

Crash Course 71

May
Day
2007

**Smash US
Imperialism**



May Day 2007

Defeat the US Empire in Iraq! Defend Iran from US attack! ANZAC troops out of Timor L'Este and the Solomons!

More than four years on from Bush's invasion of Iraq, the war goes on. But now there is a mass armed resistance to imperialism. To cover their failure to pacify Iraq Bush and Co are gearing up for an attack on Iran. To date the anti-war movement in the West has been pacifist merely calling on their governments to bring the troops home. The anti-imperialist labor movement must now strike to disable the military machine. Now is the time for the anti-imperialist movement to target the US war machine. We must support workers armed resistance to imperialist attacks and organize the labor movement in Aotearoa/New Zealand to strike against NZ's military involvement in the 'war on terror'.

A New Vietnam

The people of Iraq have spoken to the crusader Bush. Go to hell with your army of genocidal mercenaries! Of course the resistance is using suicide bombers to kill the enemy and its collaborators. They are not to be condemned since theirs is a war of resistance. They are fighting back against the evil empire in the name of Islam only because their secular national leaders are US lackeys and will not fight back. In the absence of action by workers in the West the Islamic resistance uses a fraction of the overwhelming military terror used by the US and its allies.

Yet much of the Western 'left' in the so-called anti-war movement refuses to back the Islamic resistance because it does not live up to the ideals of Western 'democracy'. Not until a secular resistance arises will they give it their support. This attitude that the West dictates that the oppressed must fight the oppressor with 'civilised' methods is called *social imperialism*. It doesn't matter that after centuries of colonization and occupation that the oppressed are forced to fight by means not of their choosing, but those decided for them by the imperialist oppressors.

There is a great scene in Pontecovo's film *The Battle of Algiers* where a captured leader of the FLN offers to give the French their small bombs which they use to attack civilian targets in exchange for French military planes. Hundreds of Palestinian suicide bombers have given their lives in the name of their freedom. They may believe that they will go to a better life, but their purpose is to liberate Palestine in this life.

During the Vietnam War similar condemnations of the so-called 'communist' ideology of the liberation fighters were used to justify bombing and napalming most of the country into a wasteland. In de Antonio's film *Year of the Pig* US generals talked of 'Asians' holding their lives 'cheap' by being willing to die for their country.

So long as the anti-war movement holds views which are racist and Islamophobic, it will put Western 'democracy' above the Islamic resistance. It will remain pacifist in appealing to Western governments to bring the troops home.

Pacifist populism...

This is a dismal prospect. It means that Western workers are buying into the argument that Islam is a threat to Western civilization. They don't see that their own *social imperialism* is no different in essence to the naked imperialism of the Bushites and the neo-cons.

They claim, like Bush, that the objective is to defend and encourage 'democracy'; they differ only in their so-called 'peaceful' methods. They delude themselves that by voting for the Democrats, or anti-war Labourites, or appealing to the UN to intervene in these US led wars, they can bring the wars to an end.

Can the US Democrats make a difference? To date the anti-war movement in the US still has illusions in voting in pacifist Democrats. But the recent Democrat 'victory' was not a victory for the anti-war lobby, but a victory for the conservative pro-war Democrats. They voted to fund Bush's 'surge' to pacify Iraq, and for the troops begin to withdraw in October. Bush will veto the Bill to force a further compromise so that it becomes clear that there is only one party – the *Republicrats*.

Can John McDonnell, the renegade UK Labourite standing against Tony Blair make a difference? Even if he wins, which is highly unlikely, the thrust of his politics is to turn to the UN as an international body to reign in the US as a rogue state. This is exactly the position of the NZ Labour government. Does this make any difference to the war?

Helen Clark commits troops to the 'war on Terror' in Afghanistan, Southern Lebanon, and the Persian Gulf. Closer to home, she commits NZ troops to 'keep the peace' in the Pacific, in the Solomons, Tonga and Timor L' Este. We could call this pacifist militarism.

...or Pacifist Militarism

The only difference between the social imperialists and the naked imperialists is that the UN acts as a blue flag to cover the naked imperialist interests that are being promoted in these countries. They act in the name of the 'war on terror' to suppress the struggles for genuine democracy and independence in Afghanistan, Lebanon and in the Pacific.

That's why when Clark meets George Bush she does not dare to voice her criticisms of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan without prior UN approval. She and her Foreign Minister Winston Peters are

proud to win the contract as the leading 'peacekeepers' in the South Pacific. Just how they keep the peace is seen in the use of force to suppress popular resistance in the Solomons, Timor L' Este and Tonga.

