vegetarians who feel strongly about the rights of animals have graffitied walls with the slogan 'meat is murder'.

Does it mean then that we should ditch everything from the ideas that came from the personal is political?

No. Many important insights in inequalities have been made and are valuable in understanding the society we live in. It's important to critically analyse the women's movement historically and continue to do so. It's 25-30 years ago since the 'second wave' of women's liberation began, there's a whole new generation out there who were not part of it, even if they take the gains made by the women's movement for granted. We should not shy away from questioning aspects that are held dear to many, the women's movement is not a sacred cow any more than are marxist and other left parties.



Visioning an Alternative Future - the Importance of Socialist Democracy

by Ken Howard

Shall we live to see it?

Shall we live to see that moment in history when the world will be changed?

Will we live to see socialism?

This has been the question that has been asked for over a millennium now and for many of us here today for the odd decade or two.

At times, when overwhelmed by the frustration and alienation of capitalist society we dream of what it will be like "under socialism" when it will all be different and we will all not only act differently but feel differently as we become liberated from the physical and emotional shackles imposed by a reprehensible system of social relations.

In the late sixties as a member of the Communist Party I remember the excitement and enthusiasm of us then young communists as we waited for the GREAT DAY that WAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. This however only lasted a few years and I vividly remember the State conference of the party in the early seventies when we were told that the great day wasn't just around the corner nor was it even on the horizon. In fact so the conference resolved, it didn't even exist, and what we as good communists must now concentrate upon is expanding the limits of democracy. That by pushing the limits of democracy we would uncover that pathway to liberation, the parliamentary road to socialism, through which, at a regular election, 51% of the population would one day vote for revolution.

Well some twenty years later, the great day hasn't come, the parliamentary road to socialism has become buried under the rubble of disillusioned and demoralised communists, the Communist Party has disappeared into oblivion and society is more repressive and less democratic than ever before.

Democracy and Socialism

But the question of socialism remains.

Today, the question of democracy has an importance more crucial than it has ever had since the Russian revolu-

This and the following article are based on Ken's and Tony's contributions at the Socialist Alliance "Educational" on "Bourgeois and Socialist Democracy" in March.

tion with the world at a crossroads and the choice of socialism or barbarism being posed in ever starker terms, to have a vision of an alternative future and to fight for it is paramount. Central to this vision is the question of socialist democracy. Not just a view of society with expanded bourgeois democracy, nor a reworked democracy from the archives of the deformed and degenerated worker states but a fundamental break from the norms of capitalism and bureaucracy at all levels of existence.

For in the final analysis the dangers that threaten humanity can only be resolved if the alienated and alienating character of human work is overcome in a decisive manner, if the great majority of men and women become masters and mistresses of our destiny in production, in consumption and in our communities. To this end we must conquer the power to decide that destiny consciously, freely and democratically. And this is the essence of a self managed society, a superior civilisation and the essential content of socialism.

So far so good, but does it tell us much about the society we are trying to build from our vision, let alone how it is going to be achieved? If we posited the objective, a democratic, pluralist, self managing world socialist federation then a living reality that embodies the totality of socialist democracy is integral to the process of revolutionary change. However the question of what conceptions we hold of socialist democracy is not just an abstract academic exercise to be implemented on the day after the great day, but rather is fundamental to the very real world of practical politics today.

Visions of a New Society

Our conceptions of socialist democracy must be clear and unequivocal if we are to project a vision of an alternative future that is radically different from the fraud of democracy practised by stalinism, labourism and social democracy. It is fundamental not only because of what it means to the vision of the kind of society that we are fighting for but equally as important how such a society is to be achieved. As revolutionaries we clearly understand that real and democratic socialism can come about only through a complete break with capitalist and bureaucratic regimes, their overthrow through mass mobilisations - in a world revolution. The balance sheet of this century has clearly shown not simply the bankruptcy of stalinism but also the bankruptcy of social democracy with its increasing integration into the structures of the bourgeois state apparatus, its loyal and brutal management of imperialist interests and its sacred union with its capitalist partners.

As the century draws to a close the failure of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois nationalism becomes ever more graphic and exposed as being incapable of bringing about real national independence and social emancipation.

Counterposed to this record the working class and oppressed will not mobilise to change society unless the vision of what is to replace it embodies a living and concrete conceptualisation of socialist democracy that is far superior to the ravages of capitalism and bureaucracy.

Our conceptions of socialist democracy must therefore not only be based upon the lessons of historical experience but also the collective experience of the working class and oppressed in struggle today.

Reform or Revolution

Fundamentally the difference between reformists and centrists on the one hand and revolutionary Marxists regarding the conquest of state power, the need for a socialist revolution, the nature of the proletarian state and the meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be summarised as:

- The recognition by revolutionary Marxists of the class nature of all states and of the state apparatus as an instrument of maintaining class rule.
- The illusion propagated by reformists that democracy or democratic state institutions stand above classes and the class struggle and the rejection of that illusion by revolutionary Marxists.
- The recognition by revolutionary Marxists that the state institutions of even the most democratic bourgeois states serve to uphold the power and rule of the capitalist class and therefore cannot be instruments with which to overthrow that rule and transfer power from the capitalist class to the working class.
- The recognition by revolutionary Marxists that the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus is in the first place the destruction of its military / police repressive apparatus as a necessary prerequisite for the conquest of political power by the working class.
- The recognition by revolutionary Marxists of the necessity for the development of the consciousness and mass organisation of the working class in order to carry through the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.
- The necessary conclusion drawn by revolutionary Marxists as a consequence: that the working class by itself can exercise state power directly only within the framework of state institutions of a type different from those of the bourgeois state, state institutions arising out and democratically elected and centralised workers councils (soviets) with the fundamental characteristics outlined by Lenin in *State and Revolution* - the election of all functionaries, judges, commanders of the workers or workers and peasant militias, and all delegates representing the toilers in state institutions: rotation of elected officials; restriction of their income to that of skilled workers; the right to recall them at all times; simultaneous exercise of legislative and executive power by soviet type institutions; drastic reduction of the number of permanent functionaries and greater and greater transfer of administrative functions to bodies run by the mass of the concerned toilers themselves. In other words

a soviet type representative democracy as opposed to the parliamentary type, with increasingly wide ranging forms of direct democracy.

The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat which summarises all these points, is a basic part of Marxist theory of the state, of the proletarian revolution and of the progress towards building a classless society. The word "dictatorship" has a concrete meaning in that context; it is a mechanism for the disarmament and expropriation of the bourgeois class and the exercise of state power by the working class, a mechanism to prevent any re-establishment of bourgeois state power or of private property in the means of production, and thus any re-introduction of the exploitation of wage earners by capitalists.

The dictatorship of the proletariat in its complete form, workers democracy, means the exercise of state power by democratically elected soviets, workers councils. The logical conclusion flowing from this is that workers democracy must be superior to bourgeois democracy, not only in the economic and social sphere - such as the right to work, a secure existence, free education, health-care etc, but also because it increases the democratic rights enjoyed by the workers and all layers of toilers in the political and social spheres.

Multi-party Pluralism

To grant a single party or so called mass organisation controlled by that single party a monopoly of access to the communication or assembly mechanisms would in fact restrict and not extend the democratic rights of the proletariat compared to those enjoyed under bourgeois democracy. It is crucial that the rights to form parties or other forms of organisation with dissenting views, the right to strike, the right and access to communication etc are far qualitatively and quantitatively superior to the democratic rights under capitalism if any concept of socialist democracy is to be relevant. Political freedom under socialist democracy also implies freedom of organisation and action for independent women's liberation, national liberation and social movements broader than the working class in the scientific sense of the word.

