



To Hell with Hawke's Accord — Unchain the Unions!

Smash Petersen's Anti-Union Assault!



1969 mass strikes fought back Penal Powers (left); Petersen's cops bust picket (right) — Hawke's Accord shackles the workers.

Mass Pickets to Shut Down the Power Stations!

The all-out assault on the trade unions by the Queensland National Party government of Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen has brought the labour movement in this country to a crossroads. Petersen's sacking of 1000 striking South East Queensland Electricity Board (SEQEB) workers, members of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU), and his new slave-labour legislation has posed point-blank the need for the trade unions to fight for their very existence. Hawke's "consensus" with this South Africa-loving swine and the Labor government's lockstep alliance with the anti-Soviet fanatics in Washington fuels the reactionary climate that has paved the way for this assault. Internationally, Reagan's smashing of the US air

traffic controllers' union PATCO and Thatcher's defeat of the heroic British miners have emboldened Petersen. In the imperialist "free world", preparations for anti-Soviet war means war on the unions at home.

Petersen wants to turn his Queensland fiefdom into a low-wage non-union haven like the American south, throwing out the window the Laborite norms of "legal" trade unionism protected by the Arbitration courts. And after three months he's getting away with it, thanks to the treachery of Hawke's labour lieutenants who have done their damndest to kill this struggle, hoping to make a deal. But Petersen is not interested — he wants to break Hawke's Accord and bring down his floundering government, showing the ruling class that the unions' power can be broken by the naked fist of the capitalist state.

Bjelke-Petersen has thrown down the gauntlet to organised labour — let him feel its power! To hell with Hawke's Accord, which strangles and demoralises the workers' ability to organise and fight. This battle can still

be turned around and won! In Queensland and across the country there is widespread, eager sentiment for active labour solidarity to crush this anti-union offensive, to stand up and fight after years of eating shit under Hawke's one-sided class peace. The key remains the battle for the Queensland power stations, the energy arteries of the state's industry and commerce. Pull out the power station operators and shut them down through mass picketing! The miners, railwaymen and transport workers must ensure that coal supplies to the power stations are stopped dead. There must be solidarity strikes to bring the full strength of the whole labour movement to bear, centrally in Queensland, the battlefield, to build mass picket lines at the power stations, but also backed up by strike action nationwide. Unleashing the power of the working class would bring down Bjelke-Petersen, shatter the Accord, and open the way for a working class offensive against Hawke's Cold War government. Reinstatement the sacked SEQEB workers

with full union rights! Drop all charges against arrested pickets! Smash Petersen's anti-union assault!

Bjelke-Petersen's onslaught has turned into another full-scale crisis for Hawke and his fragile Accord, coming right on top of the ANZUS debacle and the plummeting value of the dollar. Recalling his prominent part in the downfall of Whitlam in 1974-75, Petersen now threatens to destroy Hawke by unleashing the state and capitalist reaction against Labor's union base. Hawke knows that any serious fightback by the unions will shatter his "class peace" and his Labor Minister Willis has already threatened that the Labor premiers will follow Queensland's example in "essential services" if necessary, not that Wran, Cain and Burke are any strangers to sacking strikers and scabherding.

In a few short months Hawke has descended from near-deity status to deep political trouble, and the key date was his flinch on the MX missile in February. The Cold War is polarising

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Cockatoo Workers' Victory Jolts Bosses

As the collection of press clippings show below the reinstatement victory scored by sacked ironworker Neil Flormirell and Cockatoo Island dockyard workers really shook sections of the Australian ruling class. A special *Australasian Spartacist* supplement (3 April), "Make the Unions Weapons of Struggle", in this issue tells the real story. It was a significant victory, not only against the dockyard bosses, but against the social-imperialist government as well. The workers struck a blow against the government and its war machine and trampled on its social-democratic mechanisms for suppressing labour militancy: craft

unionism, arbitration and the rotten "Accord". Coverage of the struggle was class-partisan: the revolutionary Trotskyists of the Spartacist League on the workers' side; the bourgeois dailies for the bosses and ALP government. The reformist left press, with their loyalty to the government and arbitration, said nothing about either the victory or the bosses' response. We distributed the supplement, reporting the workers' victory and drawing the lessons from it, in thousands to major centres of proletarian power in NSW, Victoria and at mass meetings of striking

linesmen in Brisbane. It has touched a chord among militant unionists who've had a gut full of Hawke's "consensus".

Sydney's *Telegraph* and *Sydney Morning Herald* as well as the *Australian*, the Brisbane *Courier Mail*, and the shipping bosses' *Daily Commercial News* all addressed their masters' defeat. They reported the 16 April statements of Arbitration Commissioner Ted Bennett on the case, which predictably attacked the unions, wistfully recalling the days when Cockatoo Island was the Biloela Convict Settlement and whining that now "It can be evacuated at a moment's notice at the blowing of a delegate's whistle". Bennett (a former official of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union) is clearly worried that the battle by Flormirell and the other dockyard workers will be repeated on a far grander scale in the face of the hundreds of layoffs threatened in the weeks ahead.

The theme of the "good old days" of convict labour was argued most shrilly in a 19 April *Australian* editorial

titled "Valuing Australians in Cuckoo Land". Pointing to the Bjelke-Petersen government's example as the way of bourgeois salvation, the editorial raged about a "grave institutionalised problem... our unions have too much power... there is no countervailing power to bring order and discipline to the scene". Condemning "reckless and irresponsible attitudes adopted by dockyard workers", it demanded, "Are we as a nation going to do anything about this sort of behaviour or not?"

Having felt the fist of raw proletarian power at Cockatoo Island the bosses demand that their servants in the ALP and ACTU bureaucracy keep the workers in line, and threaten them with the "Petersen option" if they don't. Militant workers at Cockatoo must not be bamboozled by the bosses and their union bureaucrats who plead the company's Thatcher-like case that the yard is "uneconomic". They must consolidate this victory, assimilate its lessons and prepare to answer new attacks as one solid fist. ■



SLL Bigots: Pimping for Cain Defend Alison Thorne!

MELBOURNE: Since the Cain Labor government removed Alison Thorne from her teaching position at Glenroy Technical School in November 1983, the campaign against her reinstatement has rallied reactionaries of every stripe, emboldened in this Cold War climate. Thorne was witchhunted for defending the vulnerable Paedophile Support Group (PSG) — who believe in the right to consensual sexual relations between adults and youth — against a vicious government/cop frame-up and for speaking out against reactionary age-of-consent laws. Union-hating bigot Derryn Hinch, who started the hysteria on his 3AW radio program, is still after Thorne, suing her for libel after she charged he maliciously edited her 3AW interview.

Now the pimps for Islamic despots Qaddafi and Khomeini in the Socialist Labour League (SLL) are selling their services to Victoria's "Mr Clean", obscenely front-running an anti-gay campaign against Thorne inside the Technical Teachers Union of Victoria (TTUV). Last November leading SLL supporter in the TTUV, Martin Mantell, denounced strike action to force Thorne's reinstatement at the union's state council as "a provocation against the TTUV", demanding the union back up Cain and the witchhunters by issuing a press release opposing paedophilia (*Workers News*, 3 November 1984).

For any democrat, let alone self-proclaimed Marxists, positions on social questions such as paedophilia should be guided solely by the principle of effective consent, and opposition to state interference — state out of the bedroom! (See "Defend the PSG!", *Australasian Spartacist* no 105, March/April 1984).

The witchhunt of Thorne has set a dangerous precedent, where the state's "thought police" can take away the job of any radical teacher. To her credit Alison Thorne has fought this anti-gay and anti-sex

hysteria campaign, and there are already over a dozen union branches and three school councils demanding her reinstatement. But the Healyite bigots have not let up. At a 27 March extraordinary general meeting of Broadmeadows West TTUV branch SLL supporter and branch chairman Peter Symonds played to the current bourgeois hysteria over incest, AIDS and child abuse to get a motion passed opposing Thorne's reinstatement.

The Healyite SLL, for all their rhetoric against the Hawke and Cain governments, grovel before the bigotry and bourgeois respectability of the social-democratic labour aristocracy. It is working-class youth that are set up, hounded and jailed under the age-of-consent laws these pimps are so eager to defend. The Healyites seem to have an instinct for obscene social causes, for witchhunting and provocation, for the most cruel, deadly, clericalist and state-enforced sexual repression such as, for example, the stoning to death of unveiled women and homosexuals in Khomeini's Iran.

At Broadmeadows West one union militant stood up to this wretched demagoguery and forthrightly defended Thorne. This must be the stand of all genuine working-class fighters, that the TTUV fight for Thorne's reinstatement with full back wages and seniority.

The real sexual crimes against children and youth are often carried out in the prison of the bourgeois nuclear family, fuelled by a society that cannot provide jobs for its youth, where working-class kids are schooled in run-down holding pens like at Broadmeadows, a typical suburb lacking adequate social services and facilities for youth. The party we seek to build aims to change all that, fighting as the tribune of all the oppressed and exploited. Smash the Cain government's morality witchhunt! Defend Alison Thorne! ■

Letter

Dear Comrades,

On reading back over my interview in the *Australasian Spartacist* special supplement, I felt I should add a couple of points about the shop committee's *Telegraph* election advertisement. It is true that the advertisement's call upon workers not to support Labor in the election reflected real and felt disillusionment in the Hawke government. But the shop committee's ad attempted to channel this disillusionment and the need to fight against the layoffs into a jingoist campaign to build a second supply ship for the Australian Navy.

The *Telegraph* ad nevertheless went way too far in the eyes of the union officials. On the very same day that the ad appeared, Cockatoo Island workers were called to a mass meeting where we saw the biggest array of union officials we've seen for years lined up to read us the riot act. They pushed through a motion that effectively promised no more calls against voting Labor, warning that the island would be disowned by the ACTU if there wasn't a backdown. Although there was considerable dissatisfaction with the officials' ultimatum, that was the end of any more such ads from the shop committee.

The point remains that for those militants who cannot stomach Hawke's Cold War austerity government a class struggle alternative is crucial, a revolutionary workers party that can lead a real fight against layoffs and the austerity drive.

In struggle,
Neil Flormirell
26 April 1985

Correction

In the 3 April *Australasian Spartacist* supplement as originally issued, the caption of the reproduced Statement to Cockatoo Island Workers listing union affiliations of the 41 signatories inadvertently omitted that 14 AMFSU members also put their names to this statement for industrial unity. This has been rectified in the supplement as included in this issue.

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2, 3, Many Defeats for US, Australian Imperialism!

Hail the Victory of the Vietnamese Revolution!

30 April 1975: "Giai Phong! Giai Phong!" rang the cries down the wide avenues of Saigon — "Liberation!" Triumphant North Vietnamese combatants rolled in on tanks to join National Liberation Front guerrillas to proclaim victory from the steps of Independence Palace. The swiftness of their final offensive had surprised everyone — not least their own military command — as the US-backed puppet army crumbled like rotted, worm-eaten wood. A half million American soldiers, a million South Vietnamese troops, the most advanced military arsenal in the world, massive B-52 carpetbombing, napalm, chemical defoliants, assassination programs organized by the CIA — one of the most brutal wars in history could not crush the fighting spirit of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. As we wrote then:

"The military victory of the DRV/NLF marks the end of 30 years of civil war against colonialism and imperialism and their local allies. It means the overthrow of capitalist rule in South Vietnam, a historic conquest for the working people of the entire world and one which must be unconditionally defended by class-conscious workers against imperialist attack.

