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PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST ORGANISATION

HAVING SAVAGED Its working class support-

ers with the budget, the government has turned its attention to privatisation. Here, Hawke and Keating have gained the offensive due to the Victorian government's

After losing billions of dollars John Cain quit and left Socialist Left leader Joan Kirner

to mind the sinking ship. This

supposed Leftist rushed to sell the State Bank, Paul Keating

jumped in to have the Commonwealth Bank buy it, and raise the

needed funds through share is-

It was a marriage made in

heaven. Gushed Kirner after

meeting Keating: "I now know

why financial journalists and

people of the world say,

chattered and Keating had found the only way the Common-

wealth could raise the cash, but

that just bullshit. Several articles

in the financial press have shown

other ways to raise the funds.

The whole deal is a political ex-

Labor Party, the opening of a

new era for the Commonwealth

bank and a humiliating repudi-

ation by the ALP Socialist Left

"It is a turning point for the

ercise. The Australian gloated:

The Victorian Labor left was

sues to private interests.

Wow'

financial crisis.

AFTER THE BUDGET ...

BWAISAIN. Now, a chance to fight

fence of Telecom and other public enterprises has rapidly wilted. Transparent talk of devoting the convenient cop-out.

OBSTACLE

The special federal ALP conference on 24 September could be a more difficult obstacle. But only a struggle that goes beyond party politics is going to turn the tide against privatisation now.

The Telecom unions are still of the principles by which it has taking a strong stand, and have threatened industrial action.

By

Tam O'Lincoln

power to win. Telecom technicians not only have industrial muscle due to their expertise, but they have considerable public

A public meeting held in North Melbourne in July attracted 200 people. Some serious mobilising work could produce meetings far larger, and cement working class support. Meanwhile Victorian unions could wage a much stiffer fightback against the thousands of job cuts announced by their State government. The big rally in August showed the rank and file is prepared to respond if their officials give a lead.

But by and large the ALP and union left seems paralysed. The simple reason is that they are compromised by years of ALP government.

LEFT

Take Brian Howe. Here was a Socialist Left Minister who joined Hawke's Expenditure Review Committee in the early years of the government.

Far from championing the cause of social welfare, he soon became instrumental in selling Keating's austerity to the rest of the left.

In Victoria, the Trades Hall is stymied. The cuts are being carried out by that champion of "socialism", Joan Kirner.

A serious resistance to privatisation or to the on-going cutbacks would require some section of the labour movement to break with the logic of ALP

politics. But that requires more back



COCKATOO Island workers striking against the sell-off of their

jobs last year.

DID YOU hate the eighties under Hawke? The nineties could be worse.

The budget aroused little interest: huge surpluses and attacks on welfare are old hat. Even so, it was an outrage. Take pensioners. Thousands of poor pensioners have salted away relatively small sums of money in passbook or cheque accounts to avoid earning interest. This is to keep their income low enough

that their pension entitlements aren't jeopardised. To "encourage sound savings practices"-what a cynical line! -they will now be taxed as if they were earning 10 percent. It's bad enough that pensioners are caught in such a poverty trap. Now Keating has

to explode their pitiful defences. Aspiring home buyers, already haunted by ruinous mortgage rates, were told that the First Home

Owners Scheme has been scrapped. Supposedly the cuts are needed to fix up the economy. But this argument looks more threadbare with every budget.

turn the current account around. Labor's cuts are pretty ineffectual against the first, and are making the second worse.

Don't forget that much of the current account deficit is due to Labor's Accord. It held down wages, so profits soared. Eventually this spurred a wave of investment, which sucked in imports.

THE MORE difficult eco-

bosses to adopt a harder

stance on wages. The Metal Trades Industry Association,

one of the Accord's staunch-

est supporters amongst em-

players, has refused to negotiate a 4% productivity

Increase within the Accord

that the current job losses in

the metal industry (accord-

Ing to the Financial Review

running at 2,000 jobs a week)

will mean they can get away

with less than the unions are

years of "no extra claims"

and falling real wages as the

price of sticking with the Ac-

cord, the union leadership

don't feel they can meekly ac-

cept the bosses' ultimatum. The Metal Trades Federa-

tion of Unions want action to

save their version of the Ac-

cord. Much more impor-

tantly, they've been prepared

to call mass meetings, a na-

tional 24 hour strike, and further rolling stoppages in

response to the MTIA's rejection of the wage claim.

break out of the Accord-en-

forced passivity of the past

Despite the intentions of the officials, this can give metalworkers a chance to

But after seven and a half

Undoubtedly they think

Mark VI framework.

asking for.

Now, finally, after immense pain, imports are falling. But despite all the earlier investment, exports are not rising as much as hoped, for the simple reason that the employers have squandered much of their investment on useless projects like property development. Industry's productive core has not been renovated nearly enough.

The current account looks a bit better due to high interest rates and the resulting recession. The economy contracted in the June quarter and is expected to do so again in September. With the private sector contracting, a federal government budget surplus

can only push the economy down further.

The Parliamentary Left's de-There is no doubt they have the CAN THE FREE MARKET SOLVE ROOBIK'S PYRAMID? TO FIND OUT .. SUBSCRIBE to the Socialist] \$5 for B issues [] \$10 for 16 issues Phone number (for contact)

national Socialist Organisation have been building the activity But our own political activity hus been just as important to us, and

Every branch has reported a insational increase in sales of The ocialist-with regular sales dousline, and some uni sales going brough the ozone layer.

For the first time in years, we sold out of papers, Indeed, last issue of The Socialist sold so quickly that we had to order a re-

Every branch has also held cetings around the Gulf. In Melsourne, our public meeting attracted 90 people, and the 90 who, came in Sydney was our best attendance in ages. A Brisbane meeting saw 15 people attending their first ISO event, whilst a forum at the LNU in Canberra attracted 30.

As well, many young radicals save been jolted by the drive to war, and realised the need to get active peainst the system. This has enabled us to add a number of new people to the ranks of our sym-

been very well treated by the Iraqis.

So Saddam Hussein as a "barbarian" and a "monster". The

papers have been full of reports of Iraqi soldiers plundering food and

raping women wherever they go. On 9 August Sydney's Mirror

eported a soldier raping a female passenger with British Airways

while his comrades stood around laughing." Subsequent examples

ranged from four flight attendants to all Kuwaiti women, some of

whom "suicided from the shame." Yet Western female hostages have

denied seeing or hearing of these atrocities, and say that they have

asking Arabs how they could possibly support such a murderous

a war. As a spokesperson for the Australian Arab Welfare Council

The warning is clear—shut up or we will come and deport you.

We have already seen the effects of this barrage of threats. In

their loyalty to Australia and willingness to "die for the country". These

protestations are understandable, but mistaken. Far from satisfying

the racists, they merely serve to further isolate Arab people who don't

"love Australia", who resent their poverty, unemployment, discrimina-

active against Australian and American involvement in the Gulf.

a new mosque in the region has just had his house smashed up.

HOSTAGES: The West's hypocrisy

they got in Iraq and Kuwait.

look at the West's record on hostages.

centration camps, in the Boer War at the ton, some were even lodged in pigpens.

ish refugees-rounded up in Britain and concentration camps. interned in the Australian bush. On the their personal possessions stolen.

In the US, over 110,000 Americans of for the ultimate in human brutality. Japanese descent were interned, with

stories of Western civilians "escaping to animals. Two thousand were crowded Noriega sympathiser. When they bombed freedom" from the "barbaric" treatment into a single, filthy building in the Port- and destroyed working class districts, the declared that the US action was "in land, Oregon, stockyard. In California, survivors were rounded up, housed in Barbaric? If you want barbarism, just they were squeezed into stables at race-tents and plywood cubicles, fed one plate courses, the stench of manure still fresh. of food a day and prevented from leaving. It was the British who invented con- At Puyallup Assembly Centre, Washing-

In the so-called "Malayan emergency" British settlers and armed patrols rou- of the 1950s, Australian and other Comtinely took Aboriginal hostages in the war monwealth troops routinely beat up and and Hong Kong, boat people from Indoto crush this country's indigenous people. massacred communities of Chinese China languish behind barbed wire During both the First and Second squatters. They decapitated the dead, im- because Australia and Britain want to World Wars, large numbers of "enemy posed 22 hour curfews and slashed rice aliens" were interned. The Dunera scan- rations to hungry peasants. Whole vildal saw Germans-predominantly Jew- lages were rounded up and moved into people hostage, their homes, villages and

Similar tactics were used in Vietnam, trip out, they were regularly beaten, and as "Vietnamisation", "pacification" and "strategic hamlet" all became code-words

When the US invaded Panama, they undeclared war on Iraq.

Gorbachev

THE REAL NATURE of Gorbachev's foreign policy can be seen by his support for the US invasion of the Gulf.

Rebuking the military chief of the Warsaw Pact, who had warned of the destabilisation caused by American troops settling in near the Soviet's own border, Gorbachev accordance with the charter of the United Nations" and made it clear that there was a "common" US-Soviet position on the Gulf crisis.

The PNG government, supported by George Bush responded by say-Australia, had no hesitation taking entire ing he was "very pleased with the cooperation we've been getting from Today in both the Northern Territory the Soviet Union on a wide array of questions and subjects" including the Gulf. "I'm glad the Soviet Union is on our side.

To make sure of this, Bush is offering billions in economic assistance to prop up the collapsing Russian economy. Gorbachev has made it clear he's for sale.

We have always argued that While the Australian press cries crocodile tears for the hostages, they Gorbachev was only interested in defending Russian state capitalism. ignore the face that there weren't any But now, those on the Left who put "hostages" until the West launched an their faith in him, find themselves forced to either ditch their hero or line up with George Bush.

farms stolen.

villages hostage on Bougainville.

discourage others from leaving.

And in Palestine, Israel keeps an entire

accepting people from diverse backgrounds and different opinions. Of course that's bullshit—Australia is riddled with racism. But with AS SOON AS Hawke announce a war looming, even the veneer of tolerance dissolves into a cauldron the sending of the three warships, of race-hate and witch-hunting. The victims this time are Arab people. peace activists, socialists and De-humanising your opponent is the first step to making gross environmentalists began organising

> the frigates home has adopted a plattion to anti-Arab racism.

There are weekly pickets of the US consulate. Our 1 September demonstration attracted 1500 people and marched noisily through Sydney The one thing that can undermine this campaign is the existence streets, from the US consulate, to the Defence Recruiting Centre.

neo-Hitler as Hussein, and which side they would fight on if there were

complained, "the way they are handling the issue is encouraging The Mirror warned Arab Australians that if they "feel strongly enough about events in the region from which they came they are mands that Iraq withdraw from ree to go back there." A letter claimed, "It only shows these people Kuwait as part of the coalition's plathave come to Australia to get the benefits of our wealth, but to offer Sydney's Campbelltown, a councillor who supported moves to build Arab community leaders are bending over backwards to proclaim

> The coalition is meeting Thursdays, 6.00pm in the Teachers' Federation, Bathurst St. and information is available from PND on 264 6831.

While this continues, Arab people will find it difficult to become BRISBANE's Gulf Action Coalition was formed on 23 August out of While no one was opposed to this

Gulf coalitions organise

against the US invasion. In SYDNEY, the Coalition to bring

form of calling for no Gulf war, bring the frigates home and opposi-

of an Arab community here, people who may not welcome the September at 10.30 and plans are under way for a "teach in". Groups have been set up at Sydney Uni and

> The second committee meeting was quite heated as New Left Party members attempted to establish deform. This move was narrowly alition should not adopt as its platform demands that would exclude some people who want to fight Australian and American involvement in



FRIGATES OUT march, Brisbane, 1 September.

a public meeting of over 100 people. as a demand, the ISO argued that the The Coalition has so far sup- group would still have been formed ported the Arab community's rally even if Australia had not been inon 25 August and organised a 300 volved. strong march demanding "Frigates A motion was raised that the co-

part of the national day of action. has dominated our meetings.

Large sections of the coalition or the intervention of the US.

Kuwait. We argued that the coalition From its inception, debate on the should not place conditions on Iraq coalition's platform and demands before the US and Allied forces

The central issue in the Gulf is wanted to call it "Bring the frigates imperialism. The frigates and troops home" so as to appeal to a wider were sent to defend the west's oil audience in Australia who opposed interests. We want the withdrawal of the sending of the frigates, but not the allied forces regardless of necessarily opposed to the Gulf War " whether Iraq is in Kuwait or not. The demands adopted by the co-

alition are Frigates Out of the Gulf. US and Allied Forces Out, Let the Arab Peoples Decide, and Non-Violence in the Era of the Nuclear

motion of support for Terry Jones, the sailor refusing to go to the Gulf, was passed unanimously. A contingent from the BWIU and FEDFA

The Gulf Action Coalition meets every Monday night at the Albion Peace Centre at 6.00pm.

MELBOURNE saw three successive Saturday rallies. When Senator Button came to

the Council of Adult Education on 18 August, he was greeted by an angry picket of over 250. The following Saturday, 3-400

people marched on a rainy, windswept morning to the US counsulate shouting "US out of the Gulf" and "Bring back the warships". Speakers at the final rally included Maureen Murphy from the

Campaign against Militarism, Edmund Melki on behalf of the Arab community and a speaker from the East Timorese community. Jean McLean, a state Labor MP,

had addressed the rally at the outset, condemning Australian participation in the US-sponsored interven-

As part of the national day of action, about 300 people marched around the city and finished with a rally in the Bourke St Mall.

The Gulf Action Committee has been attracting 50-60 people to its weekly meetings.

CANBERRA had one of the earliest strations in Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, demos of the campaign-a lunch-Yemen, Jordan, Palestine and in Cairo. Jordan has seen tens of thousands time protest on 23 August which saw 2-300 people march from Garema volunteering for the armed forces in Place to the local Forces Recruiting the hope of fighting America. Office. This was followed by a pub-We spoke to "Abe", a Palestinian now living in Melbourne.

The Bring the Ships Home Coalition is meeting weekly. Phone 297 8047 for details of when and where.

With war looming in the Gulf...

ANATURAL revulsion at the Ahorrors of war, anger at the Justinus of the Gulf and opposition to Iraq's seizure of Kuwait have led many to advocate a negotiated settlement to the Gulf crisis. Yet the only basis on which such a settlement is possible is one that restores and strengthens Western domination of the region. Agreement to restore the brutal Agreement to restore the brutal al-Sabah family in Kuwait-a regime which invested over \$100 billion in western banks and denied democracy and civil rights to all but the tiniest minority—is a precondition to any US involvement in negotiations. That hardly represents a step

the immigrant workers who kept Indeed, the UN sanctions are designed primarily to stop food And the US will demand, at the and medicine getting into Irag and very least, the right to impose on Kuwait. The flood of refugees is the Iraq a regime sympathetic to their result of the UN sanctions and the interests. We may not like Saddam threat of war. A request from India Hussein, but a western puppet for permission to send food and regime, like the late and un- medicine to Iraq and Kuwait for the lamented Shah in Iran, would do 170,000 Indian nationals caught nothing for the oppressed of Iraq. there was rejected by the UN.

forward for the poor of Kuwait or

the oil profits flowing.

much more difficult.

demands of Western imperialism.

but the quarantors of the interests

There were three elements to that

defeat: military resistance by the NLF;

opposition to the war in the US itself;

and finally, disillusionment and disinte-

smaller than Vietnam, far more isolated

(since Russia is supporting the US) and

Saddam does not have the glowing

lation, is the same, and is felt right

throughout the 200 million people of

Hussein Hammami, told how the US

presence "has produced a sense of rad-

icalization and desperation [and] it will

Within the US, intelligent imperial-

ists recognise that the invasion has

and weakened pro-US governments

We welcome this destabilisation as

it raises the prospect of a new era of

that already lacked local support.

struggle against imperialism.

the Arab world.

not produce stability.

But the sense of invasion, of vio-

Jordan's Ambassador to the US,

image that surrounded Ho Chi Minh.

This situation is different. Iraq is

gration within the US armed forces.

To struggle against such a To the oppressed and exploited regime, with the might of America around the world, a negotiated behind it (and possibly even Amer- settlement that entrenched US ican bases on its soil) would be interests would become proof of the hopelessness of standing up to In any conflict, negotiations imperialism. It would strengthen only ever settle things on the basis the right wing in every liberation of the forces that the various con- movement and in the working tenders possess (and recognise in class more generally.

their opponents). To call for nego-If the US wins its objectives tiations in a situation where the without firing a shot, it has still won West has an enormous superiority by terrorism, by intimidation of forces, is to call for nothing more

Far from guaranteeing peace, Many on the left are looking to such a victory could only embolden the United Nations to provide a the US to again and again mobilise solution. Yet the UN, and especially its military whenever it wanted to the Security Council, are nothing get something

That's why it's so important of the great powers. They are that the left in the West work for being used to provide a fig leaf to the defeat of the US, Australia cover the West's brutal power play. and their allies.



their poverty and the Gulf.

attacks on pensioners.

There was absolutely no enthusi-

How the US HILST the US has been able to assemble a gigantic military force, it is by no means can be defeated quaranteed victory in the Gulf. You only have to look at their humiliating defeat over Vietnam.

> were many killed and injured, the army was there, about 20,000 ton to greater savagery, but just as troops. Syria is especially important possibly to negotiations and retreats—

in the Middle East. In Egypt, there are many groups against the government there. The intiloda showed that you can stand up against an army. If you're

not afraid, civilians can fight them... It's almost like an uprising in Jor- people with vast manufacturing indus- in Australia. Palestinian...it could move to Algeria, to Syria, to Egypt...like what

happened in Eastern Europe. People have hope now, from Iraq, they think maybe things can be changed.

united the Arab world against them, are enormous hopes in Saddam.

reflect an underlying reality—that no conscript riot police themselves rioted matter how repressive and murderous in protest at being forced to do an extra the Iraqi armed forces are, they repre- year's service. There were anti-governsent a newly industrialising country his- ment riots and strikes in Tunisia, Mo-There have been massive demon-torically oppressed by imperialism.

Anyone who wants the US beaten has to support an Iraqi victory should a shooting war break out.