In the building of classless society, the participation of millions of people not only in a more or less passive way through their votes but also in the actual administration of various levels cannot be reduced to a workerist concept of considering only workers at the point of production or in the factories as such. The soviets on which the dictatorship of the proletariat will be based are not only the factory councils

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but bodies of self organisation of the masses in many spheres of social life including factories, commercial units, hospitals, schools, transport and telecommunications etc. This is indispensable in order to integrate into the conscious and active proletariat its most dispersed and often poorest layers, and to overcome the institutional barriers to participation in all aspects of society.

Responding to Democratic Aspirations

One of the key components of the struggle for winning the masses to socialist revolution consists of responding to their democratic aspirations, of expressing them adequately and thus counteracting the strenuous efforts of the reformists to co-opt the struggle for democratic demands and divert it into the blind alley of bourgeois parliamentary institutions.

Only by the fullest freedom to form parties and organisations, and tendencies and factions within parties, to participate creatively and collectively in the fullest sense in all aspects of society and to organise can socialist democracy flourish.

If revolutionary Marxists leave the slightest impression that under the dictatorship of the proletariat the political freedoms of the workers will be narrower than under bour-

geois democracy - including the freedom to criticise the government, to have opposition parties and an opposition press - then the struggle to overcome the propagators of parliamentary illusions will be incommensurably more difficult.

Dangers of Bureaucratisation

However the danger of bureaucratisation is not inherent only in political parties. Its roots lie in the existence of the state as a professional organ of power, in the living and working conditions of the working class and in the effects of the division of labour in the workers movement. Trade unions and associations are no less exposed to this danger than parties. The only way to control and progressively reduce the risks of bureaucratisation is through a consistent and sustained activity by the rank and file, encouraged by internal democracy at all levels of all organisations, trying to combat the social, gender and cultural inequalities in their ranks and also to draw the lessons of historical experience. This can only be done with education and a collective practice that increases awareness and participation, a growing and continuous activity of members without which internal democracy remains largely fictitious, and assimilation of the lessons of historical experience, notably in the domain of institutional guarantees for workers democracy.

From the benefit of drawing such historical lessons we can see that the bureaucratic degeneration of the soviets in the 1920's and 30's while the product of objective social contradictions and international isolation was impacted upon by the policy mistakes of the Bolsheviks. Most notable of these was the banning of the soviet parties, the outlawing of factions, continuation of war communism beyond 1920 and its accompanying 'red terror' and the creation of the Cheka.

Rosa Luxemburg was quite right when she warned the Bolshevik leaders:

"But with the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the soviets must also become more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which the bureaucracy remains as the active element.

"But socialist democracy is not something that only belongs in the promised land after the foundations of socialist democracy are created: it does not come as a sort of Christmas present for the worthy people who in the interim have loyally supported a handful of socialist dictators. Socialist democracy begins simultaneously with the beginnings of destruction of class rule and of the construction of socialism. It begins at the very moment of the seizure of power by the socialist party. It is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, Pathfinder Press).

In conclusion, if we accept that the central socialist value is the idea of sharing, and that the distinctive socialist forms of the idea of sharing are the links of popular democracy and common ownership, i.e. sharing our decisions and livelihoods, then to move on to real sharing in all the decisions that affect our lives, not by some all purpose mandate to others but by direct participation and by accountable delegation is the historic task of socialist democracy.

The Origins of Bourgeois Democracy

by Tony Dewberry

Capitalist ideologues tell us that with the collapse of the Soviet Bloc all hopes for a socialist transformation of society are finished and that we have reached the end of history with the world wide victory of 'liberal democracy'. Everyone now pays lip service to the value of representative government with personal liberty and human rights. Democracy is such a powerful icon that it seems a little blasphemous to point to its class limitations, as socialists do when we describe the present political system as one of bourgeois or capitalist democracy. Surely, if we vote our governments in and out of office, then society is governed by the people as a whole and not any one class?

Marxists, however, have always argued that systems of government have a class basis, even those with electoral representative institutions. The simplest example is ancient Athens which was governed democratically but where the vote was limited to the minority of male citizens, leaving out women, slaves and foreigners. What was a democracy for the rulers was a dictatorship for the ruled. Our situation is of course more complex, our system has a very wide voting franchise and basic human rights are guaranteed in most capitalist constitutions. So, why 'bourgeois' democracy, why do socialists insist on the class limitations of a system that claims to draw the whole population into the political process?

The first sense in which this system is bourgeois is historical. Modern nation states and their representative institutions first began to take shape in that long process of war and revolution that began around the seventeenth century and coincided with the rise of the capitalist class as the dominant economic class. This period of revolutionary crisis was the culmination of an even longer process of the spread of commercial, capitalist, relations throughout the industry and agriculture of the feudal order, with the spread of a money economy in place of the so called natural economy of feudalism.

Under feudalism a military aristocracy directly appropriated the wealth produced by the peasantry, goods and services were taken by force from the peasantry and the process was unmediated through any market transaction involving money. (The 'natural economy' never appeared they could). The peasants, who rebelled against it whenever they could. A pure form of this kind of feudalism may never have existed; trade and money always played some kind of role in production even in the so called 'Dark Ages'. However, this role was for many hundreds of years very weak in Europe.

As the importance of trade gradually increased so did the importance of the townspeople involved in trade and skilled artisan work; these were the forerunners of the modern capitalist class. When the plunder from the 'New World' and Africa starting rolling into Europe around the fifteenth century this class was immensely enriched and their economic power challenged the existing political arrangements. A period of revolutionary upheaval began, which included the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain, the English Civil War, the American War of Independence, The French Revolution, the European Revolutions of 1848 and the American Civil War.

It was once the accepted wisdom to link the rise of the bourgeoisie with political revolution, but this is now terribly unfashionable; the revolutionary origins of modern forms of government are not something that the capitalists of our day care to dwell on. The tendency nowadays is to deny the class nature of these revolts and especially to denigrate the term 'bourgeois revolution'. This is done by emphasising the non-bourgeois nature of many of the social forces involved. And study of these events does show that many non-bourgeois forces played important roles. If there is a common pattern to these revolutions, it is that a wide coalition of social forces moved against the old order and that this coalition fractured and lost its more conservative components as the revolution resorted to ever more radical measures. It should come as no surprise that one of the first groups to lose heart and seek accommodation with the old order was the really wealthy element of the capitalist class. Capitalist revolutions, it seems, resemble capitalist wars in that not many capitalists actually fight and die.

But Marxists never claimed that these revolutions were willed or planned by the capitalists, merely that the revolutionary crisis was created by the objective development of capitalist relations. As the British marxist historian Christopher Hill said, when writing of the English Revolution of the 1640s:

"The English Revolution, like all revolutions, was caused by the breakdown of the old society; it was brought about neither by the wishes of the bourgeoisie, nor by the leaders of the Long Parliament. But its outcome was the establishment of conditions more favourable for the development of capitalism than those which prevailed before 1640 ... this outcome, and the Revolution itself, were made possible by the fact that there had already been considerable development of capitalist relations in England, but that it was the structures, fractures and pressures of the society rather than the wishes of leaders, which shaped the state which emerged from it ... The outcome of the Revolution was something which none of the activists had willed".

If there is another pattern to these revolts, it is that once the forces of the common people had pushed the capitalists further than they wished to go, there was a reaction against the most radical measures of the revolution and victory went to the capitalist class. Struggles which began as a fight by the whole people against feudal oppression ended with the rule of the capitalist class: feudal exploitation was replaced by capitalist exploitation. In the 'democracies' that emerged voting rights were based on very severe property qualifications.