Right to Resist

Western workers have much learning to do. In Aotearoa, the response of the Greens and the PMA PAW to Labour sending Engineers to Iraq and more SAS troops to Afghanistan, has been to appeal to New Zealanders concerns that kiwi military personnel might be killed, or that the taxes spent on war would be better spent on domestic welfare.

Then there is their futile appeal to moral arguments about 'peace' or defending NZ's reputation as a 'peacemaker' in the UN. While the international 'peace' movement mobilized up to 10 million on the streets before the invasion in March 2003, this movement collapsed once Bush went to war. And anyway, the UN created the state of Israel in 1948 and bombed Iraq for 10 years in the 1990s. It's 'fig leaf' cover for the naked interests of western imperialism is gone for good. Now NZ troops are UN 'peacekeepers' in Lebanon to keep Hezbollah away from Israel's border. Now they kill Timorese to 'keep the peace'.

To bring about this shift in political attitudes towards war we have to understand that the wars are IMPERIALIST wars, for the purpose of re-colonizing countries to grab their resources, and nothing to do with promoting democracy. And that the fundamental democratic right in this situation is for the Iraq resistance fighters to kill the invading troops, including our 'own'.

We have to put the interests of the Iraqi people first, and refuse to impose hypocritical pre-conditions for their support. Islam is not a threat to 'civilisation'.

Capitalism and imperialism and their barbaric destructive rule are the real threats to civilization.

Recognising this fact, the anti-war movement has to shift from personal, moral and financial appeals to workers to oppose war by pacifist and parliamentary means, and declare the right of all colonized peoples to resist BY WHATEVER MEANS NECESSARY the evil empire and its backers.

What is needed is a rank and file movement in those unions that represent the most oppressed and exploited workers in every country to organize to strike against the war machine at home.

We must also help to build that anti-imperialist resistance in Iraq and Palestine on the solid basis of the organized working class.

Anti Imperialism is Anti-Capitalism

It's not enough to support the anti-imperialist struggles. Workers must fight to take the leadership of those struggles. This is because the Islamic and other bourgeois forces who dominate these struggles will sellout and make deals with imperialism. Only an anti-imperialist movement that is led by the organized working class can overthrow the national bourgeois class and win independence from imperialism.

Strike against the war at home

It follows that once the left recognizes the unconditional right to resist, there is no obstruction to breaking with pacifist and parliamentary barriers to fighting war at home.

Imperialism and capitalism is the enemy and can only be stopped by a militant working class organized to turn the imperialist wars into class wars. It becomes necessary to defeat the imperialist war machine and the ruling class that uses it in its interests, at home.

In the US and UK (and other imperialist countries) we can learn some lessons from the resistance to the Vietnam War. Workers took strike action in plants making munitions. Students closed down universities and schools. Rank and File soldiers in Vietnam shot their officers rather than follow orders. There was mass opposition to the draft.

Today we must build an anti-war movement in the unions that can strike to close down the country and stop the movement of troops, and take direct action against all the reactionary anti-terrorist legislation being used to lock up 'suspects' and shut down anti-war protest.

Four years after Bush's invasion of Iraq the lessons are clear. Only the organized movement of the working class can stop the imperialist war of terror. Individual terror against state terror will always lose. Working

class armed resistance is the only force that can defeat imperialism, smash capitalism, and make socialism a reality.

ANZAC day protests

Those who called for ANZAC troops out of Afghanistan, Timor L' Este and the Solomons at this years ANZAC day events took a brave step in the right direction. ANZAC day has become a celebration of NZ patriotism. From honoring those who fell in past wars it has now become the honoring of the nation that was being defended in those wars. Burning the NZ flag as some protestors did, hits right a the heart of this revival of NZ patriotism. Workers have no countries! In 1917 at the same time that Australian and NZ troops were killing and being killed in an imperialist war in Europe and the Middle East, the Bolsheviks were calling for the war to be turned into a civil war. They recognized that imperialist wars cannot be stopped except by the rank and file soldiers turning their guns on their officers, and then on the ruling class that uses the military to further their imperialist interests! The ANZAC troops who killed and died for imperialism should have heeded the Bolshevik call and turned their guns on their own ruling classes!

