

The Socialist

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BUSH, HAWKE, GET OUT OF THE GULF!

US KILLS FOR OIL



HE'S FINALLY DONE IT.

George Bush has unleashed his F-18 and Stealth bombers to destroy and burn the cities of Iraq and Kuwait.

The US military expects to kill at least 100,000 Iraqis. They will not be the rich, but the workers whose jobs are in the oil refineries, the airports and other "strategic" facilities the US is reducing to rubble. The dead will be the poor and hungry of the cities who do not have air raid bunkers and homes to shelter in.

George Bush's war is imperialism with its veil torn aside to show the calculated brutality and ruthlessness our rulers are capable of.

Bush says it is a war against aggression.

What hypocrisy! This is just the latest in a long and bloody line of aggressions by the US.

They invaded Panama, Grenada and Vietnam and mined the harbours of Nicaragua.

Nearly two million died as a result of America's attempt to dominate Vietnam. Whole sections of the country were turned into wasteland. To this day the US maintains an economic embargo aimed at crushing the country that refused to bow to its demands.

Hawke and Bush say that Saddam is a danger and has to be stopped.

But they spent eight years backing him in his war against Iran. He got many of his weapons from Western companies.

This is not a war against aggression, but a war for oil.

It is a war to consolidate US control over the world's greatest supply, to entrench the fabulous profits of the oil companies.

And it is a war to re-establish the right and the ability of the US military to intervene wherever they choose.

This is not our war, but the war of our enemies—Hawke, Bush and the ruling classes they represent. It's a war we must stop, using all the means at our disposal.

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Qld. gerry-mander lives on

AFTER AN election campaign dripping with promises of "one vote, one value" and over a year of stalling, the word is out. According to EARC, the ALP's commission for everything controversial, there will still be "weighted votes in remote areas of Queensland". The National party used this conservative base to dominate Queensland politics for 32 years. The Labor Party's policy was for one vote one value. Like a lot of Labor Party policies, this policy has been ditched, in favour of not rocking the boat and maintaining with the existing power structures. by Terry Symonds

The fruit of the Gulf war: racism against Arabs

AS THE deadline for war in the Gulf approached, the incidence of anti-Arab racism in Australia began to climb. It reached the point that the NSW government is considering establishing an Arab-language telephone counselling line for people suffering racial harassment. Moslem women have been a particular target for racial attacks, their (mostly male) attackers engaging in heroic acts like spitting, tripping, verbal abuse, gestures and so on. Wala Zaim, who emigrated from Syria seven years ago, said she and her friends have had people throw lit cigarette butts into their cars. Aziza Elsaidik reported that while she has always been treated differently in Australia because of her religion (she should know, she arrived 34 years ago), things have become much worse since the Gulf crisis began in August. One family in Campbelltown has had their power and water regularly cut off by local youths, their home broken into and vandalised and a dead snake left in the power box, and a dog set onto a 50 year old female family member. Whilst the media and the powers-that-be, including Bob Hawke,

have made a show of being opposed to this kind of racism, they have also done their bit to encourage it. Meanwhile ASIO has been helping to beat up racist hysteria with reports of terrorist threats from Middle Eastern groups right here in tranquil Australia. In ASIO's annual report, released in early December, the spooks maintain that countering violence by Middle East extremists would be their main priority in 1991. And to add to the atmosphere, who can forget the federal government's warning to service personnel to not wear their uniforms in public, coming just after the navy's public relations coup video of sailors mocking Arabs in the Gulf. It all adds up to a climate where racists feel more confident to come out of the woodwork, where we are encouraged to see Arab Australians as potential subversives or even terrorists, and where intimidation is used to try to silence non-Anglo Saxon opponents of Hawke and Bush's war effort. Bob Hawke's hypocrisy was driven home as the racism that he has helped create moved him to deny rumours that Arab Australians would be interned if war broke out. by Peter May

WOMEN'S ABORTION RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

SURGICAL ABORTION may now be a thing of the past, with the development in France of the new "abortion pill", RU 486.

The pill's developer, Professor Etienne-Emile Baulieu, of the University of Paris visited Australia late last year to promote it. The history of this pill however has been steeped in controversy, with vicious attacks from the "Right to Life" lobby. The Western Australian Health Minister tried temporarily to stop Perth's largest maternity hospital from hosting a scientific speech by Baulieu.

In developing countries this will save the lives of thousands of women who die from "botched abortions". The World Health Organisation estimates that 200,000 women die each year from such causes.

Although in Australia surgical abortions are relatively safe, this pill offers other advantages. Abortions could be potentially much cheaper and readily available without women needing to go through surgery—women could receive the treatment from their own physician. And the use of RU 486 reduces the guilt and trauma some women

Abortion pill stopped

feel. The Right to Lifeers fear this will threaten their influence. Dr John Wilke, of the National Right to Life committee stated in 1989 that "if what abortions destroy in there doesn't look like a human, then it will make our job more difficult". A blow to the Right to Lifeers can only be a good thing.

Not only will women feel less pressure using RU 486 but the Right to Life will lose its campaigning grounds. Right to Life gain much of their publicity by trying to prevent women entering Abortion Clinics and in the US the fights around clinic access are often extremely violent.

So when can we expect this RU 486 to be available in Australia? Not for a long time. That is if the company which has patent rights over RU 486, Hoechst, get their way. The company's chief executive has said they will lose credibility for being "life" if they market the drug. Try telling this to the workers

at Hoechst in Melbourne who have recently been in dispute over the use of carcinogenic chemicals.

The real reason Hoechst will not release the drug is the same reason Roussel-Uclaf, Hoechst's subsidiary, withdrew the drug in France. They feared that the Right to Life would black-ban their other products. Only after the French government stepped in was RU 486 made available in France.

Although the French government might only have been interested in saving money by decreasing its bill for surgical abortions, the Australian government needs to be forced into taking the same step.

RU 486 will increase reproductive choices for women and men. However the controversy over its introduction shows we need to constantly fight to expand our reproductive rights. Our choices over birth control are still very limited.

by Jill Polson

Keating's tax rip-off

PAUL KEATING'S chances of being the next Prime Minister are looking slimmer by the day. A flat tax system that was trumpeted as a central plank of the "Job for Canberra" campaign a few years ago now looks like being realised by Keating according to a recent book: *Taxation Statistics 1988-89*.

In 1985 Keating tried to fool us that he was going to reform the tax system to make it more equitable, that those who could afford to shoulder a greater share of the burden did so.

It was always a fiction that the Australian taxation system was progressive, that is, the more you earned the more you paid in tax. But now after the Labor government's tax policies, conclusive proof is available that there has been a marked shift in the tax burden from the rich to the poor.

In that well known proletarian paradise, Palm Beach, where the mean income is \$50,000, only 19% tax rate is applied! On the other hand, Villawood, where the mean income is \$20,000 a tax rate of 22.7% applies, the same as Edgecliff which had a mean income of \$75,000.

I think I'll put my money on Keating becoming a tax consultant for big business rather than the next Prime Minister.

by Ross MacKenzie

Third runway campaign revs up

IN MARCH Federal Cabinet will decide whether to go ahead with the third runway at Sydney Airport.

For two years people who live and work around the airport have been fighting to stop the third runway. Now that the period of comment on the draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) has closed, the struggle moves into top gear to change the government's mind.

The third runway will affect thousands of people from Botany Bay to Sydney Harbour and the northern suburbs beyond—aircraft overhead every four minutes, sixteen hours a day.

Noise adversely affects not only those living in the area—it also affects children at school, patients in hospitals, the elderly in nursing homes, workers in workplaces. The effects on schoolchildren are devastating—aircraft noise means serious disruption to learning.

Heavier air traffic around the airport increases the risk of air crashes.

In Glebe, Randwick and Leichhardt, increased pollution from nitrogen dioxide is expected to exceed safety levels in three months of an average year. In St Peters and Marrickville it is estimated that it will reach Japanese emergency levels in the same period.

Nitrogen dioxide emissions are associated with breathing problems and are

dangerous to asthmatics. Leichhardt already has the highest asthma incidence in Sydney.

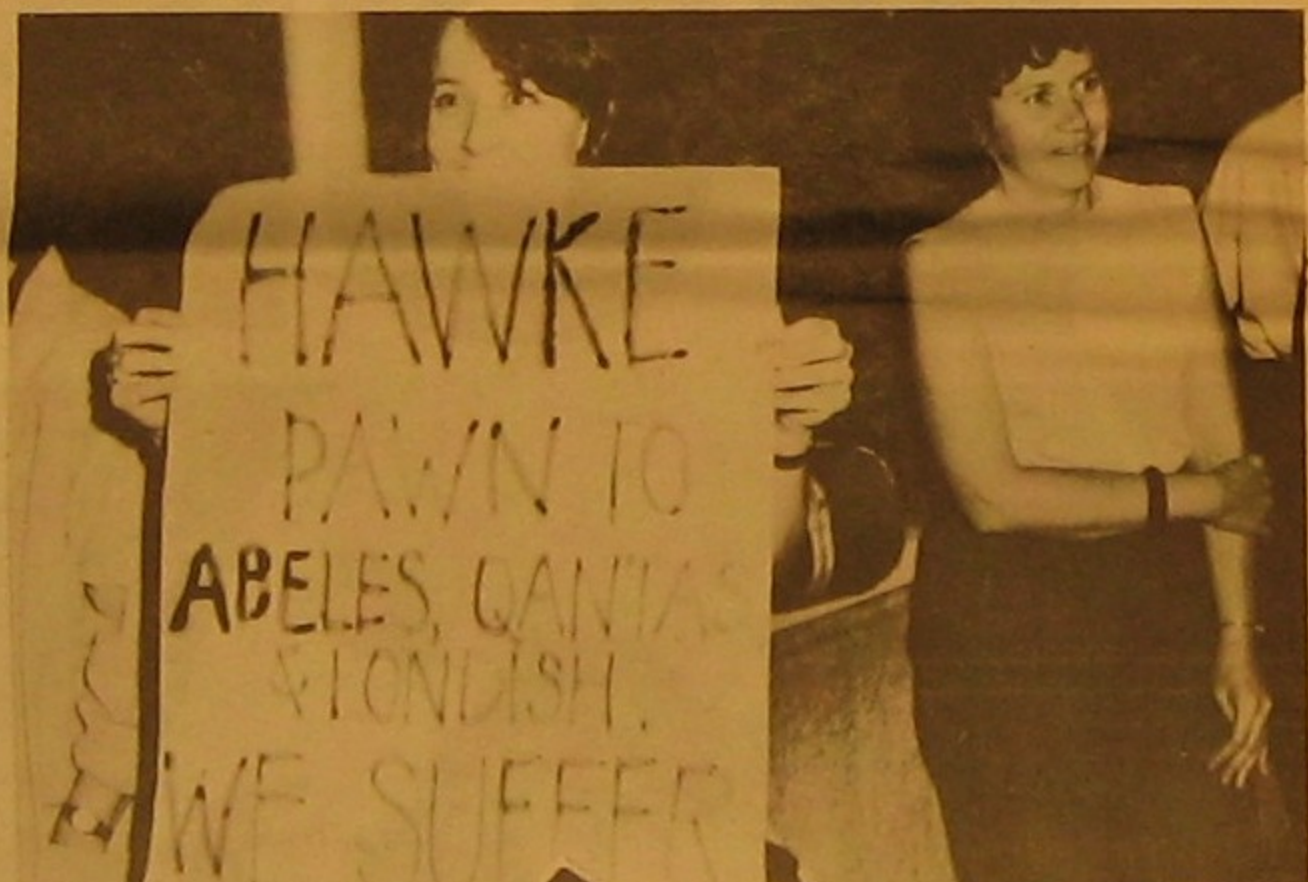
What emerges from the EIS is a very clear class bias. The suburbs worst affected by the proposed third runway are mostly working class, poor and Labor-voting, with a high proportion of non-English speaking residents. That living conditions will be so much worse with the third runway is just tough luck.

The problem now is to

make this opposition clear to the government. The decision to call a rally for 10 February with more to come if the decision goes the wrong way is a real step forward.

Stopping the runway from being built will need support from the unions involved. This will be possible if we are able to build a campaign which can mobilise the thousands who are angry about the proposal. The rally on the 10th opens up that possibility.

by Anne Picot



Don's party - in jail

OUTRAGE ERUPTED in Queensland recently when convicted ex-National Party Ministers Don Lane and Brian Austin were transferred to a hostel after serving just a few months of their sentences. Lane was jailed for 12 months on 3 October for misappropriating \$17,000 of public money and Austin was jailed for 15 months on 30 November for misappropriation of \$14,000.

If that wasn't enough, the Commission also granted Lane week-end leave in early January. Tom Burns, Acting Corrective Services Minister cancelled the leave in an attempt to maintain the little faith the people of Queensland have in the judicial system.

Rumour has it that the pair are roughing it at the hostel—a specially prepared seafood platter from a Brisbane restaurant was supposed to have been delivered to them for Christmas Day.

by Kym Hickey

Although our rulers want blood...

Bush's brutal war can be beaten

By John Minns

LITTLE MORE than six months ago we were promised a new era of prosperity, peace and world order.

Instead the world today is faced with the prospect of a major and horribly destructive war in the Gulf. War fever and anti-Arab racism have been whipped up in the West.

Gorbachev's reforms have turned into repression in the Baltic States and the other dissident republics, and to near economic collapse throughout the Soviet Union.

The military machine in the US, far from producing a "peace dividend", is gorging itself at the expense of ordinary Americans.

The Australian frigates and supply ships are costing \$600,000 every day—\$80 million for six months. But our hospitals, schools and public transport are run down and starved of funds. Hawke and Keating preach wage restraint but happily spend these large sums defending the Emir of Kuwait.

The cost of the US forces in the Gulf, even before a shot is fired, has already reached \$34 billion. Last October, the so-called "World Summit for Children" estimated that just \$2.5 billion per year could prevent the death by malnutrition or disease of at least 50 million children in the 1990s. But the money for that couldn't be found.

IF THE current situation shows anything it is what a crazy, inhuman and destructive system we live under—and what a bunch of barbarians are running it. A bloated military and starving

children, meticulous Pentagon scientists planning the method of carpet bombing which will most efficiently slaughter the population of Baghdad, dead and maimed soldiers producing windfall oil profits for Texaco and Exxon, public relations experts employed to work out that the term "human remains pouches" might horrify us less than "body bags"—this is no aberration, this is what capitalism is really about.

THE AUSTRALIAN Labor government is up to its neck in the horror.

The Gulf crisis has shown again that the Labor Party is a party of capitalism—determined to run the rotten system rather than end it. And it has shown that the Labor Party is a party of imperialism and war.

Like Menzies with Vietnam, Hawke didn't wait to be asked for ships—he was desperate to get Australia involved. And as Hawke admitted, for the size of the population of Australia, the naval force sent is a "significant contribution".

At the send off for the last supply ship to the Gulf Hawke contemptuously dismissed anti-war demonstrators as a handful of rats.

No Labor parliamentarians have come out of this with much credit. When parliament voted on 21 August on Hawke's decision to send frigates to the Gulf only one independent—the right-winger, Ted Mack—voted against. The Labor Party—including all the left—loyally supported the decision—shoulder to shoulder with US imperialism.

TO GET INVOLVED

Contact either the ISO in your city, or the coalitions listed below.

MELBOURNE
ISO meets every Monday, 7.30pm, at 328 Flinders St, City. Phone 629 3148. Network for Peace in the Middle East, PO Box 812, Parkville, 3052, or phone 481 1507.

SYDNEY
ISO meets every Tuesday, 7.00pm, at Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City. Phone 261 4862. Coalition to Bring the Frigates Home meets every Thursday, 6.00pm, University of Technology, Sydney Tower Building (Broadway). Phone 881 8390 (Diana), 690 1977 (Sally), 212 6855 (Hannah) or 281 5100 (Diana).

CANBERRA
ISO meets every Monday, 7.00pm, in the Blair Room of the Canberra Workers Club, Chidlers St, Civic. Bring the Ships Home Coalition meets next on Wed 23 Jan, 7.30 at the Peace Centre, Kingsley St, Civic. Phone John (249 4217), Tanya (297 8047), Sue (251 2174) or Bobbie (247 7951).

BRISBANE
ISO meets every Tuesday, 7.00pm at Bookmarks, 99 Elizabeth St, City. Phone 229 8832. Gulf Action Coalition meets Mondays, 6.00pm, Albion Peace Centre, 102 MacDonalds Rd, Albion, phone 275 1806 or 266 4281.

HOBART
ISO, write to GPO Box 1898, Hobart, 7001. Bring the Frigates Home Coalition, meets at the Environment Centre, phone 34 5566.

PERTH
ISO, write to PO Box 521, Wanneroo 6065. Alliance for Peace in the Gulf meets next on Mon 21 January, 5.30pm at Unit 1, 111 Colling St, West Perth. Phone 481 1244.



THE anti-war movement in Australia has grown enormously in the last month.

How to organise against the war

HAWKE IS dead wrong about the size and support of the anti-war movement. With almost no preparation rallies of thousands have appeared from nowhere. The Sydney rally against the war on 15 January had no posters advertising it, but 5,000 people turned up. A vigil outside the US Consulate on 14 August turned into a militant march of 500 people at 10 o'clock at night.

In workplaces across the country, people who never thought about politics before are angry. At the Botanic Gardens in Sydney an International Socialist Organisation member had hoped to get two workmates to the anti-war rally. Instead 15 turned up and went as a group.

At the Victorian State Library and Museum a small number of union activists decided to try to form a workplace group against the war. Forty workers came to hear two speakers against the war and fifteen stayed behind to set up an ongoing group which now plans to take a State Library banner to the next demonstration and hold educational forums on the question at the workplace.

The potential and the enthusiasm exists for a gigantic movement which can force Hawke to back down. But to do that the anti-war groups around the country have to break out of the conservative routines and passivity of the last few years.

An example of what not to do is provided by the Nuclear Disarmament Coordinating Committee in Sydney—the group that organises the annual Palm Sunday march. When confronted by the call for a united anti-war demo, its leaders said that any

such a proposal would have to be put to an Annual General Meeting—in September!

We need a united response to the war danger—with frequent city-wide and national demonstrations and we need local workplace, trade union, community and campus actions and groups to organise the thousands of people who want to get involved.