It would be fanciful to suggest that Irag's army can defeat the Americans banning of communist literature. A movement's starting in Syria. We simply militarily. But the more powerful heard about a big demonstration a lits resistance and the resistance of the lers at the Mehalla al-Kubra textile fac-

Such a revolt may drive Washing-

exactly what we saw over Vietnam. Arab working class, which is begin to make the connection between most concentrated in Egypt. Cairo is now a city of some 15 million

dan, because Jordan is about 80% tries, especially in textiles, and cars. The last few years have seen some asm to go amongst the Australian sail- wharfies and seamen have held back gigantic strike waves. In 1977, Sadat was forced to back down when pro-

posed rises in the price of food led to riots and strikes.

In 1984 and 1986, tens of thous-Throughout the Arab world, there ands of textile workers struck against prices rises again. Two weeks after Although mistaken, these illusions being used against the 1986 strikes, the rocco, and Sudan, which saw 20 national strikes in early 1985.

This wave of struggle has been fuelled by the example of the intifada. In Syria, Yemen and Jordan, strikes and protests have forced elections, the end of marital law in Jordan and the un-

A recent strike by the 40,000 workfew days ago in the north, close to larque people, the greater is the potential tory saw them linking wage issues to the Turkish and Iraqi borders. There for an uprising throughout the region. demands that Mubarak stand down

and Egypt break its links with Israel. left has dutifully lined up behind The potential exists to link this rising Hawke, only condemning his decision tide of struggle to the issue of resisting as premature. the American invasion.

It is tragic that it was only the rightwing independent, Ted Mack, who

NALLY, there is the potential for voted against sending the frigates. The most spectacular action against resistance from within the US and the Western invasion of the Gulf has This conflict is unfolding on the eve come in Bangladesh, where opposition

of a world recession, after a decade of parties organised a successful eightfalling real wages in America and tre- hour general strike on 3 September in mendous immiseration in the ghettos. response to the government's decision The same people who are cutting to send 4000 troops. Building trade union action is a fun-

welfare have billions to spend on war. Whilst resistance within America is damental task facing the various proso far limited, it is not at all ruled out test coalitions because workers have an HE KEY to the situation is the that workers and the oppressed could unrivalled power to bring their rulers to heel. Trade union action was extremely important in the struggle against the Vietnam war, and unions also banned The same dynamic can also be seen shipping to Fiji in protest at the coups.

So far, Left unions such as the ors. When Terry Jones jumped ship, he from place their traditional bans on Australia's involvement. It is vital that of these unions to convince them of the

received widespread support. Amongst those who did go, there is the various coalitions make approaches already a dispute about the payment of both to the rank and file and leadership special allowances. Anger at Hawke's decision to send need to take a stand, however modest the frigates can connect with anger at that may be to start with. Actions such as these can begin to Labor's privatisation schemes, at falling

wages, the scrapping of the dole and undermine the US war effort. They can prepare the way for a

It is therefore tragic that the Labor US defeat.

DEMONSTRATE

Saturday 22 September, 10.30am, marching from Town Hall CANBERRA: Saturday 22 September, 10.30am, Assemble Garema Place

BRISBANE: Speakout, Queen St Mall, Fri 14 Sept 7.30pm; Picket, Defence Recruiting Centre, Watkins Place, Sat 22 Sept, 11.00am

MELBOURNE-SEMINAR Understanding the Gulf crisis Sun. 23 Sept, 10-5, Trades Hail.

International Socialist Organisation

Contact us!

tion, police harassment and racist abuse.

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HOBART

LATROBE VALLEY

SOCIALISM

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

control over production or We stand for socialism, the creation of a society in which the workers will make the

and Cuba are not socialist. Workers under these state task of building their own revolutionary movement to smash the system and take

WORKERS' POWER

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Although workers create society's wealth they have no

decisions about the economy, social life and the environment

Countries like Russia, China capitalist regimes also face the control into their own hands.

Only the working class has the power to create a society free from exploitation, oppression Liberation can only be won single country; socialist

through the struggles of workers themselves, organised

independently of all other classes and fighting for real workers' power-a new kind of state based on democraticallyelected workers' councils.

REVOLUTION, NOT REFORMISM

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

INTERNATIONALISM

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

Socialism cannot be built in a

revolutions must be spread if they are to survive. We oppose imperialism, East and West, and support all national liberation struggles

country, but an imperialist power in its own right. This means we are opposed to The threat of nuclear annihilation is a product of

LIBERATION

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

egainst imperialist domination. Australia is not an oppressed

capitalism and only socialism can end it.

Crucial to a workers' movement smashing the capitalist state is revolutionary workers' party built out of the day to day struggles around economic and political issues. We are laking the first steps towards building such a party. the ideas and traditions of revolutionary socialism, while fighting alongside militants and activists who are challenging

REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

Our task today is to argue for

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

PAGE 2—THE SOCIALIST SEPTEMBER 1990

The real story behind the Gulf crisis:

We must become the owners or at any rate the controllers at the source of at least a proportion of the oil which we require." -Winston Churchill, 1913

TRETCHING from the Straits of Hormuz, northwards along the Southern Arabian shore of the Gulf, lies one of the world's more peculiar political entities-the United Arab Emirates.

Today they are a strange collection of federated states where the fabu ously rich descendants of Bedouin chiefs rule over their personal oil wells and live in luxury in artificial cities such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The oil wells are worked by an immigrant workforce who make up

Two hundred years ago this deser region was inhabited by a handful of Bedouin. With the establishment of the Suez canal in the 1880s, British inter-

est in the region increased Egypt was annexed in 1886, Kuwait (another impoverished Bedpuin emirate) in 1896, and Aden (today's South Yemen) in a piecemeal ashion between 1886 and 1914.

As a result, Britain was able to dominate the coastal regions of the

The Ottoman Empire was still the nominal ruler of the rest of the Middle East (except Iran), but the discovery of oil in Iran and Iraq around the turn If the century was soon to change

The British reduced Iran to the tatus of a virtual colony, placing its of wealth in the hands of Anglo-Persian

51% owned by the British govern nent). The First World War saw Iraq detached from the Turks and given to he British. The British were divided o

In 1932, Iraq was granted "independence". But the British troops and the British oil companies remained.

The rise of Arab nationalism

HE decision to grant independence to Iraq a series of riots and strikes crescendo in the post-war period.

The annexation of trag had been But in all cases it wasn't until the 1948 and 1967 in wars against its Arab the arms of the Shah. met by an uprising in 1920 which was | 1940s and '50s that the communist | neighbours. loodily suppressed. Kurdish villages parties of the Middle East began to But in the short term there was a gence combined to organise a coup make in the gulf that the US and Austnorthern trag, later to be gassed by exert a mass influence, and by that loosening of the imperial leash, which and the Shah returned to begin 26 ralia are intervening to protect. tussein, were treated to more civil- stage they were thoroughly Stalinised the movement against imperialism years of brutal rule. sed British methods—aerial born- servants of the Russian ruling class— took advantage of.

In 1936 the workers, peasants and have tragic consequences.

British foreign minister, made this | country and their careers.



and revolution

can swallow consistent with its prin- to Jewish welfare that lay behind the the cost of direct rule in any case and reward the Communist Party with ciples, but under which our eco- declaration. Churchill, who appreci- moved towards decolonisation. mass repression.

Jews...would from every point of | control of Iran or Iraq. view be beneficial and would be especially in harmony with the true The US

nterests of the British Empire. It's hardly surprising that Arab and Persian resistance to the partition of their homelands and to imperialist occupation flared again and again was largely provoked by between the wars, only to reach a

class along the railways and ports, in dashed. appearance of autonomy, it wouldn't | oil fields, provided the basis for the | sessions in the Gulf.

rule and they weren't to be the last. | strike wave of that year.

as a colony, others like Sir Arthur | clear in a confidential memorandum | Meanwhile, the end of the Second | for the overthrow of the monarchy and World War seemed to hold out some | counterposed the demand simply for even go through the form of con- British and the French economies had Jabr.

ascendancy

ESPITE de-colonisindependence from Imwhich rocked the country in The growth of an industrial working perialism were to be cruelly

shopkeepers of British Palestine After the war however it was strike waves in the late 1940s. In Iraq Abdul Nasser, in power. staged a six month general strike another current that made most of the these culminated in 1948 in a virtual Nasser was given to radical rhet-

accurately this series of movements) ers and students around the demand a move which provoked military inter-The Ballour Declaration in 1919 | were commonly middle class intellec- | for a democratic republic. The Com- | vention by the combined forces of the | ism. had established British support for the tuals, often army officers, who resent munist Party which rushed to the lead- UK, France and Israel. This time how-Zionist project of an exclusively Jew- ted the way in which imperialism held ership of the movement, instead of ever the US, correctly viewing Nasser overthrown but by their own people, shistate in Palestine. Lord Battour, the back both the development of their leading it forward, tried to restrain it. In as someone with whom they could and not the Seventh Fleet. particular they opposed the demand | deal, intervened to force the British to |

In Palestine we do not propose to | hope for greater independence. The | the overthrow of the right-wing Salib ing in this time is some administra- sulting the wishes of the present | been shattered by the war, resulting in | The regent was delighted to be | It has been portrayed as In the tion with Arab institutions which we inhabitants... The Four Powers are a shift in world power towards the US, presented with this opportunity. He West. The working class played which used its influence to pressure | sacked Salib, and installed an ancient | a key role. strings ourselves: something that And it was not some sentimental against direct colonial rule. The two veteran of the 1920 uprising in power, won't cost very much, which Labour | attachment by the British ruling class | European powers could little afford | who proceeded after a short interval to | once again disoriented by Stalinism.

nomic and political interests will be ated the value of oil, made this abun- In addition the discovery of oil in The focus of the struggle against his opponents on the Left, and finally the more conservative, backward and | imperialism then moved to neighbour- | to crush the workers' movement. ...a Jewish state under the protectory manageable states, such as Saudi ing Iran where a government was tion of the British Crown, which | Arabia and Kuwait, gave the West | elected under the leadership of a | US imperialism from which they are might comprise three or four million options it could exploit even if it lost nationalist, Mohammed Mossadeg, in still desperately trying to recover. I

ernment proceeded to nationalise the producing states around the Gulf property of the British oil companies. That was why they backed today's provoking righteous indignation in | retrospective "tyrant", Saddam Hus London which the Shah duly regis- | sein, when he invaded Iran in 1980. However the plot was uncovered and I today to use the crisis with Iraq to

Once more a wave of strikes and | British did before them) when the demonstrations threatened to spill | Arabs get too uppity. The British realised that unless | cities such as Tehran, Cairo and | The British in particular maintained | over into a social revolution. Once | For over a century Western Im they allowed Faisal's regime the Baghdad and most importantly on the military bases and held onto their pos- more the Communist Party did its best perialism has made a misery of the not to lead the movement, but to | lives of the people of the Middle East, These protests were not the first of these was established in Iran in more fervently than the British, trans- a workers' revolution, but the unrest installing hideous dictatorships to examples of Arab resistance to British 1920 and played an active role in the forming Israel into a heavily armed was enough to frighten sections of the maintain the flow of oil and profits from European enclave and backing it in | middle class and the army back into | the Gulf.

against British rule and the increasing Zionist immigration which the British leaders of this movement (or more Strikes and mass riots united work- nationalising the Suez Canal in 1956— the impasse of Middle Eastern politics

THE REALITY of British rule in the Middle East: soldiers crack down in Aden. US domination has relied more on Zionism and ompliant local rulers.

This made Nasser a hero in the eyes of the Arab masses, strengthen ng the hand of the nationalist move ents in countries like Iraq. Nasserite arties were formed in many countries nd Syria and Egypt momentarily nited in the United Arab Republic vakening visions of Arab unity.

In Iraq the ultra-reactionary gov rnment of Nuri al-Said signed the xplicitly anti-Nasser Baghdad Pact in 956 with the equally pro-Western audis. Unsure that the parliamen ould ratify the Pact, al-Salid rranged for a fake election. The Comunist Party and the newly formed Nationalists united in opposition with he Syrian inspired (and more rightving nationalist) Ba'ath party to found he National Unity Front.

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HE 1979 revolution in Iran was not the orgy of Islamic fundamentalism

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the Shah they lost their most powerful Mossadeg's "National Front" gov- and loyal supporter amongst the oil

tered by planning to sack Mossadeo. That is why they are determined ation, the hopes for true the Shah was forced to flee by a pop- re-establish their right to intervene militarily and assert their will (as the

It is the tens of billions of dollars a In 1953 the CIA and British intelli- | year that the US oil companies alone

The only force that can deliver the The same year saw a very different | people of the Middle East from tyranny a political degeneration which was to In Iran and Iraq, the communist | coup in Egypt, where a group of army | is the working class which has grown parties grew massively in a series of officers placed a nationalist colonel, massively in size and power over the

-by Robert Bollard

addressed a university porters. campus gathering. The Now this war has spread to

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waged largely by Gatsha to guarantee his own position at Buthelezi's Inkatha movement the National negotiation table. It has claimed over 4,000 lives and is, with the aid of the state, to

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Inkatha: de Klerk's police back the anti-ANC pogroms FW DE KLERK recently vigilante attacks on ANC sup-

government he claimed the townships in the industrial was "more than ever in a heartlands of Johannesburg. In peaceful way on the road to the townships of Thokoza. negotiations. Legitimacy of Kagiso, and Soweto, over 500 the government is not people have been killed.

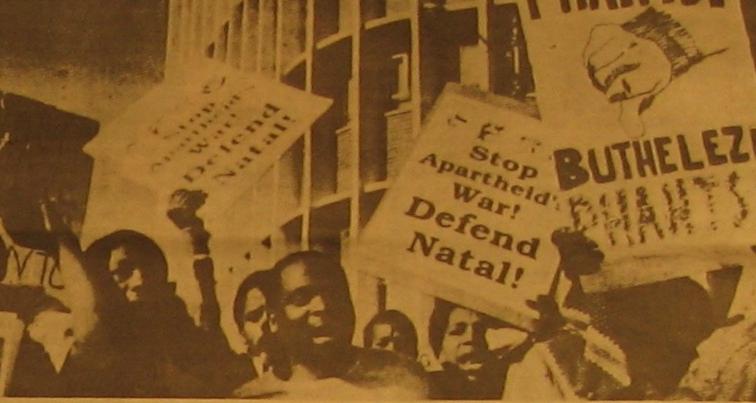
The atomising and insulating Both claims are of course effects of hostel life have enfalse. State repression has not abled Inkatha to recruit "migabated. White students were rant" workers outside of Natal. tear-gassed during a demon- This has made some hostels con-

was recently arrested on some tel dwellers on the broader community have occurred regularly And importantly, the conflict during peak periods of militant that has erupted in the Johannes- mobilization, starting with burg townships is the direct re- Soweto in 1976. But the culture sult of Apartheid and the police of resistance to Apartheid is now filtering into the hostels.

The war in Natal being Buthelezi's aim is not simply countless refugees. Inkatha is a weaken the local structures of at night-at about 12 or 1 am The ANC's suspension of the Moreover, now that the ANC Klerk of any responsibility,

In reality it voices the inter- force of 5,000 police and sol- then selected for attack. class and recruits poorer blacks text of "crime prevention", to Kasigo police station denounced political space for itself. using a mixture of coercion and disarm the residents, not In-

parent to most residents. One recent offensive. The first at- leadership. Paradoxically, at a mise with lokatha. Not to do so have to build upon such positive The unbanning of the ANC dissident Inkatha member gave tacks occurred in Soweto only time when an armed defence is would reinforce the myth that action and further mobilize has given blacks the confidence this report: "The police are based days after the COSATU/UDF crucial for survival in some the violence is a simple ethnic workers and community activto openly defy Inkatha. Thus In- at the hostel... who patrol outside week of mass action against the townships, Mandela is urging clash between Zulus and ists.



ANC supporters in a South African township show their contempt for Buthulezi's Inkatha movement.

A number of factors explain to drive a wedge between the as the ANC Youth League, lence. showed that its support is less The role of the police is trans- the timing of Buthelezi's most activists of the ANC and the rightfully reject any compro-

state-backed organization that the anti-Apartheid activists and when everyone is sleeping— armed struggle has made its' has committed itself to negotia- A campaign to get the police they go in Casspirs (armoured supporters more vulnerable to tions, Mandela is under enor- and military out of the townships and claims to represent the "Zulu" When Inkatha attacked ANC trucks) and police vans with a attack. And the formation of a mous pressure to meet with may well become imperative in aligned hostels in Sebokeng, a few Inkatha guys." Houses are deal between the state and the Buthelezi. But Inkatha has con-ANC has increased the resolu- sistently reneged on all the peace a well supported stay-away and ests of a small black business diers intervened, under the pre- A demonstration outside the tion of Inkatha to carve out a deals it made with COSATU re- 50,000 strong demonstration

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The real price of German ocuvring to avoid the blame. unity is now emerging—a First they tried to rig the votcrisis that has even the inglaws. Then they tried to bring West German government the joint elections forward so on the back foot.

servative economists continue to There are signs that East Gerclaim that the market will solve mans are deeply distrustful of every problem, German workers the politicians who are dragging are facing massive attacks. them into the mire, and are tak-

up by 30,000 each week. One Metalworkers, helped by agency cautiously estimates that West German unions, struck and almost half of the industrial won a 30 per cent wage rise, workforce could end up unem- reduced working hours and job

Chancellor Kohl to abandon this nationwide strikes demanding year's budget. Things will not the same. German oil imports, which run that drew in hundreds of thouat 90 per cent of requirements, sands.

West have responded by slash- he faces the risk of mobilising ing living standards. Basic food West German workers against staples have quadrupled in price him as well. and rent and electricity are set to Stalinist state capitalism has rise by five times.

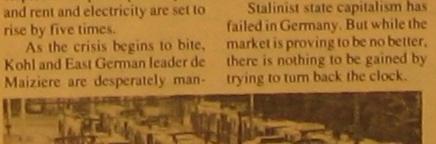
that people wouldn't be so disil-While newspapers and con- lusioned at the time of the poll.

Unemployment is rocketing ingaction to protect themselves.

guarantees. Falling production has al- Emergency service and ready forced West German transport workers are holding the weapons are very unstable. they could be conducted in a The decision will "depend on the sentative out of 15 countries at

improve when the USSR begins East German farmers have land between a runway and the trolled. charging hard currency for East blockaded parliament in actions

German bosses East and As Kohl looks for a solution,





TRAMS at a standstill as East German workers strike against the government's austerity measures.