- **UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT OF THE ARMED RESISTANCE IN IRAQ!**
- **WORKERS AND YOUTH STRIKE N AGAINST THE MILITARY OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN, THE SOLOMONS, TIMOR L'ESTE AND TONGA!**
 - **IMPERIALISTS HANDS OFF IRAN!**
 - **FOR A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AND WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!**

EPMU sells out Air NZ workers

CWG has been active in getting the message out to EPMU and SFWU members that the fight against Air NZ should be under the control of the rank and file. Two of our leaflets have been circulated over the last few months making a number of points about how to organize and how to fight. The result however, was a vote by the EPMU members to endorse the sellout offer of its leadership, leaving the SFWU workers to fight alone. Not only does this split the unions it makes it more difficult for SFWU workers to take effective action, it justifies the SFWU leadership in sticking within the narrow bosses' law of the ERA. All the more reason for SFWU workers to form their own strike committee and prepare to take strike action.

It is not surprising that the EPMU officials chose to do deal with the employers, since they had a strong hand in drafting the ERA back in 2000. They saw the new industrial law passed by the Labour government as a charter for the unions to recover their influence as key players alongside the bosses which had been denied to them by the ECA in 1991.

The EPMU were behind the CTU campaign last year to increase labour productivity. They claim that that is the way to get better wages and conditions. In reality, increasing labour productivity is increasing the rate of exploitation, that is, the amount of surplus-value that the bosses expropriate from workers. Some highly skilled workers may get a small part of that increase, but most workers find their real wage falling behind the cost of living, despite putting in more hours and working harder.

That's why the EPMU leadership, like the CTU top officials, are fully committed to a 'partnership' with the bosses and base their negotiations on their ability to extract more profits from the workers than the bosses. In every dispute the EPMU prove their value to the bosses, negotiating terms that see jobs and conditions sold out, and more profits for the bosses. No wonder that the Air NZ managers were going round trying to get workers to leave the SFWU and join the EPMU!

But the main reason why there was no strike at Air NZ is that ALL the unions involved are playing by the rules, including the SFWU.

The first rule they observe is that they cannot go on strike until their agreements come up for negotiation. This is difficult when each union or section of workers have different agreements that come up for renewal at a different time. That's why the CTU favors MECAs or MUMECAs - multi-employer, or multi-union, multi-employer collective agreements. That at least allows several unions in one or more workplaces to negotiate together and take industrial action together. However, the ERA also allows the bosses to refuse to agree to MECAs or MUMECAs. Some bosses however like them as they can deal with many workers at once. Air NZ bosses seem to want all workers in the same trades to join the EPMU so they can be sure of getting a good result!

The EPMU and SFWU both cover workers in areas like loading in Air NZ. But the SFWU agreement doesn't come up until May. So the bosses with the support of the EPMU tried to pressure SFWU members illegally to join the EPMU. Using this tactic they have succeeded in luring a number of SFWU members onto individual contracts

The response of the SFWU leadership to this breach of the ERA was to seek mediation through the court. A more effective response would be to occupy CEO Fyfes office and picket his residence. The same tactics would apply to the EPMU top officials. But this would involve the union in possible law breaking at a time when its members are not organized to fight.

Since any strike that involved unions whose agreements have not yet expired would be illegal, it would have to be organized from by a rank and file strike committee across as many unions as possible, together with massive support from workers across the labour movement.

The strike committee should put the demand for a united strike on the CTU leadership not in the expectation that it would support this call, far from it, it would do all in its power to stop it, but to expose the real class collaboration that is behind the CTU and EPMUs 'partnership' with business.

To help keep the SFWU members together until negotiations begin, and stop the bosses splitting them, it is important to create a strike committee now and to plan now for militant strike action in defence of jobs and conditions.

To win public support for a strike its demands would have to be

- ***Full re-nationalization under workers control (only the workers have the skills to run an airline). Instead of a board of directors made up of cutthroat bosses, a board of management of the workers would run the airline.***
- ***No payment of compensation to private shareholders (parasites). The state has bailed out private shareholders many times. Like Skycity, private investors in Air NZ gamble on never losing their money.***
- ***No concessions to patriotism since there is nothing about national ownership that adds to risk free air travel in foreign made planes with foreign engines. (This is not an argument for buy NZ made planes).***

The first step in this direction has to be the formation of a rank and file committee prepared to put in the hard work to organize an effective strike. Then this committee has to go out to all workers in all unions to build a massive picket to defend strike action and to prevent the employers from replacing striking workers during a lockout. This is the only way to rebuild the fighting, democratic unions that we need as the launching pad for socialism.