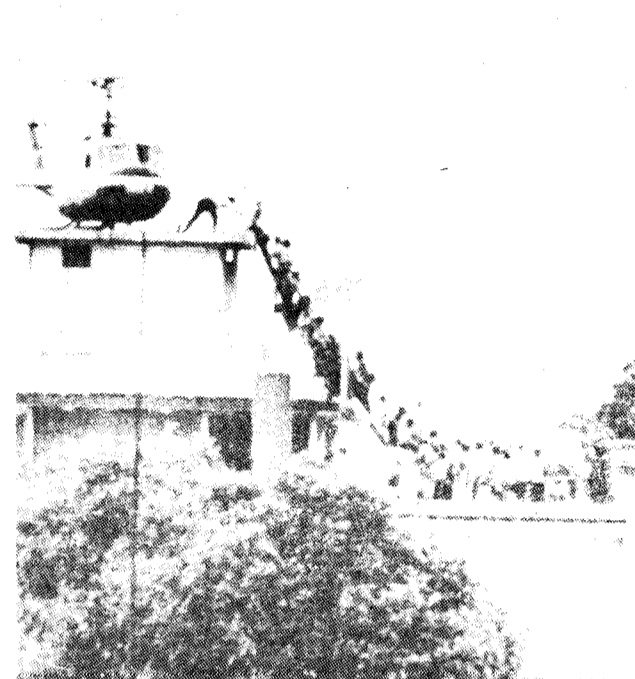
"We hail this stunning defeat of US imperialism, the first in a major war during this century, and greet the victory of our class brothers and sisters in Indochina with internationalist proletarian solidarity. The struggle against the imperialists' Vietnam war has also been a major task of socialists in the imperialist centers, dominating the political experience of a whole generation of young aspiring revolutionaries."

— *Workers Vanguard*, no 68,
9 May 1975

The Vietnam War marked a decisive turning point in world history, particularly in the US and Australia, where the imperialist rulers saw their armies go down in humiliating defeat. The so-called "American century" died in the rice paddies and jungles of Vietnam. The anti-communist prejudices of the '50s that portrayed the "free world" fighting to save the rest from the red menace were shattered as young soldiers discovered they were sent to fight an entire people, an armed people united in a revolutionary war for national liberation and socialism. A generation of youth saw the true face



Salgon April 1975: Left, NLF victors roll into presidential palace; Right, fleeing rats on US embassy roof mark Imperialism's final hour in Vietnam.



Tenth Anniversary of Liberation of Saigon

of this racist capitalist system, its arrogant, bloodthirsty barbarism.

Richard Nixon — who as vice president in 1954 argued the US should use nuclear weapons against Vietnam to forestall the final defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu, who as president directed massive bombing raids against civilian areas of North Vietnam — today titles his memoirs *No More Vietnams*. All the insipid "left" apologists for imperialism embrace this slogan. "No More Vietnams" means no more humiliating defeats for imperialism — no more *losing* wars. It is a consciously counterrevolutionary call. We Marxists reply: "Long live the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution! Two, three, many defeats for US and Australian imperialism!"

The victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants was *our* victory, and the victory of opponents of injustice and class exploitation everywhere. Their heroic defeat of the US war machine stayed its bloody hand for a decade, buying time for precarious victories of anti-colonial insurgencies in Angola and Nicaragua. In Australia it exposed and cracked apart the ruling

class's smug imperialist arrogance and "yellow peril" anti-communism, radicalising a whole generation of youth. But the imperialist monster is on the rampage again, as Reagan drives headlong toward nuclear holocaust in his lust for war against the Soviet Union and its allies.

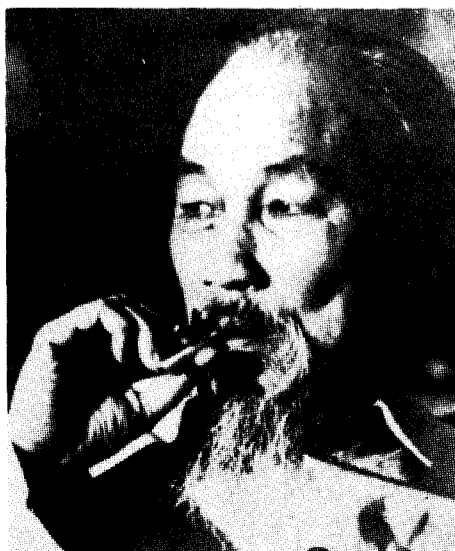
Australian imperialism, with its jackal-like need for a bigger imperialist patron to protect its exploitation in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, is as much a Reaganite lackey under Hawke as under the Liberals. Today Australia's rulers hope to regiment a new generation under the banner of a reborn nationalism to sacrifice and die for the ambitions of racist Australian imperialism. In solidarity with revolutionary struggles abroad, from Central America to South Africa to the Philippines, a new generation must be won to the cause of proletarian revolution, to build a Marxist workers party that can turn this continent from an outpost of white imperialist reaction into a bridgehead for social revolution throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Those who would fight against death

squad terror in El Salvador, Nicaragua or the Philippines must learn from the Vietnam War that there is no "political solution", no "middle road" between capitalism and social revolution; that only the international extension of insurrectionary class struggle can prevent imperialist-inspired counterrevolution. A movement against imperialist war bound to any wing of imperialism cannot win. In Vietnam, it was the heroic NLF/DRV forces which drove the US and its puppets from the country, while the liberal-led antiwar movement dissolved. The task remains today to build a genuinely anti-imperialist movement which looks to the international working class to advance the cause of the oppressed to victory.

The revolution in Vietnam established a society like the Soviet Union, where capitalism has been overthrown but a privileged caste, the bureaucracy, maintains political control over the workers. Those youth of today who are groping toward a Marxist understanding, a program to guide them in the struggle to change the world, have

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Ho Chi Minh

May/June 1985

Telegram

Sunday, 7 February 1965

President Ho Chi Minh
Democratic Republic
of Vietnam
Hanoi, North Vietnam

Spartacist in fullest
solidarity with defence of
your country against
attack by United States
Imperialism. Heroic struggle
of Vietnamese working
people furthers the
American revolution.

Spartacist Editorial Board

SPARTACIST LEAGUE FORUMS

Vietnam was a Victory! 2,3, Many Defeats for Imperialism!

Speaker: Greg Blythe (SL Central Committee)
Recently returned from visit to Vietnam

Melbourne
7.30pm Tuesday May 7
YWCA Rooms 7 & 8
3rd Floor
489 Elizabeth Street

Unl of NSW
1pm Thursday May 9
Room 211
Morven Brown Building

Sydney
7pm Friday May 10
Teachers Federation
Sunderland House
Meeting Room 2
2nd Floor
73-77 Bathurst Street

For more information call Sydney (02) 264-8195 or Melbourne (03) 654-4315

Below is a report by two Spartacist supporters who recently visited Queensland.

"You Bastards Won't Destroy Our Unions!"

Our first meeting with striking electricians in Queensland was at the New Farm picket on 17 April. We distributed the *ASp* supplement, "Make the Unions Weapons of Struggle!", which was eagerly received by militant strikers. There was firm sentiment amongst the picketers to fight, to "pull the plug" on Petersen, closing down the power stations. One striker exclaimed: "Boy, when things like this happen, it's you socialists that tell the truth!", reading aloud from the supplement: "When Bjelke-Petersen sacked a thousand lineservicemen, mass pickets to shut down the power stations could have quickly smashed his anti-union power play." The striker continued: "We had the bastard by the balls then and the TLC took it away from us." The militancy was combined with outrage at the treachery of the TLC/ETU tops which had the power turned back on and sent other striking ETUers, as well as Mt Isa workers and railway workers back to work last February. Some militants extended their anger to the Hawke government and its agents in the ACTU. As one strike committee member told us, "Hawke is worried about the effects of this dispute on the Accord, if it spreads", and pointed out how Hawke had already used ACTU secretary Kelty to get the lights

turned back on. There were about 300 picketers at New Farm that day. About 150 cops marched in, picking off the most militant and the most vocal. They were obviously well drilled, and they were vicious with chokeholds, kicking and armtwists. When they arrested young seaman Bob Carnegie, he fought back, yelling: "you bastards aren't going to destroy our unions!" A doctor arrested at the same time examined Carnegie, diagnosing severe bruising to the neck, a result of the deadly chokehold being used by the Queensland cops. Carnegie remains in jail, refusing to sign the bail conditions which prohibit going back to any pickets. He's become a real hero across Queensland for his stand, and rightly so! All Australian workers must demand freedom for Bob Carnegie! A spirited picket is set up daily outside Boggo Road jail where Carnegie is held.



Special Branch could even grab ETU head Devereux off street!

We talked with strikers about the need to build real pickets, like those built by the heroic British miners who battled Thatcher's army of scabherding cops for one year. This struck a chord, because there was real frustration in the face of the one-sided onslaught by the cops going on at the pickets. What we saw at New Farm was a picket line certainly, at times militant, with the cops making charge after charge to decimate the ranks of the picketers, ultimately arresting 96 of them. These included

ETU officials from around the country, many of whom saw the pickets and getting arrested as some kind of moral protest, while shunning the necessary mobilisation of the membership on the picket lines, beefing them up with mass delegations from other unions, and using them to shut down the depots and the power stations. Later, at a mass meeting of strikers on the 19th, Wally Martin, an ETU spokesman from West Australia, said: "One way or another those lights have



Left: ETU officials await arrest: "moral witness" instead of mass picket lines. Right: Sacked strikers read about Cockatoo victory — fighting strategy in demand!

got to go out again." Martin had participated in one of the mass pickets of British miners in Yorkshire last year. "What happened on those picket lines will happen here under this premier", he said. "Don't think that things like what happened in Britain won't happen here — they will."

Every worker we talked to, whether from Melbourne or the Northern Territory, knew that this was a crucial fight for all Australian unionists. The need for solidarity strikes from other key unions here and across the country was clear to many; how to get it was another question. Hundreds of ETU members, along with their wives who've attended strike meetings since February in support of the men, went to the meeting at Perry Park on the day of the ACTU blockade (19 April). There was plenty of hot air from the union tops. But talk is cheap, and the union tops made no proposals for action.

Seamen's union member Tony Bernardin was called out from the audience and received tumultuous applause as he walked to the microphone. The reception this man got wasn't merely because he took a stand, as many others have, in support of basic union principles, but also because his union and other maritime unions represent historically the kind of industrial muscle that must be enlisted in the fight against Petersen, and the strikers know that. But it shouldn't be left up to class conscious individuals to carry on the struggle. Thousands of Carnegies and Bernardins on the waterfront, in rail, in the mines, must be organised and unleashed by the unions to bust the union-busters and open the way for some real victories in this country.