United States chemical weapons dump threatens Pacific countries

storage area for its chemi- cades".

the 300,000 Second World War itoring of any leaks.

ing ahead with its contro- tainers and we will have thou- as a base for chemical weapons to store the weapons currently in versial plan to use a Pacific sands of nerve gas grenades and well into the 21st century and not the US. Congress recently de-Island as a dumping and bombs bobbing around for de- just for short term use. cided to have a feasability study

The US plan to extend their ate chemical weapons on the is-nitely as part of the US chemical stockpiles to less-densely popusecret military installation on land. Even the relatively retaliatory capability. Until they lated sites. If they are allowed to Johnston Atoll in the Pacific. sympathetic CSIRO report are destroyed they are part of the get away with their current plans They are currently transport- raised concerns over the lack of weapons stock. ing 100,000 poison gas rockets consideration of toxic fallout. It The report says that "the Eu- weapons to the Atoll.

ready there. To move them half- there are at least four alternatives rial" hazardous. Because of their age chemicals. All are safer because stroy them by 1997 as is claimed. Hawke was the only repre-The chemical weapons will closed environment, which world situation". These weapons the recent South Pacific forum to

aircraft to go off course and smokescreen. The report reveals could mean the Persian gulf!

The US also plan to inciner- many are to be retained indefi- present eight chemical weapon

from West Germany, to add to also pointed to insufficient mon-ropean stockpile contains material usable for national defence of the concern of the Pacific isnerve and chemical weapons al- Greenpeace has said that purposes, it is not waste mate- land nations and received strong way around the world is very that could be used to destroy the The US is not bound to de- Australia's Bob Hawke.

be stored on a narrow strip of means emissions could be con- will be held by the army chemi- give unqualified support to the cal activity western command, a proposed Johnston Atoll However it is becoming clear body required to assist in the burnoff. Throughout the meet-Even a US Army environ- with the leaking of a US army preparation of toxic chemical ing, he bullied South Pacific mental report says that "numer- report that the idea of this being munitions for shipment in de- governments to accept the ous aircraft use that runway the beginning of the end of ployment situations and to de- United States plan to treat their everyday and it only needs one chemical weapons is just a liver to the shipping point. This region as a rubbish tip.

The weapons from West Ger- undertaken on transporting the

backing for their plan from

-by Mike Waterman

Kohl and East German leader de there is nothing to be gained by Strikes in Dominican Republic

A NATIONAL strike shook the Dominican Republic in the middle of August. Fourteen people died and hundreds

were arrested in street clashes. The strike was in response to President Balguer's latest austerity plan that has devalued the peso by 30% and doubled the price of flour. Electricity is only supplied for four hours per day and water is only available for one Tobacco Riots in Siberia

hour per day in poor areas. house to celebrate the 1992 anniversary of Columbus'

Greens fight VFT in France

ENVIRONMENTALISTS fighting the very fast train project in Australia take heart! A senior planner of the French version The nationwide demonstrations have led to Gorbachev from Lyon to the Mediterranean coast has killed himself.

Thousands of people protested against the French proposal, blocking rail lines and occupying stations. Environmentalists have been upset because the train would cause thousands of acres of forests and vineyards to be destroyed. Other rail services are being run down. It takes 2½ hours to travel 100km between Aix and Nimes.

THE LACK of consumer goods provoked riots and dem-Balaguer is spending \$100 million on a giant light- onstrations in Siberian Chelyabinsk at the end of August. Consumers shouted, "Give us sausage, give us sugar, give us tobacco" outside the city's largest supermarket. On one night the demonstrators tried to storm the

Interior Ministry to free comrades arrested previously. The shortage of tobacco is acute across the country. sacking the minister responsible, Vladilen Nikitin.

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The real story behind the Gulf crisis:

• "We must become the owners or at any rate the controllers at the source of at least a proportion of the oil which we require." -Winston Churchill, 1913.

TRETCHING from the Straits of Hormuz, northwards along the Southern Arabian shore of the Gulf, lies one of the world's more peculiar political entities—the United Arab Emirates.

of federated states where the fabuously rich descendants of Bedouin chiefs rule over their personal oil wells and live in luxury in artificial cities such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The oil wells are worked by an mmigrant workforce who make up

Two hundred years ago this deser region was inhabited by a handful of Bedouin. With the establishment of the Suez canal in the 1880s, British inter-

Egypt was annexed in 1886. Kuwait (another impoverished Bedpuin emirate) in 1896, and Aden fashion between 1886 and 1914.

As a result, Britain was able to dominate the coastal regions of the

nominal ruler of the rest of the Middle

detached from the Turks and given to he British. The British were divided o now to rule Iraq. Some wanted to treat

What we ought to have been creat-

In 1932, Iraq was granted "independence". But the British troops and the British oil companies remained.

The rise of Arab nationalism

HE decision to grant independence to Iraq a series of riots and strikes | crescendo in the post-war period. which rocked the country in

survive.

rule and they weren't to be the last. strike wave of that year.

The annexation of trag had been But in all cases it wasn't until the 1948 and 1967 in wars against its Arab the arms of the Shah. met by an uprising in 1920 which was | 1940s and '50s that the communist | neighbours. bloodily suppressed. Kurdish villages parties of the Middle East began to But in the short term there was a gence combined to organise a coup make in the gulf that the US and Austnorthern trag, later to be gassed by exert a mass influence, and by that loosening of the imperial leash, which and the Shah returned to begin 26 ralia are intervening to protect. ussein, were treated to more civil- stage they were thoroughly Stalinised the movement against imperialism years of brutal rule. sed British methods—aerial born- servants of the Russian ruling class— took advantage of

In 1936 the workers, peasants and have tragic consequences.

ey Ca



ciples, but under which our eco- declaration. Churchill, who appreci- moved towards decolonisation. mass repression. dantly clear in 1920:

> Jews...would from every point of | control of Iran or Iraq. view be beneficial and would be especially in harmony with the true The US interests of the British Empire.

It's hardly surprising that Arab and Persian resistance to the partition of neir homelands and to imperialist occupation flared again and again was largely provoked by between the wars, only to reach a

class along the railways and ports, in dashed. The British realised that unless cities such as Tehran, Cairo and The British in particular maintained over into a social revolution. Once For over a century Western imappearance of autonomy, it wouldn't | oil fields, provided the basis for the | sessions in the Guilf.

laged a six month general strike another current that made most of the these culminated in 1948 in a virtual Nasser was given to radical rhet-British foreign minister, made this country and their careers.

Meanwhile, the end of the Second | for the overthrow of the monarchy and World War seemed to hold out some | counterposed the demand simply for In Palestine we do not propose to | hope for greater independence. The | the overthrow of the right-wing Salib even go through the form of con- British and the French economies had Jabr.

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ascendancy

ESPITE de-colonisation, the hopes for true independence from im-The growth of an industrial working | perialism were to be cruelly

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Inkatha: de Klerk's police back the anti-ANC pogroms

FW DE KLERK recently vigilante attacks on ANC supaddressed a university porters. campus gathering. The Now this war has spread to government he claimed the townships in the industrial was "more than ever in a heartlands of Johannesburg. In peaceful way on the road to the townships of Thokoza, negotiations. Legitimacy of Kagiso, and Soweto, over 500 the government is not people have been killed. questioned anymore."

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The war in Natal being Buthelezi's aim is not simply

In reality it voices the inter- force of 5,000 police and sol- then selected for attack. using a mixture of coercion and disarm the residents, not In- the SAP as "White Inkatha".

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Attacks by conservative hosmunity have occurred regularly that has erupted in the Johannes- mobilization, starting with

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Buthelezi is also attempting Many ANC supporters, such standstill, in protest at the vio-A number of factors explain to drive a wedge between the as the ANC Youth League, lence. showed that its support is less Therole of the police is trans- the timing of Buthelezi's most activists of the ANC and the rightfully reject any comproparent to most residents. One recent offensive. The first at- leadership. Paradoxically, at a mise with lokatha. Not to do so have to build upon such positive The unbanning of the ANC dissident Inkatha member gave tacks occurred in Soweto only time when an armed defence is would reinforce the myth that action and further mobilize has given blacks the confidence this report: "The police are based days after the COSATU/UDF crucial for survival in some the violence is a simple ethnic workers and community activ to openly defy Inkatha. Thus In- at the hostel... who patrol outside week of mass action against the townships, Mandela is urging clash between Zulus and ists.

THE REAL COST OF REUNIFICATION

The real price of German ocuvring to avoid the blame. unity is now emerging—a First they tried to rig the votcrisis that has even the inglaws. Then they tried to bring West German government the joint elections forward so on the back foot.

While newspapers and con- lusioned at the time of the poll. servative economists continue to There are signs that East Gerclaim that the market will solve mans are deeply distrustful of every problem, German workers the politicians who are dragging are facing massive attacks. them into the mire, and are tak-

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that people wouldn't be so disil-

Unemployment is rocketing ingaction to protect themselves. agency cautiously estimates that West German unions, struck and

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failed in Germany. But while the As the crisis begins to bite, market is proving to be no better,



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United States chemical weapons dump threatens Pacific countries

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The US plan to extend their ate chemical weapons on the is-nitely as part of the US chemical stockpiles to less-densely popu-They are currently transport- raised concerns over the lack of weapons stock.

ready there. To move them half- there are at least four alternatives rial" way around the world is very that could be used to destroy the The US is not bound to de- Australia's Bob Hawke. hazardous. Because of their age chemicals. All are safer because stroy them by 1997 as is claimed. Hawke was the only reprethe weapons are very unstable. they could be conducted in a The decision will "depend on the sentative out of 15 countries at The chemical weapons will closed environment, which world situation". These weapons the recent South Pacific forum to be stored on a narrow strip of means emissions could be con- will be held by the army chemi- give unqualified support to the

However it is becoming clear body required to assist in the burnoff. Throughout the meet-Even a US Army environ- with the leaking of a US army preparation of toxic chemical ing, he bullied South Pacific mental report says that "numer- report that the idea of this being munitions for shipment in de- governments to accept the ous aircraft use that runway the beginning of the end of ployment situations and to de- United States plan to treat their everyday and it only needs one chemical weapons is just a liver to the shipping point. This region as a rubbish tip. aircraft to go off course and smokescreen. The report reveals could mean the Persian gulf!

The weapons from West Ger- undertaken on transporting the The US also plan to inciner- many are to be retained indefi- present eight chemical weapon

> rial usable for national defence of the concern of the Pacific isbacking for their plan from

> cal activity western command, a proposed Johnston Atoll

-by Mike Waterman

Kohl and East German leader de there is nothing to be gained by Strikes in Dominican Republic A NATIONAL strike shook the Dominican Republic in the middle of August. Fourteen people died and hundreds

were arrested in street clashes. The strike was in response to President Balguer's latest austerity plan that has devalued the peso by 30% and doubled the price of flour. Electricity is only supplied for four hours per day and water is only available for one

hour per day in poor areas. Balaguer is spending \$100 million on a giant lighthouse to celebrate the 1992 anniversary of Columbus'

Greens fight VFT in France

ENVIRONMENTALISTS fighting the very fast train project in Australia take heart! A senior planner of the French version from Lyon to the Mediterranean coast has killed himself.

Thousands of people protested against the French proposal, blocking rail lines and occupying stations. Environmentalists have been upset because the train would cause thousands of acres of forests and vineyards to be destroyed. Other rail services are being run down. It takes 2½ hours

Tobacco Riots in Siberia

to travel 100km between Aix and Nimes.

THE LACK of consumer goods provoked riots and demonstrations in Siberian Chelyabinsk at the end of August. Consumers shouted, "Give us sausage, give us sugar, give us tobacco" outside the city's largest supermarket.

On one night the demonstrators tried to storm the Interior Ministry to free comrades arrested previously. The shortage of tobacco is acute across the country. The nationwide demonstrations have led to Gorbachev sacking the minister responsible, Vladilen Nikitin.

THE SOCIALIST SEPTEMBER 1990-PAGE 5

Left's Joan Kirner became Victorian Premier in early August, there was much red-baiting from the Right. They needn't have bothered.

job cuts, increases in taxes and anomaly". We'd say it's more charges introduced in the Aug- like a capitalist obscenity. ust budget affect workers di-

ing for the ALP is the sale of the moves. State Bank of Victoria to the But despite the revenue from Commonwealth Bank, and the this fire sale of public assets, partial privatization of the fed- which former Premier John Cain eral bank to fund the take-over. started and Kirner has taken to

been subdued in its criticism, it ture cuts are planned. is possible there will be strike In education 2,600 jobs are ernment attacks. action by State Bank employees. to go, while in the Health

the State Government is to take over at least \$2.4 billion in losses from the bank and merchant banking arm). Actually, the State Bank will

have an after-tax profit for its new owners. Ralph Ward-Ambler, State Bank chairman, calls The privatisation, massive this "an absolute financial

Kirner and Keating's shotgun sale of the State Bank is just Potentially the most damag- one of many privatization

Although Labor's Left has new heights, massive expendi-



Melbourne branch of the international Socialist Organization meets every MONDAY night at 7.30pm at Bookmarks, 1st floor, 328 Flinders St., City. For further details ring 629 3148.

PUBLIC MEETING

Oil and Imperialism, Monday 17 September. We look at why the West is prepared to go to war over oil and why we want to see our bosses defeated in the Guit.

China 1949, Monday 24 September. enin and the fight against imperialism, Monday 1 October.

write Fundamentalism, Monday 8 October. What is fundamentalism and is it taking over the Middle East?

MARXISM FOR BEGINNERS

roups introduce the basic ideas of Marx m. At Bookmarks, 1st floor, 328 Flinders St, City. Phone 629 314

Brisbane branch of the International Socialist Organisation meets every TUESDAY night at 7.00pm at Bookmarks, 2nd floor, 99 Elizabeth St. City.

The Communist International, Tuesday 18 September. is body was set up after the Russian revolution in an attempt to ascism—what it is and how to fight it, Tuesday 25 September.

he National Front in France and the Republicans in Germany are poling well. Are they fascists and how should the left respond? orporatism and the crisis of Social Democracy, Tuesday 2 October. that happened to the Labor left's strategy of nationalising industry.

tape and Power, Tuesday 9 October. Why do men rape? Are they all the enemy? Where does women's

CANBERRA

Canberra branch of the International Socialist Organisation meets every MONDAY night at 7.00pm in the Blair Room of the Canberra Workers' Club Childers St. Civic.

Today we see anti-Japanese campaigns against the MFP, and ant Arab racism as a consequence of the Gulf. What can be done? Leninism today, Monday 24 September.

s Lenin's theory of imperialism relevant? Monday 1 October. From Lithuania to Panama to the Gulf, we argue that today's world confirms the basis of Lenin's theory.

PLEASE NOTE: NEW VENUE FOR MEETINGS!! Sydney branch of the International Socialist Organisation meets every UESDAY night at 7.00pm at Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St. City. Please check noticeboard when you enter for details of which room we're in. For further details ring 261 4862.

Black nationalism: politics of Malcolm X, Tuesday 18 September. Nomen in the Middle East, Tuesday 25 September.

socialists support Saddam Hussein and the Alghan mujahedin against imperialism. But doesn't their attitude to women make any difference? Debate: Makhno and the Russian Revolution, Tuesday 2 October. ocisism and war, Tuesday 9 October.

Why is there still war in this era of glasnost and disarmament? Why do socialists oppose some wars and not others?

Hobart branch of the International Socialist Organisation holds regular Marxist study groups. For details write to GPO Box 1898, Hobart 7001 or ask any paper seller.

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

We have a bookstall every Tuesday, 1-3pm, pedestrian tunnel.

Glenn Harper

board, about 8,000 jobs will be

At the same time as services are being reduced and public transport jobs are going, fares will increase by 15%. Beer, cigarettes and petrol taxes are set to

GLOOM

Yet not all is gloom and doom. Before the budget, thousands of angry state employees demonstrated against the gov-

At the Victorian Tourism In order to sweeten the sale Department it's 1,500 and in Commission where 12 temporand keep "the integrity of the transport it's 1,000. Across the ary staff were sacked a week before the budget, workers occupied their shopfront office o fight for their jobs.

VicTour is set to be sold off

Despite orders from Tourism Minister Steve Crabb to close it down, the workers, backed by their union, the VPSA, kept the office open for business.

It is only through stands such as this that workers can fight back against a government which makes ordinary people pay for its doomed attempts to run capitalism.

We can agree with Treasurer Roper when he says that "a lot of young people... won't get the opportunities they deserve" due to this budget. But it's not just the young, Mr Roper.



VICTORIAN tram workers on strike against earlier Labor cuts.

Value for money

A TRADITIONAL argument against socialism is that workers aren't competent to run the economy. Don't we need experts to do it? Don't top bankers, for example, earn their high salaries because of their high performance?

Some interesting information about bank executives has just been released. The number one boss at the Commonwealth Bank made \$290,000. If that sounds like a lot, how about his equivalent at the National Australia Bank, who made \$630,000? Or better still the Westpac supremo who really cleaned up, with over \$1,800,000!

But they're so competent-or are they? Comparisons with financial results suggests that pay was inversely related to productivity. The Commonwealth had the highest return on net assets, while Westpac had the second lowest. But the best story of all is about lan Johns, former director

of Tricontinental, the merchant bank that created a catastrophe for the State Bank of Victoria and for John Cain. Johns received \$420,000 in salary and emoluments. While he was in the job, Tricontinental management managed to write one bad loan for every good loan, leading to losses of

more than half the loan book's total size. How did they do that? Reportedly, urgent loan proposals were circulated to the directors and followed up by a phone vote. Without the benefit of discussion at a meeting, approval was a mere formality. Now the taxpayers are picking up the

Competent? Put the employees in charge of all the banks tomorrow, and we'd be better off.

By Tom O'Lincoln

Riding the gravy train

HOSSES WEREN'T too happy when the Fringe Benefits Tax put the id on business funches a couple of ears ago. What used to be a tax leduction became a tax liability. But hey got around it by organising catered nosh-ups in the boardrooms and renaming three-hour lunches

Now bosses have a new chalinge—the Training Guarantee Tax. ompanies with annual payrolls ver \$200,000 must spend 1% on taff training, or pay it in tax.

Laurie Watkins, director of Eliible Training Company, adviser to stockbrokers and merchant banks, quickly saw what staff training would mean in practice. Senior executives will be the main recipients of the "training". He explained: "In reality, most companies are probably going to spend all their training allocation on a few top executives rather than on all of their typing pool - because it's both easier to document to Government and easier to explain to the Board".