Unite Union fights and disunites

We reprint below a report of a recent forum held by the Waitemata Branch of Unite which was refused publication in Unite News on the grounds that Waitemata Branch was 'apparently' not recognized as a bona fide branch. It looks to us as if this is an attempt by McCarten to wipe out the Branch and force its members to join his organization.

Forum Report:

Waitemata Unite rejects Key's attack on 'underclass'

Objecting to John Keys' characterization of poor working class people as an under class the Waitemata Branch of Unite! hit back on March 10th by holding a well organized forum in Henderson entitled "Empowering the 'Under Class'".

Waitemata Branch has existed in practice since 2003 and has sought to unite workers with and without jobs making branch membership and regular meetings open to both the low paid and all types of beneficiaries.

The forum was attended by just over twenty people who consisted of a core of Unite! members from Waitemata Branch, John Minto editor of 'Unite News', one member of Unite! from outside the West Auckland based Waitemata Branch, two other guest speakers apart from John Minto: Jill Ovens, Auckland Regional Secretary of the Service and Food Workers' Union and David Bedggood a member of the Communist Workers' Group and a sociologist; the remainder were left-wing political activists while the meeting failed to attract more than a handful of potential members despite the intensive publicity work carried out by the branch.

Six well received presentations were made, three by the guest speakers and three by Waitemata Branch members themselves. A great deal of planning and hard work had gone into preparations. The three Waitemata speakers held their own while compared to the three "heavy weight" guests speaking about variously the effects of the benefit cuts, personal experiences of poverty and its effects as well as presenting a political economic analysis of how capitalism maximizes profits and poverty at the same time.

David Bedggood, a long time supporter of Waitemata, said that our union needed to base itself in the community and not on labour laws granted by governments; that we needed to politicize ourselves and provide the basis for popular assemblies filling up parks such as the one the forum was held in for such meetings.

Jill Ovens gave a detailed report about her union's struggle against Air NZ while John Minto, a well known anti-racist, attacked the government's record on poverty particularly in regard to Pacific Island people. John said that a network of groups fighting for beneficiary rights existed around NZ.

The forum was competing with the Pacific Islands Festival and despite the fact that the person who was supposed to open up the local Workers' Educational Association's building wasn't able to for urgent family reasons, and the forum had to be held in a nearby park, Waitemata proceeded with all of its usual determination (and it was a beautiful afternoon!)

Waitemata which has a strong record of rank and file democracy and activism had expected to have free

and open discussion about all aspects and implications of Keys' attacks and to generate ideas for fight back. But the event had got off to a late start due to the problems with the key and it was decided to call it a day after having attentively sat on the ground listening to and closely questioning the speakers for so long.

While the forum did not generate much material for policy it emboldened Waitemata as to its own organizational capacities given its miniscule resources and a membership of mainly highly disadvantaged people of less than twenty. Waitemata Branch was congratulated by a publicity official of the Waitakere City Council libraries service regarding the extent and coverage in West Auckland of this event conducted by Waitemata.

Waitemata intends to hold regular forums in West Auckland in order to build up the fight against the government, WINZ and the employers and let the John Keys of this world know that we are not an under class but unlike him working class whether or not we have jobs.

McCarten 'de-recognizes' Waitemata Branch

(reprinted from

<http://indymedia.org.nz/newswire/display/72896/index.php>

Once again, Matt McCarten is purging the left-wing of a workers' organization. Reports are circulating that the Waitemata branch of Unite union has been expelled en masse by a recent meeting union's executive.

The Waitemata Branch has been one of the most active parts of the union in Auckland, joining recruitment drives at fast food outlets and regularly sending contingents to a wide range of political demonstrations like anti-war marches.

The Waitemata Branch has also been a staunch critic of the undemocratic structure of Unite, and the way that Matt McCarten has concentrated much of the power in the organization in his hands. As a result, the branch has frequently come under attack from McCarten and his deputy sheriff in Auckland, Mike Treen. Members have been physically ejected from meetings and threatened with expulsion for criticizing the leadership. Now the executive of the union has apparently voted to expel the entire Waitemata branch, on the grounds of its 'hostility'.

For left-wing activists who have been attracted to Unite the expulsion of the Waitemata Branch is a clear warning. When he was the President of the New Labour Party in the late '80s and early '90s, Matt McCarten presided over the expulsion of scores of left-wingers who criticized the top-down, bureaucratic way that the party ran. The party was emasculated and the scene was set for its move to the right inside the Alliance, the fiasco of the time in government from 1999-2002, and ultimately its disintegration.