It is critical that socialist organisation is built out of the movement. The new people getting involved now are not worried about bringing politics into the movement—far from it, they are desperate to grapple with political ideas. All sorts of questions—the role of the Labor Party, repression in the Baltic States, the economic recession, whether we should support sanctions against Iraq, women's liberation—get discussed widely at the demos and vigils.

Socialists can make sense of a world staggering from crisis to crisis and changing with mind-boggling speed. And socialists can also point to a way to change the world. That's why we are not embarrassed to say that we want to build the anti-war movement as broadly and effectively as we can and that we want to build the International Socialist Organisation.

In the end the injustice, the violence and the misery of capitalism can be beaten but only if those thousands who are now disgusted at the war learn how to fight the system that causes it—and that means building a socialist organisation.

If you've had enough of this system and you want to do something about it: —Join us.

Join the International Socialist Organisation

- Please send me more information about how socialists are organising to stop the Gulf war.
- I want to join the International Socialist Organisation

Name

Address:

Phone

Clip and post to ISO GPO Box 1473N Melbourne, 3001

Contact us!

THE SOCIALIST
Phone (02) 261 4862
Write to: PO Box 4338,
Sydney South, 2000.
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MELBOURNE
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Phone (03) 629 3148.
Write to: GPO Box 1473N,
Melbourne, 3001.

SYDNEY
Phone (02) 261 4862.
Write to: PO Box 4338,
Sydney South, 2000.

CANBERRA
Write to: PO Box 17,
Jamison Centre, ACT 2614.

BRISBANE
Bookmarks
2nd fl, 99 Elizabeth St, City.
Phone (07) 229 8832
Write to: PO Box 325,
Woolloongabba, 4102.

HOBART
Write to: GPO Box 1898,
Hobart, 7001.

PERTH
Write to: PO Box 521,
Wanneroo, 6065.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

SOCIALISM

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

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

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

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

WORKERS' POWER

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

Liberation can only be won

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

REVOLUTION, NOT REFORMISM

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

INTERNATIONALISM

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

Socialism cannot be built in a single country; socialist

revolutions must be spread if they are to survive.

We oppose imperialism, East and West, and support all national liberation struggles against imperialist domination. Australia is not an oppressed country, but an imperialist power in its own right. This means we are opposed to Australian nationalism and immigration controls.

REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

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

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

It is out of these ideas and struggles that a mass revolutionary movement and party will eventually be built. If that's what you want to do, JOIN US!

LIBERATION

FROM OPPRESSION

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



Are sanctions the alternative to war?

AS THE United Nations deadline got closer, the argument for sanctions was raised more and more insistently as the "peaceful" alternative to a bloody war.

It is entirely understandable that millions of ordinary people have taken up the argument that sanctions should have been allowed to work.

But to go forward, the anti-war movement needs to come out clearly opposed to America's drive to dominate the Middle East.

It implies acceptance of the idea that the problem in the Middle East is Saddam Hussein, rather than the terrible legacy of imperialism that the central question is to get Iraq out of Kuwait, rather than getting the US, Britain, France and all the big Western powers out of the region.

Dictate

But if the US does have the right to dictate terms, then it is only a small step to acceptance of the "need"—even if ultimately—for a military response.

This is exactly the position of politicians like the Democrats Janet Powell and Labor's Bruce Childs when they argue so passionately for sanctions.

Medicine

Malnutrition and infections have led to illness and death amongst Iraqi children, due in part to a lack of drugs.

One major hospital found the infant death rate had doubled. They could only perform emergency surgery due to the lack of anaesthetics.

The shortages of food in Iraq have caused prices to rocket. As usual it is the working class and poor who suffer most from the actions of Western Rambos.

Sanctions are part of a continuum from diplomacy through to outright war, which governments use to put pressure on their rivals.

Not all sanctions are the same. It depends who is using them and who they're being used against.

Sanctions against South Africa were and are undoubtedly a good thing. They represented a response forced out of various western governments by the anti-apartheid movement around the world.

To see how completely different the sanctions against Iraq are, you only have to see how someone like Margaret Thatcher, who refused to apply even the Commonwealth's miserable sanctions against South Africa because "sanctions don't work" and "hurt the people they're meant to help", became a convert to sanctions once the target was Iraq.

It is therefore all the more tragic that wide sections of the anti-war movement have taken up support for sanctions.

Turkish strikers oppose war drive

ONE OF George Bush's key allies in the Middle East is facing a massive revolt from below.

Miners from the Black Sea city of Zonguldak have led a huge wave of strikes demanding higher wages.

Thirty thousand have been on strike since November 30. In early January, they organised a massive general strike—declared illegal by the military dictatorship—which almost completely closed down industry and transport around the country.

The miners began marching the 250km to the capital, Ankara. On the way, they were joined by more than 30,000 more workers.

Throughout the strike there have been almost daily marches of striking miners in Zonguldak. Shopkeepers have pulled down the shutters in defiance of military patrols.

But by far the most important aspect of the struggle has been the way it has connected with an upsurge of anger over Turkey's involvement in the war drive against Iraq.

A German paper carried the following description of a the action in one factory in Istanbul: Chanting slogans the 360 workers of the plant march out the gate.

"Workers hand in hand to the General Strike"; "No to war"; "We have burned our bridges, there is no turning back".

Union officials make short speeches. "The giant the military dictatorship wanted to kill after 1980 has awakened."

Then the march sets off past the factories of the industrial estate, watched by dozens of uniformed and plain clothes police. "We are supposed to get starvation wages and President Ozal wants to drive us to war," says a worker.

Poverty and war are an explosive combination of issues. Should they lead the working class to seriously mobilise they



could begin to threaten, not just the Ozal regime, but the whole rotten system in Turkey.

The strike began with a claim for a 450% pay increase to cover an inflation rate of over 70%.

The miners of Zonguldak earn an average of \$A250 a month, less than the oppressed black miners of South Africa.

Ironically South Africa, along with Australia, is a major supplier of coal to Turkey.

The Turkish Electricity Board says the strike is causing a shortage of coal for power generation and is threatening to replace the miners of Zonguldak with more imports.

To counter this threat, the miners have organised an impressive campaign of international solidarity and Australian unions can play an important role in supporting their strike. Supporters in Sydney and Melbourne have organised solidarity committees and have approached unions for support.

The Miners' Federation, Waterside Workers, the Seamen's Union and the

FEDFA have all agreed to help by banning coal deliveries to Turkey.

So far this is only verbal support from the union officials and it is now up to militants to pressure them into action.

WOMEN join striking miners on their march from Zonguldak to Ankara.

PUBLIC MEETINGS No Gulf War US & Aust out!

MELBOURNE Mon 21 Jan, 7.30pm 328 Flinders St, City

SYDNEY Tues 22 Jan, 7.00pm Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City

BRISBANE Tues 22 Jan, 7.00pm Bookmarks, 99 Elizabeth St, City

CANBERRA Mon 21 Jan, 7.00pm Blair Room, Canberra Workers Club, Childers St

Does Saddam threaten world peace?

PERHAPS the single most potent argument our rulers have in winning support for their war is the idea that Saddam Hussein is the greatest single danger to peace in the world today.

There can be no doubt that Saddam is a warmonger. He was prepared to invade Iran (backed by the West) in 1980 to try and crush the revolution that overthrew the Shah.

His genocide of the Kurds and torture of opponents are well known. Any many fear, quite rightly, that he is on the road to getting nuclear weapons.

So do we have to get behind the attempts to stop Saddam's drive for an Iraqi empire?

You only have to ask the question to begin to see the problem with it. Because while Saddam would like an empire, the people confronting him already have theirs.

If the main task is to stop aggressive militarism aimed at building (or preserving) empires, then surely our first



target has to be the US, and our second, the USSR.

After all, how many bases does Saddam have in the Pacific? How many spy satellites? While the US controls the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, what major international financial institution does Saddam control?

If we really have to stop the development of any more nuclear weapons,

then surely the central problem is not a country that might have them in a year or two, but the countries that have hundreds of them right now, today, in the Gulf.

But, the argument goes, don't we risk a war with Saddam in a few years that actually would be nuclear—that would threaten the survival of the world?

The problem is that we have risked a nuclear war for the last 40 years. Kennedy took us to the brink over Cuba in 1961; Kissinger and Nixon over Israel in 1973.

If the problem is a violent, expansionist country with nuclear weapons, then we should be attacking Israel, because it already has them and is prepared to use them.

The point is that you don't lessen the possibility of nuclear war by supporting the great powers that already have them in their attempts to suppress Iraq.

There is no dodging the fact that the

problem we face in the world is the system of imperialism and the great powers that dominate it.

Iraq, whatever its ambitions, is never going to be one of those great powers.

Whilst it is important we stand against the deprivations of Saddam when he suppresses strikes and crushes ethnic minorities, we also have to see that on a world scale he is a small player compared to those who devastated Africa, who obliterated Nagasaki and Hiroshima, who daily cause famine and poverty for hundreds of millions.

The US is not angry with Saddam because he is a torturer—they backed him and armed him through his war against Iran. They are angry because he will not, at the moment at least, do their bidding.

It would be a pity if we sided with our greatest and most powerful enemy simply because they were attacking a Saddam.

THE REAL BULLIES

ONE OF the more sickening features of the West's anti-Iraq hysteria, is how respectable the naked use of American military might has become around the world.

The US marines are suddenly popular from Canberra to the Kremlin, and apparently acceptable even to Colonel Gaddafi.

This is ironic indeed considering how many Americans are bitterly opposed to George Bush's military adventure in the Gulf. They remember Vietnam, even if our own Labor politicians have forgotten.

And many of them also remember some earlier US history. As the United States grew in economic strength during the 19th Century, it aspired to take its place among the world's major imperialist powers.

In the early part of last century, President Monroe presented his "Monroe Doctrine" as a stand against European attempts to re-colonise the newly independent republics of South America.

However it was really a claim that the United States had an exclusive right to exploit its own backyard.

This began with the military conquest of large sections of Mexico. It continued through the Spanish-American war, waged around the turn of the century under the banner of liberating Spanish colonies like Cuba and Puerto Rico.

In reality, these islands effectively became American colonies. So did the Philippines, a country located far beyond the umbrella of the Monroe Doctrine. Genuine local independence movements were brutally crushed by American soldiers.

To give the US navy and merchant marine better access to this growing empire, President Teddy Roosevelt wanted to dig a canal across the isthmus of Panama.

But the government of Colombia, which controlled the territory, held out for favourable terms, so Roosevelt backed a local rebellion in Panama and the US got its canal and a permanent military presence.

Boasted Roosevelt: "I took the Panama Canal."

DURING and after the Second World War, Washington again posed as the champion of nations fighting oppression.

Again, it was an entirely cynical ploy. The new superpower wanted to get its rivals out of key areas like the Middle East, so Truman and Eisenhower called for an end to old-style colonialism.

In its place came new-style imperialism. The US moved to replace the British and French as the dominant power in the Gulf. It swung its support behind the Zionist movement in Palestine as it brutally evicted a million Palestinians from their homes.

In 1953, the CIA organised a coup when western oil interests were nationalised by the Iranian government of Mossadeq. America propped up reactionary regimes like that in Saudi Arabia. The Saudis allowed human slavery, yet they became a pillar of the "free world".

By Tom O'Lincoln

Meanwhile in other places, the pretence of anti-colonialism was quickly dumped. In Vietnam, Washington bankrolled France's brutal attempt to preserve its domination.

All over the world, US troops were used as required to protect the interests of the Pentagon and General Motors. In Korea, the fig leaf of the United Nations was used. But fig leaves were not essential.

When the corrupt Batista regime in Cuba was overthrown by Fidel Castro's rebels, to the cheers of most Cubans, John Kennedy's response was to back a rag-tag force of reactionaries and mercenaries to stage the Bay of Pigs invasion. That one ended in a fiasco.

This didn't stop Kennedy from taking the world to the brink of war in the Cuban missile crisis a year later. He objected to the presence of Soviet rockets so close to the US.

Yet the US maintained, as it does to this day, a naval base on Cuban territory which it refuses to remove. And US missile bases ringed the borders of the Soviet Union, from Turkey to South Korea. But that was different, that was the "Free World fighting Communism".

FACED WITH growing nationalist rebellions in South East Asia, Kennedy sent "advisors" to Laos and then to Vietnam.

Johnson sent troops to join them, then came the saturation bombings. Nixon widened the theatre of mass destruction to include Cambodia.

Vietnam was a defeat for US imperialism, inflicted jointly by the people of Vietnam and the people of the invading countries, including millions of Americans who stood up against Johnson and Nixon.

It left most Americans concerned to avoid another US intervention of that kind, and this "Vietnam syndrome" has been a thorn in the side of succeeding

Israel: the tyrants the US loves

GEORGE BUSH says that we are going to war in the Gulf to stop aggression.

The hypocrisy of this is exposed as soon as you look at Israel.

Immediately after the Israeli Army massacred 21 Palestinians at Temple Mount last December, the US approved \$1.2 billion in economic aid and \$1.8 billion in military aid.

In addition the Senate voted overwhelmingly to send a further \$700 million in supplies from US defence stocks "to meet the Iraqi threat".

The US has backed Israel since its foundation in 1948. Yet Israel is a state founded

on racism and terror. In 1947 the US pushed a plan through the UN to give the new state the majority of Palestine. By 1949 Israel had taken over the whole of Palestine except for the West Bank and Gaza Strip by massacring and driving out the Arabs.

Today Israel is the most aggressive state in the region. It has gone to war with all of its neighbours at least once and repeatedly invades Lebanon. In 1982, Israeli forces supervised the massacre of thousands of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatilla camps in Beirut. They maintain their own "buffer

zone" in Southern Lebanon. It is the only power in the region with nuclear weapons. Today it is infamously the political and military repression in the Occupied Territories. Over a thousand have been killed since the beginning of the Intifada.

While the media have been hysterical at every abuse by the Iraqi regime, they say almost nothing about the daily murder and torture of Palestinian civilians.

The US has backed this aggression because it is part of Israel's role as a watchdog for imperialist interests in the oil-rich Middle East.

presidents, particularly Reagan and Bush.

Even so, Reagan found a way to blockade Nicaragua both economically and militarily, including mining its harbours.

He funded the butchers who rule El Salvador and Guatemala, and used the so-called Drug War as an excuse to meddle in the internal affairs of several South American countries.

He sent troops into Lebanon, only to see a large section of them blown up by a suicide bomber. After that they were pulled out and kept on ships in the Mediterranean.

When he invaded Grenada, Reagan had finally found a country small enough to make possible a "surgical strike", one so quick that the US population wouldn't have time to mobilise against it.

This glorious adventure paved the way for invading Panama, which in its turn opened the door to new adventures in the Gulf.

Now we are told there is a new, "just cause" in the Gulf. But this new crusade is just like all those that preceded it.

Just as Vietnam had nothing to do with "saving the people from communism", so the Gulf has nothing to do with "stopping aggression".

The US invasion of the Gulf is the main aggression—the latest episode in a century of threats, invasions, and brutal domination.

A victory for the US would be the worst possible outcome for the oppressed and exploited, not just in the Middle East, but all over the world.

That's why our aim in campaigning against the war should be to force the US out of the Gulf—to hopefully inflict a new defeat, another "Vietnam", on the world's biggest bully.



LIBERATING Vietnam, 1965.

The country the US 'liberated'

THE "liberation" of Panama, gives us a glimpse of what will be involved in the "liberation" of Kuwait.

Labelled "Operation Just Cause", it was promoted as saving Panama from the brutal dictator and drug dealer, Manuel Noriega.

It was all rubbish. On 10 December, 1989, Stealth bombers and other planes dropped 422 bombs in a 13 hour period—about one bomb every two minutes—directly onto some of the poorest areas of Panama City.

Helicopter gunships followed them, shooting indiscriminately. When pro-Noriega forces

began sniping at US troops from the tenements, they were fired on by "air support and Sheridan light tanks", as Army magazine put it.

Bulldozers were called in to plough huge mass graves—there are believed to be four including one at Fort Amador, occupied by the US Southern Command.

The US will only admit to causing 202 civilian casualties. Human rights organisations say 2000-4000 whilst on the streets of Panama, the figure is put at 7000—out of a total population of just a few million.

US troops immediately began a major roundup, arresting 1200 people, mostly public servants, political activists and union officials, using hit-lists supplied by the CIA and newly-installed puppet, President Guillermo Endara.

The economy has been savaged. Initially the US promised up to a billion dollars in aid—still only half the destruction they caused—but after the firework, the money never appeared. Indeed it took a finaler strike by Endara to finally get a miserable \$120 million.

The Melbourne Age recently reported that Endara was "only kept in power by the presence of 10,000 US troops" because of 30 per cent unemployment and social unrest.

Even more than Saddam Hussein, General Noriega was a creation of the CIA and the Pentagon. They dictated much government policy, funded and trained his army.

Like Saddam, Noriega's brutality was only discovered when the small dictator fell out with the world's biggest bully.

Like Saddam, the White House did everything possible to cover up the real issues at

stake. The US did not invade Panama to arrest a drug runner or restore democracy. Endara's new "Public Force" is staffed almost entirely by officers and soldiers who served under Noriega.

According to one report in the Sydney Morning Herald, "some of the newly appointed senior PF commanders were among the worst human rights abusers during the Noriega period".

The real issue was that renewal of the strategically vital Panama Canal treaty was due in January 1990 and Noriega was refusing to extend US domination.

Marxism and the environment

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Vietnam—how the US was beaten, Tuesday 29 January.
Important lessons for those fighting against US imperialism today.
The 1936 Spanish Revolution, Tuesday 5 February.
In the 1930s the Spanish Revolution seemed like an alternative to fascism, war and depression. What happened?
Industrial Democracy, Tuesday 12 February.
We were told that the Prices and Incomes accord would mean more say for workers. When?
The environment and the limits to growth, Tuesday 19 February.
Is economic growth the reason for environmental destruction? Are there limits to the resources we can use?

CANBERRA
Canberra branch of the International Socialist Organisation meets every MONDAY night at 7.00pm in the Blair Room of the Canberra Workers' Club, Childrens St, Civic. For further details write to PO Box 17, Jamison Centre, 2614.

PUBLIC MEETING
Why Australia and the US should get out of the Gulf, Monday 21 January.
Blair Room, Canberra Workers' Club, Childrens St, Civic.
A defeat for our rulers in the Gulf would be a victory for ordinary people everywhere.