A two day seminar on "What the accountants forgot to tell you about the Training Guarantee Act" held at Peppers on Sea in Terrigal shows that Watkins is on the ball. Accountants, psychologists and Tax Office brass told those paying \$495 a pop how to include clients in training programs and why training courses should be conducted at Peppers (or even overseas). Participants indulged in cocktail parties, and an evening's elegant dining. They could use the gym, spa and heated

The promoters claimed that the course was designed to be "eligible and structured within the meaning of the Act." In other words we taxpayers footed the bill.

And who organised it? Would you believe ... the Eligible Training

CLASSSTRUGGLEINTHELUCKY COUNTRY...

LaTrobe Uni students continue their fight against CRA takeover

ON WEDNESDAY 15 August a However, despite the inconve- publicised the campaign in a sage, rather than simply and meeting was held at LaTrobe nience, they reponded very sym- dramatic way and the response clearly telling students what was for a Research and Development to explain to them what the cam-information stall the following consisted mainly of those al-Park to Conzinc Riotinto Auspaign was about, hand out heaps day, was positive. tralia (CRA). It was the first step of leaflets, and get names on a The organising group organ- This again reflects the atti-

pany-its destructive mine in signed the petition. and for research to be more "pissed people off". closely tied to industry.

Members of the International Socialist Organisation club on campus argued that we should show our anger at this by marching up to the library to have a to students. The library was chosen because students are not allowed to hand out information BUILDING WORKERS at the Gold Watpac sites have indicated that ing, there is no doubt that the hun-

students and staff. marched up to the library, two female co-workers were sacked handling the dispute, said that tradmarch, we managed to get some concerned enough about the ation.

Bougainville, its connections Members of the Left Alli- land sale site to stake a "mining ing for students." with South Africa and its inter- ance-controlled Student Repre- claim". ests in uranium mining. Links sentative Council—who do not While the street theatre was tainly has the potential to stop were also made between the land think that actions such as the lib- an effective way to publicise a the beginning of the privatissale and the Hawke Govern- rary demonstration are the way campaign, not enough effort was ation of research at LaTrobe, we ment's restructuring of edu- to take the campaign forward- put into encouraging students to still have to argue for it to be of cation-particularly the push for tried to argue that the action was get involved. Too few leaflets a militant, democratic and outprivatisation of research funding an abysmal failure, that it only were produced to hand to stud- ward-looking character for it to

in a campaign to stop the sale. petition denouncing the sale. ised another action for Thursday tude of those who see direct ac-Speakers pointed out the About three quarters of students 30 August, street theatre tion as pissing people off and appalling record of this com- inside either took a leaflet or dramatising the issues in the think that straightforward, politcampaign and a march to the ical propaganda would be bor-

ents and we relied too much on do so. But on the contrary, the demo the drama to convey our mes-

University about the sale of land pathetically to us. We were able to it inside the library and at an going on. As a result, the march ready involved in the campaign.

So while this campaign cer-

by Ron Tierney

Gold Coast building workers brief sit-in and hand out leaflets to students. The library was fight sexist bosses

for disseminating information to sexual discrimination.

Around 200 workers at the Inlet continues.

employ the two women. Plumbers, at least another 5 days. because of this, unable to get out. for half a day. Workers from other ment of the 2 sacked women is fad-

the sacked women.

at what is supposedly a facility Coast recently took a stand against they are prepared to give financial dreds of thousands of dollars lost by and industrial support if the strike Watpac because of the dispute will make them think twice about sack-About thirty students site, Main Beach, hit the grass after Mark Hickey, the BWIU official ing other female building workers.

Despite the small size of the because of their gender. The sacked itionally building workers have in the coffin of the idea that all men women allege that a foreman, when refused to tolerate any sexual dis- are the enemy of women and points explaining the reason for their dis- crimination against female co- to the way forward. Had the sacking good chants going and students missal, said that the builder, Watpac, workers by employers and even of the women occurred at a worksitting around eating their lunch did not want females working on the though "times were tough", the men place that was poorly organized then could at least see that people are site. The company denies the alleg- at the Main Beach site had stood by no doubt the workers, male or female, would not have had the confiissue to fight. When we got to the The men, members of the Build- The striking workers have just dence or even the consciousness to library, five of us were able to ing Workers Industrial Union and held a meeting where the BWIU do anything about it. This strike get inside and hand out leaflets. the Builders Labourers Federation, members have decided to return to teaches us the importance of all The other students were locked have been on strike for two weeks as work but will financially support the workers to actively building the the company have refused to re- BLF members who voted to stay out union at their workplace and for The library users inside were, painters and electricians joined them Though hope for the re-instate- like the BLF when they are attacked. feminists to support militant unions by Kym Hickey

Under Victoria's "Socialist" govenment, it's ...

JAIL FOR LEGITON'S PHERS Cops line up to defend Leighton's

ON 27 AUGUST, Ralph Edwards was jailed for 21 days without remissions-for picket-

Ralph is a shop steward with the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemans Association. Another shop steward, Mick Hartsen of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, (ASC&J) was 417, they will try it on wherever arrested on September 4.

The dispute at the Leighton's preventing them from being building site, at 417 St Kilda Rd within 200 metres of the site. Melbourne, has seen bosses In addition Leighton's are workplace meetings, motions of dispute as BLF-inspired. broadening their use of legal ac- seeking damages of \$50,000 a support for the 417 picketers at But the picket has the overtion against workers. The arrests day from each of the twelve. union branch meetings, and col- whelming endorsement of the of rank and file workers like Edwards and Hartsen follow on They have shown by their of support should be sent to P.O. official ASC&J picket, twice enfrom the jailings of union offi- strength to date that they can last Box 100, Carlton South, Vic dorsed at branch meetings. cials during the BLF deregistra- a lot longer.

Depite the constant police harassment and the legal action, 45 workers remain solid 12 weeks into the dispute. Carpenters and labourers working on the site were sacked on 8 June and have been picketing since.

The St Kilda Rd site had been the scene of numerous Health and Saftey disputes prior to the sackings. In a ten week period early this year there were 27 ing Industry Agreement (VBIA). It was the workers' refusal to accept these attacks on their conditions that led them to take action in an attempt to enforce these agreements. Leighton's response was to sack

The workers, members of the Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU) and the ASC&J. were told that to continue working on site they would have to sign on with a sub-contractor.

K-Crete, the sub-contractor, refused to guarantee that workers would not be moved off site to other K-Crete jobs. Obviously bringing in K-Crete was a move to break the strong union organisation that had been built at 417.

With no guarantee of continued employment at 417 the workers refused to sign on with K-Crete, and were sacked.

CONFINED

Initially the use of the courts was confined to attempts to prevent the BLF supporting the picketers. John Cummins, a BLF organiser, has been prominent in supporting the picket. As a result Leighton's have taken court action to try and prevent him and other BLF organisers from pick-

Cummins has continued to attend the picket, and twice been jailed for contempt of court. On the second occasion he was sentenced to 28 days without remissions.

But it quickly became clear that the jailing of BLF organisers was not going to frighten the picketers off, Legal action has now been taken against 12 workers on the picket. They have been served with injunctions

But it is not a matter of trying to out last the boss. To win they must broaden the struggle. The continuing legal attacks are the issue that they can use to win the support of other workers-if the bosses can get away with using the courts against workers at

Pressure has to be put on our on the picket has been union leaders to act. This means used to try and portray the The picketers at 417 can win. lections. Donations and letters BWIU members on site. It is an

BELOW: Ralph Edwards, jailed for picketing.



STUDENTS BACK LEIGHTON'S WORKERS The Student Legal Action Forum at Melbourne University invited Leighton's picketers to address a meeting.

More than 20 students attended. After hearing the workers' case, the Forum decided to hand out their leaflets on campus.

Action Forum members, all legal students, agreed that the workers were victims of the Government's attempts to weaken unionism in the building industry.

ISO member Daryl Croke told the meeting how unionists at his workplace, CSR Sugar at Yarraville, had faced similar legal threats during their pay dispute in 1989.

But the members of these unions are fighting without the support of their officials, who are more interested in maintaining industrial peace than defending their members 'jobs.

Even before the sackings, re-

caused little suprise to find that Union has refused to make de- entirely commendable. Leighton's had done a deal with liveries to the site. To get round It is the actions of Victoria's the BWIU over the arrange- this Leighton's have hired driv- Socialist Left government, ments with K-Crete. Leighton's ers from Tasmania and the Trades Hall and the ACTU. left it to the BWIU organiser to BWIU has given them, along doing their best to break the tell the workers they were with the other scabs, BWIU tick- picket and providing the build-

The BWIU's role in the dis- As has been the case in the for increasing the use of the pute can be likened to that of a past when BLF organisers have courts against workers, which standover person. They have or- been jailed, other union leaders deserve to be condemned. ganised scabbing and employed such as VTHC leader John Half-

lations between the workers and thugs as protection for their op- penny have done nothing. Dethe BWIU were strained. This eration, Picketers who have vis- spite their protests against the was because workers had lost ited other building sites, to gain use of the courts in industrial faith in their officials' ability to support for their fight, have dis- disputes, these recent attacks

Experience had taught them warned by the BWIU that, if It is clear that in the run-up to that BWIU organisers spent they are seen at the 417 picket, the BLF's re-registration pro got results, and was often sacked. Despite this, financial to hijacked by the state govern-

strong.

Cabinet."

covered that workers have been have gone unchallenged.

quicker than waiting for the or- and moral support has been ment and the BWIU to attack So when they were sacked it The Transport Workers BLF is giving the picketers is

ing industry bosses with a cover

-By Patrick McLeish

We are not

amused The Queen has banned a postage stamp because she thinks it could encourage loose living. The British Post Office planned a set of stamps

for the 150th anniversary

of author Thomas Hardy's

birth. One was to feature Hardy's famous character. Tess D'Urbevilles But the Queen refused to share a stamp with Tess Tess, you see, was an unmarried mother.

volume of Das Kapital Marx refers to commodity

pretty woeful, but his accepted into the party. nel, asbestos is so safe it account of the oral exam. Actually the correct can be eaten. he sat to join the Russian answer, from Trotsky, is We wonder if he ever SO MARGARET Thatcher Communist Party that Marxism is above all offered any as a snack to says that sanctions sounded about right. a method of analysis, not ex-Admiral and NSW against South Africa don't him on what page of what social relations."

money relationships. Policy Academy Wittencoms*. Yeltsin guessed that like EIGHT hundred NSW Admiral Holthouse will posed sanctions in 1986, "Washington would welcome any role the himself, the examiner police officers are doing have a lucrative career perhaps the question to Iraqis might play in stabilising the Persian didn't have a clue. So he further study. But Inspec- awaiting him if he ever re- ask is whether sanctions. Gulf. answered immediately, for Grahame Smith ad- turns to civvy street, have been imposed at all

nits he doesn't know. Building owners are deswhat his officers are en- perate for people to rid do. It's the ability to an- could dispose of it by eatalyse problems, research ing it would make a forsubjects that we want tune. them to learn. So when the cops burst in and maim you for life Truth in

after being misinformed advertising hat you're a dangerous MAYBE the Law Institute criminal, try to be sympa- of Victoria needs to learn thetic to them. It's prob- a thing or two about markably a squad that has just eting. flunked their finals.

Naval gazing

BORIS Yelstin's plan to half-jokingly, "Volume Admiral David Holthouse, return the Soviet Union to Two, page 387. He Assistant Chief of Naval becomes LIARS! market capitalism is passed the test and was Staff in charge of person-

> tin, who last month joined has imported iron and interests between the United States and the lower ranks as a victim steel worth \$350 million Iraq." of the Navy's "floating from South Africa since

the US Congress im-

The legal eagles have

ation on legal topics. Its

called the Legal Inform-

ation And Referral Serv-

Shaky sanctions

May we quote you?

rolled in. "We don't really their properties of asbes- "I WILL work with Mrs Kirner just the way I care what subjects they tos. And someone who worked with John Cain."

> "WE want a full and frank debate on this, so I'm not going to confirm or deny whether we are discussing that in Shadow

> > -Opposition leader, John Hewson, on the

-Binyamin Netanyahu, Israeli Deputy Foreign

"ISRAEL should have exploited the repression of the demonstrations in China. when world attention focused on that launched a Dial-a-Law country, to carry out mass expulsions service to give out inform- among the Arabs of the territories."

"He is the only leader who was executed ice. Abbreviated it for getting his country out of debt."

"THE US can't stand to see Iraq defeated .. that spectre would lead to instability from Marrakech to Bangladesh."

-US Assistant Defence Secretary, Richard The examiner asked the analysis of texts but of Governor, Sir David Mar- work. Given that the US "WE see no fundamental incompatibility of

THE SOCIALIST SEPTEMBER 1990—PAGE 7

-The Wall Street Journal in 1980

WHEN the crisis in the Gulf erupted, most on the left looked to the United Nations to intervene, arguing that Australia's frigates should only go as part of a UN force—as if that would change the imperialist nature of the West's invasion. Many even supported the UN sanctions which were aimed at stopping, amongst other things, food shipments to Iraq.

But what about the United Nations? Is it really a force for peace? DIANE FIELDS explains why it is not.

ence of the Communist International described the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations, as "a holy alliance of capitalists", a revolution".

So hostile were the Bolsheviks

Every party that wishes to belong to cial-patriotism but also the insincerity and hypocrisy of social-pacifism, to show the workers systematically that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international court of arbitration, no agreement on prevent new imperialist wars.

The reasons for their attitude States". vere quite simple. There are three main causes of war under capital-

economic rivalry between imperialist oppression of minor

the class struggle that takes

place within states. On none of these questions ould a body like the UN be above

Everyone who sits in the UN, whether it is in the Third Worldninated General Assembly, or the bastion of the major imperialist powers, the Security Council, is a representative of a capitalist gov-

ernment. On every issue they represent the class interests of the tiny minor-

HE FOUNDING confer- icy, it is obvious that such bodies will also reflect the domination of the imperialist powers over the rest

Today, some defenders of the UN's "progressive" role argue that since the influx of newly-indepen-"union of plunder, exploit- dent nations in the 1960s, the UN ation and imperialist counter- can no longer be characterised as

But what did the UN's founders to all such bodies that they made think about it? At the 1944 Tehran opposition to them one of the con- Conference, Roosevelt proposed a ditions for entry into the Com- controlling body with the somewhat too honest name, "The Four Policemen", to enforce "peace", the Communist International has the by military means if necessary, on obligation to unmask not only so- any nation threatening the post-

To ensure the domination of the major imperialist powers, each of them had the right to veto any decision made by the UN. Cordell the limitation of armaments, no Hull, US Secretary of State in 1944 "democratic" reorganisation of the explained: "We should never for-League of Nations will be able to get that this veto power is chiefly for the benefit of the United

DEMANDED

Russia and Britain, the second ers, demanded the right of veto for nations as a result of this rivalry; the same reasons. Anthony Eden told the British House of Commons in May 1944 that "responsibility in be related to power".

The most striking thing about it is that it is so conservative from a nationalist standpoint. It is based virtually on a four-power alliance... This is anything but a wild-eyed internationalist dream of a world State.

does it keept a "league of imperialist bandits".

any future world organisation must

As the Republican Senatorial spokesman on foreign affairs, Arthur H. Vandenberg, confided to

So in terms of trying to guaranty who run their countries. Given tee the domination of the imperialare an extension of domestic pol- the League of Nations-it's worse! and providing cover for a massacre.



Roosevelt and Stalin. ABOVE: UN soldier arrests a SWAPO fighter in that foreign policy and diplomacy ist powers, the UN is different to Namibla-doing South Africa's dirty work

MARIE DE MERICE



US MARINES go into action in Korea. Did UN "supervision" change what they were doing there?

Resolution mongering

N A STATEMENT issued in mini-state, argued:

Any guarantees given by the Great Powers of the World Organisation [UN] to safeguard the sovereignty of sion except verbally.

World Organisation").

The other is the recognition of bly carries. the way in which it provides a

avoid a head-on collision.

Conor Cruise O'Brien, a cynical described the aftermath of the control of the imperialist powers. 1967 war in the Middle East:

The Soviet Union has also now experienced, over the Middle East, just as the United States did over Hungary [1956], the value of the United Nations in a situation where a policy posture of ostensible militancy... This it did by having the General Assembly convened for a propaganda orgy, strongly reminiscent of the (US's) "Hungarian" denunciation rituals of 1956, but with different objects of verbal immolation.

UN resolutions is that they illustrate once again the imbalance of forces between the five permanent members of the Security Councilthe US, Britain, France, Russia and China-and the General Assem-

Take apartheid. From 1952 to 1960 there were repeated appeals from the General Assembly to South Africa-which it ignored. In 1966 the Assembly deplored the attitude of the main trading partners of South Africa, "including three permanent members of the Security Council".

In November 1977 the General Assembly declared South Africa's annexation of Walvis Bay in Namibia "illegal, null and void and an act of colonial expansion". South Africa got to keep Walvis Bay-in last year's UN-sponsored settle-

A similar example of the real 1969, the PLO, rejecting powerlessness of the General Asthe idea of a Palestinian sembly is the fact that the PLO has wider recognition there (a hundred countries) than does Israel.

When Nicaragua went to the UN's International Court of Justice this pseudo-state will be worthless. to protest about US mining of its harbours, it achieved a favourable unwilling to condemn Israeli aggres- verdict. Reagan simply said he didn't accept it.

recognition of the real nature of the perialist powers like the resolu-UN (the "Great Powers of the tions condemning Zionism or apartheid that the General Assem-

It is US money which keeps the forum for impotent resolution- UN going, and that in itself is a political weapon. In the current For the imperialist powers, this Gulf crisis, the US paid up bills to resolution-mongering can be used the UN which it had been deliberto pretend they are doing "some- ately withholding, once it got enthing" when they also want to dorsement for sanctions against

It is not only the military activiand right-wing former UN official, ties of the UN which are under the

INFLUENCE

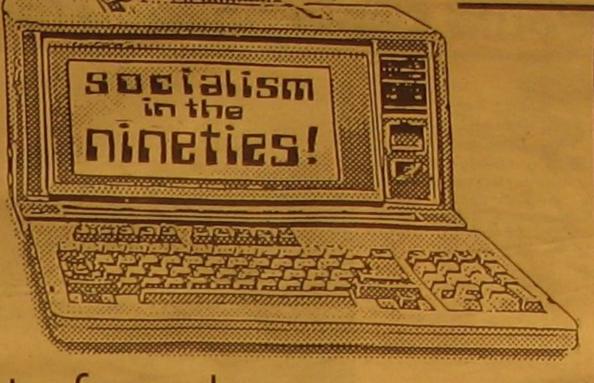
The United Nations Relief and of prudent but inglorious inaction Rehabilitation Administration has to be reconciled with an earlier (UNRRA) was set up to provide economic relief, and especially food, at the end of World War II. As the US provided 70% of UNRRA's final cost of \$3.5 billion, food was distributed, not on the basis of hunger but as a way of The other thing to be said about buying influence for the US in Europe and leaving the hungry of Russia (except for those in the Ukraine) with nothing.