A strike committee was formed by union militants incensed at the sellout in February, which has fought to keep the fight for jobs and union rights going. We had several discussions with this group, and though they didn't all agree with our strategy, they recognised that our program was serious, and respected our stand. One of the leaders,

Bernie Neville, pointed out it wouldn't be legal avenues and the bosses courts that would win this one, but industrial muscle. But to win the fight it must be ripped out of the hands of the treacherous ACTU and their local cohorts. Strike committees must be elected to run it from the ground, fighting to build mass pickets and strike action in solidarity by other unions throughout Australia. The ETU militants knew this sort of program and leadership wasn't going to come

must be strengthened. For Queensland blacks life is a continuous round of vicious cop violence and state repression and exploitation: they told us of murders, malicious and constant cop harassment, and of blacks working on the reserves for less than \$40 per week. This poses the need for forging a revolutionary party of the working class to defend not only the unions, but to mobilise all the oppressed in united struggle against the capitalists and their state.



from any of the ALP/TLC backstabbers — including the "lefts" like Bryant Burns of the AMWSU or Wilf Ardill of the Miscellaneous Workers Union.

When we visited black militants at the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA), they told us that they had been actively collaborating with the ETU strike committee to mobilise support. These links are very important and

Our supplement and press was eagerly received everywhere we went, and we sold over 20 subscriptions in the short time we were there. Our overall impression was of the anger of the strikers and their families and the potential for this struggle to become a decisive and victorious fight for our class. That anger and will to fight amongst these men and women must be won to a political program to "make the unions weapons of struggle!" ■

"We face a common enemy in Petersen"

We reprint below a press release issued on 17 April by the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action Limited.

Mr. Bob Wetherall, the Executive Officer for the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action Limited said today, the FAIRA organisation declares our full support for the striking SEQEB workers. Specifically we call for SEQEB to reinstate at once the linesmen with full entitlements. The Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action further opposes all the recent anti-union bills which have been rushed through Parliament, State Parliament, in an extremely undemocratic fashion. Mr Wetherall added, the Aboriginal and Islander people of this country have long experienced brutal repression especially from the Petersen government. We recognise that the union movement in Queensland is now being attacked by the state government. We declare that we are with the workers in this struggle. Moreover we call upon all progressive sections of the community to join us in stating support for the sacked linesmen's campaign to win back their jobs with full entitlements. Petersen's attack on the rights of these SEQEB workers parallels exactly the attacks he has made on the human rights of Aboriginal and Islander people and other sections of the community. We face a common enemy in Petersen. Let us now campaign for a common victory.

Queensland...

Continued from page one

and destabilising Australian society and the region, increasingly alienating the Hawke government from its working-class base. Hawke's role as Reagan's regional enforcer is bitterly resented as are the sharpening austerity and anti-union attacks as Hawke and state Labor premiers go all out to demonstrate their "responsible" administration of Australian capitalism. And in the ALP itself, the readmission to the Victorian branch of the NCC-Grouper led unions, the anti-communist witch-hunters from the 1955 Cold War split, has only fuelled internal fracturing and the threat of a split. Hawke's Cold War

government is besieged from all sides, opening up the opportunity to break the social-democratic stranglehold on the proletariat, tear it loose from the fetters of the capitalist state and unlock its social power.

Sacked Strikers Betrayed

Bjelke-Petersen had long wanted to smash the militant power workers; to distract attention from Queensland's economic downslide, to consolidate his strongman regime, and to avenge his defeat at their hands in 1980. When the ETU struck against the SEQEB's use of contract labour on 6 February, Petersen declared a state of emergency and then had the strikers sacked when they refused to go back. Nothing

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Australasian Spartacist



3 April 1985

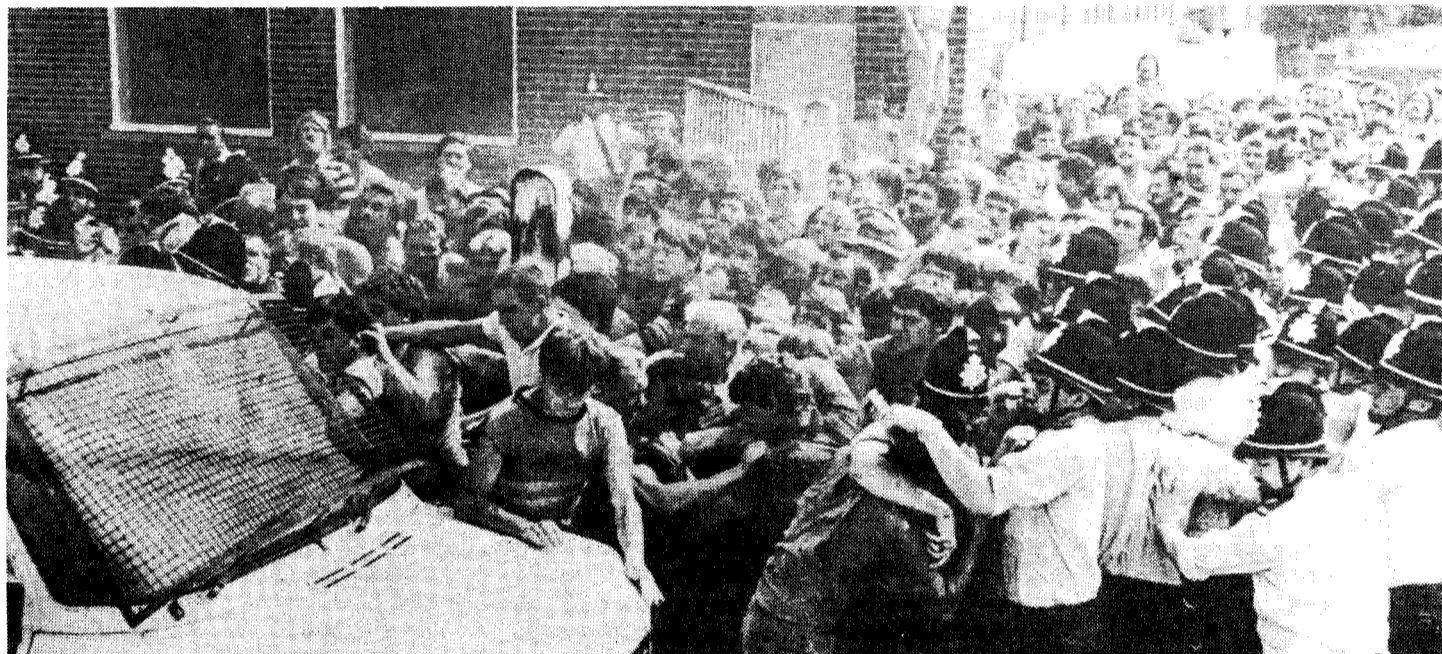
Victory for Industrial Unionism at Cockatoo Island

Make the Unions Weapons of Struggle!

Enough of Hawke! Bust the Cold War Consensus!

On the back page of this supplement we carry an interview with Neil Florrimell, a union militant and supporter of the Spartacist League. Florrimell was sacked from his job as an ironworker-rigger at Sydney's Cockatoo Island dockyards on 15 March after he refused to work with apprentices being used by the company to break a strike by the dockyard electricians. The interview details the successful fight that forced his reinstatement and defeated the company's attempts to roll back even this limited form of trade union solidarity.

This struggle, which started from one militant taking a stand against the growing erosion of basic trade union principles on the island, was taken up by the electricians and other workers and a drive launched to spread the strike to the rest of the island. On 26 March, with a hundred Cockatoo workers spilling out of the courtroom and faced with the threat of a total walkout, an Arbitration Court hearing recommended Florrimell's reinstatement. The dispute had already gone to the Labour Council. The federal government had its reporters there. This small but powerful struggle was worrying the keepers of Hawke's brittle "class peace". And it brought sharply into focus the central questions facing workers at



Militant mass picketing can forge fighting class unity against the bosses! Heroic British miners battle cops in Yorkshire last year.

Cockatoo, which in microcosm are those confronting the labour movement as a whole.

The class struggle is sharpening in this country. The Bjelke-Petersen government has declared open war on the Queensland power workers and union rights generally. But Petersen has only taken one step further Wran's union-busting threats of mass sackings hurled at the NSW train drivers earlier this year. Almost to a man the official leadership of every major union remains committed to policing the workers for Hawke's "Accord" on behalf of big business. Labor's Cold War "consensus" more and more means union busting, slashing of public services and

growing racist and social reaction — openly fuelled by Hawke's willing subservience to that union-hater and anti-communist fanatic Reagan with his global plans for nuclear war against the Soviet Union. But amongst the ranks of labour there is growing restlessness and hatred of these Labor governments. Instinctively the working class wants to fight but at every point it is blocked, lied to, and disorganised by the Labor politicians and their trade union lackeys. It's high time for some good old-fashioned class struggle to bust wide open Hawke's Cold War Accord.

The fight by Florrimell and other militants clearly touched a felt need amongst the workers to fight together for common class interests. Traditional Laborite craft unionism such as at Cockatoo divides the workers fifteen different ways and sets up the situation where the bosses continually provoke sectional strikes which never really change things. This is what feeds cynicism and anti-union rot. If the unions are to be fighting organisations of struggle they need to organise on a plant and industry level, on the basis of industrial and social power, not along craft and trade lines.

It is a disgrace that the bosses are able to force apprentices ("legally" denied the right to strike) into breaking their own tradesmen's strikes. These young workers are virtual slave labour in their early working life under the present apprenticeship set-up, a feudalistic hangover from the British labour aristocracy and the guild system. As the Cockatoo events show the bosses take full advantage of the union tops' despicable refusal to organise their own youth. It is in everyone's interests except the employers that the apprentices get full union rights and adult rates of pay. Then perhaps some of us over 21 could also have the opportunity to get some decent job skills. Nor are youth the only victims of this craftist arrogance. Thousands of unskilled, mainly migrant women, are left unorganised in sweatshop conditions, including in the metal industry, the province of the "left-wing" AMFSU. The women of the British miners' community demonstrated what outstanding class fighters women can be. Women, youth, migrants are the first victims of capitalist austerity. These oppressed

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Cockatoo militants battle cops, Canberra 2 May 1984. Union tops channelled anger over layoffs into chauvinist pleas to Labor government.

**Interview with Cockatoo
Island Militant ... page 8**

Weapons of Struggle...

Continued from page five

layers are the first driven into unemployment and it is the youth who are sent to be butchered in capitalism's rapacious wars. They all must be mobilised in united working-class struggle.

Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!

When Bjelke-Petersen sacked a thousand line-servicemen, mass picketing to shut down the power stations could have quickly smashed his anti-union power play. Even the power station operators' bans drove the situation to a near-general strike before ACTU chief Bill Kelty, acting as Hawke's agent, stabbed this fight in the back by teaming up with the Brisbane Trades Hall bureaucrats to have the power bans lifted. Now the ACTU tops are covering their treachery by running a token campaign of fund-raising and protest actions, being careful not to disrupt Hawke's "consensus" with the South Africa-loving racist pig who runs Queensland. Trade and craft divisions exploited by the cowardly union bureaucracy are the reason that Queensland power workers are still at work while a thousand of their union brothers are sacked and Petersen is ramming through his Thatcher-like anti-union laws. The British miners showed the way to break through this crap — powerful mass picket lines to shut down production.

The picket line is a powerful weapon in the workers' arsenal. Mass picket lines can rally the hesitant, organise the strikers for action, defend the workers against scabs and cops and extend the strike to other factories and work sites ("flying pickets"). Once a picket line goes up it demands that every worker take a side with the strikers. *Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!* Such tactics, based on a determination to win battles and to forge a fighting class unity across craft and trade lines, are central to the struggle to transform the unions into fighting organisations.