The expulsion of the Waitemata Branch shows that McCarten has not changed his spots. It should be opposed by all Unite members who want their union to be a fighting democratic organization, rather than another top-down vehicle for the political careers of a handful of bureaucrats.

Ngati Haua occupy tribal Mountain

CWG supports the Ngati Haua claim on this land. Good on them for forcing the issue and getting the most recent sale reversed. Occupation they say is 9/10ths of the boss's law, but it is 100% of the people's law. Workers of all ethnic origins should unite to win this struggle. Unionists should campaign for support in their unions. The Ngati Haua are unlikely to become new private landlords or private property developers This is because the Treat of Waitangi claim does not cover privately owned land, and the struggle necessary to win back private land will break the law and only succeed if all workers unite against the common enemy, capitalism. CWG supports this occupation as a step towards to collective ownership of land where those with an historic claim should have the right to its use to meet their ongoing needs and those who want to alienate the land for profit are thrown out of the occupation. We reprint below some information about the occupation first posted on NZ Indymedia.

Tena Koutou Katoa nga Whanau o Ngati Haua.
Check out the video news segment regarding our ancestral Maunga Whakakoro in the News section of the Whangape site www.whangape.co.nz/main.htm

OUR BIRTHRIGHT

We are occupying our ancestral Maunga Whakakoro to stop it from being alienated from the Hapu forever.

HAKAKORO It is the sacred Maunga of our ancestors Ueoneone and Reitu. All Ngapuhi whakapapa back to these Tupuna. It is the Maunga from which Ueoneone summoned his mystical Manu (Bird) to travel to Tainui to return with Reipai and Reitu.

From this event it connects Ngapuhi with Tainui. It is the Mountain that has watched over our Hapu as we have practiced our traditions and customs with the most important being to gather Kai Moana (seafood). It is referred to during mihi and identified as our Maunga Moana with Rangiputa being our Maunga Whenua.

What are the issues ?

In 1992 we occupied Whakakoro under the leadership of Matua Glass Murray in protest over Whakakoro being sold by 3rd generation farmer Frank Geddes to 4 million dollar lotto winner Robert Buchanan for \$700 000.00. Buchanan was responsible for;

Trying to block access to the coast. .Bulldozing roads over Urupa and Waahi Tapu. Issuing trespass orders against whanau. Opposing whanau development in the environment court. Collecting and trying to trade Maori Taonga. Establishing rights on Whakakoro for Meridian Energy, QE 11, DOC, and other environment groups. Building on land that we are trying to have returned as a reserve without permission. Permitting archaeologists onto Whakakoro to undertake studies. Operating a tourist venture that allowed tourist to go into Pa sites, and Waahi Tapu

All these things without once consulting with the Tangata Whenua Ngati Haua have had a claim (wai 696) lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal since 1997 to have all ancestral lands returned. In 2005 He sold it for \$4.5 million to high profile property developer Kim Spencer who had intentions of subdividing Whakakoro into 33 blocks selling those blocks off for approx. 1 million dollars each . Putting a \$5 million dollar road network through the land including phone and power infrastructure. . .

So over a 12 yr. period fueled by greed the inflated value for the land had increased by 1000% A delegation from Ngati Haua informed Kim Spencer about all the issues surrounding Whakakoro And made it clear that he was obligated to disclose this information to any future buyer.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE, he sold it to Philip Parker without even hinting that there were any issues in Whangape along with providing false incentives that there was a substantial profit for the buyer through subdivision development of the property.

Philip Parker was invited to Whangape Marae to introduce himself and to inform us that he was not given any information about Ngati Haua and their claim to Whakakoro. He is currently taking legal proceedings against Kim Spencer and others that lured him into this dispute. He supports our claim to have the land returned and has cancelled the sale as a result. The financiers, bankers, Property developers are all trying to get themselves out of the financial mess they are in.

So what are they attempting to do?

Sell it to the next person based on deception that there are no issues to be addressed in Whangape and that the next buyer will be living in Harmony with the Tangata Whenua or, perpetuate the myth that it is a sub dividers dream with lots of sellable land that will lead to huge profits. All of a sudden there have been Millionaires, Politicians, and foreign investors all who have some financial interests at stake contacting us seeking to get themselves out of the poo they have created. They do not want us to be successful in our claim because it would be financial suicide for them.