This process was shown very clearly in the English Civil War. The most revolutionary group, the Levellers, put forward what was, for the time, a very radical democratic program. In their manifesto 'The Agreement of the People' they called for the vote for all heads of households (recall that unfortunately the gender limitations on their concept of emancipation), a militia to replace the standing army, annual parliaments (with a ban on sitting in two consecutive parliaments), a taxation system based on personal wealth,

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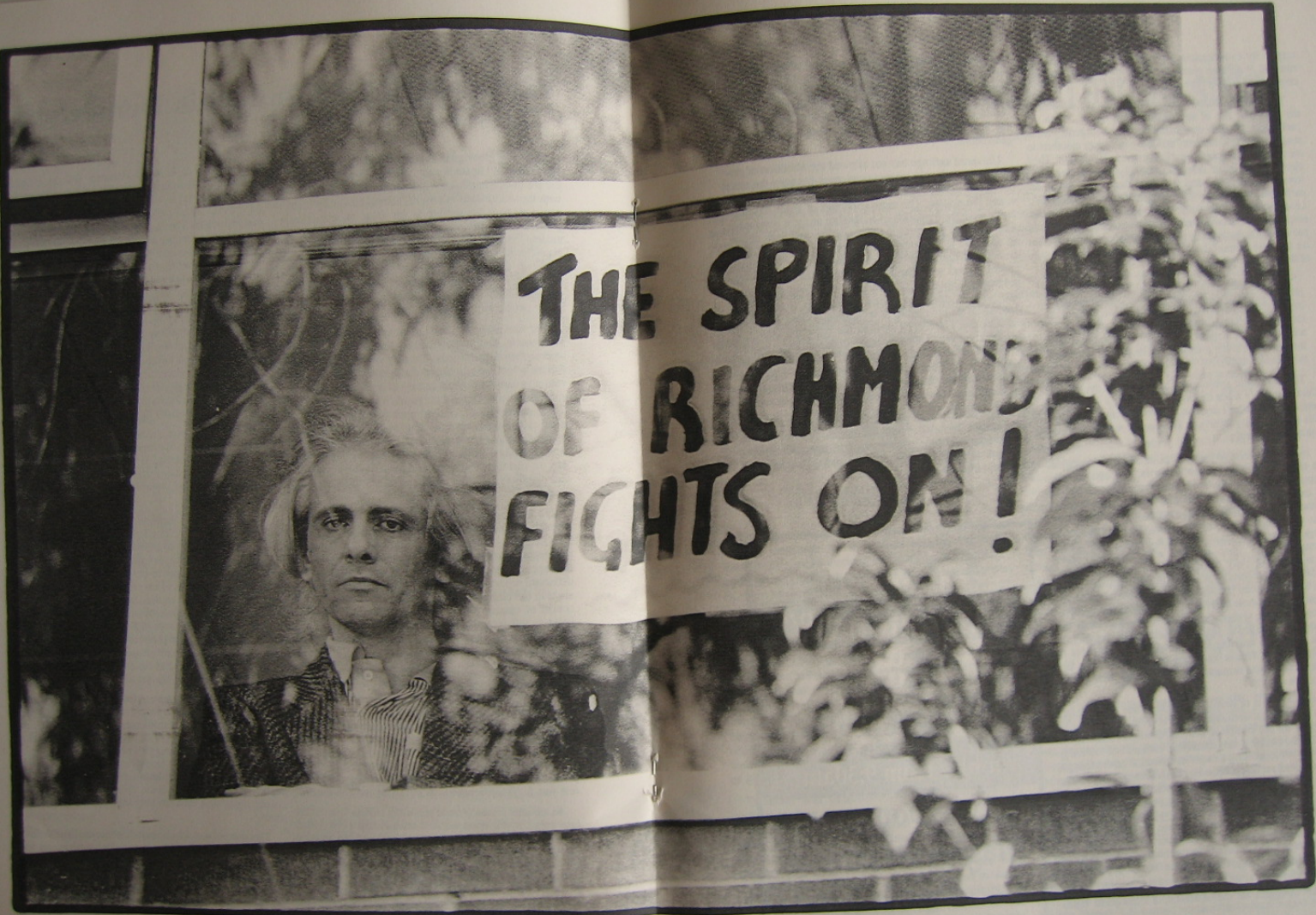
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respect for conscientious objection to military service, the removal of all laws restricting freedom of religion and the abolition of all privilege.

The Levellers had a strong influence on the thinking of the rank and file of the parliamentary army. When the parliament, by then dominated by truly bourgeois forces, sought to disband the army and leave its former members to the mercies of a counter-revolution, the army rebelled. They elected councils of delegates (called agitators) and confronted their officers and told them they would march on parliament 'with their commanding officers or against them'. Leaders such as Oliver Cromwell had to acquiesce in the revolt. Parliament was forced to back down but the rebellion provoked a huge political debate in the army. In this debate the Leveller Colonel Rainsborough put forward the demand of the common people for a say in their government:

"For really I think that the poorest be that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest be; and therefore truly, Sir, I think it's clear that every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government; and I do think that the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that government that he hath not had a voice to put himself under".

The other side spoke more honestly than the capitalist class of our day when Cromwell's son-in-law Henry Ireton replied "If you admit any man that hath a breath and being ... this will destroy property ... Why may not those men vote against all property?"

In Ireton's question was the idea that haunted the capitalist class for the next three centuries, and once its own domination of the state was assured it fought tooth and nail to exclude other classes and to protect private property. Although what capitalists came to mean by 'private property' was the rule of capital. They showed no respect for the property rights of small craftsmen, farmers or the indigenous peoples of their colonies, who were all in one way or another ruthlessly dispossessed. In fact these various violations of property rights of the poorer classes of Europe and the indigenous peoples of the world were essential to capitalism. Its whole basis is the use of capital to exploit the labour of those without means of subsistence other than selling their ability to work. Beneath all the humbug, the right to exploit remains the most inviolable right for the capitalist class. This is what they are talking about in their current privatising crusade with their slogan 'free markets and a free society'.

All extensions of democratic rights since the establishment of capitalist dominance have been the result of mass struggles by the exploited and dispossessed. Since its inception the socialist movement has been part of this struggle. As well as making a major contribution to the struggle for universal suffrage, socialists have been in the forefront of all movements to extend democratic rights, such as freedom of association, freedom of the press and freedom of speech. These struggles were necessary because it is quite simply a lie that free markets and a free society are two sides of the one coin. It should be remembered that America was a democratic republic for nearly one hundred years before it abolished slavery; can freedom and a free market in human beings co-exist?

Many struggles for the extension of democratic rights

have succeeded and yet Ireton's fear that private property would be destroyed has not been borne out. In fact not only has private property survived but the share of wealth going to the workers remains remarkably constant over a long period. Indeed recently the capitalist class all over the world has been reclaiming public sector wealth built up over generations.

Universal suffrage has not allowed the abolition of private property by the propertyless mass because the state developed to neutralise every democratic advance made within the system. The most important of these developments were the formation of a standing army, a permanent administrative bureaucracy and a judiciary and body of law all dedicated to the preservation of private property. These elements comprise the modern capitalist state, and much greater powers are concentrated in that state than in the governments we elect. Governments come and go, but the state with its structures of power stands as a permanent guardian of the dominance of the capitalist class. So, while the franchise extends far beyond the capitalist class this remains a bourgeois system because one cannot move beyond private property using the system. In this sense the adjective 'bourgeois' describes the limits of democracy. Within the limits of bourgeois democracy a party may take office, but a new social class can never take power.

It is the limitations of capitalist democracy that socialists fight against. We seek to push democratic practice beyond parliamentary elections into every facet of daily life including economic activity. Genuinely democratic social control of economic life is the basis of socialism.

4 - day - long
"Richmond 8"
Trial
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Ten years after the British miners' strike

Report from John Tully

Nine years ago this week (16/3/94) Britain's miners returned to work after a strike which had lasted a year and a day. Miners in many pits went back behind their union banners to the strains of their colliery bands. But they had forced no concessions from the government and the return to work was a disaster for the miners and the labour movement as a whole.