The union bureaucrats fear such

class-struggle tactics like the plague. Most of them think the only place for "class struggle" is in the Arbitration Court, and of course parliament. The supposed "neutrality" of Arbitration is about as big a lie as the myth of the partnership between capital and labour that underpins Hawke's "consensus". The bosses' "rules" and courts are a losing game. It was militant class struggle that got Neil's job back and that has been behind any significant reforms the working class has ever won. The union tops hate militant class struggle because it throws the workers up against the bosses' state, exposing their reactionary role and shattering the illusion that the capitalist state can be "reformed" in the workers' interest. The desperate need to turn the unions around, to organise and fight, means a political struggle against these union bureaucrats, and building a new leadership based on a revolutionary program in the unions. The starting point for this struggle is *the complete independence of the unions from the capitalist state*. As the Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in 1940:

"The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

— "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay"

Under the dictates of intensified capitalist austerity and Reagan's anti-Soviet war plans Hawke has brought the "gang of four" NCC-Groupers unions back into the Victorian ALP. In NSW these anti-communist diehards stayed in the Labor Party, like the Ironworkers' Laurie Short, and these types still dominate the NSW union and ALP bureaucracy today. The connection here is simple and stark. Anti-communism is anti-union and anti-working class. The only "union" that Hawke's allies like Reagan and Thatcher in the "free world democracies" have any time for is the Pope's Solidarnosc movement in Poland, a favourite of Santamaria's NCC as well. They only hail "militancy" when it is a counterrevolutionary movement aimed at overthrowing a workers state. Defence of the Soviet Union — the

social gains of the first and most powerful workers state which remain in spite of its Stalinist degeneration — is integrally linked to defence of the workers unions and social progress.

As Neil Flormell points out, the labour bureaucracy spreads protectionist, nationalist poison, not least in the "defence" industries. Their patriotic fervour not only protects Australian capitalists while saving not a single job, it fuels racist divisions both between workers in Australia and overseas (eg Japan), and between the different races and nationalities of the Australian working class, preparing the workers to be cannon fodder for imperialist war. The main enemy is at home — the Australian bosses and their government. Workers from the Putilov munitions factory in Petrograd (now Leningrad), also a "defence" industry, played a great role in the 1917 Russian Revolution. And workers from the same factory had a big part in the defence of Leningrad against German fascism in the Second World War. But they had something to fight for, not like propping up Australian capitalism.

The fight to turn the unions into weapons of struggle must be a struggle to drive Hawke and his Cold War CIA-lovers out of the labour movement. To successfully carry through this struggle means splitting Labor's base from its bourgeois leaders on the road to a mass revolutionary workers party. A new leadership is needed that can mobilise the working class and all the oppressed around demands that address their felt needs and point the way towards workers' rule. It must fight for jobs for all through a shorter working week without loss of pay, counter inflation with regular full cost-of-living adjustments to wages, champion the cause of the oppressed youth, women and migrants and build a fighting class unity of all workers. For the working class the struggle against the threat of nuclear war and the economic crisis must become a struggle for workers power, a workers republic of Australia which will be part of a socialist Asia. *Australasian Spartacist* is a Marxist newspaper, published by the Spartacist League, which as part of an international Trotskyist movement, the international Spartacist tendency, is fighting to build such a revolutionary party. ■

Interview...

Continued from page eight

Solidarnosc as anti-socialist. So getting back to the main issue, the question of mobilising the working class in strike action in their own interests, as opposed to the strategy of relying on arbitration and the Labor government, makes the difference between whether the working class wins or loses.

ASp: The FIA tops seem to have a pretty consistent policy of working against the interests of their own membership and those of the workers generally.

Flormell: Well, as you know the FIA tops spend most of their time and our dues money fronting for the government attacks against the BLF and publicising Hawke and Reagan's favorite union, Polish Solidarnosc. In this fight, while they initially said they backed me, they attempted to bury the fight in Arbitration. In fact during the Arbitration Court hearing the organiser from the FIA denounced me before this bosses' court for committing what he called a morally indefensible act in going against the majority of my union. In the quarterly branch meeting of the FIA that evening I put forward a motion to thank the electricians whose strike had won my reinstatement and to point out the need for all the unions on Cockatoo Island to take up the fight to organise the apprentices. My motion was suppressed using the Harvard School of Business rules that these types are trained in. And at this same meeting the FIA tops reaffirmed their support for ANZUS and the Cold War which conditions their opposition to all workers struggles. They even squashed an attempt by the men to discipline a gang of scabs that broke one of our strikes last year. Myself and others called for them to be blackballed and I was threatened by management for distributing copies of Jack London's famous condemnation of scabbing, a statement printed by the strikers of the South Wales Area of the NUM.

Of course all this goes back to the anti-communist witchhunting in the Ironworkers in the 1950s when the Groupers got control of the union. They got busy helping Menzies and the Liberals go after the workers

Postal Militants Rally to British Miners' Struggle

During the twelve months of the British miners' strike, workers around the world looked to them in real solidarity and saw their fight as an important battle. Today with the defeat of the strike it must be stressed that though defeated and bloodied, the NUM is not broken. Every worker in the world should be proud of the way the miners marched back, solemn but determined, aware that it was not a march of victory but of orderly retreat, to muster their forces for the future to carry on the fight.

The Spartacist League here established a modest fund campaign — the Aid to Striking British Miners' Families Fund — to raise money for the miners, to be forwarded via the Partisan Defence Committee's (PDC) campaign. The PDC is a class-struggle, anti-sectarian legal defence organisation in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League/US.

Collecting money here for the miners indicated the depth of solidarity felt by workers for this heroic struggle. A highlight came from

postal workers in Melbourne. The 25 February general meeting of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union (APTU) voted unanimously for a motion calling on the union to immediately send \$2,000 directly to the striking British miners and their families. The proposed motion, initiated by union militants who support the Spartacist League, had been endorsed by over 80 union members from numerous sections of the union including the mainly immigrant mail officers, drivers and line-servicemen, and from the postal officers. Mover of the motion, Peter Waterhouse from the transport section, told the meeting: "The British miners are fighting for all of us, their courage and determination to win should be seen as a lesson to the unions in Australia." Later in the meeting State Secretary David Bowler announced that an immediate state executive meeting would be polled to ensure the money was sent immediately, and then within days it was reported that the executive had raised the amount to \$3,000 in

obvious recognition of the wide support shown for the miners by APTU members. A further motion passed by the general meeting also called for the union to start a fund raising campaign.

APTU members had already donated a sum of \$225.85 in shop floor collections for the PDC Aid to Striking British Miners' Families Fund. There have been numerous stories, from collections at work sites, to street sales, to campuses, of people pulling out their wallet the minute they heard the words "British miner's strike", glad of the opportunity to donate something. There were instances in the postal collection where people approached had already been lined up by friends, and others sought out our supporters so they could donate something; as well, people who refused to donate anything were jeered at and looked on with scorn. To date, a total of \$2117.50 has been collected nationally for the fund, and we take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed for their solidarity with this historic class battle. ■

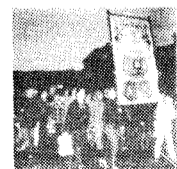
"The SL put forward a strategy for winning" — Derbyshire miners' strike militant, Dick Hall.

For a revolutionary perspective on the British miners' strike read *Workers Hammer*, paper of the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

Thatcher vindictive in victory

Miners defiant in defeat



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Hail Lankan Women Workers' Struggle!

A special meeting of the women garment workers of Magnum Garments Limited was organised last month to see our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka hand over to their union, the All Ceylon Commercial & Industrial Workers Union, the funds collected in Australia in support of their strike last year. The text of a speech given to the meeting by a representative of the international Spartacist tendency is reprinted below.

It is a very great honour for me to speak to you today. I would like to explain why this is so, and why the international Spartacist tendency thinks your struggles are very important.

I'm sorry that we could not bring to you this money we have collected when you were still on strike, when you most needed it. I'm sure, however, you will find a good use for it. I have been told that the Magnum management is refusing to pay you bonuses. Perhaps this money can be used to help in these new fights. The Apparel Garment workers are on strike, perhaps it could be used to support their struggle.

The money was collected by our Australian comrades. According to the standards of living in Australia this 13,000 rupees is not a large amount, but it is a gesture of how important they think your struggles are. The capitalists in Australia try to encourage white racist attitudes. But Australia is part of Asia. Our comrades in Australia know that they must build links with the workers of Asia if they wish to get rid of Australian imperialism.

As internationalists we believe that we must support all the true struggles of the workers and oppressed everywhere in the world. We do not say that because a strike is not in our country we will not support it. We do not say that because a strike is not led by our party we will ignore it. Today our

American, German and French comrades have been working very hard to support the British miners' strike.

The miners have been on strike for ten months. Now it is one of the coldest winters for thirty years. President JR's friend, Mrs Thatcher is using police violence, scabs, the law courts and starvation to try and beat the miners. The trade union bureaucrats and the top leaders of the



Spartacist Lanka

About 100 mainly women workers at Magnum Garments in Sri Lanka met to accept strike support funds collected by the Spartacist League/ANZ.

Labour Party have tried to sabotage the strike and have refused to bring out the other powerful forces of the working class on strike with the miners to defend jobs and get rid of Mrs Thatcher.

Our American comrades have collected thousands of dollars for the miners. The money the miners receive goes into a special bank account to run the strike and support the miners families. It does not go to the union's general funds for normal administration costs and officials' wages. But the miners do not just need financial support, they also need a program to win. That is what our British comrades fight for when they demand "All out with the miners".

Yes, we believe in international working class solidarity. It was British imperialism that was the great master of "divide and rule", of turning one community against another in its empire. Now the Sri Lankan and other capitalist ruling classes use the same tactics. But communalism and racism divide the working class against each other and diverts it from the real enemy, capitalism. It is the same

capitalists and UNP government that attacks you which also attacks the Tamil people, denying them their rights. JR's friend, Ronald Reagan, the man who wants to get his imperialist hands on Trincomalee harbour as part of his preparations for nuclear war with the Soviet Union, uses racism to divide white workers against black workers in the United States. JR and the capitalists are trying the same trick here. I ask you not to be fooled.

The great Russian revolutionary leader, Leon Trotsky, once said that when they are aroused there will be no better fighters for communism than the women of Asia. I hear people say that women in Sri Lanka are not interested in politics, that they are

backward. Yes it is true that women have special problems and burdens. But I cannot accept these excuses. I know that women workers can and must be in the vanguard of the struggle.

British imperialism made super profits from the tea plantations. Now the Sri Lankan capitalists share these profits. But still the plantation workers live and work in terrible conditions. Now the capitalists also want to make fat profits from the workers of the Free Trade Zone and textile industry. They make you a slave until you are a human wreck and then they throw you on the rubbish dump. It is the Tamil women of the plantations and the young women in factories like Magnum who are the real heart of the working class in Sri Lanka. There can be no bright socialist future in Sri Lanka unless you take your place in the forefront of the struggle. Don't listen to those men who tell you that you can and must only follow behind. I know you can be the best fighters and leaders just like Trotsky said.

As I said we will support your struggles. We have big differences with the comrades of the LSSP. I read yesterday that an LSSP leader said capitalism is to blame for all the troubles in society. This is true, but how can you fight capitalism when you join in governments with capitalist parties which oppress workers and even become minister of finance and taxation.