As a result we are now determined to ensure the land is returned into the ownership of Ngati Haua. We need to highlight our claim to ensure our voice is heard and to ensure these issues are addressed. This is an issue for all New Zealanders to support because this land is one of the last coastal properties untouched by the govt., foreign investors, housing development, corporate companies, or exclusive individual owners. We want to protect our rights and those of future generations forever.

Our Tupuna owned and lived on the land which was for all the Hapu, then the crown legislated creating the means to individualize title, alienating the land from the Hapu, then Kauri Logging industry stripped the land bare of millions of tonnes of Kauri making huge profits for themselves, than 3 generations of the Geddes Family farmed the land for their own personal gain, than they sold it to a Lotto winner for \$700000.00, who sold it for \$4.5million to someone who wanted to cut it up with the intent to make \$33 million. He sold the land to someone else for \$10 million and during all of

this we have waited, watching our sacred Maunga being used as a commodity and a few have stood against this with the dream that Whakakoro can be protected forever by Ngati Haua.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO ?

We need to stop the mortgagee tender by first mortgaggers Property Funding Ltd. and brokered by Barfoot and Thompson which closes at the end of the month. We need

to stop any Property developers purchasing this property and putting our way of life at risk. We need to discourage buyers from this area and tell them the truth that this land belongs to Ngati Haua.

Richard Raroa Murray, Marae Delegate to Te Runanga o Te Rarawa Whakakoro, Action Committee Secretary
Spokesperson! (09) 4093508

Attacks on Media jobs needs militant response

The globalization of media driven by market share and profitability is leading to the inevitable outsourcing of jobs at TVNZ and APN which owns the NZ Herald. This is the result of competition among media giants for control of larger chunks of the market. TVNZ is under pressure from SKY TV in launching its new digital platform. APN is competing for control of print media in NZ. The latest attack on jobs has been condemned by the Print & Media Industry Council, in a resolution of 16-17 April 2007.

"That this council condemns the decline in journalistic standards that has resulted from the over-commercialization of New Zealand's media. The council endorses measures to halt the decline in truth and quality reporting in print and electronic media. We demand appropriate staffing levels, training and promotion of professional standards and ethics. We condemn and express alarm at the likely loss of freedom of expression, quality journalism, and range of voices that will result from proposed cuts to TVNZ and APN newspapers. We reaffirm our journalistic commitment to providing news and information to serve all citizens and our democracy regardless of commercial pressures."

The response of the Council and of the EPMU, which represents the editorial staff under threat, is to say this is part of a media crisis and a threat to a free press and democracy, rather than to see it as a consequence of the ownership of the media by giant corporations.

Simon Collins, an EPMU delegate at the New Zealand Herald, says journalists are alarmed at the growing crisis in the New Zealand media.

"New Zealand journalists are alarmed at the decline in quality reporting that's being driven by commercial pressures. We see the proposed cuts at TVNZ and APN as a fundamental attack on news quality that will lead to less in-depth coverage, less accuracy, and more important stories left untold. As journalists we feel a responsibility to speak out in the interests of the New Zealand public and demand media companies invest in good journalism so we can fulfil our proper democratic function."

An instance of this trend is that TVNZ has just appointed a new CEO to drive up the state broadcaster's share of the dumbed-down market for game shows and soaps on the new digital platform in competition with Sky.

Yet the defence of journalists jobs by appeals to 'truth' and 'democracy' is futile when the media is already dominated by right-wing magnates like Rupert Murdoch of Sky and Fox TV and state broadcasters are competing to survive.

Appeals to the owners, either the state-owned TVNZ, or the APN shareholders will draw a blank. The market and private ownership of the media is sacrosanct. TVNZ's so-called 'charter' is a sop to those who fear the total domination of media by the market. But this concession to 'public service' media is not more than a token attempt to restrain market forces. The only answer is for the journalists to aim higher at the complete nationalization of the media under workers control.

A start would be to organize a strike not only to oppose a decline in editorial independence, but to fight for more editorial control over the commercially driven content in both media companies. Such a strike would raise immediately the main issue at stake; that the private owners dictate the content of the media.

The solution would then become clear; working people and not the magnates or market driven managers must own the media. TVNZ must be turned into a fully non-profit, non commercial service, owned by the state and managed by its workers. APN like all the monopolies run by global magnates should be taken over by its workers and turned into a socially owned industry.

But while the EPMU is running any campaign, its focus will be to negotiation with the big bosses trading jobs for concessions. This will meet the bosses' agenda for cost cutting so that they can increase profits, share values, and when necessary sell to the highest bidder.