The strike was called to fight pit closures and redundancies. Arthur Scargill, the militant president of the National Union of Mineworkers, the NUM, claimed that unless the miners stood firm, their industry would be decimated. Scargill has been proved right a thousand times over. Today, the industry is a ghost of what it was. Before the strike there were over 190,000 mineworkers in some 170 pits. Today a mere 11,000 work at 17 and the vultures of privatisation are circling the rich pickings of the remaining super pits.

"Carrying coal to Newcastle"

"Carrying coal to Newcastle" is a byword in the English language for a useless activity. Yet today there are no more working collieries on the Northumberland and Durham coalfield. Even the world-famous Durham Miners' Gala, a festival of working class solidarity since the 1880s, will probably cease after this year.

The scale of the disaster almost beggars belief. Although the Tory government prattles on about "competition" and "market forces" as reasons for the closures, the facts speak otherwise. Quite simply, the industry has been shattered because of the class hatred of Margaret Thatcher and her successors. The Tories have long memories. They know that in 1974 a national strike of miners resulted in significant gains for the NUM, and led to the downfall of the Tory government of Edward Heath.

Thatcher was determined to crush what she described as "the enemy within", that is the NUM, the cornerstone of the British labour movement. After installing the ruthless Ian MacGregor as chairman of the National Coal Board, she deliberately provoked the national strike of 1984-85. The details of the Tory blueprint for victory existed before the walkoff in March '84. Vast amounts of coal had been stockpiled at power stations; supplies of foreign coal had been lined up; and the police and army were on alert to spring into action to smash the mass pickets which had been so

effective in the 1974 strike.

Thatcher also banked - correctly it turned out - on the cowardice of the official leadership of the TUC and the Labour Party. She foresaw that these useless articles would not dare to go against Tory legislation which forebade solidarity action.

A backward section of miners on the Nottinghamshire coalfield refused to strike and scabbed throughout the dispute, setting up a yellow union with government support. Yet, despite it all, the NUM almost won when NACODS, the union of colliery foreman voted 83% in favour of strike action. This would have closed even the scab pits. Thatcher lied to the foremen, promising that their jobs and pits were secure and they backed away from industrial action, a decision which they bitterly regret today.

In the end, abandoned by the TUC, the miners were starved back to work. Seven hundred miners were blacklisted and never went back down the mines. Pits were closed in their scores. The workings filled with water. The surface works were blown up. The pit villages died. For the majority of miners the closures have meant unemployment for life. Others work in unskilled jobs for a fraction of their former earnings. Last year in South Wales the rate of fatal accidents in mines rose by 250% as a result of "deregulation" of safety and privatisation: a return to the bad old days which preceded nationalisation. Even the scabs of the yellow union have not been spared.

"the enemy within"

But the government has not been idle. New power stations have been opened, fuelled either by gas or uranium. Both options are more expensive than coal-fired plants; natural gas stocks will last nowhere near as long as the country's coal reserves; and the privately-owned nuclear power industry has received more than one billion pounds in subsidies. These facts underline the fact that the decision to close the pits was political; an act of class hatred and revenge overriding even the profit motive in the industry.

There will be some rewards for the would-be coalowners however. Ian MacGregor, who was Thatcher's hatchet person in the National Coal Board during the strike, now has a new job. He is acting for a private, largely US-owned consortium which hopes to snap up the remaining pits at knockdown prices.

The Struggle for Peace in Ireland

by Micheal Heaney

The Irish Republican Army's 72 hour unilateral ceasefire which concluded on midnight 8 April was a breakthrough in the Irish peace process.

Contrary to the public announcements of the Irish and British governments, as well as virtually all politicians in the 26 Counties (Irish Republic), the ceasefire has achieved what the last four months of British and Irish government negotiations has not, i.e., a tangible sign of a commitment to peace.

When looking at the process for peace in Ireland, it has to be remembered that the Downing Street Declaration was released in response to the Hume/Adams Agreement that

was released on September 25 last year. This Agreement by the two Nationalist parties in the Six Counties (Northern Ireland), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and Sinn Fein, united for the first time the whole of the Nationalist community in the North over the issue of peace and reunification of the country.

The Agreement set off a wide and enthusiastic response throughout Nationalist Ireland. The Irish Peace Initiative, which was formed as a result of the Hume/Adams Agreement, caught both the Irish and British governments off guard.

In response, the two governments stitched up a document

Behind the Green Curtain

The month of February saw a marked rise in Loyalist attacks against the Nationalist community in Northern Ireland. No other political party in Ireland has to endure the level of violence that Sinn Fein has recently faced. Connolly House, Sinn Fein's Belfast headquarters in Andersonstown, came under attack by Loyalist death squads three times in the space of eleven days during February.

On the 7th February, a grenade attached to a tripwire was left at the front gate of Connolly House. It was fastened to a branch with British Army issue handcuffs. Witnesses reported seeing a British Army patrol at the gate shortly before the bomb was discovered.

On the 12th February, 11 am on a busy Saturday morning, the facade of the building was damaged. Luckily, there were no casualties. Following the UDA attack, Sinn Fein Councillor, Joe Austin, was arrested by the RUC when he tried to approach his party members assembled outside Connolly House to get information on the attack.

Less than a week later, on the 18th, the Ulster Freedom Fighters attacked Connolly House. This time three workers were injured, one seriously, as the UFF fired through the wrought iron gates at the front of the building. The workers, who had been repairing damage done in the previous attacks, fled at the sound of the first shots. It was their quick reactions that undoubtedly saved their lives.

A woman who was almost shot in the Connolly House attack, told *Republican News*:

"I was going to the advice centre to get Sinn Fein to deal with a housing complaint for me. I had just entered the gate when the shooting started. I didn't know

what to do, so I just ran. There were about 10 or 11 shots fired. It sounded as if two or three shots were fired, then a pause for a second or two, then a bigger burst of shooting.

"I ran towards the building, but everything happened so quickly that I think the shooting finished before I got to the door. Someone shouted, 'is there anybody hit'. At first there was no reply, then someone, a man, answered. He said there were two shot, two of the workers.

"The third man who was shot wounded in the leg and the arm, but, he didn't seem to know he was hit except on the ankle. He kept going as if nothing was wrong with him. He ran to the fellow who was most seriously hurt. He was hit in the stomach or side as well as the leg. He was white as a sheet and you could almost see the colour draining from him.

"I heard somebody saying that the peelers and Brits were on the road just minutes before the attack and that the traffic was really heavy, but the Loyalists just ran across the road from the getaway car with a machine gun up his coat, done the shooting, and ran back again and drove off down the Riverdale and away.

"I don't know how I am still alive. I was right at the gate when the shooting started and the envelope I had under my arm was hit with a bullet. It just missed me. I'm lucky to be alive".

The same morning of the third attack on Connolly House, West Belfast experienced a heavier than usual presence of the British Army. Army patrols were being dropped from helicopters into the Lenadoon and Poleglass areas, which are adjoining suburbs to

and called it the Downing Street Declaration. The Declaration advocates nothing new. It recommends no change to the 1921 Government of Ireland Act which is at the heart of the problem in achieving peace. The Act enshrines the Loyalist veto over the Six Counties. As long as the majority of the people in the North vote to stay in Britain, the British stay. The veto has been enforced by massive discrimination in housing, government services and employment against the Nationalist people, as well as blatant gerrymandering.

The Hume/Adams Agreement advocates a vote on reunification across the whole 32 Counties of Ireland, but the Downing Street Declaration does allow for the first time, the opportunity for Sinn Fein to join the "Forum For Peace and Reconciliation", the official body for the peace talks, if the Party renounces the armed struggle. The first step being a three month ceasefire.