No, if we want to free ourselves from exploitation and oppression, if we want to build a society that is fit for ourselves and our children to live in we cannot do it in alliance with the capitalists. We must sweep capitalism into the rubbish dump. We must build working class unity — in Sri Lanka, in Asia, in the world.

Thank you very much for letting me speak to you. Workers of the world unite! ■

movement, and their people still control the FIA. But there have also been militant traditions in the Ironworkers. For example the Balmain shipyard workers' strike during the Second World War. Nick Origlass and the Trotskyists who were active FIA militants played a leading role in that struggle. They didn't stop the fight just because the bosses and their labour lieutenants were screaming for "sacrifices".

ASp: What happened at the Arbitration Court and why did it recommend your reinstatement?

Florrimell: As I said it was no thanks to the FIA. The real thing that decided it was the determination of the electricians to stand by me. Approximately a hundred of them turned up at the court to show their support and the court knew that there was massive sentiment throughout various unions on the island in support of the stand I'd taken so that metal workers official Pat Johnson had to make the point to the court that every unionist on the island stood by what I had done and if it didn't reinstate me there'd be big industrial trouble. So in some ways the court had no choice but to reinstate me in order to head off what could have been a big explosion on the island. Indicative of the growing ferment was a mass meeting on the island called by the shop committee only one hour before the court was to meet. Neither I nor the electricians were told about the meeting (to either attend or to put our case), the meeting was poorly organ-

ised and from all accounts it turned into a platform for various FIAers to defend their rotten position. Even so the meeting almost voted to go out in solidarity with me and the electricians.

ASp: You referred earlier on to the importance of the unions fighting independently of the bosses and the government in the workers' interest. What's the attitude towards the Labor government on the island?

Florrimell: In 1982 there was massive enthusiasm for the election of Hawke. There were slogans all around the island "Give Bob the Job" and there were many illusions that the workers could win something out of a Labor government. Two years and several hundred layoffs later things have changed dramatically. Before the last election the shop committee put an advertisement in the *Telegraph* calling upon all workers to refuse to vote Labor, reflecting the deep disillusionment in the ALP on the island. The only problem was that it didn't put forward an alternative to the Labor Party — the need to construct a revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government.

ASp: This was a small but important victory, something of a turnaround in the situation. What are the prospects for struggle on the island now?

Florrimell: Well, there's been a lot of pessimism on the island, the basis for which was largely laid by the campaign by the union officials against the layoffs last year which channelled the workers will to fight into a strategy of

pressuring the Labor government to grant the company a contract for another naval ship. This was lining the workers up in the interests of the bosses and their war drive and was more of the same protectionist bullshit pushed by the union bureaucracy that pits Australian workers against foreign workers, lining them up to protect the profits of their own bosses. This is a deadend strategy. And it only fuels incidents like when a few racist workers approached a delegate to call for a meeting to expel Filipino workers from the island in 1983. Right now we're facing 400 layoffs, starting in about six weeks. And what this strike did was point the way forward in terms of a program that can win: to organise the apprentices; to build an industrial union; to have no reliance on the bosses' Arbitration Court. And there is the question of picket lines which some of us were talking about. There isn't much of tradition of picketing in Australia, but it cuts right against craftism and the arbitration system. Picket lines are to shut a place down solid. They are a weapon of real class struggle. And next time we should follow the British miners example and set up solid picket lines. Apprentices, other crafts, other unions, scabs — nobody should cross a picket line. And to fight the layoffs we need demands like 30 hours work for 40 hours pay to spread around the available work. With a program like that we'd have the fighting strength and unity to occupy the island and put it to the government

and the company that they will not have their ships, their submarines, or their island until they come up with jobs. And such an occupation would be a battle cry to thousands of workers throughout Sydney and all over Australia who've been eating shit for years from both the Hawke and the Wran Labor governments, to the wharfies, to the seamen, to the government and public transport workers and many, many more. ■

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ASp photo

Sacked FIA Militant Reinstated

Cockatoo Is. Workers Beat Company Attack!

Interview

ASp: Congratulations on your reinstatement victory at Cockatoo. Can you go through some of the background to the struggle that just took place?

Florrimell: Well, the company's use of apprentices as a strike-breaking force has been a contentious issue on the island for years. My section of the FIA [Federated Ironworkers Association] (it's divided into three sections on the island) has had on its books for a long time that we refuse to work with apprentices when they're being used to scab on striking tradesmen. However, after years of general erosion of union conditions and consciousness on the island this was recently reversed. I called a meeting of ironworkers about six weeks ago to affirm the policy of not working with the apprentices. But it was voted down 35 to 53. This time when the electricians went out on strike over grossly inadequate ventilation on the subs, I decided to stand and fight this. So I refused to work with the apprentices who were being used to strikebreak and was then stood down. My section of the FIA met and the majority refused to defend me. The company took this as a green light to further attack union conditions, and sacked me two days later, telling me to pick up my pay, pack my stuff and get off the island. As soon as the electricians heard of my sacking, they said they wouldn't go back until I was reinstated.

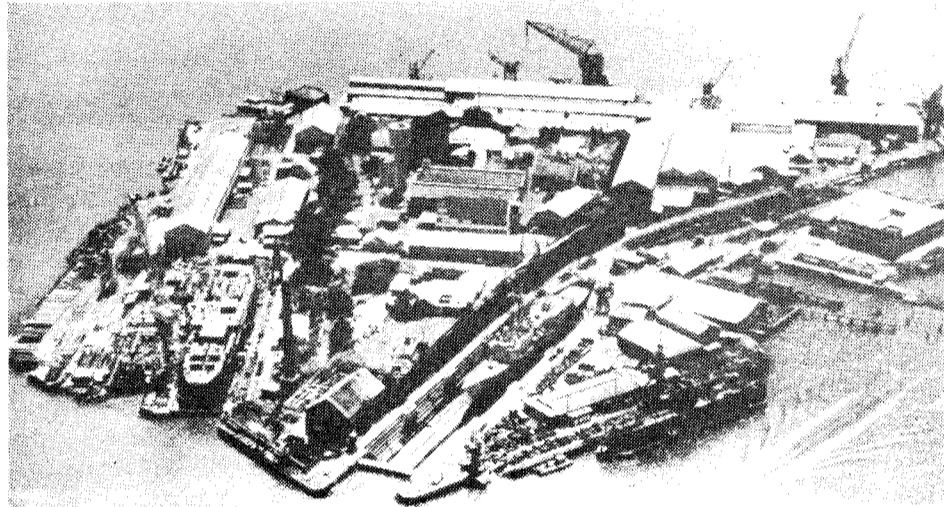
ASp: So the management probably expected to get away with this provocation and instead they got a fight. How did you go about it?

Florrimell: Well, immediately I was sacked I started lobbying other unionists on the island and in particular talked to striking elec-

tricians. At the electricians' 18 March strike meeting I intervened to point out they should not stand alone, that this was a fight for basic union solidarity. I said that it posed the question of organising the apprentices to undercut the way the company has continually pitted one union against another and broken their strikes, that the need to set up picket lines to defend the strike was posed, as was the need to forge one industrial union on the island. One of the electricians put a motion at the next meeting that took up these questions and called for extending strike action, particularly for the FIA to reverse their stand and come out with the electricians. Some electricians started talking about setting up picket lines. But the motion was deferred to the next meeting so I decided with some electricians and ironworkers to tell the other workers this by distributing a statement to the island.

ASp: And what was the response?

Florrimell: The response was pretty overwhelming. Several electricians, fitters, and ironworkers volunteered to hand out the statement and many more volunteered to put their name to it. In a few days we had collected close to 40 names. We had several apprentices who were very enthusiastic about it, and several unionists after reading it and talking to us about it were quite incensed that their delegates had not called any meeting about it. We got support from the assistant secretary of the Garden Island Shop Committee who said that such a thing would never be allowed to happen at Garden Island. We got endorsement from state and federal officials of the Painters & Dockers. The P&D delegate at Cockatoo took a bunch of leaflets and distributed them on the island. Workers at John Fairfax's talked about taking up a collection for the strike. Overall our stand tapped a very deep-felt need



Cockatoo Island dockyard in Sydney Harbour. Neil Florrimell (top).

for one industrial union on the island and received support from workers in quite a number of different unions, showing that the issue cut across the usual craftist divisions.

ASp: You're a supporter of Australasian Spartacist. How did your political perspectives affect what you did in this situation?

Florrimell: Well, in a small way the experience of this struggle shows that the working class's real strength lies in its independent mobilisation in strike action against the bosses. The strategy I pursued in conjunction with some militant electricians was to win this strike by broadening it, by fighting this fight on the basis of the objective interests of all the workers there. By contrast most of the delegates, including shop committee convenor Bill Haggerty, who has been a longtime supporter of the Socialist Labour League [SLL], sat on their

hands and waited for the Arbitration hearing. The Communist Party supports a group called the Rank and File Ironworkers, one of whose members, Max Callaghan, is a delegate for the shipyard section of the FIA. The CPA were architects of Hawke's Accord, so it's probably not surprising that Callaghan even refused to sign the statement we'd issued. Then there's the SLL's *Workers News* which is sold on the island. They wrote an initial report on the dispute but nothing at all about its victory. Instead they printed a sinister slander piece about the Spartacist League in the US claiming they supported white racist vigilantism and were evolving "toward fascism". Just slanderous garbage. Certainly the British miners have no time for this group after the way they set up Arthur Scargill for a Cold War witchhunt at the 1983 Trades Union Congress. He had just rightly denounced the Polish

Continued on page seven



Neil Florrimell and electricians celebrate their victory.

ASp photo

STATEMENT TO COCKATOO ISLAND WORKERS

On 13 March Neil Florrimell was stood down and then later sacked from his job as an ironworker-rigger for refusing to work with the electricians' apprentices during the current ETU strike over safety and air-conditioning facilities on the submarines. The apprentices are being used by the company to break the electricians' strike.

The defence of Neil Florrimell and the defeat of this attack on elementary union solidarity is in the interests of every worker at Cockatoo. For too long the company has used apprentices to set one group of workers up against another and to break their strikes. It is the unions' responsibility to organise the apprentices — full union rights and full union responsibilities. Otherwise the present situation where the company uses the apprentices against any union action on the island will continue. The ironworkers meetings that decided to allow ironworkers to work with the apprentices doing struck work, and then refused to defend brother Florrimell after he was stood down are a green light for the company to increase its attacks and should be reversed immediately. Cockatoo ironworkers should join the electricians on strike to decisively defeat this attack. A motion to this effect was submitted to the last electricians' meeting and will be considered at the next meeting.

Only the company's interests are served when effective industrial action is undercut, setting up one group of workers against another, including both electricians and ironworkers when they have been on strike. We must guard against any attempts to set one union up against others, robbing jobs from the FIA in person. Genuine working class unity can only be achieved through building on the electricians' action and extending it. Unless that fighting industrial unity is forged we will not have a hope in hell of properly confronting and fighting the company retrenchments that continue to threaten union members on this island.

We truly believe that this fight can be won, and that industrial unionism here at Cockatoo Island can be established as the weapon for all our battles against the company. The electricians should not be allowed to stand alone in this fight. Strike action to defeat this company attack needs to be extended now, and right across the island if need be.