The revolutionary party, Monday 28 January.
Workers need a mass, democratic party based in the workplaces if they are ever to make a revolution.
US imperialism—from Vietnam to the Gulf, Monday 4 February.
The Gulf is not the first outrage by the US. We look at the long and sorry history.

SYDNEY
Sydney branch of the International Socialist Organisation meets every TUESDAY night at 7.00pm at Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City. For further details ring 261 4662.

PUBLIC MEETING
Stop the Gulf war madness
Tuesday 22 January, 7.00pm at Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City.
Hear why the madness in the Gulf must stop, and how it can be done.
US imperialism—from Vietnam to the Gulf, Tuesday 29 January.
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Socialists and women's liberation, Tuesday 5 February.
There is a myth that it took feminists to force marxists to take women's liberation seriously. Actually, socialists have a proud history of fighting against sexism.

HOBART
Hobart branch of the International Socialist Organisation holds regular Marxist study groups. For details write to GPO Box 1898, Hobart 7501.

PERTH
Perth branch of the International Socialist Organisation holds regular Marxist study groups. For details write to PO Box 521, Waverley 6065.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE LUCKY COUNTRY...

CES CUTS SPARK WORKERS' ANGER

IN THESE tough times the odds in industrial disputes tend to favour the employer. But the present conflict in CES offices in Victoria shows the potential for swinging this around.

The department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET)—of which the CES is a part—is to be restructured. Each CES office is being fragmented into smaller units.

This is part of the government's general attack on both the unemployed and employed in Australia. In the middle of the worst recession since World War 2, Dawkins wants to cut staff by 700.

CES workers are to have sole responsibility for cutting long term unemployed off the dole—in effect bringing DSS work into the CES.

CUT OFF

The government also intends to spend \$1.5 million on teaching CES workers it'll do the unemployed good to be cut off the dole, and to go without such non-essentials as food.

Although the PSU has accepted the restructuring and the dispute is, on the surface, about implementation procedures, very few CES workers are happy with the changes.

PSU's initial response was a strategy of gradually imposing tougher and tougher bans. In October, the restructuring process was banned and members voted to hand in management's "surveys" (asking where they wanted to work) to the union office.

Workplace meetings later agreed on bans on public contact two afternoons a week, plus a host of other bans.

Meanwhile, DEET overplayed its hand by serving Supreme Court writs against three PSU officials, demanding that they hand over the surveys being kept at the union office. Pressure from the PSU nationally caused the writs to be withdrawn and legal costs paid.

The anger around the dispute exploded on 2 January, the first day the restructure came in.

Management disciplined 8 members who were refusing to move offices. Within 4 hours, 21 metro and 2 country offices had walked out.

The mood at a regional meeting hastily called in a pub was fantastic. As the last office arrived, there was clapping and cheering.

The general mood of cynicism and disenchantment was beginning to turn around, and a new confidence was growing.

But the delegates committee that night refused to endorse a strike arguing the members were too passive, too weak.

The delegates are isolated out in their offices year after year, trying to hold together a union there often isn't much interest in. This is a massive conservatism pressure. It led many of them not to see the opportunity to recruit new members and build a stronger union.

So when the opportunity arose, they opted for motions calling the action off if manage-

Nurses pay penalty

A TOTAL commitment to award restructuring has led Queensland Nursing Union (QNU) officials to trade off penalty rates.

Sunday penalty rates are being cut from double time to time-and-a-half. First year registered nurses will lose over \$20 every time they work a Sunday!

Evening shift penalty rates are being cut from 15% to 12.5%. This cut is greater than the pay increase nurses will get for working a morning shift which does not have penalty rates.

In return they get a small pay rise, to be phased in in 3 instalments this year.

After the results of award restructuring were made public, one union official said cuts in penalty rates were in line with "professional rates" nurses were seeking. Rumours are now circulating that the QNU eventually wants to get rid of all penalty rates and just have a standard hourly "professional" rate.

In line with award restructuring's Structural Efficiency Principle, a new career structure is also being implemented in June. The officials claim that this will be a way of advancing through the nursing profession more easily.

But the Minister for Health, Ken McElligott, argued to public sector nurses that "salary gains must be balanced by improved performance and productivity". No doubt the new structure will be yet another erosion of established conditions in the hospital wards.

The attacks on nurses come at the start of a generalized attack by the Goss Labor government on the state's health system.

It's obvious that they are out to cut the \$1.8 billion health budget. Already Nambour Hospital is losing its reputation for quality care as in line with the ALP policy to ensure scarce hospital resources weren't "wasted" on services that could be provided by GPs.

The QNU officials' complicity in attacks on nurses' wages will make it that much harder to fight the Government's attacks on the health system in general.

—by Beris Penrose, registered nurse

People who didn't want to move were directed to by the union. At the delegates meeting after this, many delegates again wanted to say that this wasn't a sell out.

They argued that, if negotiations didn't work, we could pump the action up again. But this doesn't take into account the fact that the members feel they've been defeated—by the actions of the officials.

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SOLUTION

The solution to the timid role of the officials is for more members to be involved in the union, for more delegates to be pulled into the delegates committee. The links that were starting to be built between delegates in the offices need to be strengthened.

This dispute may be over. But the government's attacks on welfare and the unemployed are not.

We can use the rank and file links which were beginning to be generated to mount a more effective fight against the next round of attacks.

—by Marcus Banks (Brunswick CES), Bernadette Fallon (Northcote CES), Glenda Wadley (South Melbourne CES), Jill Polson (Vic State Office)

Drug changes needed

A MAJOR report before the Federal Government recommends radical overhauls of the drug approval system in Australia, in particular to provide increased funding for drug trials and allow the use of data from drug trials overseas.

These reforms are essential to give people with AIDS and HIV access to potentially life saving treatments. ACT UP and other activists are now planning a campaign to pressure the government to implement the report, unlike five similar earlier reports which have been ignored.

—by Robert Stainsby

Conditions for sale

MORE THAN 200 employees at the Prospect County Council (near Sydney) have signed contracts giving up conditions unions have fought for 90 years to secure—for wage rises of about 12 per cent.

The contracts were agreed to outside the industrial system, on an individual basis and without union consultation. In return for the pay rise, they have agreed to go back to a forty hour week, to give up rostered days off, a Christmas break, a bank holiday, travelling allowances, meal allowances, higher duty pay and paid overtime.

TELECOM MOBILES, the section of Telecom that runs the Mobile Telephone system, is trying to get its employees to make ourselves work harder.

It is trying to implement job performance reviews. These reviews rely on a form completed in an intimate meeting between workers and their direct supervisors. Workers are encouraged to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and set goals for themselves. These are written on the form and signed by worker and boss to give a "contract" feeling.

The reviews are being sold to us as a chance to have a say in how things are being run. But these attempts to restructure the work place are for one reason only—greater productivity, making us work harder, producing bigger profits.

Job performance reviews try to short cut the traditional organisation workers have—shop stewards and unions. Instead they individualise people, reducing the collective strength of workplace organisations.

My workplace gave it a 100 per cent thumbs down. Our review forms are now collecting dust in the state stores. Our union, the NSW branch of the ATEA, have ratified our ban and made it state wide, in accordance with a similar ban in Victoria.

Under the new deal, workers

Reviews perform boss's job

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NSW bill threat

THE NSW government has had another union-busting victory, with the passing of the Enterprise Agreement Legislation in December.

This bill allows for awards for various occupations such as clerks, metal workers, builders labourers etc, to be replaced by one single award for a business or enterprise, as long as 65 per cent of the workers in that enterprise agree to the proposed wages and conditions. It rules out the necessity of the relevant unions to represent workers in any new award.

With the recession looming over people's heads, it will be easier for the bosses to erode hard-won conditions. While unions are lying passive more instances like the Prospect County Council will arise.

What is needed is a push among all unions to get the unions to take some sort of action.

—by Anne Kennelly

No right to strike

LAST NOVEMBER, 74 workers at the AC Hattick chemical plant in Sydney went on strike.

The company sent them a letter saying that they were in breach of contract, and if they did not return to work, that they would be deemed to have resigned.

They stayed out on strike, and the company sacked them. The State Industrial Commission agreed that the workers had effectively resigned. As a "concession", Hatticks agreed to allow the workers to apply for their old jobs.

But even those who are rehired will lose all their benefits, like accumulated sick leave and long service leave.

—by Peter May

Just deserts

IT WILL not be another Vietnam. Iraq is mostly desert while Vietnam was all jungle", according to the very observant US Vice President, Dan Quayle. But why Dan, are British troops wearing jungle greens and not their desert khakis?

Because Dan, the Iraqi troops have the khaki. The British army sold all its stocks to Iraq at the height of the Gulf War. "Four years ago there were no problems with Iraq," explains the Ministry of Defence. Quite.

Bosses not only cheat their employees, they cheat the government. The tax office forced 319 large companies to fork out an average \$1.2 million a year after an intensive audit program found they understated income.

Where will this end? Without wages, wage slavery will disappear. Without tax revenue, the State could wither away. Seems like many bosses are unconscious Marxists.

—by Lindsay Munks, Telecom Mobsiles

Right left out

THE South African government has been trying to convince blacks that market capitalism is the preferred setup in a post-apartheid economy. But they aren't all that impressed, according to an economics lecturer at the University of Western Cape.

He asked his students which economic system they favoured. One third said they were social democrats. Another third said they were Marxists. The last third identified themselves as Trotskyists.

Just one of the gang
BUILDER Civil and Civic employed Jack Cooper on a Sydney site to "uncover troublesome unionists", according to evidence at the Royal Commission into the Building Industry in Sydney.

Company executive Stan Jones apparently told Cooper, who had served time in jail for an

Super ceded

HAVE you got the 3% superannuation increase promised instead of a wage rise? Unless you are a government worker it's more likely than not that your boss has diddled you out of the 3%. A recent government report found only 47% of private sector wage earners have received the 3%. Bosses have held back a staggering \$884 million from their workers.

SPC DEAL—WHO PAYS FOR THE RECESSION?

NOW THAT the Hawke government has brought on the recession that we "had to have", workers are starting to really feel the effects.

By Liz Ross



John Halfpenny

still lose four RDOs and penalty rates for 10 Saturdays in the year. They'll be working a 40 hour week and losing about \$40 a week in pay. Seasonal workers will lose between \$25 to \$34 in weekly over award payments, as well as their RDOs.

The SPC deal represents something more than just another "success" story for the Accord. The recession has given an urgency to the ruling class debate over restructuring Australian capitalism.

The issue in the SPC case was largely one of tactics: whether to do deals directly between bosses and workers, by-passing the union movement, or go through the officials and the Industrial



HOW DARE YOU TRADE-OFF AWARD CONDITIONS!!

DEMARICATION DISPUTE

Wage cuts don't save jobs

SOCIALISTS vehemently reject the idea that workers are responsible for the mess the system's in. Why should we have to pay the cost?

Right now this is a minority view. Most SPC workers, and 88% of Australians surveyed, thought that workers should play a role in saving companies from ruin by taking cuts in pay and conditions. Many at SPC saw it as a "sink or swim" case of survival, with no real alternatives.

But are the workers really going to benefit from these sacrifices?

In exchange for trading off approximately \$2 million in wages and conditions, SPC employees have been promised the survival of the company (and their jobs), restoration of the lost conditions at the end of 12 months, and profit sharing once the cannery is making profits. Supposedly this was a one time deal, and just for the one company.

But none of this is guaranteed. The history of similar deals in the US isn't encouraging. In many cases, factories closed down despite workers' concessions.

So, all that sacrifice leads to is more sacrifice.

But what's the alternative? The workers could have knocked down the deal. At the Cairns engineering firm, NGEA, workers rejected a company proposal to cut the working week to 4 days. They've said they'd rather get their redundancy payouts, go on the dole—they'd be better off—and apply for the jobs if they reappear later.

More importantly, they could have taken industrial action to keep both jobs and conditions. Probably they felt too weak to do this on their own. But if John Halfpenny, instead of just making pronouncements, had offered to mobilise powerful unions like the Transport

Workers to back them, the SPC workforce might have at least considered fighting the issue industrially. There was clearly support for such a stand: even at the pre-accrual rally there were placards attacking the deal.

If the company is really as broke as they claim, nationalisation would save jobs without any loss in pay. Funding this shouldn't be a problem: seeing that the Hawke government can afford \$600,000 a day to send ships to the Gulf.

This would be seen as a "socialist" proposal. Needless to say, Victoria's "socialist left" Premier and his "left-wing" Trades Hall secretary haven't even considered it. But until we begin to consider demands of this kind, we will be stuck with the dismal capitalist alternatives we've been offered this time.

REFUSED

At Chrysler, five years after concessions were agreed to, the company was back in the black. But one quarter of the workforce had been laid off, and the workers' "givebacks" had become permanent, and the company refused to pay out profits.

And the idea that the SPC deal might be limited to one company was demolished almost immediately, when its competitor Ardmona announced it was trying on a similar agreement with its workforce. Ardmona didn't pretend to

REALITY

Behind the claim that the Accord protects workers' interests, lies the reality that it undermines their conditions and the strength of the union movement.

This contradiction between illusion and reality showed up all too clearly in the official union response to the proposed SPC deal. Victorian Trades Hall secretary John Halfpenny began by claiming to defend workers' interests, and ended up giving the bosses virtually everything they wanted by another route.

Halfpenny rightly opposed the initial threat to award conditions, saying: "These entitlements are not the property of one small group of workers. They are the property of all the workers who work under those awards. No one group can just give them away."

But Halfpenny's main concern was preserving the Accord and through it Australian capitalism, so he then went on to explain to the employers how to cut wages and conditions by a "better" method—through Trades Hall, the ACTU and the union officials.

In the end that's just what SPC management did. Workers, at the specific request of Trades Hall, were excluded from the discussions.

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CHEAP SHOTS

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Justice American style

IN October 1990 Judge Thomas Penfold Jackson sentenced Washington mayor Marion Barry to six months jail for a drug possession misdemeanour.

Two years ago Reagan aide Michael Deaver was before Jackson for lying under oath, a felony. He got probation.

Barry was black.

Roll out the barrels

A SHOOTING war in the Gulf would have a dampening effect on the sales of Rolls Royces in the US, according to Rolls' managing director Peter Ward.

Still they've covered themselves—by making many of the fighter-plane engines that will "need replacing" after the war.

May we quote you?

"THE result is a confirmation that the National Party is as strong as it ever was."

NSW National Party leader, Wal Murray after the party slumped from 67% to 37% in a by-election

"WE'VE defeated capitalism and what the Labor Party is doing is redesigning capitalism."

Paul Keating, after a century of ALP reformism

"This is just a routine interview to see if you've been penetrated since you began working with us," the interviewer began. Then, realising his faux pas, "er ... by another human

Spy v Spy

A FORMER ASIO employee tells of how she was called in for a security check after her first two years.

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WE need a force that is militarily worthwhile, self sufficient, and looks good on television.

"IF whales were privately owned maybe they would be well looked after too."

Tory student leaflet

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Important lessons for those fighting against US imperialism today.
The 1936 Spanish Revolution, Tuesday 5 February.
In the 1930s the Spanish Revolution seemed like an alternative to fascism, war and depression. What happened?
Industrial Democracy, Tuesday 12 February.
We were told that the Prices and Incomes accord would mean more say for workers. When?
The environment and the limits to growth, Tuesday 19 February.
Is economic growth the reason for environmental destruction? Are there limits to the resources we can use?

CANBERRA
Canberra branch of the International Socialist Organisation meets every MONDAY night at 7.00pm in the Blair Room of the Canberra Workers' Club, Childrens St, Civic. For further details write to PO Box 17, Jamison Centre, 2614.

PUBLIC MEETING
Why Australia and the US should get out of the Gulf, Monday 21 January.
Blair Room, Canberra Workers' Club, Childrens St, Civic.
A defeat for our rulers in the Gulf would be a victory for ordinary people everywhere.
The revolutionary party, Monday 28 January.
Workers need a mass, democratic party based in the workplaces if they are ever to make a revolution.
US imperialism—from Vietnam to the Gulf, Monday 4 February.
The Gulf is not the first outrage by the US. We look at the long and sorry history.

SYDNEY
Sydney branch of the International Socialist Organisation meets every TUESDAY night at 7.00pm at Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City. For further details ring 261 4662.

PUBLIC MEETING
Stop the Gulf war madness
Tuesday 22 January, 7.00pm at Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, City.
Hear why the madness in the Gulf must stop, and how it can be done.
US imperialism—from Vietnam to the Gulf, Tuesday 29 January.
The Gulf is not the first outrage by the US. We look at the long and sorry history.
Socialists and women's liberation, Tuesday 5 February.
There is a myth that it took feminists to force marxists to take women's liberation seriously. Actually, socialists have a proud history of fighting against sexism.

HOBART
Hobart branch of the International Socialist Organisation holds regular Marxist study groups. For details write to GPO Box 1898, Hobart 7001.

PERTH
Perth branch of the International Socialist Organisation holds regular Marxist study groups. For details write to PO Box 521, Waverley 6065.

CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE LUCKY COUNTRY...

CES CUTS SPARK WORKERS' ANGER

IN THESE tough times the odds in industrial disputes tend to favour the employer. But the present conflict in CES offices in Victoria shows the potential for swinging this around.

The department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET)—of which the CES is a part—is to be restructured. Each CES office is being fragmented into smaller units.

This is part of the government's general attack on both the unemployed and employed in Australia. In the middle of the worst recession since World War 2, Dawkins wants to cut staff by 700.

CES workers are to have sole responsibility for cutting long term unemployed off the dole—in effect bringing DSS work into the CES.

CUT OFF

The government also intends to spend \$1.5 million on teaching CES workers it'll do the unemployed good to be cut off the dole, and to go without such non-essentials as food.

Although the PSU has accepted the restructuring and the dispute is, on the surface, about implementation procedures, very few CES workers are happy with the changes.

PSU's initial response was a strategy of gradually imposing tougher and tougher bans. In October, the restructuring process was banned and members voted to hand in management's "surveys" (asking where they wanted to work) to the union office.

Workplace meetings later agreed on bans on public contact two afternoons a week, plus a host of other bans.

Meanwhile, DEET overplayed its hand by serving Supreme Court writs against three PSU officials, demanding that they hand over the surveys being kept at the union office. Pressure from the PSU nationally caused the writs to be withdrawn and legal costs paid.