It is enough for the British Government when Gerry Adams, on behalf of the Republican movement, states their desire to "take the gun out of Irish politics forever". What John Major wants is a total capitulation by the I.R.A.

Andersonstown, where Connolly House is situated.

In the same month members of the moderate Nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party came under attack from Loyalist death squads. The son of an SDLP election candidate was shot and wounded on the 11th February. While another SDLP member narrowly missed a bomb attack in South Antrim on the following day.

The Culturliann, a community and cultural centre on Belfast's Falls Road was hit by a Loyalist bomb attack on the 9th February. The Culturliann provides accommodation for two Irish language schools, as well as a café, art gallery, production rooms, a recording studio, a theatre, together with the office of the West Belfast Festival Committee.

The bomb exploded outside the building while 33 people representing youth, community and disabled groups were meeting inside to discuss plans for this year's West Belfast Festival. Slight damage was done to a parked car and a nearby house lost it's windows when the bomb went off.

The Festival meeting had been well advertised in the local press. The Loyalist murder gang - the Ulster Freedom Fighters - claimed responsibility for the attack. In their statement to the press, the UFF said that they had planted the bomb to target Republicans attending a meeting to prepare for the annual Provo Week.

Festival organiser, Deirdre McManus responded:

"The West Belfast Festival is a registered charity with people from many different areas of the city taking part in organising it. The meeting continued despite the bomb attack.

Major's intransigent position of "no talks with terrorists" is laughable when his government has conducted numerous secret meetings with the Republican movement during 1993.

The effect of the 72-hour ceasefire is that it has thrown pressure to compromise for peace back on to the signatories of the Declaration. Already division between the two governments are starting to appear.

Shortly after the IRA announced its plans for a ceasefire, Albert Reynolds described it as "a small step in the right direction". Major's response was to call it a "cynical exercise". But achieving peace in Ireland might be the only issue that saves the Major Government. Already facing a leadership challenge and a potential disaster at the next elections, Major will have to look beyond the Unionist bloc in Westminster if he wished to save his political skin.

Amnesty International Report on Political Killings

The release of two reports in February on the role of the British security forces in the Six Counties, is a timely reminder of what is really for a great majority in the North of Ireland today. It also shows the one-sidedness of Britain's demand for a 3-month I.R.A. ceasefire.

In a special report entitled "Political Killings in Northern Ireland", Amnesty International highlights its investigation into the allegations of a British "shoot-to-kill" policy in the Six Counties. While focussing on the growing evidence of collusion between the British forces and Loyalist death squads.

In both instances, Amnesty International remains unconvicted by British government statements that such a policy does or did not exist because such statements are not supported by evidence of an official British will to investigate fully and impartially each incident. Nor has the British government shown any interest to introduce relevant legislation in line with international standards, or even to make the facts publicly known or bring perpetrators to justice.

On this last point, Amnesty International presents figures to show the political bias of the British security forces and judicial system. Between 1969 and November 1993, around 350 people have been acknowledged as having been killed by the British Army. About half of the victims were unarmed, most were Nationalists, and the vast majority were killed in disputed circumstances.

Yet, as Amnesty points out, despite this, between 1969 and 1991 only 21 members of the British forces were prosecuted for killings using firearms while on duty in the Six Counties. 19 were found not guilty, one was convicted of manslaughter and given a suspended sentence, only one was convicted of murder, but although given a life sentence, he was released after serving only two years and three months and reinstated in the British Army!

Bending Under the Strain

Below is an excerpt from "Bending Under the Strain", a report highlighting the cuts to non-government human service agencies in the Inner Melbourne Region, prepared by Kate Dempsey for the Human Services Managers Group of the Inner Metropolitan Regional Association.

The sections printed look at the way changes and cutbacks in one place have an impact across a range of areas and spread out like ripples in a pond, and how the State Government's emphasis on the level of public debt has led Government Departments and other agencies into a frenzy of cost cutting and 'belt tightening'.

All agencies interviewed said demand for their services was up, due to the recession and to cuts and changes to other services, but for all, funding levels were down. Many services felt they had been cut without logic, often without negotiation and sometimes without consultation. Yet at the same time as being cut, they were expected to take on more. For some, more insidious than direct funding cuts were attacks on their service philosophy by funding departments demanding changes to the way they do their work or the groups they deal with. Preventative and locally focused programs are just not a priority these days.

With the introduction of new 'mega' regions, a 100-year community of interest amongst services in the inner suburbs has been wiped out and the idea of keeping families together in their local communities has been lost in the process. Costs have gone up, schools have closed, services are cutting back and the atmosphere of restraint and debt reduction has permeated every aspect of the lives of low income families in the inner suburbs. The language of the day sanctions any groups which deal with the public to curb spending, tighten their belts, reduce overheads and deal only with 'genuine cases'.

The climate of cutbacks has left people in the inner city areas reeling and the long term impact of all the cuts and changes can only be guessed. There may be savings in the short term, but in the long term the costs to the whole community are likely to be high.

The closure of Ardoch secondary school is an example of the far-reaching and perhaps unanticipated results of government cuts to services. The closure of Ardoch has meant more young people on the dole, more early school leavers with little prospect of work.

School closures may appear to save the Government money now, but they have an impact on the community, and the cost is very high. School closures and State Government cutbacks have the effect of tentacles, spreading out costs into the community.

Ardoch's closure has meant public complaints to local government about gangs of youth causing trouble around the railway station. It has meant that Prahran Secondary College spends time trying to connect its ex-students with welfare groups and protect the younger ones (under 16 years) from harm.

According to locals, the new mix of students at Prahran Secondary, coming from Ardoch and from Richmond Secondary (another inner city school also closed) has created an explosive situation amongst rival gangs of teenagers. Violence has escalated since the school closures, both at school and around the public housing estates.

These school closures have put greater stress on the police and other welfare services such as South-Port Youth Services and the Salvation Army Crisis Centre who themselves face funding shortages.

Not only does a school closure have many unanticipated costs to the community now, but what of the future. What are the long term effects of these cuts to vital services for people in the inner city areas? What permanent damage has been done to the lives of the young people whose school has been closed? Will the cost savings now be far outweighed by the long term cost of salvaging damaged young lives?

Rural Connections

Changes and cuts to services in one community can also have far reaching effects in other communities. Info-Deli in Flinders Street which provides assistance to young homeless people says, more teenagers are drifting to the city and St. Kilda because, they say, welfare workers can't help them locally.

Prahran Mission relies heavily on the generosity of Uniting Church parishes in country Victoria. These parishes raise money and collect food and material goods for Prahran Mission to give to the poor of the inner city.

But rural parishes have themselves suffered from the recession and from cuts by the State Government and now that many country train services have been cut, Prahran Mission has found that its donations are well below target from parishes beyond the train lines. It's just too difficult to get the food parcels down to Melbourne without the train.

So, cuts to country rail services have an unexpected result for the poor of the inner city areas. But that's not all. Cuts and tough new government policies have many unexpected and unaccounted for impacts on services trying to help the needy, such as Kensington Womens Group.

Hit From All Sides

Kensington Womens Group is a small neighbourhood house offering a number of recreational, educational and community development activities for the local community. It receives small grants from both State and Federal Government for its various programs and it works in co-operation with other local groups to provide its services.

It has been hard hit by government changes and suffered 'invisible' losses due to cuts and changes in other services. It lost a Vietnamese worker previously funded by the State Government. It lost \$2,500 for educational programs because Adult Education (part of the State Education Ministry) felt the climate was right to redistribute its funds to other areas. It lost \$4,800 for literacy programs because the Commonwealth now distributes this money through DEET (Department of Employment, Education and Training) who prefer larger and more established groups to operate literacy programs.

Less easy to quantify are the losses due to other organisations tightening their belts because of their own cuts. Kensington Womens Group used to work co-operatively with the local Community Health Service, but these days their help costs money.