A statement for industrial unity! 41 unionists put their names to this statement:
6 FIAers,
9 ETU members,
14 AMFSU members,
6 P&D members (including a delegate),
1 painter's union member,
4 federal & state officials of the FSPDU & the assistant secretary of Garden Is's Combined Unions Shop Committee.

Queensland...

Continued from page four

like this has happened in the Australian class struggle in living memory, and the outpouring of working-class anger could have swept the arrogant racist peanut farmer away. Coal miners, wharfies, building workers, railways electricians and others walked out across the state; there was a general strike in Mount Isa, scene of the historic 1965 miners' wildcat; printers banned Joh's scab ads and there were union bans on the government everywhere.

What really had Petersen by the balls was the power station operators' bans which cut power in half, putting Brisbane in darkness and shutting down most industry. Then the Trades and Labour Council (TLC) bureaucracy, at the bidding of Hawke's errand boy, ACTU secretary Kelty, stepped in to prevent Petersen's downfall. Though Petersen was threatening to sue the operators, members of the Municipal Officers Association (MOA), it was the TLC which turned the lights on for Petersen on 21 February, directing the MOA to comply with an Arbitration order to stop all industrial action, in exchange for reinstating the strikers with "concessions". Petersen however had no intention of complying, and demanded the strikers crawl back as scabs, sign no-strike individual contracts at longer hours, and rat on the remaining strikers. This was a turning point — with the power back on, and the TLC traitors working overtime to call off the solidarity strikes, the SEQEB scraped together enough scabs to restore full services, though three have been killed and workers say the system could still collapse.

This cowardly betrayal only emboldened Petersen, who rammed five long-prepared anti-union laws through Parliament, inspired by Thatcher's 1983 Employment Act in Britain. Trade unionism is essentially outlawed in the power industry, not only picketing but the closed shop and even advocacy of "strikes" (redefined to cover any industrial action, bans etc), while the SEQEB is empowered to conscript labour. Other legislation, including amendments to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, prohibit unions using secondary boycotts, picketing, striking over the closed shop, and any action at all against scabs. Now Petersen's talking about deregistering unions, and going after their finances through punitive fines and million-dollar damages suits.

The bureaucrats' fear of the class struggle and allegiance to the capitalist "legality" and their Arbitration Courts has left the unions paralysed before these deadly assaults. In February Petersen confidently dared the TLC bureaucrats to call a general strike, knowing this was the last thing they wanted. Now he's bragging "the battle is won, they're all in the bag" and laughing at the ACTU's pathetic "campaign" like the April 19 "blockade" of Queensland. The abject snivelling of the heir-apparent to the ACTU presidency, Simon Crean, on TV that night captured the bureaucracy's bankruptcy: "give us one more chance, Mr Minister, just give us one more chance"! To defend the unions' very existence means a struggle to oust these pro-capitalist sellouts and build a new class-struggle leadership.

Break the ALP-ACTU Stranglehold!

For over two months now the sacked ETU strikers have been left to go it alone against Petersen's government

and its marauding cops. It is only their stubborn determination to defend union conditions and their livelihoods that has stopped Petersen's onslaught from turning into a complete rout and forced the union bureaucracy into any action at all. Early on these strikers issued a strike call to the rest of the ETU which the bureaucrats suppressed. Strikers told us that Bryant Burns, Socialist Left ALP leader of the metalworkers union, screamed at a striker, "Can't you get it through your fucking head, your job's gone, you're sacked, you're finished, that's it". The "lefts" in the union bureaucracy like Burns, and Hugh Hamilton and Dick Aneer of the Communist Party (CPA) backed TLC head Ray Dempsey and the ACTU's Kelty to the hilt in stamping out explosive solidarity strike action in February and remain utterly hostile to any serious class-struggle counter-offensive against Petersen.

Shunned by Hawke and now fearing for their own hides, the ACTU/TLC tops have been forced to call protest actions. As the bosses' *Bulletin* (23 April) noted, the bureaucrats intend the series of one-day solidarity strikes to have only a "symbolic nature", to appease bitter anger in the ranks while loyally holding the line for Hawke's Accord. But this could well blow up in their faces, and union militants should fight to turn these actions into political strikes not only against Petersen but the Hawke government as well, to break free of the ALP/ACTU stranglehold and unchain the unions. Meanwhile in Queensland the bureaucracy is keeping the SEQEB strikers isolated and vulnerable, using them as a cynical publicity exercise to appeal to liberal "public opinion". ETU militants must have viewed with some bitterness the group of national ETU officials who visited the depot picket lines for one day to take a symbolic arrest. These fakers refuse to call out the union membership and the ranks of other unions to seriously confront Petersen's scabs and cops. The last place they want to see pickets is at the power stations themselves for this would again pose mobilising workers state-wide for a head-on confrontation with the capitalist state. Instead they have turned the picket lines at the SEQEB depots into a form of peaceful, legal "moral witness" compatible with the churchmen's pleas for heavenly harmony or Senator George Georges' "civil liberties" protest politics.

Picket lines mean don't cross! Despite the bureaucrats' treachery the union ranks are hungry for a lead. If "flying pickets" were sent out to the big battalions of labour in rail, the waterfront, the building industry, the coal mines, etc., calling for solidarity strike action, there could be tens of thousands on the picket lines; the authority and necessity is there to call out the rest of the power workers and shut down the power stations through mass picketing. The question here is not just one of more militancy, but of a fundamentally different political perspective. The call of the Healyite *Workers News* to "force the ACTU to call a general strike" is just cynical rhetoric, a cover for doing nothing, in the idiot illusion that Kelty and Crean can be pressured into leading a general strike. The rest of the fake-lefts want to turn Petersen's attempt to destroy the unions into a classless "civil liberties" issue acceptable even to the sidelined state Liberals to build what the CPA's *Tribune* (3 April) calls a "broadly-based coalition of all anti Bjelke-Petersen forces" — a popular front with the main party of the Australian bourgeoisie!

For the trade unions the question of democratic rights is directly tied to exercising their social power to fight the class enemy. Jim Cannon, leader of the American Trotskyists, put it this way during the 1934 Minneapolis general strike, a critical battle which the Trotskyists eventually led to victory as part of the 1930s struggle for industrial unionism.

"The workers, whose strength lies in the mass movement, can fight only in the open . . . That is why they are so insistent upon the right to free assemblage, so that they may speak freely. The right to free speech, so that they may organise. The right to organise, so that they may strike freely. The right to picket, so that they may win swiftly!"

— James P Cannon, *Notebook of an Agitator*.

So too with picket lines. They are *battle lines* in the class war. The social democrats want to gut their fighting content and turn them into moral gesture appealing to an imaginary peaceful, "humane" wing of the bourgeoisie. Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army, and must be built in conjunction with trade-union defence guards capable of smashing the scabs, strikebreaking cops and fascist scum.

Oust the Traitors! For a Trotskyist Party!

The fight to defend the unions and turn them into weapons of struggle must be a struggle to drive Hawke and his Cold War CIA-lovers out of the labour movement and politically expose the bankrupt "lefts". It means a struggle to split Labor's base from its pro-capitalist leaders, in particular the "lefts" who want to divert the workers down the poisonous road of racist protectionism and Australian nationalism. Petersen's assault has laid bare the bankruptcy of the unions relying on the "neutrality" of the capitalist state and its Arbitration system. As Leon Trotsky wrote in a

1929 article titled "Communism and Syndicalism",

"Independence from the influence of the bourgeoisie cannot be a passive state. It can express itself only by political acts, that is, by struggle against the bourgeoisie. This struggle must be inspired by a distinct program which requires organisation and tactics for its application. It is the union of program, organisation and tactics that constitutes the party. In this way the real independence of the proletariat from the bourgeois government cannot be realised unless the proletariat conducts its struggle under the leadership of a revolutionary and not an opportunist party."

This is what the Spartacist League fights for, a revolutionary party that aims to forge *unity in action* not only among the organised workers, but with the masses of the oppressed as well. The opportunities are sharply posed in Queensland, as well as a portent of what imperialist reaction has in mind for the rest of the country. Petersen has given the power workers a taste of what daily life is like for blacks in Queensland, and as the FAIRA press release reprinted on page four notes, an opportunity for common struggle. The British miners' strike showed that women are a tremendous untapped reserve, particularly the strikers' wives. It is necessary to rally all the oppressed into a single fist behind the power of labour. In the course of sharp social struggle, the Australian working class — long poisoned by racism and chauvinism — can throw off its social backwardness, become conscious of its historic role, and with a revolutionary workers party at its head lead a successful fight for state power. The need for such a party, modelled on Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks, is the central lesson to be grasped from the British miners heroic but defeated struggle at the hands of bloody Thatcherism and the most urgent question facing Australian workers today. ■



Happy faces in Hanoi, 1985, where once B-52s rained down terror.

Vietnam...

Continued from page three

much to learn from the indomitable revolutionary will of the Vietnamese combatants. But youth must also understand the bitter fruits of Stalinism — the nationalist ideology of a bureaucratic strata seeking "peaceful coexistence" with capitalist reaction — which today finds its most grotesque expression in China's obscene counterrevolutionary alliance with US imperialism against the USSR and Indochina. For proletarian political revolutions to shatter the Stalinist bureaucracies, establish mass organs of workers democracy and open the road to socialism!

Vietnam today, despite enormous

poverty, has taken great strides forward in achieving genuine national reunification, regaining self-sufficiency in food production, reconstructing a land devastated by four decades of imperialist aggression, persevering in the face of a vindictive international blockade of foreign trade and technical assistance. Recent victories by Vietnamese and Kampuchean forces have driven out of Cambodia the last nests of CIA-sponsored counterrevolutionaries fighting to return to power the genocidal Pol Pot clique. Today, ten years after the liberation of Saigon, we hail these victories, and fight here in the imperialist centres for workers rule, under the Trotskyist banner of international socialist revolution.

— Adapted from *Young Spartacus* no 126, April 1985

Students...

Continued from page twelve

are permitted to work only 20 hours per week.

Student *realpolitikers* were dancing to Bob Hawke's tune at the 21 March front lawn meeting on fees at UNSW. Over 1,000 students heard the Students Union Council (SUC) propose a race- and class-biased motion which both omitted any call for increased TEAS without which working-class students have little hope of tertiary education, and the government's attacks on overseas students. ALPer and Education Vice-President Sharon Byard justified this on grounds that she didn't want to lose the votes of white males who she considers the "backbone of the university"! Perhaps this "consensus"-minded climber had in mind "independent" SUC President Peter Lynch who is both for fees for *everyone* and for anti-Asian quotas.

It was the Trotskyists of the Spartacist League (SL) who fought this garbage and defended the interests of young workers and Asian students alike. Spartacist supporters together with representatives of the Overseas Students Collective (OSC) amended the SUC motion as follows:

"The Labor government's imposition of fees for overseas students is the spearhead of the attempt to impose fees on all students. This Students Union demands the complete abolition of fees and racist quotas against overseas students. Further, we demand massively increased TEAS available to all students and open admissions to all tertiary education."

Cheers and applause greeted the speakers for this amendment, which was passed overwhelmingly after it was hastily and grudgingly incorporated into the SUC's motion.