The anger around the dispute exploded on 2 January, the first day the restructure came in.

Management disciplined 8 members who were refusing to move offices. Within 4 hours, 21 metro and 2 country offices had walked out.

The mood at a regional meeting hastily called in a pub was fantastic. As the last office arrived, there was clapping and cheering.

The general mood of cynicism and disenchantment was beginning to turn around, and a new confidence was growing.

But the delegates committee that night refused to endorse a strike arguing the members were too passive, too weak.

The delegates are isolated out in their offices year after year, trying to hold together a union there often isn't much interest in. This is a massive conservatism pressure. It led many of them not to see the opportunity to recruit new members and build a stronger union.

So when the opportunity arose, they opted for motions calling the action off if manage-

Nurses pay penalty

A TOTAL commitment to award restructuring has led Queensland Nursing Union (QNU) officials to trade off penalty rates.

Sunday penalty rates are being cut from double time to time-and-a-half. First year registered nurses will lose over \$20 every time they work a Sunday!

Evening shift penalty rates are being cut from 15% to 12.5%. This cut is greater than the pay increase nurses will get for working a morning shift which does not have penalty rates.

In return they get a small pay rise, to be phased in in 3 instalments this year.

After the results of award restructuring were made public, one union official said cuts in penalty rates were in line with "professional rates" nurses were seeking. Rumours are now circulating that the QNU eventually wants to get rid of all penalty rates and just have a standard hourly "professional" rate.

In line with award restructuring's Structural Efficiency Principle, a new career structure is also being implemented in June. The officials claim that this will be a way of advancing through the nursing profession more easily.

But the Minister for Health, Ken McElligott, argued to public sector nurses that "salary gains must be balanced by improved performance and productivity". No doubt the new structure will be yet another erosion of established conditions in the hospital wards.

The attacks on nurses come at the start of a generalized attack by the Goss Labor government on the state's health system.

It's obvious that they are out to cut the \$1.8 billion health budget. Already Nambour Hospital is losing its reputation for quality care as in line with the ALP policy to ensure scarce hospital resources weren't "wasted" on services that could be provided by GPs.

The QNU officials' complicity in attacks on nurses' wages will make it that much harder to fight the Government's attacks on the health system in general.

—by Beris Penrose, registered nurse

People who didn't want to move were directed to by the union. At the delegates meeting after this, many delegates again wanted to say that this wasn't a sell out.

They argued that, if negotiations didn't work, we could pump the action up again. But this doesn't take into account the fact that the members feel they've been defeated—by the actions of the officials.

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SOLUTION

The solution to the timid role of the officials is for more members to be involved in the union, for more delegates to be pulled into the delegates committee. The links that were starting to be built between delegates in the offices need to be strengthened.

This dispute may be over. But the government's attacks on welfare and the unemployed are not.

We can use the rank and file links which were beginning to be generated to mount a more effective fight against the next round of attacks.

—by Marcus Banks (Brunswick CES), Bernadette Fallon (Northcote CES), Glenda Wadley (South Melbourne CES), Jill Polson (Vic State Office)

Drug changes needed

A MAJOR report before the Federal Government recommends radical overhauls of the drug approval system in Australia, in particular to provide increased funding for drug trials and allow the use of data from drug trials overseas.

These reforms are essential to give people with AIDS and HIV access to potentially life saving treatments. ACT UP and other activists are now planning a campaign to pressure the government to implement the report, unlike five similar earlier reports which have been ignored.

—by Robert Stainsby

Conditions for sale

MORE THAN 200 employees at the Prospect County Council (near Sydney) have signed contracts giving up conditions unions have fought for 90 years to secure—for wage rises of about 12 per cent.

The contracts were agreed to outside the industrial system, on an individual basis and without union consultation. In return for the pay rise, they have agreed to go back to a forty hour week, to give up rostered days off, a Christmas break, a bank holiday, travelling allowances, meal allowances, higher duty pay and paid overtime.

TELECOM MOBILES, the section of Telecom that runs the Mobile Telephone system, is trying to get its employees to make ourselves work harder.

It is trying to implement job performance reviews. These reviews rely on a form completed in an intimate meeting between workers and their direct supervisors. Workers are encouraged to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and set goals for themselves. These are written on the form and signed by worker and boss to give a "contract" feeling.

The reviews are being sold to us as a chance to have a say in how things are being run. But these attempts to restructure the work place are for one reason only—greater productivity, making us work harder, producing bigger profits.

Job performance reviews try to short cut the traditional organisation workers have—shop stewards and unions. Instead they individualise people, reducing the collective strength of workplace organisations.

My workplace gave it a 100 per cent thumbs down. Our review forms are now collecting dust in the state stores. Our union, the NSW branch of the ATEA, have ratified our ban and made it state wide, in accordance with a similar ban in Victoria.

Under the new deal, workers

NSW bill threat

THE NSW government has had another union-busting victory, with the passing of the Enterprise Agreement Legislation in December.

This bill allows for awards for various occupations such as clerks, metal workers, builders labourers etc, to be replaced by one single award for a business or enterprise, as long as 65 per cent of the workers in that enterprise agree to the proposed wages and conditions. It rules out the necessity of the relevant unions to represent workers in any new award.

With the recession looming over people's heads, it will be easier for the bosses to erode hard-won conditions. While unions are lying passive more instances like the Prospect County Council will arise.

What is needed is a push among all unions to get the unions to take some sort of action.

—by Anne Kennelly

No right to strike

LAST NOVEMBER, 74 workers at the AC Hattick chemical plant in Sydney went on strike.

The company sent them a letter saying that they were in breach of contract, and if they did not return to work, that they would be deemed to have resigned.

They stayed out on strike, and the company sacked them. The State Industrial Commission agreed that the workers had effectively resigned. As a "concession", Hatticks agreed to allow the workers to apply for their old jobs.

But even those who are rehired will lose all their benefits, like accumulated sick leave and long service leave.

—by Peter May

Under the new deal, workers

SPC DEAL—WHO PAYS FOR THE RECESSION?

By Liz Ross



John Halfpenny



DEMARICATION DISPUTE

NOW THAT the Hawke government has brought on the recession that we "had to have", workers are starting to really feel the effects.

Not only are half a million already officially unemployed, but we can expect 10 per cent unemployment by March. For those who've still got jobs, the recession means intensified attacks on wages and working conditions to pay for the problems of capitalism.

Workers at SPC in Shepparton have been amongst the first in the firing line. Their "wage restraint" under Labor's Accord helped make record profits for the company. And then in 1990 the industry turned sour. A new board of management responded by getting rid of a quarter of the workforce and extracting record levels of productivity from the remaining workers.

But even this wasn't enough. Having picked the workers' pockets during the boom, the bosses were only too eager to make them fork out again during the slump. Unionists were given an ultimatum: slash your wages and conditions by \$2.5 million or you'll be out of a job.

The Accord did nothing to protect these workers. Because its underlying logic is that workers' interests lie in cooperating with their bosses, the Accord led them precisely to the SPC "solution" which saw the permanent workers—a minority of the workforce—bargain away the wages and conditions of everyone.

still lose four RDOs and penalty rates for 10 Saturdays in the year. They'll be working a 40 hour week and losing about \$40 a week in pay. Seasonal workers will lose between \$25 to \$34 in weekly over award payments, as well as their RDOs.

The SPC deal represents something more than just another "success" story for the Accord. The recession has given an urgency to the ruling class debate over restructuring Australian capitalism.

The issue in the SPC case was largely one of tactics: whether to do deals directly between bosses and workers, by-passing the union movement, or go through the officials and the Industrial

party. But none of this is guaranteed. The history of similar deals in the US isn't encouraging. In many cases, factories closed down despite workers' concessions.

So, all that sacrifice leads to is more sacrifice.

But what's the alternative? The workers could have knocked the deal back. At the Cairns engineering firm, NGEA, workers rejected a company proposal to cut the working week to 4 days. They've said they'd rather get their redundancy payouts, go on the dole—they'd be better off—and apply for the jobs if they reappear later.

More importantly, they could have taken industrial action to keep both jobs and conditions. Probably they felt too weak to do this on their own. But if John Halfpenny, instead of just making pronouncements, had offered to mobilise powerful unions like the Transport

Wage cuts don't save jobs

SOCIALISTS vehemently reject the idea that workers are responsible for the mess the system's in. Why should we have to pay the cost?

Right now this is a minority view. Most SPC workers, and 88% of Australians surveyed, thought that workers should play a role in saving companies from ruin by taking cuts in pay and conditions. Many at SPC saw it as a "sink or swim" case of survival, with no real alternatives.

But are the workers really going to benefit from these sacrifices?

In exchange for trading off approximately \$2 million in wages and conditions, SPC employees have been promised the survival of the company (and their jobs), restoration of the lost conditions at the end of 12 months, and profit sharing once the cannery is making profits. Supposedly this was a one time deal, and just for the one com-

pany. But none of this is guaranteed. The history of similar deals in the US isn't encouraging. In many cases, factories closed down despite workers' concessions.

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REFUSED

At Chrysler, five years after concessions were agreed to, the company was back in the black. But one quarter of the workforce had been laid off, and the workers' "givebacks" had become permanent, and the company refused to pay out profits.

And the idea that the SPC deal might be limited to one company was demolished almost immediately, when its competitor Ardmona announced it was trying on a similar agreement with its workforce. Ardmona didn't pretend to

be in difficulties—they made about \$2 million profit in 1990—but they claimed that SPC, with its lower labour costs, would have an "unfair" advantage. So, all that sacrifice leads to is more sacrifice.

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Workers to back them, the SPC workforce might have at least considered fighting the issue industrially. There was clearly support for such a stand: even at the prospect rally there were placards attacking the deal.

If the company is really as broke as they claim, nationalisation would save jobs without any loss in pay. Funding this shouldn't be a problem: seeing that the Hawke government can afford \$600,000 a day to send ships to the Gulf.

This would be seen as a socialist proposal. Needless to say, Victoria's "socialist left" Premier and his "left-wing" Trades Hall secretary haven't even considered it. But until we begin to consider demands of this kind, we will be stuck with the dismal capitalist alternatives we've been offered this time.

REALITY

Behind the claim that the Accord protects workers' interests, lies the reality that it undermines their conditions and the strength of the union movement.

This contradiction between illusion and reality showed up all too clearly in the official union response to the proposed SPC deal. Victorian Trades Hall secretary John Halfpenny began by claiming to defend workers' interests, and ended up giving the bosses virtually everything they wanted by another route.

Halfpenny rightly opposed the initial threat to award conditions, saying: "These entitlements are not the property of one small group of workers. They are the property of all the workers who work under those awards. No one group can just give them away."

But Halfpenny's main concern was preserving the Accord and through it Australian capitalism, so he then went on to explain to the employers how to cut wages and conditions by a "better" method—through Trades Hall, the ACTU and the union officials.

In the end that's just what SPC management did. Workers, at the specific request of Trades Hall, were excluded from the discussions.

Under the new deal, workers

Just deserts

IT WILL not be another Vietnam. Iraq is mostly desert while Vietnam was all jungle", according to the very observant US Vice President, Dan Quayle. But why Dan, are British troops wearing jungle greens and not their desert khakis?

Because Dan, the Iraqi troops have the khaki. The British army sold all its stocks to Iraq at the height of the Gulf War. "Four years ago there were no problems with Iraq," explains the Ministry of Defence. Quite.



CHEAP SHOTS

Bosses not only cheat their employees, they cheat the government. The tax office forced 319 large companies to fork out an average \$1.2 million a piece after an intensive audit program found they understated income.

Where will this end? Without wages, wage slavery will disappear. Without tax revenue, the State could wither away. Seems like many bosses are unconscious Marxists.

Company executive Stan Jones apparently told Cooper, who had served time in jail for an

Right left out

THE South African government has been trying to convince blacks that market capitalism is the preferred setup in a post-apartheid economy. But they aren't all that impressed, according to an economics lecturer at the University of Western Cape.

He asked his students which economic system they favoured. One third said they were social democrats. Another third said they were Marxists. The last third identified themselves as Trotskyists.

unlawful killing, to see how these militants could be removed, supposedly without violence. Cooper denied bringing weapons onto the site.

He was sacked after workers discovered his role. He then complained he couldn't get a \$5000 "bonus" for removing the troublemakers.

And they talk about BLF gangsterism!

Spy v Spy

A FORMER ASIO employee tells of how she was called in for a security check after her first two years.

"This is just a routine interview to see if you've been penetrated since you began working with us," the interviewer began. Then, realising his faux pas, "er ... by another human

Roll out the barrels

A SHOOTING war in the Gulf would have a dampening effect on the sales of Rolls Royces in the US, according to Rolls' managing director Peter Ward.

Still they've covered themselves—by making many of the fighter-plane engines that will "need replacing" after the war.

Justice American style

IN October 1990 Judge Thomas Penfold Jackson sentenced Washington mayor Marion Barry to six months jail for a drug possession misdemeanour.

Two years ago Reagan aide Michael Deaver was before Jackson for lying under oath, a felony. He got probation.

Barry was black.

May we quote you?

"THE result is a confirmation that the National Party is as strong as it ever was."

NSW National Party leader, Wal Murray after the party slumped from 67% to 37% in a by-election

"WE'VE defeated capitalism and what the Labor Party is doing is redesigning capitalism."

Paul Keating, after a century of ALP reformism

WE need a force that is militarily worthwhile, self sufficient, and looks good on television.

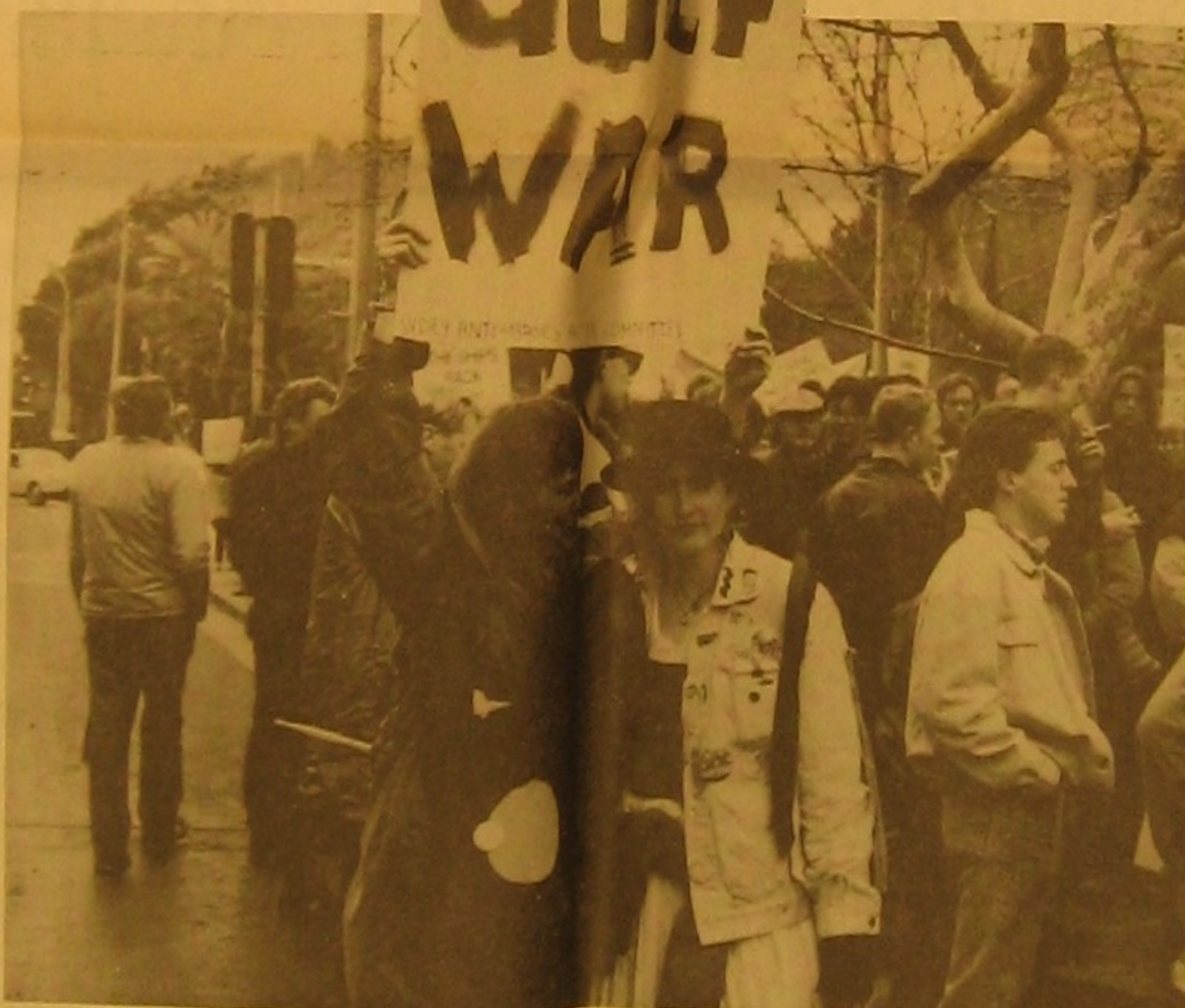
A British government spokesperson

"IF whales were privately owned maybe they would be well looked after too."

Tory student leaflet

WHY WE SAY

NO to war in the Gulf



Won't it be a war to defend democracy?

NO. WHATEVER else they may be doing, US forces certainly aren't defending democracy in Kuwait.

Only 60,000 of the country's two million people—and not one woman—had the vote. Two-thirds of the population were migrant workers who weren't even allowed to own a home.

The ruling al-Sabah family dissolved parliament when they felt like it, the last time for four years from 1985. They banned political parties, permitted no public meetings of more than 20 people and censored newspapers.

NEIGHBOURING Saudi Arabia is even worse.

The ruling al-Saud family preside over a quarter of the world's oil reserves. They enjoy fabulous wealth—King Fahd has a jet equipped as a flying palace.

But they have never allowed any kind of elected assembly. Political organisations and trade unions are banned, and there is rigid censorship.

Slavery was only officially abolished in 1963. Ten years later, there were still half a million slaves.

Shouldn't the UN and major powers defend small countries?

SINCE WHEN has any US government or the United Nations been concerned about the integrity of small nations?

Remember it was the US that invaded Panama a year ago, killing thousands to overthrow its former policeman, General Noriega. It did the same in Grenada, overthrowing the island's government in 1983.