Enough of bureaucratic, sellout unions! Organise!

CAP Resists creeping Privatization in Auckland

CAP (Citizens Against Privatization) recently held a meeting in West Auckland to rally support against plans by local bodies to privatize a range of services from water to libraries.

Media Release: "Hands off what's Left"

According to Meredydd Barrar, of Citizens Against Privatization (CAP), in Auckland's west, Councils and government changes are driven by big business to further impoverish workers, Citizens Against Privatization have organized a public meeting, Wake up Westies!, to launch a mass campaign against flat and user charges, restructuring of Auckland regional governance, the Rates Inquiry and road tolls:

Restructuring of Auckland regional governance means less democracy, more corporate power, so the working class pays. It means even more privatization or corporatization - of essential services like water and libraries. At very least, water and wastewater prices would rocket because the eight Auckland Councils agree that Watercare profits should fund stormwater.

Most people don't realise, that Auckland Councils are consulting, now, as part of draft Annual Plans, on proposals to restructure the Auckland Councils from Franklin to Rodney, including the ARC, but are providing no finalised facts, no implications, no costings. With or without legislation for this restructuring before October elections, START, a linchpin of the proposals, is now open for consultation as the Long-term Sustainability Framework for the whole region. The ARC is working to integrate this with the Regional Growth Strategy, Regional Land Transport Strategy, Auckland Transport Strategic Alignment Project, Auckland Economic Development Strategy - and the anti-worker Metro Project Action Plan. Unfortunately for ordinary people. START not only chants the same Single Voice mantras as Councils' super city plans, but it's explicit in relentless market-speak for "greater association between the user and the payer". We understand all too well.

Flat and user charges are already 80% or more of total rates on low-value homes, so working people and pensioners pay while the rich save. More increases are on the way across the Auckland region. But what families are repaid GST, and claim rates or rent as tax expenses, as companies do?

All Councils' rates are rising as usual more than inflation, but such huge flat/user charges hit the majority poor,

Proposed, from Franklin to Rodney (all include GST), mid-2007:

- Franklin has no uniform annual general charge (UAGC), but many flat charges depending where you live, e.g. for some Community Boards, this year \$15-\$25; for Community Centres, 06-07, \$22-\$56; recycling, this year \$35, rubbish collection 06-07, \$12-\$180, or \$1.80 user charge stickers; wastewater flat charge up to \$790, or \$410, rising July 07 - \$435, and water per cubic metre up from \$1.80 to \$1.90. - total flat charges 07-08 at least \$520
- Papakura, privatized United Water user charges for water/wastewater, user pays rubbish bags and UAGC, this year, \$320, likely to rise to \$350. (The biggest company pays exactly the same UAGC as a family. Further automatic reduction 07-08 in business' share of rates - by decrease in

- business differential.) - total flat charges 07-08 at least \$350
- Manukau, UAGC up from \$300 to \$318, rubbish flat charge up, to \$170, commercialized Manukau Water user charges for water and flat wastewater charge \$320 will rise July 1. ('Conservation' price increase: businesses bought less water, so residents must pay more.) - total flat charges 07-08 at least \$808
- Auckland, rubbish flat charge to \$199 from \$168 - (for expensive inferior recycling), UAGC stays \$95, MetroWater wastewater and water user charges, plus flat \$60 water. (ACC wants \$18m from MetroWater, 07-08, plus \$3m incl. GST to shift from business rates onto household rates - was \$2.8m incl. GST, 06-07.) - total flat charges 07-08 at least \$354
- Waitakere, UAGC up from \$600 to \$640, user pays rubbish bags increase, flat wastewater from \$350 to \$378 (But businesses still pay for wastewater on rateable value. 3-step residential differential means low-value home owners pay at double the rateable value of high-value property owners.) - total flat charges 07-08 at least \$1018
- North Shore, UAGC up from \$646 to \$691, rubbish stays \$27, flat wastewater charge for now \$396 per household and per business or per toilet pan for business. (But also per toilet pan for schools - from their Operations Grant. Best-for-the-rest-of-us business differentials in the region: x 7.4 - are clawed back by these flat charges. Wastewater user charges and residential/rural differentials only postponed till next year. Don't be conned. Poor Auckland City families pay more to MetroWater than for rates:- total flat charges 07-08 at least \$1115
- Rodney, no UAGC, but huge flat charges for different areas, e.g. Civic Amenities - Hibiscus Coast (H. Coast) - up \$41 to \$458, Rural and Townships (R&T) up \$31 to \$450; Democracy & Development - H. Coast down \$12 to \$102, R&T up \$2 to \$117; water user charges, and flat water charge - H. Coast down \$20 to \$60, R&T up \$117 to \$294; wastewater flat charge - H. Coast up \$22 to \$573, R&T up \$78 to \$798. \$573 or \$798 is also the per pan tax on schools in these area:- total flat charges 07-08 at least \$1193, Hibiscus Coast; at least \$1659, Rural and Townships
- Auckland Regional Council (ARC) has no user or flat charges but its business differentials, lowest in the region at x 1.6 - compared with North Shore x 7.4 - clobber households with what should be business' share of the rates.