The SUC bureaucrats, however, quickly "corrected" themselves by sabotaging what was to have been a city-wide anti-fees rally on 18 April. After the government opted to drop general tertiary fees, at least for this year, student "leaders" recognised that *their* government had taken care of *their* interests and dropped the besieged overseas students like a hot rock. "Leftists" like the anti-Soviet International Socialists (IS) have boycotted *any* protest action. Despite this, on 18 April about 80 mainly Asian students and supporters from UNSW, Sydney Uni and NSW Institute of Technology demonstrated at Hyde Park and then marched to occupy the NSW Labor Party offices in angry defiance. Spokesman for the Spartacist contingent, Phillipa Naughten, stressed the need for a sharp break from reliance on the ALP social imperialists in Canberra and called on the rally to link the student struggle against fees and racist quotas to the power of the organised working class in a fight to *defeat* this government on the road to a workers republic of Australia, part of socialist Asia. Linking the White Australia racism and nationalism on which the ALP was founded to Australian imperialism's role as US lackey for counter-revolution in Southeast Asia, Naughten pointed to the violent campaign against Vietnamese government-sponsored students at Canberra CAE by counterrevolutionary Vietnamese refugees and called on students in league with organised labour to defend them.

It is vitally important that the Labor government not succeed in isolating Asian students in this country to face the kind of race hatred and violence which racist pigs like Geoffrey Blainey are trying to inflame. In desperation the OSC at UNSW and on other campuses has resorted to a

"Fees Delay Campaign". Up to 2,000 overseas students have not paid the new fees which were due on 15 March. But while personally courageous this tactic of protest and pressure on the government cannot win. On the contrary, it places these students in serious danger of government reprisals. Already the Immigration Department has threatened fines, imprisonment and deportation for failure to pay the fees. It is in the interest of the organised workers movement and all the oppressed to demand: the immediate end to vindictive harassment of overseas students! Down with racist fees and quotas! Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born students and workers!

The ALP government is attacking on a lot of fronts in the interests of anti-Soviet Cold War and capitalist austerity. Youth unemployment stands at around 30 per cent. The government is attacking Aboriginal Land Rights while letting cop killers of black youth like John Pat go free. Women are being forced out of the work place while "moral majority" bigots campaign openly against abortion rights. And the unions are under an all-sided attack of which that by the Petersen government in Queensland is only the most vicious and resolute. There are a lot of potential allies for Asian students in this country. What is needed is a program of sharp class struggle for the rights of all the oppressed and a party with the will and determination to carry it to the end, a revolutionary workers party such as the Spartacist League fights to build.

Key to this struggle is the recognition that the fight against capitalist oppression is *international*. For reformists like the Socialist Workers Party, and the Socialist Labour League pimps for Islamic dictator Qaddafi of Libya, the Asian students are a constituency to be mobilised to pressure the Labor Party and then thrown off in the face of reaction. For us, overseas students are a potentially vital link to the Asian masses. We therefore frankly warn against any reliance on Australian imperialism or the reactionary ASEAN capitalist regimes. The ASEAN alliance with which Hawke works hand-in-glove is based on the twin pillars of anti-communism and anti-Chinese national chauvinism. Thus the OSC support to the "Buy Less Australian" campaign — threatened by some Malaysian unions and consumer groups backed by the Mahathir government — in reprisal for the fees imposed on Asian students here is a deadly mistake which can only rebound on the Malaysian workers. Support to the government that fosters nationalist-communalist hatreds against the minority Chinese and Indians, that polices the sweatshops in Malaysia's Free Trade Zones and the super-exploited migrant Indonesian labour on the plantations, can only strengthen Malay chauvinism on the one hand and give ammunition to Australian chauvinists on the other.

It is crucial today to fight to unchain

the power of the working class from the Labor traitors. Support for socialist revolution in Asia and the understanding that the main enemy is at home is the beginning of a class-struggle perspective for Australian workers and Australian youth. As proletarian internationalists we realise that Australia's only future is with Asia. For revolutionary Trotskyist parties in Australia and Southeast Asia! For region-wide proletarian revolution! ■

Sth Africa...

Continued from page twelve

Witwatersrand to the auto plants of Port Elizabeth. By its very bulk, this five-million-strong working class has forced the petty-bourgeois black leadership to take it into account, but not programmatically. The black proletariat is still being used as cattle to haul the ideological cart of nationalism. A Bolshevik party must be built to lead a victorious struggle for "amandla", *power*, for the oppressed, through workers revolution.

Instead of the mass starvation and internecine tribal strife which have marked the "independent" neo-colonial states of black Africa, proletarian class rule in South Africa will open the way to socialist construction, based on the higher levels of industry and culture, in which whites will also have a necessary place. Only such a perspective of a black-centered workers government, through forging a multiracial working-class vanguard which struggles for class power, can break down the iron white-vs-black line.

South Africa is the one place in sub-Saharan Africa where there is the possibility for a workers state, because here the black population has been partially absorbed, at the bottom, into a modern industrialized society which can, based on the revolutionary reorganization of society, provide a decent life for its citizens. The white population must have a place in an anti-racist society; the model is how Trotsky offered thousands of tsarist officers a job to do, placing their skills at the disposal of the new Bolshevik regime and the Soviet peoples. South Africa's two and a half million coloureds, who comprise a strategic part of the Cape proletariat, and the nearly one million Indians, mainly a commercial population, are no less a vital component.

South African whites are an oppressor people who can easily and guiltily envision the terms of oppression reversed, and are determined not to be on the receiving end. That makes them extremely dangerous. South Africa is unique. Unlike Ulster Protestants, Israeli Jews, the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, and, formerly, Cypriot Greeks, where the group on top is not qualitatively, if at all, economically advantaged, in South Africa you have, in bulk, one whole people exploiting another. Ulster is the triumph of ideology over social reality,

for Catholic and Protestant alike are impoverished even by the standards of run-down British capitalism. In the Near East, Palestinian Arabs are at most half a social revolution behind the Israelis. But the Afrikaners have the qualitative military, economic, technical and cultural superiority to carry out the bloody "scorched earth" program which the Zionists can only dream of imposing on the Shi'ites and Druze of Lebanon.

While the Botha regime is not crumbling, it has plenty of problems which cannot be solved by the *sjambok* (whip) and Uzi machinegun. A new generation of urbanized black youth burn with anger at their grossly inferior schooling, limited job prospects and the denial of their birthright. Black workers, getting a taste of their growing social power, refuse to continue servilely groveling before the white *baas*. With stones and petrol bombs, with boycotts and strikes, the black masses are defying not just the pass laws or residential restrictions but the whole oppressive structure of apartheid rule. The South African bourgeoisie — the English in the mines and the Afrikaners on the farms — thrived for a century on the slave labor of blacks. Now they need to stabilize a layer of black skilled workers in industry and to contain the labor militancy of the emerging black unions.

In the interests of economic development, there has been a quantitative narrowing of the wage gap between white and black workers. Through the Wiehahn reforms, black unions have been permitted to organize, though the regime tries to hamstring them with elaborate state controls. Recently several employer associations called on the Botha government to implement its vague promises of reform. But government spokesmen, representing the *verligte* ("enlightened") wing of Afrikaner nationalism, replied that "Businessmen should not call for black political participation without understanding the implications of what they were advocating" (*Washington Post*, 15 March). What may be economically rational for segments of the ruling class is not politically possible.

In a recent *New York Times* (27 March) article, the generally perceptive reporter Alan Cowell remarked that "Compared with 1960... the white authorities [now] seemed adrift, reliant as ever on force, but unable to provide any other answer to the questions spawned by their own troubled racial history...". This reflects a pervasive misunderstanding of South Africa shared by the American bourgeoisie and the American "left". What's posed is not granting token democratic rights to an oppressed *minority*. In South Africa, a racial caste of 4-5 million whites share in the superexploitation of the 26-plus million blacks, Indians and coloureds. An important 1983 ABC-TV [American Broadcasting Company] special on the rise of South African black unions was titled "Adapt or Die". But on the political level, South African rulers

Aid to Striking British Miners' Families Fund

Accounting of Receipts Nos 1-196

Contributors have received numbered receipts, and the financial records of the fund drive are open to inspection by any bona fide workers organisation.

Union Membership collections	\$328.85
Including members of:	
Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union	
Printing and Kindred Industries Union	
Victorian Secondary Teachers Association	
Individual Donations	\$1810.73
Total Collected	\$2137.58

Amount sent to Partisan Defense Committee's Aid to Striking British Miners' Families campaign to be forwarded direct to Miners' Solidarity Fund \$2137.58

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cannot adapt. White supremacy, whether in the form of apartheid or by some other name, is the foundation of South African capitalism, just as slavery was to the pre-Civil War American South.

What does majority rule, "one man, one vote", mean in South Africa? To the white minority, it can only mean one thing: "Drop dead." But they don't want to drop dead, and they have all the guns. ABC's Ted Koppel referred to a slogan painted on a South African wall, "Boer go home". But the Boers are home. The Afrikaners see themselves as a "white tribe of Africa". These trekkers who conquered the veldt (plains) lost the Boer War, but they won the country. In contrast to whites in Southern Rhodesia, the Afrikaners are not a settler colony anymore. The Rhodesians, like the Israelis in Lebanon, couldn't afford to lose steady casualties, even only ten a week — trivial numbers in the abstract, but not with such a narrow population base. The Afrikaners, however, have the weapons, a sufficiently large white population, an ideology and the religion, history and bloody-minded determination to prevail.

Genocide is not the aim of South Africa's rulers — they hardly want to kill off the black proletariat that has produced their golden egg. But their whole security set-up is designed for repression on a mammoth scale. They're probably already calculating what Henry Kissinger once cynically called the "raped nun gap" — how many atrocities against whites to allow, or instigate, to prepare foreign opinion for the bloody holocaust of blacks. (Recall the Western scare propaganda about raped nuns in Stanleyville which paved the way for the 1961 UN intervention against Lumumba in the Congo, engineered by Teddy Kennedy's elder brother JFK.) And when Botha lets loose it won't just be with Israeli machine guns firing out of gun slits of hippo troop carriers. The black townships were designed for civil war, laid out like giant concentration camps encircled by highways and empty "free fire zones", so they can be isolated and, if necessary, napalmed into submission. Pretoria is prepared to impose a peace of the graveyards.

The contradictions of the Botha regime can be seen in the gold miners' strike last September. After careful study and passing elaborate legislation, the government had granted a highly circumscribed right to strike. One of the tamer black unions went through all the procedures and finally declared a first-ever legal strike. The *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed the advent of "enlightened" labor relations in South Africa. But as soon as the legal strikers walked off the job, their example spread like wildfire through the gold mines, and the government responded by sending in the troops and shooting down unarmed strikers in cold blood.

★★★★

Meanwhile, the power of the black proletariat is still politically strait-jacketed by nationalism. And this is no accident, for the structure of South African society subjects the black population as a whole to the most hideous forms of colonial oppression. They are treated as aliens in their own country, without legal rights, colonial subjects constantly threatened with deportation to their *kraals* on the starving bantustans. The capitalist class and its state apparatus are entirely white (except for black cops who rarely rise above sergeant). There is no black bourgeoisie in South Africa. The very depth and totalitarian nature of this internal colonialism has tended to produce a nationalist-populist outlook among the black African masses,

including the industrial working class. Historically, the black struggle has been under the sway of nationalist formations, principally the African National Congress.