The United Nations did nothing. The US government ignored South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia for decades. A UN Security Council resolution in 1969 demanded the apartheid regime's immediate withdrawal, but South Africa didn't pull out until 1990.

Kuwait owes its very existence to the rulers of the world's major powers.

It was created in the carve up of the Middle East after the First

World War, its borders drawn in 1922 by the British High Commissioner in Baghdad.

The British aimed to keep the Gulf oilfields under British control by separating the region's greatest source of wealth from the population centres of Iraq and Iran. It kept Kuwait as a British colony until 1961.

The result is that millions live in poverty throughout the Middle East while a clique of the world's wealthiest families rule the tiny, oil rich Gulf states.

Isn't Saddam Hussein another Hitler?

SADDAM is a tyrant. But if that's the reason George Bush wants to start a bloodbath, why did the US back Iraq through its eight year war with Iran?

His regime is no more brutal than those backed by the US in Central and southern America, no worse than Suharto in Indonesia. Suharto's genocide in East Timor—a third of the population has been killed—still surpasses Saddam's slaughter of the Kurds.

SADDAM is not a "Hitler". When Hitler took over, on the back of a smashed working class movement, Germany was the world's second greatest industrial power.

For six years before the war, Hitler was a symbol for the most reactionary movements everywhere in the world.

Iraq, by contrast, is a minor industrial power, its population just a third of that of its neighbours Iran and Egypt.

Saddam was only able to launch his war against Iran in 1980 because of US backing.

The White House declared, "We see no fundamental incompatibility of interests between the United States and Iraq". The US and other Western leaders hoped he would destroy the revolution in Iran and prevent its spread to the Gulf states.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait bankrolled Saddam's war while the US, Britain, France, Germany, China and the USSR supplied the arms.

In 1987, when it seemed Iraq might win, the US sent a naval armada to the Gulf to intervene on Saddam's behalf.

The Wall Street Journal proclaimed Iraq's victory in 1988 as "a major foreign policy victory for the US".

But the war left Iraq crippled and Saddam turned on Kuwait as a way out of his problems.

He thought he had the backing of the US. Just days before he invaded, the US ambassador in Baghdad told him,

"I know you need funds. Our opinion is you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country. But we have no opinion on Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait."

So what is the point of the war?

OIL. The Middle East has the richest oil fields in the world and its oil is the cheapest to extract.

US State Department official, Robert Kimmitt, said the US invasion was to secure "the free, uninterrupted flow of oil from the Gulf".

US magazine, Business Week, applauded, saying "Oil is worth going to war for".

At the same time, the US is a declining power. Drained by decades of high arms spending, its industries are failing in the competitive race against those of Germany, Japan and other advanced countries. Now it is

respectability for Bush's war drive. Sadly, it was never likely to do any different.

Look who makes up the United Nations' most important body, the Security Council. There's the US, Britain, France, the USSR and China—the invaders of Panama and Lithuania, the occupiers of Northern Ireland, and the butchers of Tiananmen Square—side by side with the European powers that carved up the Gulf in the first place.

For all its existence, UN resolutions have either provided a cover for the superpowers, or proved meaningless. A hundred resolutions condemning Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank have produced no result.

For that reason a US victory would be the worst possible outcome for the exploited and oppressed around the world.

That's why ordinary people across much of the Middle East are behind Saddam. They fear the United States and its bully boy, Israel, far more than the Iraqi leader.

Shouldn't we look to the United Nations to find a peaceful solution?

THE UN has done nothing more than provide a cloak of

Shouldn't sanctions be given time to work?

SANCTIONS are not the "peaceful" alternative to war. They are designed to starve the Iraqi people and destroy their industries and livelihood.

Like war, the sanctions were approved by the United Nations on the insistence of the US. They were imposed to do all the things Bush wants to achieve with war—to establish US domination over Gulf oil, to establish US hegemony in the world.

The food, clothing, spare parts and medical supplies that ordinary Iraqi people need are being stopped by exactly the same warships, helicopters and commando units that are preparing to rain death and destruction on Iraq's cities.

The drive to impose the sanctions was always part of Bush's drive to war; it was never the alternative.

Isn't Saddam preparing to use chemical weapons?

BOTH SIDES are preparing to use appalling weapons.

Saddam may well resort to chemical warheads.

But Israel is preparing to use its nuclear weapons; and the US and Britain have nearly 1000 nuclear warheads in the Gulf, ready to fire against Iraq.

We deplore all of these weapons, but we don't side with the hypocritical denunciations of Iraq's arsenal coming from the White House and Canberra.

If Saddam has chemical weapons, it is thanks to the US, British, French and German governments and the companies that sold them to him.

Can the war be stopped?

YES. Already a huge protest movement has begun to grip the West.

Just before the UN deadline, 200,000 marched in Germany, 100,000 in Britain and thousands

marched in daytime demonstrations in Sydney, Canberra and other cities.

Building this protest movement is our central task. It was the combination of huge protests along with a realisation that the US couldn't win the war that led to its defeat in Vietnam.

In America, the two national demonstrations planned for the 19th and 26th of January will be gigantic.

Polls show nearly half the population no longer support Bush.

Some soldiers have refused to go, and soldiers' letters home show considerable opposition to the war. This is what one black army sergeant wrote to the daily paper, USA Today,

"If I should return as a fatality do not drape the flag around my coffin. I did not die in defense of my country. I died because my country thought the blood of our young men and women is worth less than oil."

In Turkey, a general strike in early January saw anti-war slogans raised throughout the country. In Japan, huge street demonstrations forced the government to drop its plan to send military forces. In Greece, students have connected the war to their own grievances and their demonstrations have thrown up barricades against the police. Everyone in Australia who gets involved will strengthen the anti-war movement.

What can we do?

WE NEED more demonstrations, pickets, street meetings, public meetings, resolutions in workplaces and union meetings, and people raising these arguments everywhere.

In every school and workplace, activists should establish an anti-war group.

Students United Against War is organising for the start of the uni year.

And every branch of the International Socialist Organisation is holding meetings on the Gulf and discussing anti-war activity every week at our regular meetings.

This is important too, because it is only by building a powerful socialist movement that we can step up the struggle against the system that causes war in the first place.



International Socialist Organisation

For more information about the ISO ring Melbourne 629 3148, Sydney 261 4862 or Brisbane 229 8832—or write to GPO Box 1473N, Melbourne, 3001

Behind the crisis in the Gulf lies...

IT IS only just over a year, though it now seems like ages, since we were told that the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe would herald a new era of world peace.

One of the leading intellectual (to use the word extremely loosely) protagonists of this view was Francis Fukuyama, the Deputy Director of the Policy Planning Unit in the American State Department. In an influential essay, *The End Of History*, written in 1989, Fukuyama argued that with the defeat of Stalinism there were no great ideological battles left to be fought.

History had come to an end, liberal democracy and the free market economy had triumphed. All that now needed to be done was for a few outlying areas to be brought within the orbit of the market. He wrote:

Palestinians and Kurds, Sikhs and Tamils, Irish Catholics and Walloons will continue to have their grievances. But large scale conflict must involve large scale states still caught in the grip of history, and they are what appears to be passing from the scene.

The 400,000 US troops massing in the Arabian desert to attack Iraq dramatically destroy the notion that the "triumph of the market" has anything to do with peace. The harsh reality is that capitalism breeds war. This century has been a century of wars.

Ten million people were killed in the First World War, fifty-five million in the Second, and two million in Indochina. Despite all the talk of disarmament, the two main nuclear powers, America and Russia, still possess the means to destroy the human race many times over.

Explaining this horror is difficult for those who support the existing system. They are driven to conclude that there is some innate, instinctive drive in human beings that leads them to enjoy mass slaughter.

But human society has not always known war. The famous archaeologist Gordon Childe noted of Europe in the Stone Age:

The earliest Danubians seem to have been a peaceful folk, weapons of war as against hunters' tools are absent from their graves. Their villages lacked military defences.

But "in the later phases of the neolithic period armaments became the most conspicuous items..."

WAR IS NOT caused by some innate human aggressiveness. It is a product of the division of society into classes.

When a class of property owners first emerged, between 5,000 and 10,000 years ago, it had to find the means to defend its wealth. It began to construct armed forces—a state—cut off from the rest of society. This then became a valuable means of further increasing its wealth by plundering other societies.

The division of society into classes meant that war became a permanent feature of human life. The slave-owning ruling classes of ancient Greece and Rome could not survive without continual wars which procured them more slaves. The feudal lords of the Middle Ages had to be heavily armed in order to subdue the local serfs and to protect their loot from other feudal lords.

When the first capitalist classes began ruling 300 or 400 years ago, they too repeatedly had to have recourse to war: first to establish their supremacy over the remnants of the old feudal rulers. Then the rising capitalist countries such as Britain used warfare to expand their wealth, looting India and Ireland, transporting millions of people as slaves from



MILITARY domination and rivalry are central to modern capitalist competition and depend heavily on modern industry. LEFT: US aircraft carrier off Vietnam, 1971.

YOU CAN loathe and fear war without opposing capitalist society. But you cannot end it.

War is the inevitable product of the division of society into classes. The threat of it will never be ended by begging existing rulers to make peace.

The armaments have to be wrested from their hands by a movement fighting to overturn class society once and for all. That means mobilising the only power capable of stopping the drive towards war, the working class.

Only socialist revolution can end the horror of war.

And that is not some utopian dream for if capitalism breeds wars, it also breeds resistance.

This has been a century of both war and revolution. The First World War was not brought to an end at the negotiating table of the high and mighty, but by the mass action of millions of ordinary workers and soldiers.

At the outbreak of war a wave of patriotic fervour gripped the masses of all the combatant nations. The tiny minority of socialists who rallied behind Karl Liebknecht's immortal slogan "The main enemy is at home" were extremely isolated.

But years of privation at home and slaughter in the trenches provoked a revolt. In February 1917 the women workers of Petrograd protesting against food shortages sparked off a rebellion that toppled the Tsarist Empire. In October the Bolsheviks led the working class to power in a revolution that was to eventually take Russia out of the war completely.

Then in November 1918 a mutiny by German sailors in the port of Kiel provoked a revolt that saw workers' councils being set up in all the major cities of Germany. As one observer described the scene:

No elegant gentleman or well-to-do lady dared show themselves in the streets. It was as if the bourgeoisie had vanished from the surface of the globe. Only workers—wage slaves—were to be seen. But they were seen with arms.

In the following year the revolutionary wave spread across Europe toppling old monarchies and Empires.

Australia was not immune from this ferment. A massive wave of struggle saw the defeat of two attempts to introduce conscription and a near general strike in NSW in 1917. 1919 saw a further explosion of struggle.

The closing years of World War II also saw mass upheavals in Italy, France, Greece, Vietnam and in Germany. More recently of course the Vietnam war provoked a world wide movement in solidarity with the Vietnamese people in their struggle against US imperialism.

The anti-war movement intersected with a rising level of working class struggle to produce a virtual revolution in France in May/June 1968, the "revolution in slow motion" in Italy the following year and upheavals throughout the advanced West. In Australia the mass movement in the streets, in combination with the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people, forced the withdrawal of Australian troops and gave birth to a vibrant New Left.

The US war drive in the Gulf provoked unprecedented opposition before the first shot was fired. The task is to build on that opposition to create a movement that can challenge not just the present war drive, but the whole system that produces war.

—by Mick Armstrong

Capitalism: a system of war

Africa to the Americas, turning the whole world into a source of plunder for themselves.

Today competition between different units of capital is central to the system—competition in which crises periodically call for restructuring in which bigger units of capital gobble up the smaller. This competition has never been purely peaceful.

Indeed since the beginning of this century market competition has been superseded by military competition—a point noted by the Russian Marxist economist Nikolai Bukharin around the time of WWI.

Bukharin pointed to two tendencies at work which accounted for the nature of modern imperialism. One was the tendency to create giant monopolies that spilled over national boundaries; the other was the tendency of the state to intervene more directly in economic affairs in order to prop up the national economy and make it competitive at an international level.

The highest expression of this second tendency was the fusion of capital with the state, bringing about the emergence of state capitalism. The most complete example of this was Stalinist Russia.

THESE TWO tendencies interacted to push competition beyond the orbit of national life and drag the state into the arena of direct competition with other states.

That inevitably meant the growth of arms production—not as a minor element in the economy but as a leading component. Economic conflicts increasingly came to be settled by the military might provided by the

armaments industry, which in turn dictated the pace of growth in industries like iron, steel and coal.

The drive to war was therefore built into the modern economy. It came to the fore in the two world wars of the first half of this century.

The Second World War however marked an important turning point. It gave birth to a new imperial order—the one that has only now been dismantled. The defeat of Japan and Germany and the substantial weakening of the other great powers—France and Britain, left a world dominated by two super powers, the US and Russia.

But it was an unevenly divided world—the US was initially far superior to Russia both economically and militarily. In 1945 the US accounted for over 50% of world manufacturing production. This enormous industrial capacity allowed it to economically dominate the West without having to resort to the direct colonial control on which the British and French empires had depended.

This does not mean that the US empire was ever a "peaceful" empire. Since World War II there have been over 80 so-called "minor" wars, leaving between 15 and 30 million dead. Indeed there have been only twenty one days of peace since 1945.

Now the US and Russian empires are both in decline, it is no longer simply a two superpower world. But far from the end of the Cold War ushering in an era of peace we face a more unstable and threatening future.

For a start it is a much less economically stable world. Already the US, British, Canadian and Australian economies are in a recession

which threatens to engulf the whole world economy.

Furthermore a declining US imperialism will be increasingly tempted to make use of its still enormous military muscle to gain advantage over the rising economic power of Germany and Japan.

MEANWHILE, in the so-called Third World we have seen the rise of a series of regional powers.

These seek to exercise the kind of dominance at a more localised level which the superpowers used to enjoy globally. As we have seen recently in the case of both Iran and Iraq, these localised powers, which were originally armed and built up by the great powers, can in the attempt to consolidate their regional influence come into conflict with the massed might of US imperialism.

The US-led war drive in the Gulf reflects two factors. First, that control over the Gulf's vast supplies of cheap oil remains one of the main objectives of US foreign policy. Secondly, it represents an attempt by the US to reassert its leadership over the Western bloc. The US intervention is a salutary reminder to Bonn and Tokyo that the security of vital oil supplies depends ultimately on the Pentagon.

Those who believe that one can have peace under capitalism look to bodies like the UN to prevent war. But as the Gulf crisis has starkly revealed, the UN is merely the instrument of the great powers that dominate the Security Council. Rather than restrain the US war drive, the UN has merely sought to cloak it with legitimacy.

REVIEWS

Against 'the way it is'

THE GERMAN Marxist poet Erich Fried wrote that if:

"Philosophy leaves everything the way it is"

Then upon the way it is depends the gravity of its crime

In January you've still got the choice
You can cut the weeds before they start to bud,
If you leave them to grow high they will silence your voice
And in December you will pay with your blood.

Judging by their third and most recent album, *Through the Smoke of Innocence*, it is clear that Roaring Jack are against the crime of leaving everything the way it is.

In their two previous albums and in their live performances, Roaring Jack have consistently stressed the need for ordinary people to fight against their oppression.

DARE

In the title track of their second album, *The Cat among the Pigeons*, the band's lead singer (Alistair Hulet) argues that "oppression is the bosses' creed and profit their religion", and asks "where are the ones who'd dare to set the cat among the pigeons?"

Also on this album is *The Swaggies Have All Waltzed Matilda Away* which was written to counteract the nationalist euphoria of the bicentenary. At the end of the song we are urged to unite and organise against the bosses:

Koori and white, old Australian and new,
Brothers and sisters of every hue,
The future is ours, take the wealth from the few,
And raise the red flag in Australia.

Through the *Smoke of Innocence* contains more songs about love gone wrong than the second album, and may seem on first hearing to be less political than their earlier work.

Yet it also contains two songs which are, for me, the political and musical high points of Roaring Jack's output so far.

Song of Choice, written by Peggy Seeger, is a superbly ironic blast against political indifference and inaction which gains even more urgency and anger in Roaring Jack's upbeat arrangement. Here increasing ruling class repression and the potential rise of fascism are seen as weeds:

In January you've still got the choice
You can cut the weeds before they start to bud,
If you leave them to grow high they will silence your voice
And in December you will pay with your blood.

And the band mock complacency about the danger:
It's all right if you are running with the pack,
It's all right if you agree with all they do
If fascism is slowly climbing back
It's not here yet so what's it got to do with you.

Interestingly enough, a similar view is expressed in a piece of graffiti which came out of the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe: "Only dead fish swim with the current!"

Alistair Hulet's views on these revolutions are made abundantly clear in *October Wind*. He welcomes the massive movements from below which toppled the seemingly invulnerable Stalinist monoliths in Eastern Europe and which have shaken Gorbachev and his fellow bureaucrats:

Not since Lenin's day
Has such a fever wrung the land,
Once more the people feel
They have some power in their hand.

Power to ring the changes
And lay the tyrant low
The wind that shook the world
Has once again begun to blow.

As the chorus of the song suggests, Hulet, unlike Gorbachev and many in the West, wants the movements to grow into a social revolution which can bring about socialism from below:

And the hunger won't be satisfied
Until the great October wind has been revived.

Although the rest of the album does not have this politi-

cal and lyrical intensity there is still much to like about it. And even a rollicking drinking song like *Ways of a Rover* manages to include some trenchant criticism of conventional morality:

I was born and raised a pagan youth
You could call it my vocation
I hate your christian morals
With your rules and regulations.

So if you like celtic influenced rock which does not want to leave the world the way it is, this is the record for you.

—by Rob McCarthy

RIGHT: Roaring Jack—stressing the fight against oppression.



Weapon against racism

IN THE PAST few years, there has been a steady increase in the level of anti-Japanese racism.

Whether it has been the campaign against the multi-function polis or land purchases in Queensland, the ugly face of Australian nationalism has shown itself.

To argue against the racists, and to people who are not racists but are swept along with their ideas, we have to arm ourselves with some facts about the history of anti-Japanese racism in this country.

This is why the article by Phil Griffiths in the third *Socialist Review*, the theoretical journal from the International Socialist Organisation, is so useful.

The article, *Australian Perceptions of*

Japan: *The History of a Racist Phobia*, explains how the continued warnings of Australia being invaded by the "yellow hordes" have affected both the working and the ruling class.