And the UN Commissioner for Human Rights was sacked in 1981 by the new General Secretary, Kurt Waldheim, because he dared to investigate the "disappeared" in Argentina, and the death squads in

As far as the UN is concerned, in the economic and political as well as the military sphere, might is right. Far from being an alternative to warfare and the use of violence, the UN is part and parcel of

Its central purpose is to provide a veil behind which imperialist domination of the world can be hidden, all the better to strengthen

UN sanctions against Iraq



Neither are they against

They don't propose UN

military action against the

American and Australian

Invasion! To them, the real

problem in the Gulf is Iraq's

upselfing of the status quo.

force is possible are those

themselves want a military

Rainbow Alliance politics. On

the one hand, their members

genuinely want an end to war

ISO have argued that the real

that the way forward is for our

That doesn't mean our line

has been perfect. In a number

placards calling for Victory to

of early pickets, we carried

US can be beaten (by the

pose the question far too

exclusively in terms of the

and generalised nationalist

The task of socialists is to

people fighting the abuses of

concerns of leftward-moving

Since last issue came out, the

mood in society has shifted to

about the possibility of war.

to relate to that concern, an

order to convince people who

entirely reasonable one, in

to both connect with the

people outside our ranks.

revolt in the region.

military confrontation between

rag and the US, ignoring the

Western war effort.

stood against illusions in the

United Nations and any

negotiated settlement.

problem is a century of

our line

Since the only military force

that's acceptable to them is a

UN force, and since the great

into sharp relief the importance sanctions which are explicitly

of Leninist politics. To see this, we only have to look at the way others on the left have responded.

Labor's Parliamentary left has military action. We reject all attempts to resolve the conflict come out in support of Australian military involvement. by military means, other than by The few Labor politicians who U.N. agreement and oppose sending the frigates

have mostly ducked for cover. Outside parliament, many rank and file Labor Party members oppose sending the ships, but the main concern is The threat to Australia's national interest and national

In the last issue of The Socialist, we argued against such ideas, as letting our own uling class off the hook". Howke offered the ships, and

did so to defend the interests global interests too-domination of the Pacific and \$60 billion

Now the Sydney Marning Herald has published proof for aur argument. On 1 September Paul Grigson quoted a US State Department official as saying that "No request was ever made involve accepting the system the phone call from Bush to Hawke 'stemmed from a request to the White House by

Australia's Ambassador in Washington, Mr Michael Cook Talking about the 'national

interest' fies workers to the fortunes of Australian capitalism and the Australian military. For instance, how could it be in the national interest for the ingates to be sunk by trag? Yet a defeat for the west would be a step forward for Australian workers in their struggle against Australian basses.

Rainbow Warriors

WHAT ABOUT the Greens and Rainbow Alliance?

They set out to break with traditional left politics and find a new way to change the world. one that emphasised peace, the environment, and the need for decentralised and democratic social structures.

But a leaflet produced by the Rainbow Alliance, the Democrats and the West Australian Greens for one of the wider questions of class struggle to find new sympathisers for the Melbourne demonstrations, was none of these.

It supported 'The unprecedented sanctions agreed to by the U.N. Security ouncil, arguing that they were 'already taking affect, and must be given time to work." In other words, despite appearances, they agree with George Bush in wanting to

defeat trag. Their differences are tactical-how you go about it. Rather than bomb Iraqi industry, they would prefer to destroy the Iraqi economy

buy the paper that a strugglemaybe even a violent struggle -is necessary, and that the UN aimed at starving the Iraqi people (though later leaflets and negotiations aren't the answer.

Seize the time

HOWEVER it's simply not enough to be right.

If an organisation is to have any impact on the world, on the struggle against the invasion of the Gulf, it needs peoplepeople to help make the arguments and build the

In most of the universities, workplaces and action imperialists have a veto over the committees in Australia, it is not use of force by the UN, the only our line that is being argued. The main left wing arguments are those of the nationalist left, which weaken and undercuts our ability to turn this crisis

This is not a new problem When opposition to First World War erupted into the German revolution of 1918, Rosa Luxemburg had only a few thousand followers with no tradition of separate

and US imperialism. Their members have organised and But the ideas they argue for

Lenin, who had built a hard and tested mass revolutionary party, was able to lead a while the mistakes of her followers cost Luxemburg her life. The crisis in Germany continued, but the newly formed Communist Party was unable to BY CONTRAST, members of the transform the opportunity of 1923 into a successful revolution. That's how Hitler got

imperialist domination, argued his chance. . It is vital, therefore, that basses to be defeated. We have readers of The Socialist who agree with its basic arguments, consider joining the ISO. And the central task facing every member of the ISO is to

recruit new members to our Part of Lenin's genius was to ragina slogan which is not one see that the First World War hat reflects our view of how the was more than just a barbario outrage against humanity; if working class in the Middle East would also create the and here), and which served to opportunity of revolutionary

create obstacles to our ability to struggle against the system that influence those opposed to the create such horrors. Likewise today, the crisis In addition, our leading article created by the Gulf is giving us (on page 5) last issue tended to new opportunities to find people who can be won to

revolutionary socialism. To take advantage of those opportunities means attempting organisation, a renewed emphasis on talking to the individuals who have already draw towards our politics other expressed interest in our politics, an expanded effort to the system. So our slogans need build a base for ourselves on

participation in the struggle. There is no law that says that this kind of crisis must automatically strengthen the the right. People are concerned left. If revolutionary politics remain marginalised for long This issue our front page tries enough, it can be nationalism and the right that is

the compuses and active

-- by Phil Griffiths

What is the UN's record?

Korean War of 1950-53 provided the first and still the most glaring example of its

n the post-war carve-up of the globe, Russia and the US had agreed to divide Korea at the 38th parallel (a line drawn, entally, by Dean Rusk, late to be US Secretary of State during the Vietnam War).

In 1947 the UN called for all loreign troops to withdraw. leaving two puppet regimes. When war between them began the two imperialist blocs backed This was the sort of situation

where the veto would normally have rendered the UN impotent But as Russia had vacated its seal on the Security Council in protest at the UN's refusal to ecognise the People's Republic of China, the US was able to disguise itself (and a few of its allies like Australia) as the UN.

a supporter of the "UN Ideal" It appeared that "UN action"

The novellist Shirley Hazzard,

and equipped directly by one powers...in short, samething all too like what had hitherto been known as war.

Just as in the Gulf, the UN retrospectively legitimised US aggression. General Douglas Macarthur, whose idea of peacekeeping" was to nuke thina, became the head of the UN forces. While his nuclear bitions were thwarted, the UN forces did get to experiment with a new and hideous weapon-napalm.

UNITED NATIONS tervention in the Congo in 1960-64 showed both aspects of the UN's value for the US-rivalry with other mperialist powers, and

suppression of any -Imperialist forces The Congo (now called Zaire) became nominally independent of Belgium in 1960. Two provinces, including Katanga, which contained huge mineral reserves, seceded under the

control of Belgian mine owners

The nationalist government of Patrice Lumumba appealed to

> the UN for aid both to fight the deigians and the secessionists whom they backed. UN intervention appeared anti-imperialist. But when a coup took place against Lumumba, the UN forces closed the national radio and all airports except those in

Katanga in order to keep him isolated from support elsewhere in the country. After several bungled attempts, Lumumba was killed on CIA orders and replaced by the pro-Western Mobutu. After Lumumba's death the

Security Council sent the UN force into Katanga to impose national Unity" now that they had a government to their liking Summing up how useful the

UN channels in fact meant

interfering in the affairs of the

request for UN aid had been. Thomas Kanza, Lumumba's delegate to the UN said: .helping the Congo through

Congo with the approval of

SIMILAR conclusions can be drawn from the UN's more recent role in Namibia. In a process approvingly overseen by both the US and Russia, the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) was forced into a rotten deal to

end the lighting in the region. Amongst the aspects of the deal that were drawn up without consulting the Namibians at all were: the granting of the country's only port, Walvis Bay, to South Africa, the expulsion of SWAPO fighters from their own country, and the installing of the South African army, thinly disguised as policemen, as the sole armed force on the ground.

When South Africa relinquished formal control on April Fool's Day 1989, the UN told South African troops that they could carry out the "peacekeeping" role near the border. South Africa proceeded to butcher over 200 Namibians After the slaughter under the

protection of the blue berets

demonstrators chanted "UN go

SO MUCH for those cases where the major imperialist powers could agree to act. Just as instructive are the countless examples of the UN's failure to Intervene—the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnam War, US invasions of Grenada and Panama, Russian Invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, China's takeover of Tibet. It was a UN vote in 1947 that

set the seal on the dispossession of the Palestinians to create the state of Israel. They decided to "give" 57% of Palestine to the Zionists, who then proceeded by force of arms to try to get the whole lot.

After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Security Council passed country, it is struggle against the ruling order and its hired inadmissable that territories be acquired by war, and that Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories. Israel Ignored It.

Israel's violations of UN decisions did not provoke UN intervention because none of

the permanent members of the Security Council had an Interest in moving against Israel-it was not a threat to the status que. For example, there was a UN

force in Southern Lebanon from

1978. It did absolutely nothing

as the Israeli army marched by on its way into Beirut in 1982. By contrast with the studied impotence of the United Nations, it was anti-imperialist war that threw the US out of Vietnam, the intifada that has pushed the Palestinian cause to the forefront, the trade union and community struggles of South Africa's blacks that have undermined apartheld and it was the revolution in Nicaragua that got rid of Somoza. Everywhere and in every thugs, that has advanced the Interests of ordinary people.

And in the long term, it is only

rid of the oppression of But the United Nations will never agree to that!

a world revolution that will get

ment in Namibia.

are just the latest example.

could only take place on any

Karl Marx argued that it was vital that socialists in Britain support the struggle for Irish independence. I

tile camps, English proletarians and of the English working class... It is

Fifty years later, in a world where mperialism had made the divisions analysed by Marx in Britain a global henomenon, Lenin extended this argument into a general defence of he right to self-determination of oppressed nations as an essentia precondition to breaking the hold of hauvinist ideas over the minds of workers of the imperialist countries.

Lenin also recognised that support or anti-imperialist struggles was a means of rousing the colonial masses to revolt against the great powers.

Where the demand for national ndependence becomes the focus for mass struggle against oppression, i s the duty of revolutionaries to involve hemselves in that struggle and ndeed fight for leadership.

This does not imply the accept ance of the ideology of even revolu tionary nationalism, but rather that

Another key reason why socialists support anti-imperialist struggles is that domination by a foreign imperialist power tends to overlay the class struggle within the oppressed nation. and therefore to distort, or dampen class antagonisms

A people who do not enjoy national Libya and Hussein himself. freedom will tend to pay primary attenrom impenalist domination will have ership of the nationalist forces. internal class strains.

tional struggle, the greater the possi- taking sides in the struggle. pilities of turning the victory over the

The tactic of critical support

OWEVER, while Marxists are for the victory of those forces fighting imperialism, this does not mean that our support is uncritical.

ions in the anti-imperialist credentials agua and the ANC in South Africa. With impunity. of Saddam Hussein. He has come into They are quite happy to give totally conflict with the US because of his uncritical support to these "cuddly" would have destabilised the internal Gulf, which the Shah of Iran had inbe quite prepared to reach an accommodation with imperialism if that is in | oriented when "problems" emerge,

For this reason the Arab masses | in relation to less "acceptable" antithroughout the Middle East can place | imperialist struggles



The national struggle against imperialism

ests, not just of the US, the Israelis and | been prepared to openly defend Iraq the wealthy shelks and emirs, but also | because Saddam Hussein is a brutal | of the "nationalist" regimes—of Syria, dictator (so unlike Ho Chi Minh!).

The Marxist approach is one of tion to that immediate question; their | supporting the military victory of these to be dominated by it. Liberation | no political support to the official lead-

the long-run effect of providing the For most people on the Left-liberconditions for the exaccerbation of als, social democrats, Stalinists and anarchists alike-support tends to The greater the extent to which | mean uncritical support. This either socialists in the oppressed nation can | leads them to romanticise the forces participate in the leadership of the na- fighting imperialism or to abstain from

As Trotsky argued, in his theory of | were often presented as socialists | brutal system.

Revolutionary Marxists had no more progressive society. such illusions. We knew full well that Yet socialists automatically Fear of the politically destabilising their teeth butchering the Trotskyist | progressive society"

neutral*, or even reactionary, position | Europe.

no confidence in the Iraqi regime. It is Some have qualms about support- concretely by Marxists to the Gulf War and the Bolsheviks during WWI—the the world. bound to sell them short. They have to ling the IRA in Northern Ireland of 1980-88 between Iran and Iraq. workers and peasants of each bellig-

Haile Selassie

HIS APPROACH totally misses the point. For Marxists the essential question is not the politics of the leadership of the antiimperialist struggle

We judge instead on the basis of During the Vietnam war most of the | the social nature of the struggle—the | imperial power into a broader social left were totally uncritical of Ho Chi lact that the defeat of imperialism will ists) and Cambodia's Pol Pot. They | people around the world lighting this

ally supported their military victory. | countries, whereas Italy's victory con- | by the Iranian Revolution. Similarly today, most of the Left | firmed the attitude of the imperial pow-

the perceived interests of the fragirul- such as the rejection of the Sandinis- victory strengthened Mussolini's The bloody war of attrition came to ing nationalism. ing class—just as he did when he tas in the recent Nicaraguan elections. regime and set back the class resemble the First World War, this time

Most of the Left refused to support | decisive force in overthrowing the Iran against the US because they were | Shah of Iran in the revolution of 1978- | of the Iraqi regime we offer it no politi "Islamic fundamentalists"; and hardly 79. However the weakness of the Iran- cal support. In Iraq this means revoln the region would threaten the inter- anybody on the Australian Left has | ian left allowed the Ayatollah Khomeini | utionaries arguing that the only way gains of the revolution, justifying the by the use of revolutionary methodsexploitation of workers and the workers' control of the factories, seizoppression of women and national | ure of the wealth of the ruling class, the minorities in terms of a reactionary | right to self-determination of national

is bankrupt—above all because of the | on the basis of a revolutionary chalstruggle against capital—domestic Minh (head of the Vietnamese Stalin- be an enormous step forward for all influence of Stalinism which encour- lenge to the Ba'athist regime. aged, for example, the Palestinian They would explain, for instance, resistance to put its faith in "progres- that the regime was impeded from permanent revolution, that if the work- championing the interests of the Viet- A classic case in point was the sive" Arab regimes rather than in the fighting effectively against imperialism Italian invasion of Ethiopia in the | workers and peasants of the region. In | by its suppression of the Kurds, its he national struggle they would be This lead to incredible distillusion- 1930s. At the time Ethiopia, under the country after country the bankruptcy support for the luxury consumption of apable of transforming it into a ment when the reality of the authori- rule of the Emperor Haile Selassie, of the Left allowed Islamic fundamen- the Iraqi bourgeoisle and so on. They truggle for workers' power and begin tarian regimes set up in Cambodia was incredibly reactionary—slavery talism to fill the vacuum, appealing would oppose every attempt to create o spread a successful socialist revol- and Vietnam became clear to all but was still widespread. By comparison especially to the urban poor as an confidence in the regime (for instance the most hardened of Stalinist hacks.

even Mussolini's fascist Italy was a apparently radical anti-imperialist.

the regime's calls for ordinary workers.

some nice democratic regime, let It would have made it more difficult for encouraged to attack Iran by Saudi | getting to the front). alone socialism. Still, as long as they Italy and other imperialist powers to Arabia and other oil sheikdoms, terri-

regime and opened up a space for | herited from Britain, while Khomeini | 'pure revolution' will never live to see

It also opens them up to taking a struggle, both in Italy and the rest of between two small powers lighting for late to nationalism. On the contrary, local rather than global hegemony. In support for struggles against imperial This general approach to the | this situation, the stance of revolution- | ism is indispensable to breaking the national question had to be applied | aries could only be the same as Lenin | hold of nationalism on the workers of

EGYPTIAN students show what they think of Britain in 1951. Clearly, their enemy has a lot in common with that facing the British working class-hence the mportance of supporting iberation struggles against our own rulers.

erent country had to oppose the war ffort of "their" government.

The situation was radically changed with the US military build-up the Gulf in 1987-88. Now Iraqi attacks on Iran were part of a broader nperialist campaign orchestrated rom Washington.

For revolutionaries to welcome ran's defeat in these circumstances would have been to line up with American imperialism. Marxists had to support the Khomeini regime against the US and its allies, including Iraq.

Socialists and Iraq today

OW IRAQ, the US's ally against Iran, has itself hreatened the interests of Western imperialism by invading Kuwait.