The Community Health Service used to provide a leader for the 'walking group', they used to 'loan' their Turkish and Asian worker to help out with the womens groups, their bus could be borrowed for outings - now it costs 30 cents per kilometer and to use their photocopying machine is 20 cents per page.

A Community Divided

Local government amalgamations have taken their toll on Kensington Womens Group too. The Group used to be part of the City of Melbourne, but now Kensington is divided and the Womens Group falls into the newly expanded City of Essendon: It is three doors down from the new boundary and although it is now technically in Essendon, 90% of its high rise estate participants live in Melbourne.

The City of Melbourne took advantage of this change and although \$11,000 was promised by Council for 1994, only half the money was sent and Kensington Womens Group was told to ask Essendon Council for the rest!

But as Carolyn Fuller from Kensington Womens Group says, "We know this presents a dilemma for Essendon Council as most of our participants live in Melbourne."

Similarly, Share Care used to work in Collingwood, Richmond and Fitzroy and was partly funded by these local governments, but will those three Councils still provide funds now that Share Care has to cover all of the Northern Region and will they still exist in the same form themselves in future? Share Care reports that already Fitzroy Council has eager to prove its efficiency to the State Government, has cut 8% of its budget for community groups and has agreed to fund Share Care for one year only.

Everywhere boundaries are changing and relationships lost and broken. Many agencies tell of co-operative arrangements between services split because of boundary changes or stricter policy guidelines. Many tell of previously good relationships with officials from funding departments now in ruins because of the changes.

The pace at which cuts and changes were introduced has left most groups reeling and they report that workers in the bureaucracy themselves can't keep pace; many have taken retrenchment packages or been promoted or shifted to work in new areas. With the amalgamation of the Health and Community Services Departments, "the ground rules keep changing" for non-government groups.

The Climate Has Changed

The State Government and its emphasis on the level of public debt has led Government Departments and other agencies into a frenzy of cost cutting and 'belt tightening'. It seems a new climate of toughness has emerged which worries human service agencies in the inner urban areas.

Frank Giggins from Prahran Mission says, "A utility (Gas or SEC) debt could be negotiated last year, now there is an unwillingness to consider people's hardship. Tightening of operating procedures at the SEC has an impact on people's lives".

For Jim and Margaret, Jim's casual work assembling light globes from home is what saves the family from asking for food vouchers. Jim has been doing this work reliably for three years and has declared it to both the State Housing Department and Social Security. Now, Jim says for some reason, the Housing Department is classifying his work as a home business and is threatening to evict him if he continues. Jim doesn't understand why, after three years his work is now a problem to the Housing Department.

At the same time Jim says, the Housing Department has cut down on its maintenance program and it is almost impossible to get repairs done on the high rise estates. "Just when the buildings are getting too old to stay up anymore, that's when you can't get any maintenance".

Integration, a Right or a Privilege?

These experiences are repeated in most human service agencies. The Disability Resources Centre (DRC) reports that its referrals for advocacy have increased in the past 12 months. Disabled people are complaining that they aren't treated fairly anymore by services and agencies that used to handle their needs without difficulty.

Services provided by local government are a prime example. Home help is becoming difficult to access and in one case, the local Community Health Service agreed to provide extra assistance for a disabled person, but was then, itself, amalgamated and declined to assist. As workers from

DRC put it, "The climate these days has allowed people everywhere to toughen up, even in non-government organisations and where cuts aren't happening".

The Disability Resource Centre suffered a 55% cut in its state government funding. One full time administration worker lost her job and two full time information workers were cut to half time. Such is their dedication (and the overwhelming need) that they work the remaining hours voluntarily.

They say the problems are growing because integration of disabled people seems to be viewed more as a privilege, not a right in times of fiscal restraint. Clients are telling the service that getting their rights is increasingly difficult. Residential and respite care opportunities are dwindling, higher rents are being asked in group homes, managers have greater control of a disabled person's finances, there is less support available for those wishing to live independently.

Inevitably, with a huge cut in funding and an increased demand on the service something has to give. DRC and other human service agencies reluctantly acknowledge that there is a growing tendency to make hard decisions about just who can be helped and who can't.

The DRC will match its resources to people "who are really in a bad way". The Salvation Army also noted with concern that clients tell them that agencies are making judgements about who is the most needy and deserving. Many agencies now require an appointment to be made and won't assist people who simply walk in without one. Paul McDonald from the Salvation Army says, "Agencies are in a bind and can tend to take it out on service users".

All services interviewed said they aimed to help the most needy and would still do so, despite government cuts. But they found with tough cost efficiency measures like 'through put' and 'outcome' pressures from funders, it is increasingly challenging to maintain their service philosophy.

Services are performing with further threats hanging over their heads. As one service says, "There are strong indications that if we don't meet their [State Government] targets, we will get further cuts". Another service points out the costs of additional accountability now required, "We are constantly justifying our work. Case management and unit costing costs more to implement, not less and we have to absorb the administration costs".

Our Values are being Hijacked

Agencies agree that accountability is important, but they argue that increased methods of accountability cannot be introduced at the same time as funding cuts have to be absorbed.

Frank Giggins from Prahran Mission feels, "The philosophy that drives human services is about people, not economics and yet we have to play their game to get funds to do our job. Agencies do need to be more accountable, but the underlying values of our services are being hijacked".

At Kensington Womens Group, the feeling is the same, "We still service the most needy, we refuse to change to fit government guidelines. Our people need us even though it would make life easier for us not to bother with them".

Dealing with the Crunch End

At South-Port Youth Services they argue that, "Services need to change, to adapt to changing needs and times, but changes should be client driven, not bureaucrat driven". The service is trying to maintain its preventative focus, although Government is more interested in its statutory clients. "Government doesn't see the need for preventative services, it only wants to deal with the crunch end".

Similarly, Share Care notes the State Government focus on child protection, not planned respite. But this is a shortsighted approach since "All of our caseload is vulnerable families, virtually all have had some contact with the Department". If they are not assisted they will end up on the Government's statutory list; they will become 'crunch end' victims.

Many services noted with alarm, this emphasis on direct service to Government's statutory clients, with little emphasis on preventative programs, planning for future needs or research.

Tendering of Government Services

With compulsory competitive tendering of local government services and tendering of human services to non government agencies, local government and other agencies become "paid instruments of government rather than partners" according to Vera Boston of St. Kilda Council. She worries that tendering out of services to the lowest bidder may become the way in future, leading to poor quality services.

Prahran Mission also has concerns about tendering for government projects. "Tendering hides the real cost of a service, there is a dilemma about whether to compete for the work and absorb the extra costs or not pick it up at all".

Competitive tendering also inhibits innovative and creative solutions to welfare problems. Frank Giggins of Prahran Mission says, "Innovative community enterprise ideas are just not encouraged these days".

Many agencies said they will be looking to private trusts to maintain funding for their innovative and preventative programs. But the private trusts have indicated that they do not wish to fund programs which have been chopped by government, so agencies have to think of new ways to achieve their aims. As Paul McDonald from the Salvation Army says, "Trust funding will collapse under the strain put on it".

Finding funds from new sources is something that all

agencies try, but in the inner urban suburbs fund raising is a difficult and time consuming process often, for little return.

Caroline Fuller from Kensington Womens Group, highlights the problem: Ten Vietnamese women who attend one of her classes, decided to make and sell Spring Rolls to raise money to keep their class going after funding was withdrawn. They worked for many hours and sold their wares in the main street. They made a total of \$72. As Caroline says, "How many Spring Rolls would we have to sell to keep a class going...we just cannot fundraise here because the people have no money".