At the same time, for the black unions, having to deal with economic reality tends to cut across nationalist principles, and there have even been reports of joint white-black union action, such as at the Highveld Steel plant where common mass meetings were held (*Work in Progress*, October 1984). In meetings of the National Forum, a nationalist coalition rivaling the UDF [United Democratic Front], exclusion of whites was rejected by leaders of black unions formerly associated with the Black Consciousness Movement. But politically the South African black unions are still inchoate where they are not directly integrated into one or another nationalist popular front.

In the case of the ANC, the strategy of seeking alliances with the more "liberal" wing of imperialism and its

are now looking for provocations — and they may get them. ANC sources indicate that their guerrillas are shifting their military strategy from attacking exclusively strategic installations to "softer" targets, exercising "much less caution about incurring [white] civilian casualties" (*Work in Progress*, February 1985). This, combined with their talk of moving from sporadic bombings by small commandos to "people's war" is a deadly dangerous fantasy, playing directly into the hands of the Afrikaner hardliners. Any actions along this line will trigger a monstrous slaughter without threatening Pretoria militarily. In contrast to such light-minded playing at war, well-selected actions by the black workers movement can strike the apartheid system in its Achilles heel, its absolute dependence upon black labor.

Unlike the Bishop Tutus, we do not talk of bloodbaths as an excuse to preach pacifism and reconciliation with the apartheid state. Blood will

Port Elizabeth:

"We long for the day when there is majority rule government in South Africa and [imprisoned ANC leader] Nelson Mandela is our Prime Minister. But when that day comes we must have an independent trade union organisation to make sure the black workers don't get kicked around simply because our people are in power."

For the oppressed to emerge victorious from the inevitable civil war in South Africa, they must be organized and led by a class-conscious vanguard infused with the understanding that those who labor must rule.

Continuing Lenin's struggle for independent communist parties in the fight for a Fourth International, his companion-in-arms Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, wrote to his supporters in South Africa in 1935. Trotsky noted:

"The Bolshevik Party defended the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination with the methods of the proletarian class struggle, entirely rejecting the charlatan 'anti-



Left, Longshore union militants picket Kimberley ship carrying Sth African cargo, San Francisco Nov 84; Right, Spartacist contingent at anti-Apartheid demo, Sydney 13 April.

"own" ruling class extends back to its founding. Hoping to exploit the sometimes sharp antagonism between British capital and Afrikaner nationalism the ANC supported British imperialism in both the First and Second World Wars. And following the savage repression in the wake of Sharpeville, in 1964 ANC leader Luthuli appealed to "South Africa's strongest allies, Britain and America ... for sanctions that would precipitate the end of the hateful system of apartheid". As if the City of London and Wall Street, the butchers who slaughtered blacks in the "Mau Mau emergency" in Kenya and communist guerrillas in Indochina, are any more humane than Afrikaner leaders Malan, Verwoerd and Botha! They're just more remote and cool.

The "moderate" nationalist ANC talks of "multiracial democracy", but means by this a "power-sharing" deal with elements of the white racist ruling class, from the United Party in the 1950s and '60s to the Progressive Federal Party today. Meanwhile, Bishop Tutu, picked as the black savior of South Africa by the Nobel Prize committee, warns of the danger of a bloodbath, appealing for the intervention of the American imperialists. So that in the South African black movement talk of interracialism is exclusively associated with popular-front do-gooders of the CP/ANC stripe, and those who warn of the danger of a bloodbath turn out to be weepy friends of the Kennedys. The more militant of the nationalists, such as AZAPO which demonstrated against Teddy Kennedy's visit to Soweto last January, close their eyes to the dangers looming over them and harden up the enemy camp, driving whites into the Afrikaner laager.

The black movement in South Africa doesn't seem to realize that they're looking down the barrel of a cannon that's been wheeled out to blow them away. They vastly overrate the humanity of their oppressors. Botha & Co

flow in South Africa: the question is whose blood, when, where, why and how. Certainly there is no solution in South Africa without a civil war. But if it is fought on a purely white vs black, national basis it will be a disaster for the oppressed. One only has to look at Angola where a few hundred South African soldiers drove almost all the way to Luanda before the Cubans intervened to stop them.

★★★★

The savage apartheid dictatorship in South Africa is the result of uneven and combined development in which the latest advances in industry and technology coexist with imposed colonial backwardness of the oppressed black masses, condemned to suffer the most brutal aspects of serfdom, slavery and tribalism. The most elementary democratic demand or social gain can only be achieved in an anti-capitalist revolutionary context. The fundamental political right of "one man, one vote" — real majority rule — would mean the overthrow of white supremacy and would sound the death knell for the white ruling class. Those such as Bishop Tutu, the UDF and ANC who preach a "peaceful" end to apartheid through moral suasion and "economic sanctions" of international finance capital disarm the oppressed ideologically in the face of impending catastrophe in which it will overwhelmingly be the blood of the black masses that flows.

Today hundreds of thousands of black, coloured and Indian workers are enrolled in black unions, which have repeatedly broken through the labyrinth of state controls to unleash mass strike action. The economic organization of the black workers is a necessary condition for the South African workers, but it is not sufficient. A recent book titled *Power! Black Workers, Their Unions and the Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (1984) reports a revealing remark by a shop steward of a black union in

imperialist' blocs with the numerous petty-bourgeois 'national' parties of Czarist Russia ...

"Only thanks to this irreconcilable class policy was Bolshevism able to succeed in the time of the revolution to throw aside the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries, the national petty-bourgeois parties and gather around the proletariat the masses of the peasantry and the oppressed nationalities."

— LD Trotsky, "On the South African Theses", *Writings* [1934-35]

In South Africa today, the construction of a Bolshevik party based on the black proletariat is more urgent than ever, but also the possibilities are possibly better than in the past. The government has a lot on its plate right now, and its highest priority probably isn't tracking down inconspicuous red nuclei in the workers movement. As a result of what has happened to government informers in the townships in recent months, there seems to be an involuntary relaxation of security control within the black population.

A Leninist-Trotskyist party in South Africa must be built in irreconcilable struggle against every kind of nationalism and popular-frontism, counterposing the program of permanent revolution, for the emancipation and reconstruction of the oppressed nation under the dictatorship of the proletariat. A workers revolution in South Africa, with its concentration of industry and wealth, will be the motor force for the liberation of the desperately impoverished black masses throughout the continent. Where to begin? Now is the time for internationalist communists, black, coloured, Indian and white, to undertake the construction of unobtrusive nuclei, in and oriented toward the workers movement, laying the basis for a multiracial revolutionary workers party in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International.

— Abridged from *Workers Vanguard* no 376, 5 April 1985

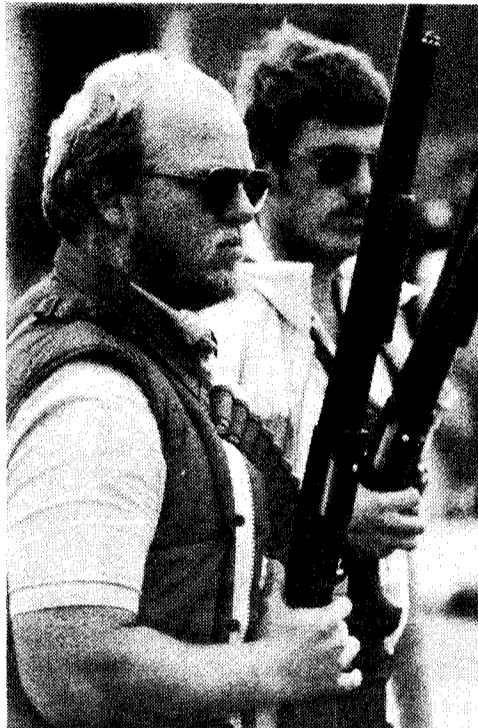


Nationalism Is a Deathtrap for Black Masses – Build a Proletarian Party to Smash Apartheid!

South Africa: Razor's Edge

On Thursday, March 21, rallies were held in South Africa to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the massacre at Sharpeville, the black township near Johannesburg, where police of the white supremacist regime mowed down 69 black demonstrators peacefully protesting the apartheid pass laws. This year black students in Sharpeville put up barricades and boycotted classes. At the strategic Vaal Reefs gold mine, the largest in the world, 40,000 black workers went on strike. And in the Eastern Cape Province after a three-day "stayaway" shutdown by the black population of Port Elizabeth, the authorities celebrated Sharpeville by staging another massacre.

The massacre at Uitenhage was the racist regime's answer to eight months of defiant struggles by the oppressed black population of South Africa. A massive boycott last August by the Indian and "coloured" (mixed-race) communities doomed Botha's "reform" constitution to reinforce apartheid disenfranchisement and provide the executive with new martial law powers. Peaceful protests of rent increases in black townships around Johannesburg were met with police terror and the unprecedented introduction of the army. They were followed by black gold miners battling the police and army in September. In November came the massive two-day stayaway general strike in the industrial Transvaal. In February, black squatters at the Crossroads



shantytown outside Cape Town erupted in defiance of government plans to move them to an isolated township far from the city. Even though more than 250 blacks have been killed by Pretoria's security forces since the beginning of 1984, it hasn't stemmed the waves of revolt. But things cannot go on this way indefinitely.

South Africa appears to be rumbling down the tracks to a bloody confrontation. The system of apartheid — a bogus partition in which the whites



Left, cops in Uitenhage; Above, Crossroads residents defy police terror. Massively armed apartheid state wants bloodbath. Black struggle for freedom needs program for proletarian power.

give up nothing — is coming apart. Blacks have made it clear that they are not taking this oppressive situation any more. And the white population is armed to the teeth, determined to defend what they've got. The coasts are secure, there is a belt of cowed black African states to the north, and the struggle is along white-vs-black national lines. So long as the national principle predominates, in a military confrontation, now and for the next period the whites will win hands down. The danger is of a pointless bloodbath,

something on the scale of the partition of India in which hundreds of thousands died, and a very one-sided bloodbath in which the vast majority of the victims will be from the oppressed black, Indian and coloured majority.

Yet the class principle can prevail. In South Africa there is a black proletariat with a growing sense of its power. Over the past decade it has entered into struggle, from the gold mines and industrial heartland of the

Continued on page ten

Beat Back Labor's Racist Attacks

Defend Overseas Students!



Demonstration against racist fees and quotas marching on NSW ALP HQ, Sydney, 18 April.

Racist fees and quotas for overseas students are now the cutting edge of Labor's austerity offensive against students and access to tertiary education. Those most affected will be the self-supporting Chinese students from Malaysia (comprising over 50 per cent of overseas students), denied access to universities at home due to the Malay-chauvinist policies of the Mahathir government. Although the reintroduction of fees for tertiary students was shelved by the Labor parliamentary caucus for the moment, overseas (mainly Asian) students have been singled out for massive fee increases, preparing the political ground for more general austerity attacks against the working class, youth and minorities. This is the year of sharpened austerity as Hawke's

Accord fractures and the path to anti-Soviet war shortens.

Labor's Education Minister, Susan Ryan, with her "leftist" pretensions, announced overseas students' fees starting at \$3,500 this year increasing soon to "full cost" (over \$10,000). The racist quotas that are already operational at most universities are to be enforced everywhere to limit enrolment to no more than 10 per cent at any institution. Appealing to white racist chauvinism, Ryan blames the increase in anti-Asian racist abuse and assault on its victims, pointing to the large concentrations of Asian students at universities like the University of NSW. Ryan's scheme will effectively drive out the vast majority of Asian students who get no TEAS, and

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