A victory for the US over Iraq would only serve to confirm America in its conviction that it not only has a right to police the world in favour of capita sm, but that it can do so successfully and with impunity; and this conviction can only lead to more and more extensive "police actions" of the Panama

yndrome", which has blocked US

Ironically, America's ability to interrene with impunity in the last Gulf war, s successful support for Hussein hen, today weakens Hussein because Bush now feels confident to end a vast force into the Gulf to con-

Does this mean revolutionaries

However the regime was able to Marxists in Iraq would seek to enconsolidate its hold partly because of | courage working class discontent with is claim to be leading a struggle. Hussein's regime and with its methods. against the "Great Satan" of American of waging war (the use of chemical nperialism. This had important | weapons, and so on). However, they nternal effects-much of the Iranian | would direct this discontent, not to Left sided with the regime after the US | calling for an end to the war on terms Embassy in Tehran was seized by that could only benefit imperialism, but to demands for a revolutionary war-The left throughout the Middle East | demands which could only be fulfilled

to work harder and consume less)

the Vietnamese Stalinists, who had cut | defended Ethiopia against this "more | impact of tranian fundamentalism on | port actions which could lead to an the Gulf states was one factor precipi- immediate collapse of the front and a leadership of the working class move- An Ethiopian victory would have lating the Iran-Iraq war in August victory for imperialism (for examples ment in Saigon, would not create been a setback to Italian imperialism. 1980 The Ba'ath regime in Iraq was strikes which would stop munitions

were fighting the US, we uncondition- impose their will on other oppressed. fied that they too would be swept away. It is national question requires us to So for example we have no illusromanticise the Sandinistas in Nicarers that they could carve up the world
developed into a struggle for regional
Marxist approach to the national quesmake a careful analysis of the condominance. Iraq hoped to take over tion. Mere abstract opposition to

This approach leaves them dis- Italian workers to struggle against sought to put his own stamp on the It." People can come to light capital-

-by Mick Armstrong

REVIEWS

ANNE KENNELLY reviews Public Enemy's latest album

Rappers attack a racist society

"Black Power 1990 is a collective means of self defense against the world wide conspiracy to destroy the Black race. It's a movement that only puts fear in those that have a vested interest in the conspiracy, or that think that it's something other than what it ac-

-Public Enemy 1990

ONE OF THE most powerful and political trends in music in the last decade has been the emergence of rap from Black city areas in the USA.

Rap is distinctive musically. And it relies on voicing anger at the racism and oppression that are prevalent in American sociely. You could say today's leading Black fighters are rappers like Public Enemy.

Not surprisingly, these groups have created controtrong stance against anti-black racism. But they have also been attacked as anti-semitic and

In their latest album, Fear Of Farrakhan. A Black Planet, Public Enemy have made some attempt to rec- martial arts school and Islamic American Unity which he de- including Eldridge Cleaver. By tify their anti-woman stance. study group, Unity Force, which scribed as a "non-religious and 1968 they had become a major to this latest wave of radical They still have a long way to go. later became the Security of the non-sectarian group". In 1965 national organisation widely re-But they are on the right track First World or S1Ws. when they say "R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Now he sees his job as to my sister's not my enemy" in the re-educate Black people on the song Revolutionary Generation. teachings of "Malcolm, Mao

anti-semitism have been more Khomeni, Winnie Mandela, complex and controversial.

It all started with the state- Farrakhan." ment by the group's "Minister of Information", Professor Griff, cated by the Black Panthers. that "If the Palestinians took up Other members have had similar arms, went into Israel and killed experiences. all the Jews it'd be alright". for "the majority of wickedness

Even though the rise of Black that goes on across the globe". Power did improve some situaciting as one of his sources, tions for Blacks, a lot still has to white supremacist, Henry be won. Ford's The International Jew.

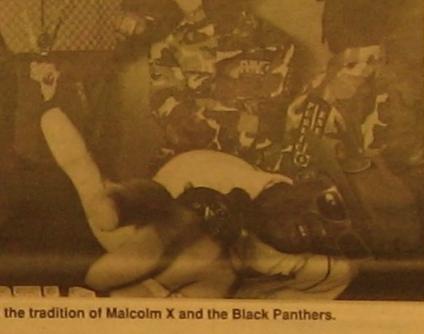
EXPELLED

group amidst confusion and re- to one in six white children). admitted after a while.

At the same time the Jewish tion of employed adult Black moreover, Irreconcilably Defence Organisation was or- men plummeted from about antagonistic classes". This is ganising racist pickets outside 75% to 55%. Officially, unem-Public Enemy gigs. They ployment among Black teenaghanded out leaflets saying "If ers is 50%, but in reality only you're white, if you're Jewish, if 20% actually hold jobs. The meyou're a decent American, or if dian income of Black families is you're Black and against less than 60% that of whites. Farrakhan, PUBLIC ENEMY IS YOUR ENEMY."

The reason Griff was able to frightened American capitalism. slide into this position was his He was a militant, in direct con-Black nationalism: "Jews are trast to Martin Luther King and just white people, there ain't no his pacifist politics.

The group's politics are Nation of Islam, founded in the strongly influenced by Black 1930s, grew into the most mili- two new forms of rule arose Nationalists like the Nation of tant and powerful Blacks-only out of the ashes of Czarism. Is elected we have no control cused of being authoritarian.



PUBLIC ENEMY: In the tradition of Malcolm X and the Black Panthers.

Islam and minister Louis organisation America had seen. formed in 1966 by Huey P New-

However the accusations of Tse-tung, the Ayatollah Nelson and Minister

Member Chuck D was edu-

It's not surprising that the However, when further pushed legacy of Malcolm X and the by the media, Griff blamed Jews Black Panthers is so strong.

centage of single Black women roles of former secret police in with children rose from about Romania today. Lenin's pam-21% to 47%. According to the phlet The State and Revolution Children's Defense Fund annual report almost half of all Black He was expelled from the children are poor (as compared

At the same time, the propor-

concerns of Blacks in a way that tion. The state creates a sense

Through Malcolm X, the

he was brutally murdered.

He went on to form a group ton and Bobby Seale. Later oth-In 1979 Griff helped form a called the Organisation of Afro- ers joined the leadership,

spected by Black Americans.

tant, and to some extent realised the important role the working class could play in a revolution, but they did not fully understand how to organise in workplaces and unions.

However, at the same time, there were Black Revolutionary Union Movements (RUM) springing up across the USA in the car factories, like the Dodge Revolutionary Union Move ment (DRUM) set up in Detroit

DRUM inspired other RUM, and in early 1969 the League of Revolutionary Black Workers was formed to co-ordinate their Today the Black Power

movement and the Nation Of Islam have almost disappeared. It is rappers like Public Enemy that spread the word of Black light against the racism and op pression that still exists.

To be able to sit down and relax to Burn Hollywood Burn or Fight the Power after a shitty day at work is quite uplifting. It's really worth the time and effort to have a listen political music, and Fear Of A Black Planet is a great record

controversial one on the left. Yet it is derived directly from the writings of Lenin on imperialism and the national question and the policy of the Communist International in the early 1920s, before the Comintern became a tool of Stalin's foreign

Essential reading on this subject are Lenin's pamphlet The Rights of Nations to Self-Determination and nis article "The Question summed up" (Collected Works Vol. 22). Also ndispensable is the pamphlet Marxism and the National Question (No. 7

in the Education for

Socialists series.)

More specifically on the question of imperialism in the Middle East are John Rose's Israel: The Hijack State; Phil Marshall's Intifada: Zionism, mperialism and Palestinian Resistance; Fred Halliday's Arabia Without Sultans; and Maxim Rodinson's Israel A Colonial Settler State? and Israel and the Arabs. Alex Callinicos' article

The Gulf War" in iocialist Worker Review raq—our method today is he same. Finally, the lisgusting role of western il companies in the Middle East is examined n Anthony Sampson's The Seven Sisters.

Most of these publications are available from ISO branches or

Lenin's State and Revolution: a guide for those fighting today

past 12 months have seen the Government, which was based death of one Stalinist monolith on parliamentary democracy. after another.

the same class remains in con-From 1960 to 1980 the per- trol, as is shown by the leading can be an excellent guide to types of state. understanding the new re-

> Lenin repeatedly emphasises the fact that society is writing on the Paris Commune being "neutral" from the rest on the new workers' state in split into "antagonistic and, what has made necessary the formed of the municipal counestablishment of a power society", the state.

But this power reflects the interests of the capitalists, who are the dominant class Malcolm X addressed the because they control producof order in which class conflict is moderated by "depriving the oppressed classes of definite gle to overthrow the oppres-

In 1917, when Lenin wrote,

IN EASTERN EUROPE, the The first was the Provisional

The other was based on the However, fundamentally soviets (workers' councils), which took control of the workplaces in Moscow and Petrograd. Here lay the potential for the rule of two different classes, needing two different over them.

> of 1871. Two things are of of society was torn away. importance.

cillors chosen by universal Provisional Government. The the most ruthless bloodletting "seemingly standing above suffrage...responsible and state changed from "a special in order to preserve their rule. revocable at short terms".

REMOVABLE

demand (and get) the immediwho they felt had abused their the rest of society. authority. Despite all the supposed virtues of bourgeois these functions. democracy", once someone

A series which looks at how the Marxist tradition develop and the relevance of the Marxist classics today. But Lenin understood that

In order to come to terms tionaries were...to be elective, sie by the proletariat" was abwith this complex situation responsible and revocable". Lenin looked back to Marx's The pretence of state officials

The Russian masses the massacre in Tienanmen Firstly "the commune was created armed groupings square, the bosses have force for the suppression of a the general force of the major-

ity of the people". It is here that we find the In 1917 the soviets were basis of what Marx and Lenin elected by workers who would call the "withering away of the state", for now we do not need for the position that these means and methods of strug- ate removal of representatives institutions standing above movements take on the state

The Bolsheviks are ac- struggles.

themselves to deal with the shown that they will resort to Struggle from below is particular class to the sup- reviving in Eastern Europe, pression of the oppressors by pushed on by desperate attempts to cure failing econ-

solutely necessary.

"suppression of the bourgeol-

From the vicious onslaught

Russia from 1918 to 1921, to

The State and Revolution is still of enormous importance, will define their political direc-Society Itself performs tion, and in turn the role that they will play in future

omles with harsh austerity

HE IDEA THAT there will soon be too many people on the earth is very widely held in the environmental movement today.

The prospect of 6.25 billion people by the year 2000 is held up as threatening a dire future for the

There are two main arguments underlying this fear. The first is that the world is running out of resources; the second that we can't feed even oday's population-shown by famine in places like Eritrea and widespread malnutrition in the socalled Third World.

Socialists must reject these ideas. There is no correlation between population size and either environmental damage or famine. The idea that the earth's resources are almost exhausted is pessimistic, ahistorical and unscientific. The fact is that today, even under capitalism, the technology and resources exist with which we could care for the world's population and many more.

The reason it doesn't happen is not the result of numbers of people, but of the social and political structures of the world capitalist system. We need a serious fight to force governments to pump in the funds necessary to send the food they hoard around the world, to feed those in need, and to enforce environmental controls on companies. Just as importantly, we need to fight to get rid of the capitalist system altogether, so that cooperatively we can begin to really tackle the environmental and social problems we face.

This fight can only be successful if we are clear about who our enemy really is. Blaming population growth lets the capitalists off the hook and directs anger and concern against ordinary people.

The causes of

FWE LOOK at the facts historically and geographically, there is no connection between population size and famine or ecological disaster. Several random examples make the point.

In the Ukraine in the 1930s, millions died and agricultural production was devastated. The cause was the policy of Stalin's new ruling bureaucracy or the rapid industrialisation of Russia and the orced "collectivisation" of the land. Peasants their cattle and their crops rather than hand them over to the Stalinist state; grain was exported to the West while millions starvedothing to do with population size.

Chad and Eritrea are relatively underpopulated areas compared to many parts of the world. Yet the desert is expanding because of deforestation and farming, and masses starve to death every year.

It is poverty and the lack of electricity which leads people to denude the land for fuel. Imperialist domination and the world banks force farmers to engage in mono-cropping which, with a shift i world markets, can lead to economic disaster and famine. This has nothing to do with population.

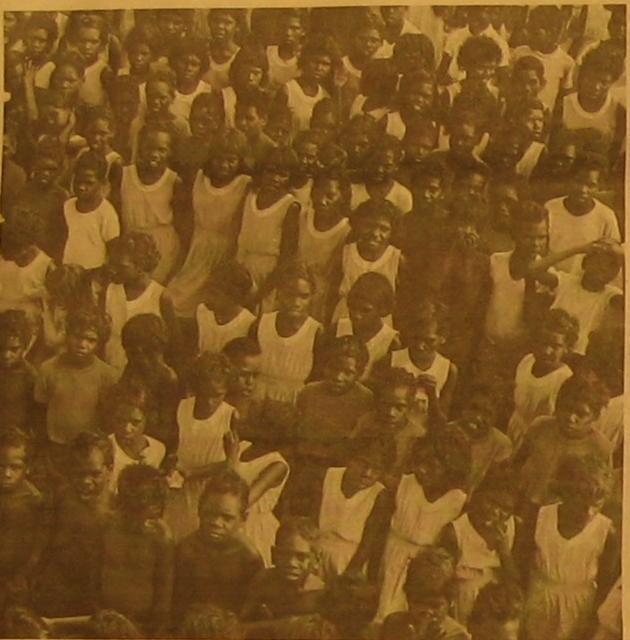
Rum Jungle, in the north of Australia, was devastated in the sixties and seventies. The local Aboriginal population was small. The damage was caused by uranium mining, an industry which does not exist because of the needs of "too many people" but to service the arms race. The energy produced by the nuclear industry has never been economical without enormous government subsidies.

Huge areas of Vietnam were defoliated by America in the attempt to crush the national liberation movement. It was war, not population size which caused this disaster and consequent threat to

Lake Baikal in Russia, the largest fresh water lake in the world, was turned into a cess pit. The surrounding area is sparsely populated. Moreover, the products of the factories which have pumped their filth into the water for decades, do not provide necessities-or even luxuries-for huge populations somewhere else. They were developed, against all scientific advice, to provide defence materials during the Cold War.

One of the greatest ecological disasters in Australia today, soil salinity, highlights all of the aspects of the argument. The problem was first noted decades ago. The government made a film about it in the 1940s, so it occurred long before anyone thought of Australia as closely populated. The very fact of the salinity means agricultural production is drastically reduced. So if the soil could be restored to its original capacity, we could feed many more people.

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ARE THERE really too many of these people?

he work needed. Instead, they encourage the formation of community organisations to deal with it. But restoration work is going to require very technical and advanced knowledge and engineering. Invariably, the local communities cannot muster the resources. Individual farmers are in debt up to their ears and the banks insist they continue to crop exhausted land under threat of foreclosure.

The simplistic ideas of many in the environmental movement about population numbers offer no way forward. Neither do plans to send out teams of volunteers to plant trees-they have been proven to

As with all questions concerning the environment, the technology exists to reverse the damage. The problem is a social and political one.

The food question

HEN IT COMES to the amount of food available, one simple figure blows a hole in the idea we can't feed everyone today: the average consumption of fruit, vegetables and grain in the United Kingdom is 1.7 kg per day. World-wide 2.3 kg per person are produced every day.

During the 1980s, food production has kept up with, or outstripped, population growth. Famines sappen because food is stored at enormous cost. rather than distributed free or at minimal prices. If the land which is left fallow, to keep food prices up on the world market, were planted each year, there would be much more food than we need to feed the present population.

So we could feed a larger population while at the same time planting forests on some of the land which is not used at present. This would decrease the Greenhouse Effect, as well as reducing the need to log timber from forests which should be preserved.

When we think of resources more generally there are many ways they could be used to better and more efficient effect. The whole advertising industry is useless, except to bosses making profits It eats up enormous resources. Because of competition, there is enormous duplication of services and commodities which do not raise our living stan-

dards, only make profits. In Detroit in the US, marvellous double-storey houses are boarded up and left to rot. At the same time, new houses are being built on newly cleared land miles out of town. This waste is the result of a The problem is, governments refuse to carry out | deliberate policy over the last two decades by the

numbers of militant black workers on their assembly lines after mass riots in the sixties.

By moving the factories, coupled with the racism which plagues the US, they have created a wasteland. Whites won't live in the areas where black people live, and blacks can't afford to buy the

This kind of waste, with some areas left to rot while capital moves to new areas and duplicates housing and infrastructure, is common both in the

And of course, the pinnacle of waste is the arms industry which consumes not just vast physical resources, but also human energy and creativity. If all this waste was put to use for human needs, we could provide adequately for everyone and more.

The scarce resources myth

HE IDEA that the earth's resources are being exploited to their limit is based on a narrow, pessimistic view of human potential for

There are all kinds of technological advances available to us which would either reduce consumption of particular materials, or enable us to exploit new ones

Today, there are prototype engines which could run 80-100 miles per gallon of petrol, which would dramatically reduce our consumption of a resource and slow the Greenhouse Effect. They remain undeveloped because it does not suit companies to

Of course, cars could be used much less than they are if public transport was upgraded. Many more people could have mobility without any more use of resources. Instead, public transport is being cut around the world.

There is a pilot scheme in the US to use sewerage to produce clean drinking water. A side product

The resources of the planet as a whole are relaively unknown. There are the deep recesses of the earth's mass. There are mineral salts in the sea and

earth, the uses of which are relatively little known. Car bodies do not have to be built out of steel. Silicate used for glass fibres is available in enormous quantities on the earth.

When we think of the potential for recycling of resources, of innovative ways of tapping sources already available to humanity, the idea that resources are almost exhausted is ridiculous.

If we think of the question historically, we can get some perspective on the question. If anyone had told people living in feudal society that people would have sky scrapers and would fly around the world, it would have been a fantastic science fiction. The widespread use of the by-products of oil is a

Any idea that human beings have reached the mits of knowledge is fantastically conservative onsidering the leaps in knowledge of which numans have been capable throughout the ages. The advances of any era are unimaginable before they

There is no scientific or rational reason to believe we have come to the end of our growth, innovation and technical advance. Every advance makes new resources available, or re-use of old

Fred Pearce, news editor of New Scientist magazine, in his book Turning up the Heat rejects the idea that we are running out of resources. He points out that in 1972 known reserves of copper were expected to run out by 2010. A decade later, known reserves were expected to last until 2045, leaving aside technological advances which made even more inaccessible sources exploitable.

Today, ceramics can replace minerals such as cobalt and tungsten which have been used because of their hardness and resistance to heat and corrosion. Sand can be used to produce glass which is turned into optical fibres. New composite minerals can take over from metal alloys in things like jet

Julian Simon, from the Illinois University, published a book, The Ultimate Resource, in 1981. which summed up the argument. He pointed out that for the last 200 years the real price of fuel, metals, food and other natural resources has fallen.

He argued that because of human ingenuity, "people create additional resources...raw materials have become less scarce throughout history". His 'ultimate resource" was simply human inventiveness. There is absolutely no reason to believe that hat resource has reached its limit.

The real question is not survival, but which political approach to adpot.

Any movement which arises as a reaction to ndefinite continuation of capitalism and those who see capitaliism as the cause of the problem and so want to bring about its demise.