CATCH-CRY

These ideas stem from the particular form that early Australian capitalism took and its geographical position in the world. Faced with an enormous coastline and a acute labour shortage, the slogan "Populate or Perish" became the catch-cry.

But it wasn't a case of just anyone being allowed into the country. The immigrants had to be from Britain so they could be relied upon to defend British (i.e. Australian) interests, and so the British government would be forced to provide some sort of security.

So, far from the British "dominating" the poor little Australian capitalists, they were actually encouraged to keep a military presence in the region and were often attacked by the Australians for not being imperialist enough!

Also, because of Australia's proximity to Asia, surrounded by "hostile non-anglo" neighbours, Australian nationalism has always been racist. For example, in 1903, Senator George Pearce, who

would soon become Defence Minister in the Fisher Labor government, commented:

...I have never feared, nor do I now fear, the invasion of Australia by any European nation...But I do recognise that in the East there are peoples alien to us in race, religion and ideals...We must shut our doors against races so foreign to us as the Asiatic races are.

It was in this context that the "White Australia Policy", the complete banning of Asian immigration, was put forward.

With Japan's victories over China in 1894 and against Russia in 1904-5, general racism against Asians began to focus specifically on Japan.

But it was not of their own choosing that the Japanese ruling class transformed the country into a modern, advanced industrial and military power. The examples of India and China displayed what would be in store for Japan if it was unable to defend itself against the great powers like Britain.

Other articles in the *Socialist Review* are on the anarchist Makhno, Stalin's industrialisation, and a Marxist critique of post-structuralism.

With an increasing need for a better understanding of the world around us, the latest *Socialist Review* is an important weapon.

—by Craig Kendal

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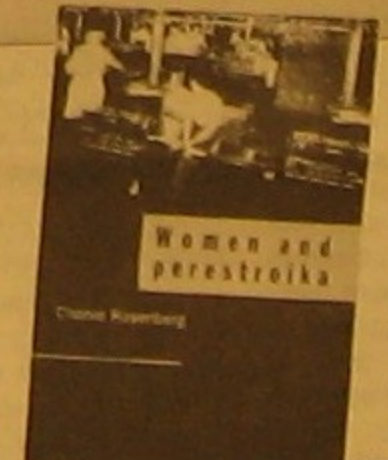
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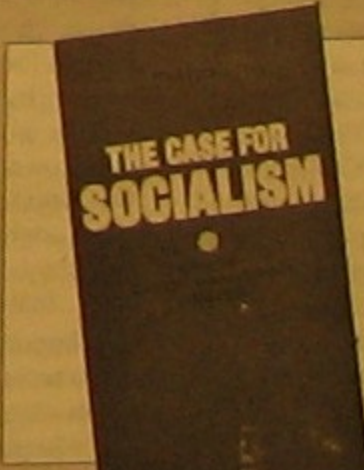


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Marxism and the fight for women's liberation

By
Tess
Lee Ack

HOW can women be liberated? This question has long been the subject of debate between Marxists and feminists.

Feminists argue that Marxist theory, because it is "obsessed" with class, cannot explain the oppression of women, or deal with questions of personal life. This is "proved" by the historical record: Marxists have supposedly never taken the question of women seriously enough. What's more, women are oppressed in "socialist" countries.

But in reality, the revolutionary Marxist tradition has a record to be proud of. Marxism, and in particular the work of Engels, provides a theoretical framework for understanding the oppression of women, and how to get rid of it. Of course, many issues have arisen since Engels' time—particularly in relation to sexuality and the ability to control fertility. But Marxists today can still use Engels' analysis as a basis to deal with these questions.

And actually, it's where the revolutionary Marxist tradition has been abandoned—in the direction of reformism or Stalinism—that problems have arisen. The historical record, from the very beginnings of the Marxist movement, makes this clear.

In his book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Engels examined the appalling experience of working class women and the impact of industrial capitalism on women's health, the family and the relations between the sexes. He did not by any means see these as trivial issues. From his observations, Engels concluded that despite all the horrors involved, the mass entry of women into the workforce was historically progressive and laid the basis for equality between the sexes.

Women as victims or fighters?

THIS focus on women as workers with power, rather than as victims, is one of the key differences between the Marxist and the feminist approach.

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels argued that abolishing the family was a precondition for ending the status of women as "mere instruments of production". They looked forward to the destruction of capitalism bringing with it the abolition of the "community of women springing from that system, i.e. of prostitution both public and private."

In *Principles of Communism*, Engels posed the question "What influence will the communist order have on the family?" and answered it as follows:

It will make the relation between the sexes a purely private relation which concerns only the persons involved, and in which society has no call to interfere. It is able to do this because it abolishes private property and educates children communally, thus destroying the twin foundation of hitherto existing marriage—the dependence of the wife upon the husband and of the children upon the parents.

These were extremely advanced ideas for the time. Underlying them is a view of the family as a social institution which perpetuates the oppression of women and a rejection of the notion that women's main role is that of wife and mother.

Within the early socialist movement, Marx and Engels' ideas were controversial. Followers of Proudhon in France and Lassalle in Germany, for example, believed that women should not compete against men in the workplace, but should remain in their "natural" sphere, the home. Marx and Engels argued for women to be organised and brought into the workers' movement: it was Marx who insisted that an English schoolteacher, Harriet Law, be appointed to the General Council of the First International. He also recommended the formation of working women's branches of the International.



IN THE PAST few years, nurses have shown that it is as workers and unionists that women have power.

A materialist analysis

ENGELS' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* provided for the first time a thorough materialist analysis of women's oppression.

He argued that it was not a "natural" phenomenon, but was associated with the development of class society. He located the rise of the family with the beginnings of private property. Once ownership and inheritance of property became an issue, the previously existing mother right had to be overturned. Engels called this "the world historical defeat of the female sex", when "the man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of his children."

With the rise of the family, domestic labour became a private service, with the woman excluded from social production, economically dependent on the man, and condemned to monogamy. Engels maintained that:

...the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry, and...this in turn demands that the characteristic of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society be abolished.

After the revolution, housework and childcare would be socialised. This in turn would lead to sexual liberation for women. Engels was not completely free of the prejudices of his times (and it would be utopian to expect him to be); nor could he foresee the impact of the development of cheap, safe contraception and abortion, still less the development of techniques such as in vitro fertilisation which open up the prospect of the complete separation of sex and reproduction. He believed that socialism would lead to the development of a "higher form" of monogamy. But he also made it clear that this could not be definitely predicted or prescribed:

What we can now conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered...is mainly of a negative character, limited for the most part to what will disappear. But what will there be new? That will be answered when a new generation has grown up... When these people are in the world, they will care precious little what anybody today thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and...that will be the end of it.

The importance of Engels' book is that it locates women's oppression in material conditions—in class society, rather than in the ideas in men's heads. He therefore shows how to get rid of it—by changing the material conditions that dominate our lives, by getting rid of class

divisions and exploitation, and destroying the institution of the family. And crucially, women themselves, as workers, have a leading role in their own emancipation. The struggles against oppression and exploitation are inseparably bound up.

The struggle in Germany

SOME OF Engels' ideas formed the basis for a popular book by August Bebel of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Women and Socialism was the single most popular publication of the SPD, going through fifty editions and many translations in Bebel's lifetime. It was enormously influential throughout the European socialist movement and brought many women into political life. A historian of the period commented: "For the proletarian woman who was intellectually alive, Bebel was almost always the way to Marx." It is easy to understand how inspiring women in the nineteenth century would have found passages like this:

The woman of the future society is socially and economically independent; she is no longer subject to even a vestige of domination and exploitation; she is free, the peer of man, mistress of her lot. Her education is the same as that of man... She chooses her occupation in such fields as correspond with her wishes, inclinations and natural abilities, and she works under conditions identical with man's. Even if engaged as a practical working woman in some field or other, at other times of the day she may be educator, teacher or nurse, at yet others she may exercise herself in art, or cultivate some branch of science, and at yet others may be filling some administrative function. She joins in studies, enjoyments or social intercourse with either her sisters or with men—as she may please or occasion may serve.

In the choice of love, she is, like man, free and unhampered. She woos or is wooed, and closes the bond from no considerations other than her own inclinations... The satisfaction of the sexual instinct is as much a private concern as the satisfaction of any other natural instinct... all bashful prudery and affectation of secrecy regarding natural matters will have vanished... all the circumstances and conditions which until then condemned large numbers of women to celibacy and to prostitution will have vanished...

Today, we can criticise certain formulations used by both Bebel and Engels. They were after all products of their times and not entirely im-

mune from the ruling ideas of their age. But this did not prevent them from creating a theoretical framework on which future Marxists such as Alexandra Kollontai could build.

And even with their limitations by today's standards, their ideas were light years in advance of anything else at the time.

The record of feminism

AT THIS TIME, feminists by and large were not advocating sexual freedom for women, did not argue the existence of a female sexuality equal to men's, did not champion gay rights and did not call for the abolition of the family as a condition of women's liberation.

Indeed, one of the main criticisms levelled at Marxists was that they stood for "free love"!

Nor were the bourgeois feminists concerned with improving the economic position of the vast majority of women so as to make them economically independent. For the most part, they confined themselves to agitation for the vote and with various forms of legal equality. It is worth briefly comparing some of the positions taken on questions affecting women by the socialist and feminist movements.

Marxists supported the democratic right of all adult women to vote as a matter of course. This compares favourably with the British suffrage movement (and indeed all other bourgeois women's movements), who wanted only restricted votes for women along class lines, on the same basis as men. Even within the socialist movement, Marxists were the most consistent supporters of women's voting rights.

For example, in 1906, the reformist Austrian SPD ran a campaign to extend suffrage to all adult males. Female suffrage was party policy, but was dropped for opportunistic reasons. This led to a major debate at the first socialist women's conference, organised by the German Marxist Clara Zetkin in 1907. The Austrians were backed by delegates from Belgium, Britain and France, who argued that the demand for restricted suffrage was more "realistic". The attack on them was led by the Marxists, Zetkin and Alexandra Kollontai.

Protective legislation for women workers was opposed by the bourgeois feminist movement for clear class reasons. Interestingly, it was also initially opposed by Zetkin, who was in general a resolute opponent of the bourgeois feminists. On this occasion, it seems she was to some extent influenced by feminist ideas, though from a different class perspective. She changed her position as it became clear that to uphold abstract, formal equality as the feminists did in practice meant the super-exploitation of women.

Abortion and contraception

ABORTION and contraception are relatively straightforward questions today.

But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were associated with reactionary currents such as Malthusianism and eugenics (the pseudo-scientific proposal to construct a "superior race" through breeding the better specimens of society).

Thus the Malthusians advocated birth control for the working class and opposed it for the middle class. These ideas were enthusiastically supported by many bourgeois feminists. Their stand had nothing to do with the right to choose and everything to do with their class hostility and fear of workers. It is hardly surprising that the workers' movement was suspicious of those who advocated birth control.

Marxists such as Lenin and Zetkin condemned laws against abortion and contraception, which they saw as democratic rights. But they attacked the Malthusians and those on the left who saw birth control as a way to reduce poverty or increase the bargaining power of the working

Marxism and the struggle for women's liberation...

class by limiting its numbers. They argued that the struggle, and ultimately revolution, was the way to raise workers' living standards.

In London in the 1880s, the radical Men and Women's Club debated issues related to sex and birth control. A number of prominent bourgeois feminists were members, but they refused to admit Eleanor Marx because she was living with a man outside marriage. The group was unable to agree on a position on birth control. Some women argued against birth control because it "vulgarised the emotions" and led to immorality. Most agreed that birth control allowed men more control over women's bodies, because men were "beasts of prey". The minority who argued that sex could be mutually pleasurable were accused of supporting prostitution!

By the early 1920s, news was coming through about the advances in women's status in Russia, and this created a new context for the debate. Communist Parties supported the right to birth control as a democratic right, not on the basis of eugenics. However, these ideas were still very prevalent. In Britain, Stella Browne tried unsuccessfully to marry the ideas of Marx, Malthus and feminism. Despite the Communist Party's support for birth control, she left it in 1923 to join the Labour Party, which refused to take a position on contraception and abortion. Her concessions to feminism led her away from revolutionary change.

The superiority of Marxism

ON THESE major issues affecting women, as well as basic questions such as equal pay, Marxists have a consistently better record than feminists.

The difference lies in the class approach. Ultimately, the bourgeois feminists were interested in formal, legal equality with men of their own class. This necessarily meant ignoring or actively opposing the rights and needs of the majority of women, those of the working class.

Feminist criticism of the Marxist tradition is misplaced in another sense. Within the socialist movement, it has been the best Marxists who have been the most consistent fighters for women's rights. The highpoints of the struggle for women's rights by socialist movements were in German Social Democracy in the late nineteenth century and the Russian Revolution. The advances made by and for women in these movements were subsequently destroyed by reformism and Stalinism respectively.

In the early days of German Social Democracy, bitter theoretical struggles took place between supporters of Marx and Lassalle over female suffrage and women's right to work. These debates were eventually won by the Marxists, and the SPD's position on women was influenced primarily by Bebel and Engels. The SPD developed a cadre of women leaders who were mostly associated with the revolutionary left wing of the party. It published lots of literature on and for women, organised women workers into unions with phenomenal success, campaigned against laws restricting women's political activity, ran Marxist study groups for women and so on.

But the 1890s saw the emergence of a new reformist current around Eduard Bernstein. He called for an accommodation to "progressive"

bourgeois elements, including those in the bourgeois women's movement. The left's fight against reformism within the party was inextricably bound up with a fight to hold the line on issues affecting women. For example, Zetkin edited *Die Gleichheit* (Equality), a magazine aimed at advanced women workers and party cadre. It contained a mix of theoretical articles and more practical information to inform and train women leaders in the working class and the party.

As the reformists became more dominant, the nature and format of *Die Gleichheit* gradually changed. Supplements were added for housewives, mothers and children; the political level was lowered and diluted; Zetkin was eventually forced to include articles about cooking and fashion.

The growing strength of reformism encouraged a revision of the Marxist position on women. Reichstag deputy Edmund Fischer wrote an article called "The Woman Question" in 1905, where he said that the existence of women in the workplace was "a capitalist evil". He went on:

The so-called emancipation of women goes against the nature of women and of mankind as a whole. It is unnatural, and hence impossible to achieve. The first and highest good in life for the woman, buried deep in her nature, is to be a good mother and live to educate her children.

The final victory of reformism came with the outbreak of World War I, when the SPD leaders capitulated to nationalism and supported the war. The only ones to oppose it initially were Rosa Luxemburg and Zetkin. For a short time, Zetkin used *Die Gleichheit* to agitate against the war, but she was sacked as editor and eventually expelled from the party. *Equality* became *Women's World* and politics virtually disappeared from its pages.

Women's work within the party, which increasingly took on a social welfare character, was taken over by reformists like Marie Juchacz. When she was elected as the first woman deputy to parliament, Juchacz announced: "The 'Woman Question' in Germany no longer exists in the old sense of the term; it has been solved." At the same time, the SPD, now in government, dealt with the mass unemployment that followed demobilisation by decreeing that women should be sacked.

For a long time, the German SPD had the best record on women, precisely because it had the strongest Marxist current. The poor record of other socialist parties (with the notable exception of the Bolsheviks) reflects either the weakness or complete absence of a genuine revolutionary Marxist current within them.

Liberation in Russia

THE RECORD of achievement in the area of women's rights after the October Revolution in Russia is phenomenal.

Full suffrage was introduced along with equal pay, equal opportunity in jobs and education, free abortion and contraception, easy civil marriage and divorce, abolition of laws against homosexuality, adultery and incest, free maternity hospital care and paid maternity leave, nursing breaks, reduction of the working day, and protective legislation with women inspectors to enforce it.

Most of these laws were enacted by simple decree immediately after the revolution. All this, in backward and impoverished Russia, was far in advance of anything that existed anywhere in the world at the time.

In its totality, this body of legislation still surpasses anything in the world today. It is hardly the mark of a party that did not take the question of women's liberation seriously.

But impressive as it was, the Bolsheviks recognised that laws were not enough, and that the backward and entrenched attitudes of centuries could not be made to disappear overnight. It was necessary to create a series of institutions to replace the functions of the family and free women to participate fully in political life.

So an ambitious program was begun to establish maternity and nursing homes, creches, laundries, mending centres, communal housing and restaurants and so on. A special women's department, the *Zhenotdel*, was set up to oversee and lead this work.

The Bolshevik government made a tremendous start on creating the material conditions which would lead to women's liberation. And



RESPONSIBILITY for children remains at the heart of women's oppression. Only socialism can end this.

what they achieved in a few short years was a vindication of Marxist theory and practice. They did not need a separate theory to introduce the most sweeping improvements in women's status in history; nor did women need an organisation separate from the party to press for their rights. The lead came from within the leadership of the Bolshevik party—women and men who were the most advanced and committed revolutionary Marxists of their day.

Their achievements were limited, not by lack of feminist theory or commitment to women's liberation, but by economic collapse and renewed war (caused by the counter-revolution and the invasion by a string of imperialist armies—Britain, America, Japan).

Rolling back women's gains

THE FAILURE of revolutions in the advanced countries sealed the fate of the Russian workers' state and of Russian women.

By the end of the 1920s, a new ruling class had arisen under Stalin. With Russia under siege and the revolution exhausted, the bureaucracy set out to take control of society and build modern industries and armies equal to the best in the West. The priority of the new ruling class was capitalist accumulation to catch up with the West. This meant the super-exploitation—and hence the brutal repression—of the working class. So on the ruins of the revolution, Stalin and the emerging new ruling class constructed a form of bureaucratic state capitalism.

It is from this point that the gains made by women started to be rolled back as a matter of deliberate government policy rather than under the force of circumstances. Women lost protective legislation, mechanisms such as piecework rates made it impossible for them to earn as much as men, and maternity benefits were slashed. Child-care continued to exist, not to liberate women from the family, but to facilitate their exploitation.

Indeed, an essential project of the Stalinist counter-revolution was the restoration of the family, forcing back on women the responsibility for housework and childcare outside working hours. There was a sustained attack on Kollontai's ideas on sexual freedom which eventually intimidated her into silence.