The Effect of Public Service Cutbacks

The Salvation Army reports that although the Government has taken on mandatory reporting of child abuse, it does not have the resources to cope with the demand. Paul McDonald from the Army, says "The Department can't keep up, we ring with a drug related protective matter, but they are only interested in cases of sexual abuse".

Two agencies in the inner suburbs indicated that cutbacks in the Department of Health and Community Services have led to problems for their service. "They are really screwing up adolescent services; they are not filling vacancies, transferring staff and not allocating kids to social workers". Sometimes these services say, they can't get hold of a social worker for days...."they are overworked and just don't return calls for days".

Opportunities

Services in the inner Melbourne area have been cut drastically and for many the changes have been too great and too fast to absorb, but for some, perhaps just a few, opportunities to adapt and serve people of the region are still presenting themselves.

The Community Health Centres of Collingwood, Carlton and Fitzroy have lost 50% of their funds (\$1.2 million between them) and were forced to amalgamate. North Richmond Community Health Service is however still active and confident, arguing that despite government cuts and changes, opportunities still exist for services to operate successfully in the inner urban areas.

They have sought sponsorship from Telecom and are auspicing a statewide government program for ethnic health which has in fact increased their total budget. Their clients come from all over Melbourne. "People come to a good service regardless of bureaucratic changes" says Demos Krousos, Chief Executive of the Health Service. North Richmond Community Health Service is not fearful of the future and believes that it is well regarded and will adapt and survive current cuts and changes.

Even Berry Street which had to absorb a 20% cut and alter its focus dramatically, claims "The Government has really thrown us...although the up side is it has forced us to be more creative".

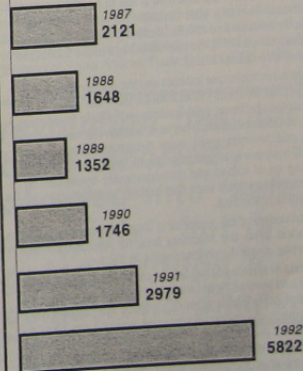
Providing a Lifeline

But on the whole, Human Services in the inner suburbs are struggling to survive and seeing increasing needs all around them. They are willing to adapt, but fear that as push for cost cutting goes on, the needs of the most vulnerable in the inner city areas will be forgotten.

Such is the dedication of these services, that a 20%, 40% or even 50% funding cut does not deter them from trying as well as they can to continue to help those in need in the inner suburbs. In some cases, as with the Disability Resource Centre, this means continuing in your old full time job, but for only half time pay, or for a Berry Street worker, it means taking on four teenage boys as a foster carer in a special arrangement, when the group home they live in is closed down.

These services provide a lifeline for the thousands of service users in the inner Melbourne region and without adequate funding and support, the future looks uncertain and the impact of cutbacks to human services on their lives is likely to be felt for many years to come.

Total Client Contacts of the Emergency Relief Program and Material Aid Service of the Prahran Mission, 1987 - 1992



Apartheid ends - a new Chapter opens

from an article in *Militant International Review* by Peter Taaffe, following a visit to South Africa

The three years that elapsed since the release of Mandela have been used to condition the population to accept that there is 'no alternative' to the path mapped out by Mandela and De Klerk. Negotiations and elections have been pictured by the right wing of the ANC as an 'easier road to liberation'. De Klerk and the National Party, in the sunny optimism which radiated from South Africa in the immediate aftermath of Mandela's release, convinced the whites that the ceding of partial political power to the African majority was the only alternative to a bloody racial civil war and countless victims on both sides.

At the same time, state and Inkhata terror has been unleashed throughout this period as a means of dividing the Africans and forcing greater and greater concessions from the ANC leadership. The violence has exceeded that which resulted from the struggle against apartheid. Since 1990, upwards of 15,000 have perished in the bloody reign of terror which has been unleashed by state forces and Buthelezi's Inkhata impis.

But to little avail. The whip of counter-revolution has merely provoked a massive reaction from below by African workers and a greater determination to prosecute the struggle to the end.

The negotiations have been punctuated by huge general strikes, showing the imminent power of the African working class, for instance, following the Boipatong massacre and the assassination of Chris Hani. Remorseless mass pressure and a spontaneous arming of a section of the workers and the youth have compelled Inkhata to go into retreat. In its home base of Natal it has been evicted from one African township after another. Its strategy of terror has latterly been shifted to Johannesburg and the Transvaal. In the summer of 1993, the rate of killings in the East Rand was five times that of Natal.

There is no doubt that Inkhata and the white right, if they do not get the necessary concessions from the ANC in the run up to the elections, will continue with their murderous tactics. But this will merely serve to harden the mood of the masses and provoke even more determined action from below. If a proper lead had been given by the ANC - above all setting up of armed and democratically controlled defence committees - the state and Inkhata terror would have been nipped in the bud.

An indication of the potential is shown by the comments of a worker from the Mandela area of Alexandra when commenting about the defence units in his area:

"Inkhata is nothing if we are organised and disciplined. We have had several fights with the Inkhata warlords and I have learned over these years of violence that Inkhata does not have much discipline, is scattered everywhere. They do not have clear political aims, but are manipulated by others to perpetrate violence against the masses.

"You have to fight your enemy in a very disciplined manner, at the same time bringing forward to the people an understanding of why this fight is taking place. You're not

there to kill but you're there to bring unity to people. We just want to fight against the criminals and their methods, which is a product of the apartheid regime.

"I'll give you one indication of what a disciplined defence force can achieve. It took place on what we in Alexandra call Black Tuesday. We fought Inkhata for 12 hours at night on this date. The police did absolutely nothing but all along were identifying themselves with the Inkhata warlords. In the previous period we had been burying comrades time and again because the police backed up and defended Inkhata. We were slaughtered time and again, but on Black Tuesday we said we had had enough of this.

"When the Inkhata warlords came on that day we were ready for them in a much more disciplined way than any other formation I have ever seen. We had not been out in exile to train. We were prepared to fight because we had lost so many comrades. Anyway, on this day Inkhata warlords came with the police and a crowd of 200-300 which surrounded our area. We had no chance to escape or to flee anywhere. We had about 500 living in that section, including many women and children, which was surrounded by the Inkhata forces. They attacked at 7:30pm in the evening. We made sure that, number one, people should not run away for that is the best way to expose themselves and shot them. We demanded that everybody should lie down, don't stand up because there is a hail of bullets and anybody could be shot.

"We fought the enemy almost the whole night and the police retreated, leaving the warlords to fight alone. Because we were organised and disciplined we defeated them and Inkhata retreated. We maintained the defence force which acts against criminals in our area".

**"the police
retreated, leaving
the warlords to
fight alone"**

Such incidents could be repeated in practically every township, particularly in the Transvaal/Johannesburg area as well as in Natal. The consequence of this is that the strategy of terror of the state, egged on by De Klerk, has completely failed: This has had very important consequences in the negotiations on the constitution. The constitution does not guarantee representation to whites and other minority groups in local government. The ANC local government head Thuzamile Botha, in the capitalist *Business Day*, "said that whites would have representation even

where they formed a substantial minority". [17 Nov 1993] It is clear that the constitution has been so framed as to leave a substantial number of councils in the hands of whites.

But on the national plane, the National Party was forced to abandon the blocking mechanisms for a future cabinet. In the previous months De Klerk had been boasting that it would need two-thirds or even 75% agreement within a new cabinet for decisions to go through. Twelve months ago such an arrangement would probably have been acceded to by the ANC leadership. But under mass pressure, they have been compelled to harden their demands. An agreement has now been reached which in theory concedes 'majority rule' within the cabinet. Decisions will be adopted on the basis of a clear majority.