The green movement is no different. It is a heterogeneous mixture of optimism and pessimism, of people fighting the system and acceptancesometimes de facto, sometimes explicit-of the

The arguments which blame population growth, which blame the use of natural resources and techology for the problem, do not provide a way forward because they do not challenge capitalism at

For this reason, socialists must reject the argument which sections of the Left have taken up, that living standards should be improved in the Third World so that population growth will decline. The "raise living standards in the Third World" argument is also put forward as an alternative to dismantling Australia's racist and inhumane immigration controls. We, too, are for raising living standards in the Third World, but only because the mass of workers and peasants have a right to it and or no other reason.

If the fight to win that improvement is linked to the idea that population will decline, it immediately concedes the racist fear that it is really the "teeming millions" of the underdeveloped world who are the problem. We are neither for nor against population growth; we are for ordinary people deciding how nany children they want, free from coercion. So there is no reason to link the two questions.

In any case, the whole argument is simply too glib, and amounts to an apology for capitalism. In the developed world, where living standards are undoubtedly higher than places like Vietnam or Chad, it is not the case that workers live in a paradise of luxury and leisure.

Behind falling birth-rates

HE REASONS why masses of workers limit the number of children they have are more complicated than simply increased living standards.

There is no simple one-to-one relationship between poverty and population growth. Poverty is a relative thing. Average living standards are higher in the US than in the Third World. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of people are homeless, with the streets of New York full of people begging for a bite to eat. Neither does escape from the worst

The reactionary myth of 'too many people'...

poverty mean escape from the pressures of capital-

And poverty can lead to different responses in different countries. It is commonly accepted that poverty in a largely agricultural society leads peasants to want more children so they will have labour for their farms and to care for them in their old age.

In the industrialised countries, poverty can lead to masses of workers limiting the number of children they have. Most workers cannot live comfortably on one wage, and child care facilities in most countries are appalling and are being cut back. This means couples will work different shifts so that they can alternate home responsibilities. The result is stress, strain and little companionship.

On a recent visit to the US, a woman told me of her experience of getting out of bed at 5.00am every day to get her child to school and herself to work. At the end of the day, after answering tourists' inquiries all day at the transport centre in Manhattan, she is exhausted. She can hardly hold a conversation with her son who is full of energy and affection, which nearly breaks her heart. In this situation, who wants to have another human being to have to care for?

If one partner in a marriage, usually the woman, can stay home and mind children, the loneliness and boredom drives them back to the workforce as soon as possible.

Who doesn't know people who, after one or two children, have abandoned their hope of having several more because of the sheer hassle of coping with the consequences?

Historically, in the developed countries, a severe reduction in living standards has produced a drop in the number of births per head of population. In the US, births per thousand population dropped from 27.7 in 1920 to 18.7 in the depths of the Great Depression of the early thirties. They rose again to 26.6 in the boom after the Second World War.

The argument has a nasty logic if we make any concession that we need to reduce population growth. It could fit very easily with the demands of bosses in many countries to reduce workers' living standards. Giving the argument a left gloss by ar guing to raise living standards in the Third World does not negate that.

The Malthusian

ISTORICALLY, ideas which have predicted disaster because of population growth and exhausted resources have always been reactionary.

Thomas Malthus was the originator of this strand of thought. Frederick Engels, Marx's collaborator, dubbed him an agent of the ruling class. This was because he explicitly opposed reforms which could raise the living standards of the poor, because this would mean the rich might have to give up some of their privileges.

He opposed birth control, preferring to starve the poor into abstinence. He argued that humans are naturally selfish and disgusting, which is why we need an authoritarian state to control them.

The 1970s saw the rise of "Malthusian" ideas to popularity. The Limits to Growth, by Dennis and Donella Meadows of the Massachusetts Institute of



FALLING PRICES make it more profitable to destroy sheep than feed the hungry. The problem is the social system, not the world's

Technology, was instrumental in spreading and egitimising them.

Their computer model, which predicted the colapse of civilisation perhaps within fifty years, did not become popular by accident, or simply because of the force of its arguments. As Fred Pearce point

Scientists who warn of disasters are usually guaranteed a good audience. When they are sell their message, the effect can be dramatic.

They had the backing of the elite "Club of Rome", and 12,000 copies of the book were distributed free to politicians and journalists world-wide. In spite of the praise the book received in influential journals and institutions, it was a fraud. Pearce explains why;

The trouble was [the] conclusion had been essentially "fixed" by the way the computer was programmed. Meadows told the computer to assume that all the bad things, pollution and our demands for soil and mineral reserves, increased exponentially, i.e. at an ever-accelerating rate. All the good things, notably technological breakthroughs, continued to grow at the current rate. Not surprisingly, the computer predicted a bumpy ride for humanity.

Paul Ehrlich in his book, The Population Bomb, predicted three possible futures; one, a billion

people would starve to death by 1983; two, rampant disease would stop population growth by 1984; or three, the Pope would crusade for birth control and the billionth death from starvation would be delayed

Nothing remotely approaching this kind of apocalypse has happened. The pseudo-scientific basis for his predictions was the observation that butterflies, given certain conditions, would breed so fast they are all the leaves of the plants which sustained them. But his account of a night in the streets of Delhi illustrates his attitude to human

People eating, people washing, people sleeping, people visiting, arguing and screaming...People, people, people, people...the dust, noise, heat and cooking fires gave the scene a hellish aspect...All three of us were, frankly, frightened.

John Caldwell, an Australian demographer who tudies the world's human population, rather than outterflies, is scathing:

[Ehrlich] did not see population explosion, for Delhi's birth rate is relatively low. He probably saw fewer people than one would see with pleasure in New York, London or Paris at Christmas or in the peak hour. What he did see was poor non-Europeans.

Caldwell has pointed to the racism which is nvariably associated with Malthusian ideas today. People of the Third World become "teeming millions". It is always the masses of China who are mentioned with horror at environmental events when considering the amount of CFCs which would enter the atmosphere if everyone were to have a

With this attitude, Malthusian environmentalists have absolutely nothing to say to the new free trade unions workers are trying to build in China to ight for improved living conditions.

In fact, the idea that population in China is a problem, can lead you into real difficulties. The regime has seriously tried to limit population growth by outlawing all children other than the first born to a couple, in the face of sullen resistance by most of the population. If the democracy movement demands the right to choose how many children anyone has, who do you defend, the opposition or the butchers of Beijing?

LUEPRINT FOR SURVIVAL

day document of the seventies.

police and repressive legislation to impose them.

political document, and its conclusions are not sur-

pawns in the capitalist system. They cling to any

small area of control they have over everyday life

and frequently fight for more. Any attempt to deter-

mine the number of children they have by decree,

any attempt to make them accept lower living stan-

prising. They are the logic of the starting point.

This is not just science fiction. It was a serious

A call for

repression

dards, is guaranteed to provoke a response. If they can't be convinced, then repression is the logical

Environmental degradation is not new to capialism. Engels wrote about it in the 1840s in the new industrial cities of Britain. The rivers were filthy the air foul, workers' food contaminated and streets

ittered with rubbish. In Sydney in the 1880s, swamps and undrained streets gave rise to epidemics of typhoid fever. A. historian of the time described Circular Quay as a pestilent sink" and wrote that Darling Harbour was a jeculant swamp, fouling, polluting slowly de-

Ideologues who want to see capitalism survive save always blamed the victims of capitalism. Revolutionary socialists from the time of Marx and Engels have placed the blame squarely at the feet of the ruling class which benefits from a system based on profit and exploitation.

The solution is not to "wait" for socialist revolution, as many environmentalists suspect is the socialist position; it is to fight in the here and now to force the capitalist class to clean up its act. Every struggle against bosses and their governments is part of that fight. A powerful workers' movement is the surest way of winning both environmental improvements and higher wages. And such a movement will open up the possibility of a complete transformation of society.

Malthusian ideas, which fear the future, and fear the development of human beings' control over nature, deny the possibility of human liberation, of working people gaining control over their lives. If people are not free to have as many or as few children as they choose, they do not have the most basic of rights.

Those greens who subscribe to Malthusian ideas accept a view of humans as outside nature, and alien to the "harmony" of the natural world. The socialist position is absolutely counterposed to this view. nstead, we agree with Engels when he wrote;

At every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature-but that we, with flesh, blood and brain belong to nature and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and



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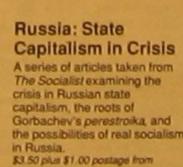
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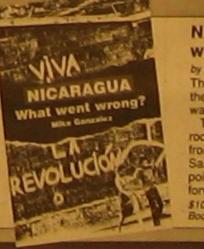




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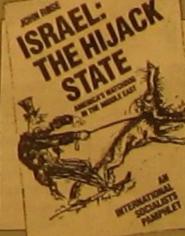
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THE SOCIALIST SEPTEMBER 1990—PAGE 13

WENTY-ONE YEARS ago, a riot at the Stonewall Inn in New York City sparked the emergence of the modern gay liberation movement in the USA.

The echoes of that explosion reverberated around the world. Within weeks activists had set up gay liberation groups in dozens of US cities

Exactly a year later gays in Sydney had taken up the struggle and the rest of Australia quickly

The movement for gay rights and gay liberation had a profound effect on society. Twenty years ago it was "simple common sense" that homosexuals were criminals, evil, sick and that society had to protect itself by any means necessary against the contagion of perversion. Most homosexuals themselves believed this.

Today, while many people still believe this sort of thing, many more do not. And for the majority of homosexuals the slogan "Gay is Good" is a fact of life.

This transformation did not come about on its own. It is the rest of two decades of struggle by gays and straight supporters-initially in the Gay Liberation Movement, later in large public campaigns or by a low-key niggling away at the system by scattered groups and individuals.

And the fight is not over yet. In Eastern Europe, the democratic revolution of 1989 has opened up new space in which gays are organising and demanding their rights. Gay rights groups also exist in Latin America and parts of Asia and Africa.

Even in Australia, the campaigns for law reform in WA. Queensland and Tasmania are a reminder of just how far we still have to go jus to secure basic democratic rights.

USTRALIA'S first homosexual rights groups were actually L founded in 1969, before the impact of the Stonewall Riot was felt, but they were cautious and very pessimistic.

The Daughters of Bilitis were concerned to to think that we, in our lifetime, will see a great change in public attitudes to Lesbianism"

With the founding of the Gay Liberationinfluenced Campaign Against Moral Persecution (CAMP) in July 1970, all this changed. The change accelerated when a group of radical gay activists broke away in late 1971 and set up Gay Liberation.

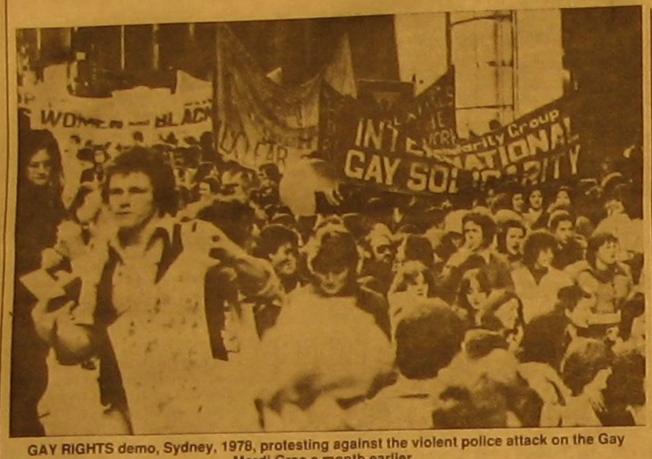
Gay Liberation was a fighting movementpublic, militant, unapologetic. It was committed ly Pride and Gay is Good It rejected all concessions to prejudice and pleas for tolerance, and refused to present a respectable fact to the world. It confronted the oppressive assumption that gays were a miniscule and fixed minority with its street chants: "Gays are Everywhere", "Two, Four, Six, Eight, Are you sure you're really straight?" It challenged people to explore their own sexuality and to question their assumptions about what gays were.

The movement rejected a narrow focus on law reform, though it fought and fought hard for



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Twenty years of gay liberation in Australia



Mardi Gras a month earlier.

that too. It proclaimed instead its program of society that hated and oppressed gays. It attacked religion, the nuclear family and the education

One of Gay Liberation's earliest campaigns was against psychiatry and especially the use of electro-shock therapy to "cure" homosexuality. In 1973 Sydney Gay Liberation refused an invitation to participate in a Psychiatry and Liberation Conference and to debate Neil

SGL wrote in a leaflet to the Conference, "and rationally' debate our position with our oppressors. No, we're fed up with that. We're sick of being reasonable anymore when the oppressive horrors of aversion therapy...continue to fuck us

But neither were activists prepared to ignore the conference. Instead they invaded it-arguing and heckling, floating balloons and finally unleashing a barrage of eggs at McConaghy when he attempted to defend his brutal practices.

In the same outrageous vein, but with a lighter twist, Gay Liberation stood a candidate in the 1972 Federal election. They chose as their target Billy McMahon, then Prime Minister and reputedly a closeted homosexual. The campaign slogan "I've Got My Eye on Billy's Seat" attracted a lot of good-humoured attention.

ROBABLY the most important campaign was that launched around the death of Dr George Duncan, an Adelaide academic murdered by off-duty police on the banks of the Torrens River (a well-known gay beat) in 1972.

The movement took up this issue without ttempting to play down Duncan's sexuality or gloss over the fact that he was, when murdered, on a search for public sex. The campaign pointed to the reality of gay male sexuality seedy though it may have seemed to the broader public, and demanded the right for gays to live and love as they saw fit. It pointed, too, to the vicious reality of gay oppression. Gays faced not just cruel jokes, public contempt and victimisation at work but also the risk of cold-blooded murder at the hands of the police.

The strategy of Gay Liberation was to challenge all aspects of existing society. It saw itself allied to women, blacks, migrants and workers as part of a broader struggle for real liberation.

This was no accident. Many of the activists in all these movements had been schooled in the fight against conscription and the war in Vietnam. The Gay Liberation Movement, like all the others, rested on the skills of experienced political activists. But it relied, too, on the enthusiasm, daring and creativity of those who were throwing off a lifetime of self-hate that society had imall oppressed people

It is hardly surprising, then, that socialist liberation. It was fighting for the overthrow of a politics had a strong part to play in the movement. Many of the activists were socialists before they became involved in the Gay Liberation Movement. Many more became socialists in the course of the struggle.

> T WAS SOCIALISM that provided the most telling critique of the system that gays were fighting against and best explained the systematic and under capitalism.

Certainly many socialist analyses had flaws. Some argued, for instance, that lesbians and gay men had always been oppressed under class society. Actually we now know that for whole periods of European history at least, this was not the case and that modern gay oppression (indeed modern gay identity) emerges only with the rise of industrial capitalism in the 19th century.

But it was the socialist analysis that showed ow capitalism used the modern nuclear family to provide both a well-disciplined workforce through family-centred child-rearing and socialisation, and a refuge from the grinding world of alienated work.

The nuclear family, in its turn, required a set of strictly defined sex roles. Male and female, young and mature-all were fitted neatly into their own little behavioural boxes. These sex roles were propped up in their turn by religion. psychiatry, the schools and the media.

The struggle for gay liberation, then, as for ill the oppressed, was bound up with the struggle against capitalism.

Because of its coherence and the commitment of revolutionary activists, the socialist current was an important part of the gay liberation truggle during the whole period of its existence. Indeed, with the decline of the movement in the second half of the seventies, the revolutionary movement remains one of the last bastions of the authentic gay liberation tradition.

The Gay Liberation Movement declined in the same way and for the same sorts of reasons that the rest of the radical social movements of that period.

Partly, it is a simple matter that no social movement lasts forever. They rise, often explosively, based on the enthusiasm and optimism of their activists; and they decline as goals are achieved or as they start to appear unachievable.

The specific decline of the Gay Liberation Movement has much to do with the eruption and evaporation of the radical ferment of the 1960s and 70s.

This ferment was underpinned by a sharp increase in working class militancy, based on the confidence bred of the long, post-war boom and the first threats to it in the second half of the 1960s. Even those activists who were not in, or from, the working class could not fail to be infected by the example of millions of workers posed and were participating in a struggle to free | whose every activity caught the attention of the media and political leaders.

The movement against the Vietnam War and conscription was the breeding ground for many of the activists who would move on, as the troops were pulled out by the Liberal Government, to other areas of struggle, Women's Liberation, Black Power and other movements for social transformation (including Gay Liberation) were the products of this redirection of energies.

The decline of this period of radical upheaval was due in large part to the onset of the recession of the mid-1970s. The arrival of recession in 1974 provoked a great burst of working class resistence which was, with some difficulty, defeated by the Labor Party and ACTU. The fall of the Whitlam Government, in which such high hopes had been placed by workers and political activists, accelerated the political retreat.

By the mid-1970s Gay Liberation as an organised and coherent force was gone. Even so, gays remained capable of organising in their own defence. In 1978, when the NSW police attacked a Gay Pride March, the campaign against the police lasted for several months and mobilised jundreds of gays and straights. National Gay conferences brought together up to 500 activists a year until the mid-1980s, and a Socialism and Homosexuality Conference in 1981 attracted 000 gays and straights. Most recently, AIDS has provided a focus for gay activists, both as lobbyists and educators, but also as campaigners in the ACT UP groups.

HE LEGACY of gay liberation goes much wider than gays how-

If it had failed in its goal of overthrowing our ppressive society, it had nonetheless transformed it, not least because the relationship THE THE SHE way wel the working class both in the social struggles going on around them an echo of their own struggles and respected them as such.

The BLF in NSW, for instance, played an mportant role in defending victimised gays on several occasions. In September 1973, when a Gay Pride March was attcked by Sydney police, workers on a nearby building site intervened to support the marchers by hurling water on the cops and by taking up a collection for the bail

On two other occasions when gay students were victimised by campus administrations, BLs black-banned campus building sites in support of gay defence campaigns.

Nor was it just the BLF. In the early 1980s at Melbourne Uni, Liquor Trades Union members held a stop-work to support a victimised student. Many other unions adopted pro-gay and antidiscrimination policies to defend their members against homophobic employers.

In society at large, politicians, religious leaders, even the medical and psychiatric professions, abandoned anti-gay policies and came out in support of gay rights. Public opinion shifted sharply in all states towards the decriminalisation of gay sex.