Marriage and divorce laws were tightened up, laws against homosexuality were re-introduced, and abortion was banned. The need for labour led to an obscene cult of the family, with women being rewarded with medals for bearing lots of children. *Zhenotdel* was disbanded in 1930 and women were removed from positions in the Red Army and leading positions in the party.

The changes in Russia were reflected in the Communist Parties. The Communist International discussed questions relating to women and emphasised the importance of bringing them into the parties and combating prejudice against women both within the parties themselves and in the working class. In the early 1920s, the Communist Party of Australia's paper, *Workers Weekly*, contained articles discussing the position of women in capitalist society compared with communism, arguing against those who opposed the entry of women into industry, campaigning for equal pay, condemning those who discouraged women from participation in political activity and so on.

By the 30s, the focus had changed. While they continued to do some good work, and never adopted the cult of the family in its grossest form, Stalinism had an impact, particularly during the

period of the Popular Fronts, when Communist Parties under orders from Moscow were trying to dampen down class differences. The CPA paper *Working Woman* became a magazine called *Women Today* which modelled itself on mainstream women's magazines, complete with fashion advertisements and household hints.

The triumph of Stalinism on the left was almost total. The tiny handful of revolutionaries around Trotsky struggled to keep the Marxist tradition alive, pressured by Stalinism on the one hand and the massive shift to the right which accompanied the post-war boom on the other. Most ended up accommodating to one or the other.

The 1960s revival

THE NEW LEFT which emerged as a result of the upturn in the late 60s and early 70s did not automatically rediscover the Marxist tradition.

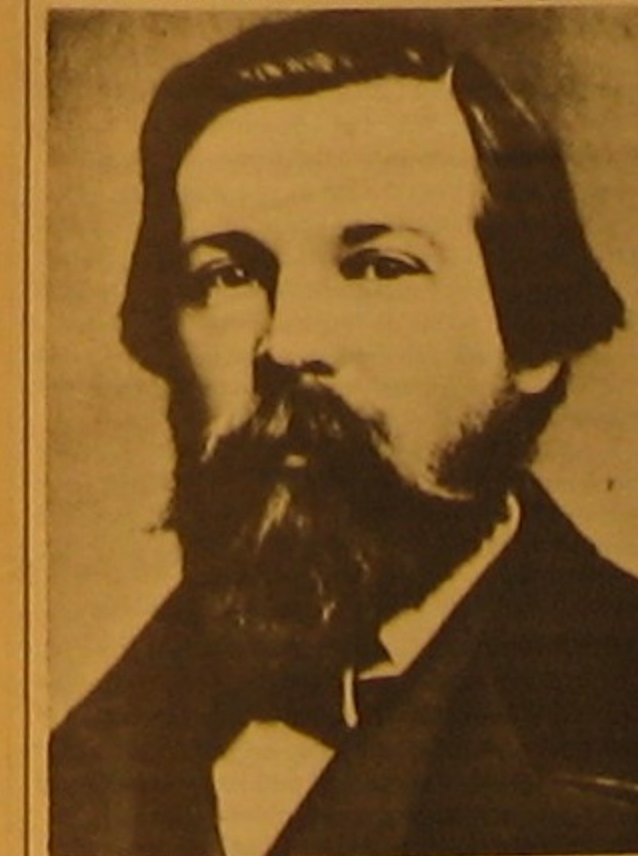
Stalinism was still dominant, particularly a Maoist Third Worldist variant. New movements—of blacks, women and gays—sprang up. There was a ferment of ideas, some new, but also a lot of old ones dressed in new clothes. Marxists had to grapple with these and made many mistakes in the process. Some were slow in responding to the opportunities created by the new movements. Others made far too many concessions to them. Our own tendency made mistakes in both directions. We had to go back to the basics of Marxism, re-examine our theory and tradition in the light of new developments.

What emerges from that re-examination is that Marxism remains the only theory that can explain the world and show how to change it. Feminism still has no answers for the vast majority of women. At best, it looks to achieving a few reforms to benefit a few women. At worst, feminists are at the forefront of attacks on women, such as the government's child maintenance scheme which has reintroduced the idea that women have to depend on the biological father for money to maintain their child—a humiliating system the early women's liberation movement fought against. Feminists have fought for censorship against pornography, lining them up with the Fred Niles of the world. Many feminist ideas today celebrate the oppressive stereotypes of women as "caring" and "natural mothers", and celebrate "difference" from men.

But fundamentally, by arguing that sexism is inevitable and that men are the problem, feminism gives up on the fight to change the world.

The key to women's liberation is still socialist revolution, the destruction of class society and social structures such as the family that give rise to women's oppression. The destruction of the material roots of women's oppression will open up the possibility to eliminate sexist ideas. This is not just wishful thinking. Time and again we've seen how ideas change in struggle, how working women and men are forced by the need for unity in struggle to challenge the ruling ideas. But we are not utopians or idealists. We recognise that, most of the time, the ruling ideas of our society dominate. Marxists obviously attempt to withstand the pressure of sexist, racist or other backward ideas; but in the absence of fundamental social change, we cannot entirely eliminate them.

The point then, is not to agonise, but to organise to change the world. With the experience of the Russian revolution to guide us, and with the numbers of women in the workforce today, we are better placed than at any time in history to fight for liberation.



FREDERICK ENGELS: his analysis showed how women could liberate themselves.

We review the recent 'United We Stand' film festival...

A celebration of struggle

MANY of the "commonsense" notions of the Australian trade union movement in recent years are rooted in the idea that traditional forms of workers' struggle, such as strikes, are outdated and old-fashioned, a legacy confined to male, blue-collar workers.

Tied in with this idea is the notion that workers' fortunes are linked to those of both their immediate bosses and the national economy. Workers in the new "service industries", we are told, need a new form of trade unionism based on negotiations over more flexible work arrangements in return for "realistic" wage demands to make sure that their bosses and their industry remain "competitive".

Perhaps somebody should have told this to the Sydney hotel workers who had to go on strike in 1989 precisely because the flexible work arrangements imposed by their bosses meant that they are among the lowest paid and most exploited.

Yet while socialists can challenge these ideas, it is easy to see why they have come to have such an influence in recent years. During a time when most strikes are unsuccessful, it is understandable that collective action is not seen as a practical alternative by many workers. The "commonsense" ideas rely on and reinforce this pessimism and demoralisation.

So the recent "United We Stand" film festival sponsored by the NSW Labor Council in Sydney during January, was a welcome opportunity to see from experience the heights the workers' movement is capable of.

And it was refreshing that most of the twenty or so films were recorded from the point of view of the rank-and-file workers themselves.

The range and diversity of the films presented was a credit to the organisers, Summer Hill Films. From the struggles of women factory workers in the USA during and after World War 2 in "Rosie the Riveter", to the history of the waterfront workers in Australia in the 1920's and 30's in "The Hungry Miles". From the solidarity of French and German miners in the aftermath of WW1 in "Kameradeschaft", to the story of the BLF Green Bans in the early 1970's in "Rocking the Foundations", what shone through again and again was the tremendous inventiveness and capacity to organise themselves that ordinary workers display during such struggles.

There were defeats and setbacks, of course, and plenty of them and all the demoralisation that goes with them. But showing the stories from the workers' point of view meant that the explanation of the defeats was not to be found in the notion of fighting itself, but in the actual development of each struggle.

Strikes are a test of strength but their outcome is not decided in advance. The question for workers in the middle of a strike is always "How do we take the strike forward?"

Almost every film told of the tussle for the heart and the direction of the strike, between those who are prepared to challenge the logic of the present system and those who claim to be "realistic" by accepting it. None more so than two new films, "American Dream" the story of a meatworkers' strike and "Amongst Equals—A History of the Australian Trade Union Movement" (reviewed below), both of which were shown for the first time during the festival.

"American Dream", by Barbara Kopple (who directed "Harlan County") is a dramatic and moving documentary about a bitter eleven-month strike at a meat-processing plant in the small town of Austin, Minnesota.

Against a background of an American trade union movement in retreat and union officials engaged in "concession-bargaining" (trading-off working conditions, the bosses at Hormel tell the meatworkers that they plan to cut wages by 25%. The reason for the cut is, of course, the "need to remain competitive"—despite the fact that Hormel has just announced a \$29.5 million annual profit.

Kopple conveys the dynamic of the strike brilliantly. With no support from their national union officials the meatworkers take it upon themselves to organise and run the strike. The confidence of the workers and their enthusiasm for demonstrations and picketing is clear from the beginning. The standard chant on the early demonstrations is "We're gonna win". The encouragement from other workers is overwhelming as the meatworkers tour the country, with the speakers at every meeting saying "Thank God somebody's taking a stand for a change." The eventual rejection of a last minute offer from the company and the vote in favour of going ahead with the strike, is greeted with a deafening cheer.

However, the company is able to shift production to its four other plants and uses management to keep some production going at Austin. This presents difficulties for the strike, difficulties which are compounded by the use of the police and the na-

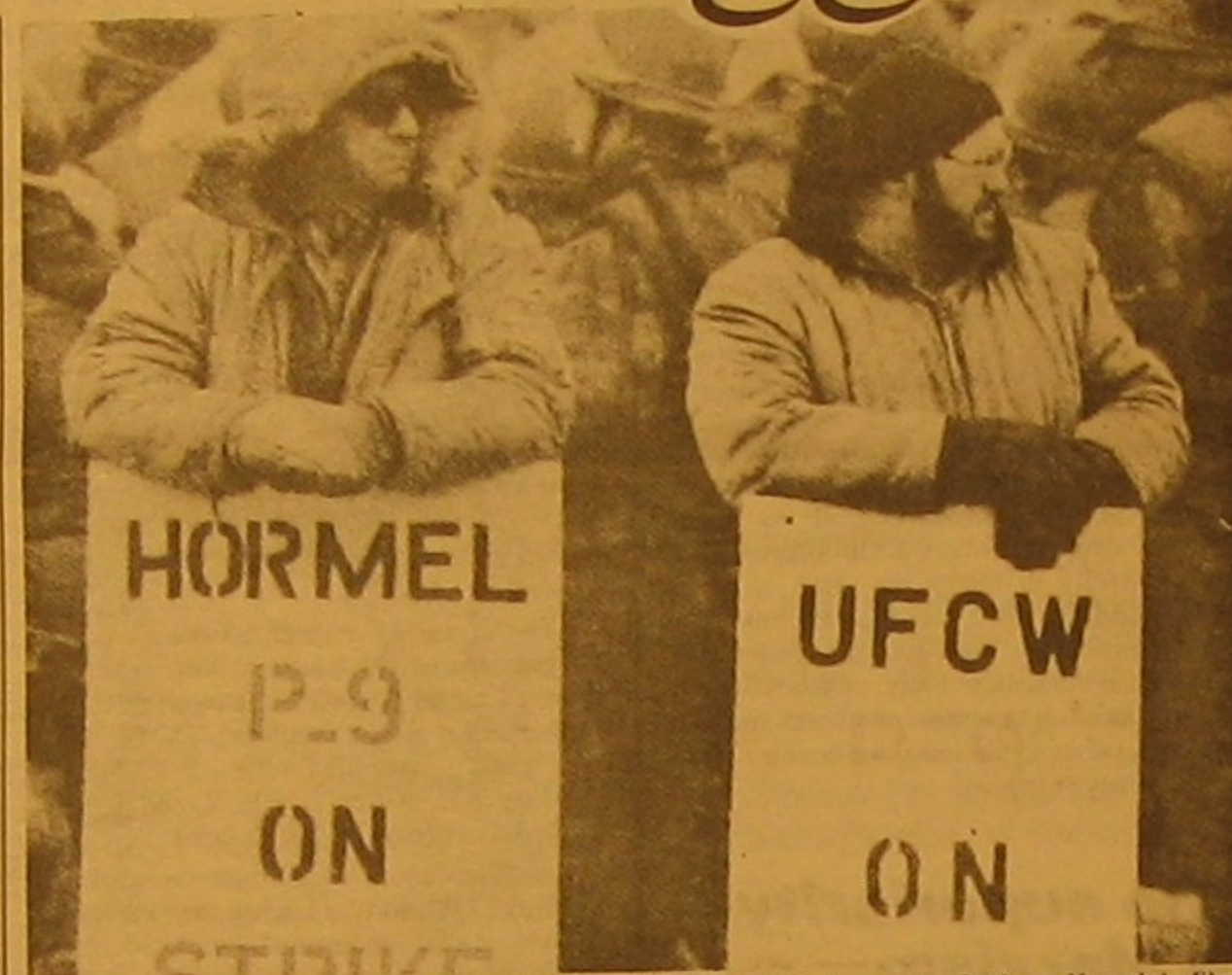
tional guard as the company begins its scabbing operation. The workers clearly see these things as obstacles to be overcome—they organise a "mass breakdown" of cars on the road into the plant at four in the morning to stop the scabs—and eventually send flying pickets to the other Hormel plants. Their officials, on the other hand, use these problems as excuses for not striking and continue to call for negotiations, saying "Wage cuts are a fact of life. You've got to be realistic."

The conflict of ideas within the strike is shown in the contrast between the striker who criticises the strategy so far and proposes the flying pickets, and the national official. He began with outright hostility to the idea of a strike when he was first approached, actively organised the weaker union members to oppose the strike and eventually reappeared in its dying stages to tell the workers, "We knew you could never do it, but you wouldn't listen and now you've lost your jobs."

Full-time trade union officials are a distinct layer standing between the bosses and the workers they claim to represent. As a result they see clever negotiations and delicate manoeuvres as the very stuff of trade unionism and workers' struggle as, at best, a support to this.

Barbara Kopple's "American Dream" is an education in the possibilities of struggle and the obstacles it faces. Anyone interested in the problems that workers face in defending their conditions today should make sure they get to see it.

—by Colm Bryce



HORMEL picketers brave the bitter winter cold to defend their wages. Barbara Kopple's film is an inspiring testament to their struggle.

The trade union history the ACTU is trying to suppress

ASTORM of outrage has erupted over attempts by the ACTU executive to censor and gut a history of the trade union movement they commissioned in 1987 for the bicentenary.

The illegal screening of Tom Zubrycki's three part TV series, *Amongst Equals*, was one of the highlights of the "United We Stand" film festival. What they hate about the series is its message that workers have only won better conditions through fighting for them—the exact opposite of the message the ACTU has pushed under the Accord—restraint, restructuring and improving the profitability of local capitalism.

As Zubrycki explained to *The Socialist*, "In the film I look at workers themselves, their experiences, their work and their industrial activity, not simply look at the institutions that represent them." This is the great strength of the series.

It covers many of the high points of the class struggle over the last century.

For example, the film documents the 1929 miners' strike in Rothbury in NSW, where the cops systematically shot at picketing workers, killing one and wounding dozens of others. Struggles such as this one in the late 1920s marked a permanent change in the political climate, which was to benefit the Communist Party.

Militant workers were disillusioned with traditional trade unionism and the timidity shown by many union officials. They were disillusioned too, with the response of Labor governments who carried out vicious cuts to wages and welfare. Thousands of workers looked towards communism as an alternative—enough to turn the CPA into a mass party.

The ACTU Executive strongly objected to "reference to the Communist Party [and the revolutionary IWW] as an organising force amongst unionists, the portrayal of actions which involved worker militancy [eg the Ford strike in Melbourne in 1973] and insufficient references to the Accord and the arbitration process."

As Zubrycki commented, "Every labour historian agrees that these groups played a significant role."

At Ford, a large number of migrant workers were involved in striking for higher wages, but as well as taking on the bosses, they had to fight their union officials who often treated migrant workers with contempt—not even providing basic services such as interpreters for union meetings.

Simon Crean didn't like the way the series' third section opened with footage from the early 1970s of Bob Hawke (then ACTU leader) being heckled by women demanding that the trade union leadership seriously take up the fight for equal pay for women.

Zubrycki has attempted to negotiate with an ACTU committee over their objections. He told us:



TOM ZUBRYCKI

Nor did the ACTU like the mention of Norm Gallagher from the Victorian BLF. After all the ACTU led the fight to deregister the BLF in 1984. And they didn't like the coverage of the SEQEB strike—a major defeat—or the Robe River strike of 1986.

But most of all they didn't like the fact that the third section wasn't a glowing tribute to the "achievements of the Accord" (whatever they might be). But in fact, this desire by the ACTU to highlight the Accord, sums up the differences between the message of Zubrycki's film and the ACTU's aims.

The Accord was sold to us on the basis that workers don't need to fight to win improvements anymore, they can be won through clever negotiations, between the union officials, the Labor government and the bosses.

This was underpinned by the idea that all Australians—workers and bosses—have a common interest in making Australia more competitive. However, in practice the Accord has meant cuts in wages and conditions.

Zubrycki has attempted to negotiate with an ACTU committee over their objections. He told us:

I wasn't aware that the committee saw its role

very much as proscribing what went in the film. I thought they were going to be a consultative committee.

They actually approved the script, but when they saw the finished film, they suddenly started to make some objections to it. Some of these were fixable and just involved changes in narration, but the problem was we endeavoured to accommodate their interests and made about three or four re-cuts for them.

But as we recut the film they wanted further and further changes, which involved quite major overhauls to the structure of the whole film in such a way that the original intention of the film was going to be compromised.

It really came down to a point where I was being faced with an organisation which didn't really want to make the film that was in the original agreement between them and Film Australia—a critical appraisal of the trade union movement for prime time television.

This is precisely what is not going to be achieved, they (the ACTU) want to rewrite history.

Jim Hagan, the official historian of the ACTU, has praised the film, describing it as historically accurate and recommending that all trade unionists see it.

The series is far from perfect. In many places it is incredibly soft on the Labor Party, failing to mention the role of Labor politicians in promoting the First World War and conscription, in cutting wages and welfare during the depression, in presiding over the system during its two major wars.

Yet at the same time as promoting Chifley as a great reformer who cared about the workers, Zubrycki also shows Chifley brutally crushing the 1949 miners' strike, jailing the union's leaders.

His left nationalist politics lead him to promote the "cause" of Australian independence from supposed US control.

And the third program is the weakest, precisely because of the compromises he made—dodging the question of the Accord and failing to address the serious problems trade unionists now face as a result of it.

Yet time and again he also answers those who say the working class is indifferent to oppression, by showing the critical role played by the unions in the struggle against the Vietnam war, in struggles for equal pay and childcare, and the Green Bans which saved large areas of parkland and working class housing from rapacious developers.

The film is a great introduction to working class history in Australia, which is why the ACTU want to suppress it. We need to stop them.