**the ANC leadership
is increasingly
seen as the
bourgeois wing**

The only reason that there will not be untrammelled majority rule now is that the ANC leadership, in advance of the elections, and irrespective of any majority that they might receive, have agreed to enter a five-year power-sharing government. They have accepted that every party which receives 5% of the vote can have a cabinet minister. This has been done to allegedly keep the civil service and army tops 'onside'. They have even hinted at an 'amnesty' for the army tops and secret intelligence units which organised the murder and assassinations of liberation leaders.

The demand for the release of all political prisoners receives powerful political support from the African workers. But the heroic fighters, such as Philemon Mauku and those who still languish in Leeuwkoop prison, cannot be put on the same plane as the murderers of Chris Hani, Darby-Lewis and co., or the hired assassins of the apartheid regime. Who is and who is not a political prisoner should be determined by a commission organised through the trade union movement, with representatives of all layers of the population.

By agreeing to enter a coalition, and remaining within the framework of capitalism, the ANC leadership is increasingly seen as the bourgeois wing of the movement. They have systematically jettisoned all the most radical features of the ANC's aims and programme, above all the Freedom Charter, which summed up the aspirations of the South African masses for a new society. ...

David Beresford, writing in *The Guardian* commented "a survey of business leaders in South Africa published yesterday showed that 68% wanted Nelson Mandela to be the country's next president, 32% backed the present FW De Klerk and none supported Chief Buthelezi. The chief was described by 36% as 'power hungry and irrational'."

Commenting on this survey, *Business Day* stated: "This does not mean business has been converted to the ANC/

SACP alliance - far from it. They favour him (Mandela) because his election would be their own best interests ... There were times when it was expedient to kowtow to John Vorster and PW Botha, because they seemed to offer the best chance of a stable business environment".

Explaining why they have switched horses, *Business Day* goes on: "While business and a workers party like ANC may seem natural adversaries, they are widely sought an understanding with each other ... The ANC no longer preaches nationalisation and redistribution, and accepts the basic tenets of free market economics ... business accepts that black majority rule is inevitable and that a new government will have the best chance of producing a stable country if the most popular black leader, Nelson Mandela, is in charge. Businessmen may not like his policies and they may not vote for him, but they realise he is the leader capable of establishing an environment in which they can get on with what they do best: producing the wealth on which the country depends".

Yet, despite the colossal authority of Mandela and all the best efforts of the bourgeois wing of the ANC, they may not be able to apply the brake on the mass movement for very long. Apartheid has bequeathed a disaster to a new government, visible even to the most superficial commentator. ...

The author spoke in Alexandra township to Anna, a domestic worker who works for 12 hours a day looking after elderly whites in the white suburb of Houghton ten minutes away. However, this area might as well be on a different planet, with mile upon mile of the most splendid housing; mansions literally within walking distance of the horrors of Alexandra.

There are up to two million domestic workers in South Africa. There is 50% unemployment and seven million workers living in shacks. Education for African and Coloured children has virtually broken down. These conditions have fuelled the revolutionary fervour of the South African workers. ... In the 1980s, alongside of the series of general strikes, the near-insurrectionary mood of the townships, and the self-arming of at least a section of the workers and youth, we saw also the creation of the mighty Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). ...

**revolution has not
been 'aborted',
diverted into 'safe
channels', but is
going through a
democratic phase.**

This revolution has not been 'aborted', diverted into 'safe channels', but is presently going through a democratic phase. Such periods, when there is a lull or the movement appears to have receded, is an unavoidable phase in any revolution. ...

There is another crucial factor ... The situation in South Africa is developing in the teeth of the worst recession for 60 years. ... This rules out large-scale concessions to the proletariat on a world scale. On the contrary, the capitalists are attempting to snatch back the reforms granted in the post-1945 period. ... Given the colossally aroused expectations of the masses, some reforms will have to be introduced in an attempt to mollify the masses. Action will have to be taken in the field of housing, in education, and above all as far as jobs are concerned.

Action will have to be taken in housing, education, and above all jobs.

Even journals such as *Business Day* have advocated a 'retraining' programme for unemployed township youth. A recent report by the Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG) proposed "massive cash injections into education and training, job creation, housing and health". It also advocated short-term redistribution of land, mainly for the benefit of female members of landless households in rural areas, the acquisition of white farmland saddled by unsustainable levels of debt, and even the nationalisation of some commercial banks and the buying of key stakes in companies on the Johannesburg stock exchange "in order to transfer the ownership of wealth to the majority".

Some concessions can, with the help of international capital, be implemented. The report estimates that a basic health care and nutrition programme could be introduced at a cost of one billion rand (A\$300m) a year which could lead to the creation of 2,000 clinics. A housing programme could also be introduced aiming at the completion of 350,000 homes a year by the end of the decade and a jobs programme for "2.5 million jobs in 12 years". Some concessions, it must be underlined, will be given. But the problems besetting South Africa, of massive unemployment, catastrophic housing and dilapidated education, will remain intractable on a capitalist basis. Even substantial reforms by an ANC government, given the nature of the problems, is like an egg cup being used to empty an ocean.

the illusion that the problems of the masses are being solved

However, it is possible that in the first period the illusion that the problems of the masses are being solved can delay for a short time a movement of the proletariat. After waiting 350 years a certain fund of credit will be granted by the

African workers to what they will perceive as 'their' government. But once it dawns on them that only the slightest dent will be made in the massive problems of the African townships, an inevitable outburst of anger and indignation will take place. Even before an ANC-dominated government has come to power there are rumblings of discontent amongst the youth and a critical attitude towards the ANC leadership among significant layers of the working class. They are already suspicious of the bourgeois wing of the ANC, which more and more distances itself from the working class basis of its organisation.

Developments in Namibia, with riot police deployed by the SWAPO government, have been noted by the South African workers. ... Like COSATU, the Mineworkers of Namibia (NUM) supported SWAPO. Yet it was repaid in November with an attack by SWAPO police on its picket line at the striking Consolidated Diamond Mines. And it is not the first time that repression has been used against the Namibian unions. The police attacked striking brewery workers three years ago, injuring scores.

Former rail worker Andimbu Tolvo ya Tolvo, now Namibia's Mines and Energy Minister, explained such measures by saying that Namibia could not afford a strike, so key was the mining industry. This is the logic of SWAPO's decision to remain within the framework of capitalism. The situation will be no different for an ANC government which accepts capitalism and rests on a capitalist state, although one which will be overwhelmingly Africanised. How long will it be before an ANC government sends police and army units against striking workers or rebellious inhabitants of the African townships? ...

The ANC could become the main instrument of the South African bourgeoisie.

The ANC leaders will undoubtedly attempt to use the presence of others in the cabinet, the National Party etc, as an excuse for not carrying out the demands of the African people. Pressure will therefore grow for an homogeneous ANC government and undoubtedly that will develop at a certain stage. ... The ANC could in the course of time become the main instrument for the political rule of the South African bourgeoisie.

On the other hand an increasingly radicalised working class will seek to cash in its promissory note of a workers' party. The ANC itself could split with the left coming together with COSATU to form such an organisation. Thus the end of apartheid and 350 years of political slavery is not the end for South Africa. On the contrary, it is the beginning of a new chapter which will see the emergence of the powerful and inspirational South African working class under its won colours and challenging for power.

socialist
alliance

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ACTUALLY EXISTING ^{BOURGEOIS} DEMOCRACY

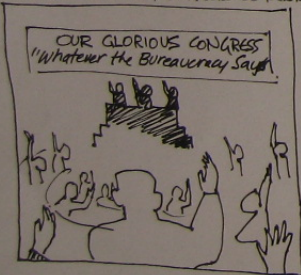


PROPER ^{BOURGEOIS} DEMOCRACY



... AFTER ALL, IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE END OF HISTORY.

ACTUALLY EXISTING WORKERS DEMOCRACY



PROPER WORKERS DEMOCRACY



THE POSSIBILITIES FOR PARTICIPATION ARE ENDLESS...