Even the AIDS crisis has failed, despite the best efforts of the Right, to reverse the gains. Fred Nile and his supporters, while no doubt a potential danger to gays, are a very marginal force in politics and have achieved none of their anti-gay agenda. Twenty years ago the ideas they ire spouting, which now seem so ridiculous to nost people, were only the commonsense view

None of this is to argue that gays have no need o organise. While capitalism persists, while real power in our society in in the hands of a tiny ninority of property owners who will do anyning to protect their interests, gays are not safe. We are potentially the target of hate campaigns

Even without these, we face everyday dis rimination. Anti-gay violence is without doubt on the increase. It is only by organising that we can fight effectively. The struggles we wage are for positive reforms—law reform, anti-discrimin ation, health spending-and should be supported on those grounds alone. But these truggles also serve to bring gays face to face with the limitations of reform and, for some ateast, to a recognition that socialism is the ultimate solution.

-by Graham Willett

How can you support Iraq? The Socialist

welcomes letters and reports Kuwait was a rotten, repressive shiekdom carved from our readers.

out by the British to ensure oil supplies; No support can be given to the invasion of Kuwait Please write to: PO Box E23, by Iraq, however valid Iraq's historical claims, or to St James, NSW 2000.

The Iraqi regime is one of the most butcherous in the Letters MUST include a contact address and world-it systematically tortures and murders oppophone number so that we can verify authorship, and discuss any changes that may be necessary. Letters may be cut for length. ■ Bush, Thatcher and co are complete hypocritesthey built Saddam up during the Iran/Iraq war and are

or Arab nationalism. On 25 August, Socialist Worker,

To say that "Indeed, we actively want Iraq to break

It is a "two-campist" analysis where the world is

seen as two simple blocs-the imperialist and the

anti-imperialist-and the working class is ignored.

approach or the lunatic anti-semitic ravings of the SLL

A socialist response to the Gulf crisis is clear:

-Richard Lane, Melbourne

Rather than Marxism it reminds me of crude Stalinis

your sister paper in Britain, asked "Who Wants a

the blockade, attack Israel and arouse the Arab masses

against imperialism and their own rulers" has nothing

to do with the "independent working class stand" of

War?" The Socialist seems to say "we do".

which the ISO has been so proud.

Troops out of the Gulf!

through democratic elections!

themselves covered in the blood of armed interargued at your public meeting in Melbourne on 27 lugust that an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait equals a ■ The main enemy is at home—we focus our fire on US victory. So how can you say the invasion was the US, Australian and other imperialists' intervention, wrong? Either it is still wrong and Iraq should get out, which now is a virtual occupation of Saudi Arabia and or it was right in the first place. Your current argument incoherent. My experience in arguing against the

But, to go from opposition to the US to support for US/Australian intervention is that support for Iraq is Iraq is a big mistake. othing but a liability. Supporting Iraq can lead to uncritical cheerleading

Saddam's troops have already shipped 10,000 Iraqi dissidents from Kuwait to Baghdad to face torture and death. Anti-imperialist and Arab nationalist rhetoric is used as a cover for Iraqi expansionism.

THE SOCIALIST is right to say that the US and

Australia must get out of the Gulf, But I can't

agree that socialists should support Iraq.

nents and has gassed Kurdish people;

Saddam's regime:

We can agree, I think, on the following:

Armed by the West and the USSR as a counterweight to Iran, Saddam has fallen out with his one-time backers. Iraq wants to be a fully-fledged regional power. So the present conflict between US (and other) mperialism and the ambitious Iraqi sub-imperialism is quarrel among thieves.

The Gulf War transformed Iraqi society according to the needs of wartime mobilisation. War has become a vital means of political control for the Ba'ath Party, which functions as a typical "Stalinist" totalitarian

Socialists have no wish to see Saddam achieve his Nasserite dreams of uniting the Arab world under his ■ Iraq out of Kuwait! leadership, and wiping out religious, political and cul-Let all those who live in Kuwait decide their future tural minorities. There can be little doubt that, after figesting Kuwait and using its oil to rebuild and rearm, For a Socialist Federation of the Middle East with he armies would be on the march again.

the right to self-determination for all minority nations There is an obvious contradiction for the ISO. You

Gaywaves threatened

UNTIL the end of September, Gaywaves, on Sydney's Radio 2SER-FM, will go to air at its usual time of Thursday nights from 10pm to 1am. Starting from October, our programme will have a different timeslot, will be less than its current three iours long, and quite possibly won't be broadcast on wanted to.

There are a number of reasons for this change, a hange which the Gaywaves Collective has strongly existed. The immediate reason given to all programmers by the board running 2SER-FM radio station is that most of the community language programmes will be leaving 2SER to join the new community languages station in 1992.

Why has Gaywaves been so "intransigent" (to use management's term) in opposing the change? Simply because the collective does not exist to gratify its own ego. The programme we broadcast is not just any programme; its role is essential to the well-being, even the very life, of many of its listeners

We live in a capitalist society which maintains heterosexism as part of its ideological arsenal for controlling people. Thus people who walk astray from the dominant heterosexual norms are marked out as perverts, sinners or criminals. All around us we are battered by images of heterosexuality and find precious few positive images of ourselves. In this context, a gay and lesbian media plays a role which is incomparably important.

However, not everybody has access to newspaper and magazines. For various reasons: many are young and still dependent on their family. Others live in densely-populated suburbs, but which provide no homosexual social life. To these people, radio is the best form of access to gay and lesbian culture. In fact, the only one possible.

Which is the reason why we have argued for a late

timeslot. For the section of our listeners who depend almost wholly on our radio programme, a late broadcasting time is necessary. They need to go to the privacy of their rooms after all their family obligations are finished (dinner, washing up and so on).

The community language programmes contribute a substantial portion of the station's income, and there as no hope that the owners of the radio station-Macquarie University and UTS-will make up for the shortfall. Given the Federal Labor government's attacks on education, these universities probably wouldn't be able to put up the money even if they

The Board's proposal, then, was to move these community language programmes to the weekend and shift everything else into the weekdays. The rationale for this was that it would make it easier to sell off the weekend time to other interested groups while at the same time minimising the potential for havoc with the major section of programming. This is from a station hat is supposed to be all about community access.

It is now known that it is unlikely to find enough

While our collective was accused of being stubnorm, inflexible, self-isolating and so on, management rejected most of our attempts at reaching compromises with the other groups who wanted our timeslot. Thus, when we agreed that music programmes could have the earlier timeslot, while we retained the late one, management said it was not possible-it did not fit in with the guidelines given by the Board. It would seem that to management "compromise" is almost akin to us toeing their line.

Gaywaves found itself having to give reasons why we shouldn't get less than the three hours and why we need a late timeslot. It seems that our reasons were not enough to convince the management, Management ignored our explanations and was intent on purely formal reasons for making its own decisions. Why so many hours wasted in "consultation" if these were to have an almost purely formal function?

—Michael Schembri, **Gaywaves Collective**

No answers for the nineties

Questions for the Nineties, ed. by Anne Gollan, Left Book Club, \$13.95.

THIS COLLECTION of 15 essays reveals both the depth of concern felt by the liberal middle classes at the state of affairs of Australian society and their

absolute bankruptcy in proposing solutions. The book takes us into a pot pourri of popular concerns about poverty, media concentration, immi gration, women's rights, privatisation and so on, and seeks to engage the reader on the most right wing territory-"what is best for Australia"? The collection of articles ranges from the informative to the appalling

Ted Wheelwright provides a handy summary of recent data on the growing inequality in Australia under the Hawke Government before getting back onto his hobby horse of the "deindustrialisation of Aus tralia" and "the auctioning off of Australia to the highest bidder".

Simon Marginson gives a reasonable defence of the public school system and urges that the private school system be abolished, while David Brown debunks the myths of the "law-and-order" brigade on the prison system and sentencing. Then there is the nonsense. Former diplomat, R.

Throssell, asserts that "Atomic weapons have made war itself obsolete". His little asides also illustrate quite clearly the social milieu of his ilk: "I was only a young fellow in the Department of External Affairs then, but I told the Minister, Dr. H.V. Evatt, what I thought," or his picking up a book "to read in my hotel room after a long day at a Commonwealth conference at Mt. Meru in Tanzania".

Other articles are not so harmless. An article by Nancy Viviani asks, "Are we getting too many Asian migrants?" Her solution, a maximum intake of 100,000 a year which would reflect the concerns of environmentalists and be sufficiently modest to avoid a racis backlash. This limit has "the advantage of being a middle path and politically defensible"

Of this 100,000 Viviani then takes it upon herself o decide how "we" should decide who "we" want to let in. Three categories of people, apparently, "have" o be let in: refugees, family reunions, and...New Zealanders! Why the latter? Because it is part of closer economic relations and the development of the free trade bloc-ie suits the needs of Australian capitalism. After these categories of people "we" have to take

(how she makes migrants sound like an unpleasant medicine!), "we" then have 30,000 places left to allocate to others. This is to be done essentially on an economic basis: "we" should pick those migrants who have the education, the skills and the money. After all "we'd be doing ourselves a disservice not to take the best people we can get".

It would appear that the Left Book Club, having already made a name for themselves with their tatty and soft-racist The Third Wave, are seeking to carve themselves out a niche in the "I'm not a racist but... field of left politics.

han one or two of the authors even mentions the word et alone suggests that socialism might be an answer to the problems they explore. Their ultimate target, not a ociety governed by the working class in which the rich nd powerful have been politically and economically efeated, but the Whitlamite dream: "Socialism is a ystem in which every student in the country has a

room, a desk and a lamp"

Not one of the authors even argues that people who want to change the world should join a left party, nor even the ALP. The working class as an agent of social change is entirely missing. There is nothing about class power, about the need for an assault on the privileges of the rich, strikes, demonstrations or barely even the need for struggle. The trade unions are mentioned by Marian Sawer as one possible avenue for combating sex discrimination at work (but only after laying much of the blame for the subordinate position of women at vork on male workers), however mostly workers are

For socialists looking for a way forward out of the norass of pessimism generated during the Hawke ears, this book is of no value.

-by Tom Bramble

Aussie rules feminism

Playing the State: Australian Feminist Interventions by Sophie Watson, Allen & Unwin, \$19.95

OPHIE WATSON'S choice of title for her recent Collection of articles, Playing the State: Australian Feminist Interventions, suggests that the feminism under discussion is involved in a round of sporting engagements with the state. Playing on the state's round and to its rules is shown to have yielded little for women's liberation-though this isn't the position of most of the contributors.

The book gives interesting insights into what has

happened in the "mainstream" of feminism over the last twenty-five years since the beginnings of the "second wave". Over that period, the women's liberation novement became the women's movement and now

by socialist ideas; its early demands being free safe abortion on demand, 24-hour childcare, free contraception, equal employment opportunity, access to ed ucation and equal pay. Many feminists engaged is struggles and campaigns over these demands. But the book deals almost entirely with the other two main responses made by feminists-either becoming part of the state-funded network of women's houses, refuges, health and rape crisis centres or (for the formally qualified) entering the bureaucracy as "femocrats".

There was another response. In the mid to late 1970s, a number of women (including myself) who'd articles written not only after the fact but during its seen in the women's liberation movement, joined rev olutionary socialist organisations, convinced that you could only get real liberation through fighting to destroy the whole capitalist system.

Some changes have occurred. Women have been moving into the paid workforce in large numbers; they are currently 36% of the workforce and one-third of all trade unionists. However despite getting "equal pay for work of equal value" in 1972, women's earnings are still on average only two-thirds of men's. In 1977 the ACTU adopted some of the demands of the Working Women's Charter, but few have been implemented.

In early 1973, Elizabeth Reid was made adviser or women's affairs to the Prime Minister, Whitlam, and became part of a wave of femocrats entering the bureaucracy. Despite cutbacks in welfare, the Fraser government did not destroy all Reid's initiatives. Many Liberal women supported Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and the appointment of women to government boards and commissions; quite predict ably since the inclusion of women in management and government in itself represents no threat to the system

From the mid-1970s also came a widespread growth in women's services. In June 1975, twelve refuges were funded. In 1977 under Fraser, the number exploded from 19 to 99, becoming one of the few growth areas of Commonwealth spending.

But the benefits of this were mixed. Workers in such services rarely had reasonable wages and conditions as the work was endless; further, they were always vulnerable to funding cuts and so, increasingly these often became simply bandaid services unable to address politically the basis of the oppression they were working to alleviate-either because of lack of time and resources, or from fear of funding being cut off if they were too outspoken.

While revolutionaries often fight for reforms, we never see them as enough or as ends in themselves, in contrast to liberal feminism (in the femocracy) or radical feminism (in self-help "autonomous" operations). The majority of the contributors to Watson's book are strongly influenced by these two traditions, so their critiques of such practices-as unable to deliver real change for more than a small minority of women-often fail to be incisive enough.

While reformist feminism may have scored a few goals, after the match most people are still going home for mum to cook them dinner.

-by Carole Ferrier

Defeat in Nicaragua

Nicaragua: What went wrong? by Mike Gonzalez, Bookmarks, \$10.00 (Available from Bookmarks, Australia).

N THE WAKE of the defeat of the Nicaraguan revolution in the elections in February, a new book by Mike Gonzalez has brought together a series of

To fully understand why the revolution failed we need to look at the Sandinistas' politics.

With Cuba as a model, the FSLN built an organisa tion of dedicated revolutionaries, operating from mountain bases, fighting for national independence But in the late 60s they were smashed by the Somoza regime, reducing them to a very small group.

In 1974, after an extremely daring raid on one of Somoza's loyalest supporters, which failed to gain any real influence in the mass movement, an intense debate broke out within the FSLN.

The theory of guerilla war was abandoned. Two endencies emerged: the GPP argued for the slow accumulation of forces for a "peoples" war", while the Proletarian Tendency (TP) recognised the growing working class and the need to organise within it.

However, in 1974 a third tendency appeared known as the Terceristas, or Insurrectionists, and by 1977 they had captured the leadership of of the FSLN They believed in an alliance with the more moderate anti-Somoza forces, and that when the time was right a mass strike or insurrection could get rid of the Somoza dictatership.

To this extent they were right. But the need for an independent working class organisation and the question of socialism was not answered, so when the mass uprising occurred in 1978, leading to the eventual overthrow of Somoza by July 1979, there was no current in the FSLN arguing for workers' control.

After the victory, property once held by Somoza was seized, which meant 22 per cent of productive capacity was now under the Sandinistas' control. The financial system was also nationalised. There was a limit to which they were prepared to go however, so by November 1979, the expropriation decree was with drawn, to stop further land and factory occupations.

Even with substantial state control, it remained a mixed economy. In their eyes the essential task became to strengthen the state, form an alliance with "patriotic bourgeoisie", convince the mass of the population of the need for austerity, in order to accumulate capital. During the early years of the revolution great gains

were made in areas such as health and education, but no matter how much control the state has over the economy, it remains subject to the whims of the world market. The point is, it is not how much the state controls, but who controls the state.

-by Ian Dudley

ndsay Tanner | Evan Thornley

Y BARRY JONES

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FORGET the hypocritical posturing: George Bush wants war in the Gulf.

their decline, to reimpose their authority in the world.

So Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State during the Nixon administration, has called for a "surgical strike" against Iraq, a program of bombing that would destroy Iraqi industry and kill tens if not hundreds of thousands of ordinary workers.

A.M. Rosenthal, former chief executive of the New York Times: "The ultimate goal now has to be the elimination of the ... Baghdad dictatorship by Western economic and military reprisals."

William Safire, also a leading columnist with the Times: "Our declared-war strategy should be to (1) suppress Iraqi air defenses; (2) take out war production at the 26 key targets; (3) launch a three-front land war at the Turkish, Syrian and Kuwaiti borders... Our great danger is delay."

Or the editorial writer for the Wall Street Journal: "If we take Baghdad and install a Mac-Arthur regency, that is the optimum."

Look at the scale of the US military build-up. In Vietnam, it

Phil Griffiths

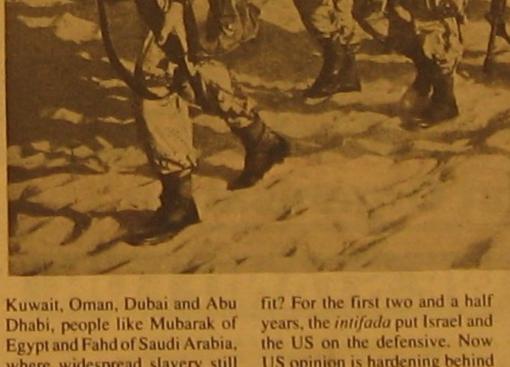
took the US four years to send the troops and weaponry they've poured into Saudi Arabia in just four weeks.

This staggering accumulation of force is far in excess of what was ever needed to "protect" the barbaric regime of King Fahd, the official half-truth used to justify the invasion.

Who will benefit from this?

Certainly not the people of the region, who have seen their oil wealth systematically plundered by companies like Exxon, BP, and Royal-Dutch Shell for most of this century.

It was precisely to protect their oil supplies that Britain, France and the US supported the Zionist colonisation of Palestine and systematically imposed a series of murderous regimesthe Shah of Iran, the fabulously wealthy and brutal Emirs of



where widespread slavery still existed in the 1970s, and where the government cuts the hands off people convicted of theft.

Will the Palestinians bene-

US opinion is hardening behind Israel, whose importance as the major pro-US military power in the region has come back to the fore.

If the US and its allies get away with this, every movement of the oppressed will be set back-the opposition in Chile, the rebels in El Salvador, the workers and peasants of Nicaragua and the independence movement on Bougainville.

But most importantly, the class struggle in the West will also be set back. Already Britain, France and the US are ditching the cuts to military spending that were promised with the decline of the Russian empire.

The burden of mounting debt and looming recession will not go away: it will be shoved onto the working class and the poor. Any victory for the West in the

Gulf will make it easier for them to get away with it.

Beating the drums of war has already -given Margaret Thatcher a boost.

And here in Australia, it is the government that is selling off Qantas and Australian Airlines, that has abolished the dole, that is cutting wages and jobs with a fury, that says there is no money to spend on reversing the decline of our cities-it is this government that is spending millions to impose the will of Western imperialism on the peoples of the

Middle East. It is these people, Hawke, Bush and Thatcher, the robbers and war-mongers of the West, that are our greatest and most immediate enemy.

We want to see them weakened. A defeat in the Middle East would be a good start.

That's why we say: Hawke and Bush, Get out of the Gulf!

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Hawke, Bus Get out of the Gulf!