—by Lesley Penrose

Oppose compulsory AIDS testing

AS SOCIALISTS, the proposal for compulsory AIDS testing in NSW public hospitals must be vehemently opposed. While fights for safer workplaces should be fully supported, all compulsory AIDS testing does is blame the victim not the culprit.

The culprit is the current Greiner government under which we have seen major cuts in health services. In fact it is no coincidence that the proposal came out around the same time as reports of serious understaffing in public hospitals and the run down of health services in Sydney's south west.

Understandably, health workers in this situation are frightened of accidental infection of any disease. But the solution is not to isolate but organise. The AIDS Council for instance could join forces with health worker unions to fight the government's run down of services. Calls for a greater increase in funding could mean more staff so health workers do not work 72 hour weeks or double shifts which not only places themselves at risk but also the patients. Higher wages mean that more doctors and nurses stay in the public sector. It also means more beds and more health facilities.

It is union action that makes for safer working conditions, which can only benefit health workers and patients. AIDS victims should never be charged for making NSW hospitals unsafe—the guilt lies squarely at the Greiner government's feet.

Susan Petersen, Sydney

Hoechst report incorrect

THE ARTICLE analysing the Hoechst dispute in the last paper was simplistic and in some cases incorrect.

Firstly the article claimed that the "big bad monster" of legal threats against workers was pushed to the side.

Early in the dispute Hoechst used penal powers and took the Metal Workers Union to the Commission. Even after sacking 74 unionists they still threatened to fine those workers retrospectively. While it may be true Hoechst did go through with this possibly because of the dispute spreading, more "basic" legal obstacles weren't confronted by unions involved.

When the metal workers first walked out they didn't set up a picket line for some time partly because they feared use of legal action (common law writs). Once the picket was in place other workers were not encouraged to join the picket line and trucks and scabs were not stopped from entering the plant.

The police had arrived in order to break the picket, some of the unions involved not only didn't challenge this last activity but cooperated with the police to keep it passive, that is ineffectual.

The question is: why wasn't the picket line enforced? One reason was that to do so would have meant arrests and legal action against picketers and their unions.

The article also stated that one of the main reasons the union officials shied away from calling out more workers was this would mean them losing control of the dispute.

The Socialist

welcomes letters and reports from our readers.

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Letters MUST include a contact address and phone number so that we can verify authorship, and discuss any changes that may be necessary. Letters may be cut for length.

There was little danger of the union officials losing control of the dispute given the current industrial and political situation. The reason why the dispute lost is more complicated than that.

The Accord and its whitening away of the independent rank and file organisation meant there weren't spontaneous walkouts in Altona and other factories in support of Hoechst workers.

All strike action was initiated and controlled by the officials including mass rallies outside the Hoechst plant. There was no doubt with proper leadership the dispute would have won.

There is a saying about strikes, that disputes are won and lost on picket lines. The fact that at Hoechst the picket line was never effective meant the dispute was defeated.

We need greater political analysis of the recent past of workers' organisation. If we don't understand history and the political situation of the period today, we can fall into the trap of making the wrong analysis in the future.

Jill Polson, Melbourne

Public Enemy too sexist

ANNE KENNELLY states that she supports the ARA in their struggle against British imperialism despite their anti-choice position on abortion and Public Enemy in their Black Nationalism despite their sexism, homophobia and anti-semitism; why then does she not support the JDO in their struggle against anti-semitism despite their commitment to Zionism?

Personally I can no more support Public Enemy than I can support the JDO (and I DO NOT support the JDO) as I know that sexism, for example, is as central to the particular strand of Black Nationalism that Public Enemy draws upon as Zionism is to the JDO's false solutions to anti-semitism.

For example, Elridge Cleaver, who Anne Kennelly lists amongst the proponents of this form of Black Nationalism, made himself famous for the theory of insurrectionary rape, whereby, during the revolution, the black man is to rise up and seize the white man's property, including "his" women.

Taking sides in a conflict between these two horrendous ideas (Zionism and misogynistic black nationalism) as you state we must, is like taking sides in a struggle between two imperialists over who will

control Africa. There is a diversity of opinion in all political movements. Just because I disagree with Public Enemy's strand of Black Nationalism does not mean that I completely reject all strands of Black Nationalist politics.

For example, I do sympathise with the ideas expressed by Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, two Black Nationalist feminist writers. Likewise, I feel that Anne Kennelly is making a mistake when she rejects all feminisms because she disagrees with a particular strand; I disagree with many strands of feminist politics, particularly "mother earth" politics!

Naomi Hauptman, with Steve Noble, Melbourne

Are resources finite?

IWOULD like to take issue with one of the central arguments raised in a discussion of the environment at the recent ISO conference in Melbourne.

Accepting that resources are limited does not mean that living standards should be cut or population growth reduced.

The concept of limited resources does suffer from major flaws. We have only begun the search for resources. For example, in 1972 the known copper reserves were set to last until 2001. Now the estimate has been revised to 2045. The pace of discovery of oil is still more than keeping up with consumption.

Substitutes can be developed, such as synthetic rubber during World War 2. When the 1973 oil crisis hit, the use of natural gas increased.

Resources can be recycled—61% of copper, 48% of aluminium, 42% of lead, and 40% of nickel was recycled in the mid-70's.

The potential for renewable energy resources in the Third World is great. In 1980, Asia had harnessed just 9% of their hydropower potential, Latin America 8% and Africa 5%. In China, 40% of villages have small hydropower units to supply electricity.

More efficient technologies also mean that levels of consumption of resources can actually decrease while living standards and population grow. New fridges are 52% more efficient, new fluorescent lights use a quarter of the energy. Superinsulated homes in Sweden require less 89% less heat. Double-glazing, wall insulation, etc. can reduce an existing house's heating bill by 17%.

A 1986 study found that potential energy savings in Brazil, using currently available, economically justifiable technology, were 19% of total electricity use. Just imagine what the potential would be if we took away the "economically justifiable" limitation?

The potential for a reduction in energy use in a growing economy was highlighted by a 1979 study of future energy use in the UK. It found that where GDP trebled by 2025, energy consumption would increase by about 10% up to 2000 and then fall back to its 1975 level by 2025. If GDP doubled, then energy consumption fell by 14%.

When a developing country establishes basic industries and infrastructure, it uses a lot of energy, but

for each unit of increase of GDP after that, the energy required decreases as more efficient machinery is used. And the next country which industrialises requires less energy as it takes advantage of the new equipment. One analysis indicated that developing countries only need a 20% increase in energy consumption over 1980 levels to achieve a mid-1970's European level of energy services.

Similarly with the establishment of a home—once you have bought the heavier energy users such as fridges, washing machines and dishwashers, other items such as computers and videos do not use much energy.

Energy consumption in the OECD countries is actually falling, even though their economies are growing. In Japan, over a period of ten years during which output increased by 46%, energy consumption fell by 6%. This was due to the continual improvement in the energy efficiency of equipment and the existence of saturation levels.

The potential of improved efficiencies, recycling, saturation levels and the demographic transition all indicate that limited resources need not be a problem. We can provide a high standard of living for everyone in a way which will be sustainable and environmentally sound.

But this potential is held back by the illogical, rapacious, wasteful capitalist system, a system which will do anything for the profits of the few, regardless of human need, environmental impact or the resources cost.

The potential exists to drastically cut energy usage, but it will not be fully realised under capitalism. Builders often cut initial costs rather than install more insulation. Not everyone can afford extra insulation or new fridges. Recycling takes time and money. More efficient cars could have been produced years ago—but they haven't been because, as Henry Ford put it, "mini cars make mini profits". Public transport is being wound down.

The more wasteful industries are the more profitable. It is twice as profitable to produce aluminium as steel, even though aluminium requires 15 times as much power as steel. Aluminium and chemical production alone accounted for about 28% of the total industrial use of electric power in the US.

As well as the destruction of war, the war machine consumes 10% of world production. In the UK in 1980-81, the military took 20% of the output of the electronic industry.

Rather than spreading the wealth evenly, capitalism increases the gap between rich and poor. As poverty increases, population growth may rise again. For if you cannot guarantee that your children will survive, if there are no social services to take care of you when you are old, if an extra mouth is also a free extra pair of hands, people keep on having children. Then as you will be poverty which causes hunger in a world of plenty.

If we keep on going in the capitalist way, with increasing resource use and population, we must eventually run out of resources. We are running out of rainforests and wilderness. Animal species are being wiped out. Resources on this planet are not infinite.

Only by getting rid of capitalism can we end poverty and hunger and take full advantage of appropriate resource-saving technologies. Only in this way can all of humanity achieve its full potential.

Patricia Langenakker, Canberra

Marxism and culture

IT'S NOT widely known that Trotsky spent much of his spare time while commander of the Red Army writing a book about literature and culture.

A key feature of Trotsky's writing about literature was his insistence on its value and importance. He wrote in his diary in 1935: "Politics and literature constitute in essence the content of my personal life."

What is the relationship between culture, and its surrounding society and its economic mode of production?

In classical Marxism there's a lot of discussion of the interaction between the economic base (the relations of the production of material life—in our case, capitalist relations of production) and the ideological superstructure (the view people have of their lives and the world).

Trotsky in *Literature and Revolution*, the book he wrote on the troop train, described culture like this:

"Culture is the organic sum of knowledge and capacity which characterises the entire society, or at least its ruling class. It embraces and penetrates all fields of human work and unifies them into a system".

However, it was the economic interrelationships of classes that determined "the character of culture".

But this central emphasis on economics over ideology doesn't mean Marx and Engels believed economics determined everything. If this were the case, there would be no possibility of resistance—because you couldn't imagine it.

The Frankfurt School, represented by people like Adorno, Habermas and Marcuse, were profoundly pessimistic and rejected wholesale every aspect of popular culture and the dominant ideology.

Adorno argued in *Minima Moralia* that contemporary society (he's talking about the 1930s) was so corrupted that you couldn't go to the cinema, have a relationship, or have sex, without feeling totally sick as everything is totally contaminated by bourgeois ideology. This elitist approach makes it impossible to relate to any aspect of working people's lives; it's a theory of a stupid and manipulated masses.

The second influential theory is that of Stalinist "socialist realism". This demanded that any literary work give a representation of the workers forever advancing the course of the Revolution. Its tone was to be that of "revolutionary romanticism". As the left wing Australian novelist Christina Stead wryly pointed out, the real hero of such works was often a tractor. It was crudely prescriptive, demanding writing to a formula.

Trotsky had always argued against a reductionist view of literature. He saw art as capable of disrupting and challenging traditional assumptions, without necessarily having to embody any "correct line" to be worth reading.

The Frankfurt and Socialist Realist schools, then, were in essence anti-Marxist. But their ideas tended to dominate over those of theorists like Bertolt Brecht until the rise of the Birmingham School of Cultural studies in Britain in the 1960s. This had a new way of looking at popular culture.

The Birmingham school insisted that there wasn't one innate meaning in a literary text, but that people reading them produced their own meaning according

to their own view of the world.

Diane Fields' review of *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, in a recent *Socialist* also uses this idea. The film is read by the 60s ex-radical Richard Neville as immoral and needing to be censored. This view would undoubtedly be shared by someone like Rona Joyner though she might (tear on different parts of the film as a problem. But as Diane points out, it can also be read as a critique and exposure of bourgeois society.

The Frankfurt School saw people watching a screen just as passive receptacles who were filled with bourgeois ideas as a result. By contrast, writers like John Docker use the idea of reading being "a site of resistance". He does a comparison of *New Price is Right* and *Mastermind*.

In an elitist view, *New Price* could be seen as a hideous celebration of consumerism, capitalism and greed. But Docker argues that it is a show where aspects of the actual conditions of working people's lives are portrayed. By contrast, *Mastermind* is a show about bourgeois individualism: contestants show off their "intelligence" in a soundproof box. Docker says *New Price* is a collaborative and participatory show, and even the audience is not passive.

This may err on the side of populism (romanticising the current conditions of working class life). But it's a lot better than the Frankfurt School's elitist writing off of popular culture as simply manipulation and control.

Works of art or literature have political effects but these are not as simple as those of a manifesto or a piece of political theory. The point of the latter is for readers to draw from it the clear meaning that the writer intended. Artistic production can't control the meanings produced from it in the same way. Hence, even works that seem to endorse dominant ideas can be used by readers to produce a critique of this, and to imagine different futures.

—by Carole Ferrier

The Socialist

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Gorbachev sends in the troops...

Russia's bloody crackdown

By
Ian Rintoul

ECHOES OF TIANANMEN SQUARE ARE RINGING FROM THE STREETS OF VILNIUS.

As we go to press at least twelve people are dead, and hundreds more wounded. Some were crushed, fighting to hold back the tanks of the Russian army, just as the students were crushed by the butchers of Beijing.

Gorbachev has effectively imposed military rule on Lithuania, under the auspices of the pro-Moscow rump of the Lithuanian Communist Party, calling itself the Committee for National Salvation. In the process he has provided an unequivocal answer to those who wondered who would be the next dictator of the Soviet Union.

EMPIRE

Gorbachev is desperate to preserve the empire that Stalin created. He has said that it was the local military commander who was responsible for the murder in Vilnius.

But it is Gorbachev himself who has used repression since May last year in an attempt to strangle Lithuanian independence. Even after the extent of the brutality was revealed, Gorbachev lent his support to the military's onslaught.

It is not the first time, Gorbachev has used repression against popular demonstrations. In 1988, a nationalist demonstration in Tbilisi, Georgia was attacked by a force of largely Russian soldiers using sharpened shovels and a mysterious poison gas. More than twenty people died.

Even more died in Baku, when troops put down a nationalist uprising in Azerbaijan last year. Earlier this month troops of the Interior Ministry seized control of the main printing press in Riga, Latvia.

Thousands of paratroops are being deployed in Latvia and Estonia to "round up draft dodgers and army deserters." It seems only a matter of time before these Baltic States face rule by presidential decree.

Troops are still occupying parts of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldavia and the Ukraine, while Georgia has been issued with an ultimatum to comply with demands from the centre or face similar military action.

PROTEST

The tent city of protest outside Hotel Rossia where the deputies to the Congress and Supreme Soviet are housed during sessions, was flattened by police on 31 December.

The offices of Inter-fax, an independent news agency in Moscow have been closed. Authorities raided the offices and confiscated equipment to silence a source of information with a different opinion of the military action in Lithuania.

The state news constantly carries the message of chaos and disorder in the republics and throughout the USSR while the army is portrayed as the only force able to restore order.

For some time now, Gorbachev has moved to place himself at the head of the conservative forces in the bureaucracy.

Even *Moscow News*, concerned with the creeping authoritarianism of Gorbachev (and the fate of parliament in the USSR), asked the question, "...will the 4th Congress [of Peoples' Deputies] be the last?" and recorded Yegor Ligachev (long regarded as a figurehead of the most conservative) saying,

Many of Gorbachev's proposals seem realistic to me now; on the structure of executive authority, on the strengthening of law and order...

On the domestic front, Gorbachev is tightening the screws. New enterprise laws remove even the fig-leaf of workers' control such as the right to elect some directors at enterprises level. Gorbachev has used the shortages of basic food supplies to place the KGB in charge of supervising food distribution to re-establish control from the centre.

At a recent meeting of 3000 enterprise managers from across the Soviet Union, Gorbachev promised to "restore order in the enterprises."

The understanding between the world's two superpowers, and the importance of maintaining a world order to their advantage, means no-one should be surprised that Bush will turn a blind eye to the imperialist domination of Lithuania. It is clearly a payback in appreciation of Gorbachev's acquiescence in the US imperialist intervention in the Persian Gulf.

CONTEXT

Gorbachev's manoeuvres in the name of perestroika are only understandable in the context of the extreme crisis that confronted the rulers of Russia at the beginning of the eighties and continues to dog the bureaucratic command economy.

It is an economy and a political system that has nothing to do with socialism. Gorbachev is neither restoring capitalism nor reforming socialism.

He is desperately trying to prop up Russian state capitalism, and, in the process, to save the ruling elite of which he is a part.

Like rulers all over the world, Gorbachev wants workers in the Soviet Union to pay the price for his own salvation. And like rulers elsewhere, he is quite prepared to use the tools of repression and violence.

The outrage in Lithuania is far from the end of the savagery the Russian rulers are prepared to unleash. The ghost of Stalin once again haunts the Soviet Union.



Lithuanians protest for independence. Gorbachev's response: tanks.

The struggle rolls on...

MASS PROTESTS and strikes have continued to rock Eastern Europe during the northern winter.

A general strike in Bulgaria in late November forced the government of Andrei Lakanov to resign. Bulgaria's half million strong independent trade union federation, Podkrapa, was at the head of the strike movement. When they were joined by Bulgaria's official 3.6 million strong trade union federation that put the final nail in the government's coffin. At the height of the crisis students took to the streets and set up barricades in central Sofia.

Andrej Lakanov came to prominence in late 1989. While Stalinism was collapsing across Eastern Europe, he

staged a coup inside the Bulgarian Communist Party and ousted the old hard line Stalinist leader Todor Zhivkov. His was the only reformed Communist Party able to hold onto power by swimming with the tide.

However a mounting economic crisis, food shortages, power cuts and rationing saw the popularity of his government fall away almost overnight. The economic program that the Lakanov government had introduced was drafted by the United States Chamber of Commerce.

Meanwhile in Albania the last of Eastern Europe's hard line Stalinist regimes still holding on to power was forced to make

massive concessions in the face of mounting student and worker protest.

It began with student protests at Tirana University. Albania's President Ramiz Alia attempted to end the protest by making concessions. He sacked half of the ruling Politburo and made tenuous steps towards a multi-party system—something the Albanian regime had vowed never to do.

The concessions backfired. Workers joined the student protests and running battles with the security forces erupted in at least six cities across Albania. The regime restored "order" using troops and tanks.

In Romania opposition has continued to mount to the Ilescu government. Inspired

by the successful general strike in Bulgaria, union leaders in early December threatened to topple the government.

The government waved the big stick warning that the "consequences would be grave".

At the last moment the 100,000 strong National Drivers Union called off a threatened strike after the government made concessions on their wage demands and promised to amend its economic reform program.

But strikes of teachers and health workers continued—as did a strike by 200,000 Romanian students, demanding the resignation of Ilescu and the Prime Minister Roman.

—by Mark Gillespie

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