The Rates Inquiry panel was invited to front up to working people at the CAP meeting. But the Rates Inquiry wants to make this even worse, further hitting struggling families, pensioners and schools. It's looking for alternatives to rates – from road tolls/pricing to poll taxes – but as this shows, Councils have already found them.

CAP says, "Demand the best rating system for the working class majority - no flat or user charges. Undo privatization and franchising, commercialization and contracting-out of Council services. Increase rates for big business and the rich, so they do pay their share. Submissions, delegations, marches and pickets will be discussed and organized."

Meredydd Barrar – spokesperson (ph: 09 836-6389 or 09 409-5533 or 027 447-6451),

ANZAC troops involved in killings in East Timor

We reprint a short introduction to and a statement by the Organising Committee representing internally displaced persons in Timor L'Este, responding to the actions by ANZAC troops in Timor L'Este that resulted in two deaths and a number of wounded Timorese displaced persons. We do so to show that there is popular opposition to the role of the ANZAC troops. We do not agree that they should be replaced by 'neutral UN forces' called for by the Action Committee. There can be no 'neutrality' on the part of the UN as it represents the interests of the imperialist nations. Nor do we share the illusion that the Timor L'Este government can further the interests of the Timorese masses. Only an armed, independent movement led by revolutionary socialists can resolve the grave situation facing Timor L'Este, by kicking out the ANZACs and the national bourgeois politicians who are all prepared to do deals with imperialism. (reprinted from <http://indymedia.org.nz/newswire/display/72773/index.php>)

Anzac troops are committing human rights abuses, and the East Timorese want them to go home. After the recent article I wrote comparing the occupations of Iraq and East Timor appeared on indymedia.org.nz and the Aussie website Labor Tribune, I received a number of angry e mails accusing me of exaggerating the 'problems' in East Timor and taking an 'ultra-left' position by opposing the presence of Anzac troops there.

One of these messages claimed that the occupation was supported by East Timorese 'from across the political spectrum'; another insisted that Australian and New Zealand troops were 'there to help' the East Timorese.

This sort of ignorance is not entirely surprising, because the big anti-occupation protests that have shaken East Timor over the past month have been under-reported, even in the media of the activist left. The huge demonstrations which followed the shooting of three refugee protesters by Aussie troops on February the 23rd, and the bloody raid that killed five opponents of the occupation south of Dili on March the 4th, have been characterized by much of the mainstream media as mere 'mob violence', and further evidence of the need for Anzac forces to occupy and 'stabilize' East Timor.

The widespread misrepresentation of the events of the past month make the following document, which was composed up by 'Internally Displaced Persons' resident at a camp outside Dili, invaluable. The refugees' statement was written in the aftermath of the deadly Anzac attack on the camp on February the 23rd, and it moves from a vivid description of a series of human rights abuses to a clear call for Anzac forces to leave East Timor.

The refugees, who were displaced during last year's civil war, were attacked after resisting attempts by the government of Jose Ramos-Horta to force them to leave the huge encampment they had established near Dili airport. Despite the fact that the 8,000 people in the camp had nowhere else to go, Horta and East Timorese President Xanana Gusmao

had set a deadline of last November the 20th for them to leave the land they had been occupying. Anzac forces were called in to the camp after the refugees built barricades and threw rocks at police trying to evict them.

Earlier this week Helen Clark announced that two Iroquois helicopters and 32 support troops would join the eleven hundred strong 'Anzac battlegroup' that was dispatched to East Timor in the middle of last year. Along with John Howard's pledge of 150 more Aussie cops, Clark's new infusion of troops shows that the Anzac governments are responding to the crisis in East Timor by copying the 'surge' strategy George Bush is employing in Iraq.

Howard and Clark hope that more military and police muscle will help to 'stabilize' East Timor. Like Bush, they are setting themselves against the will of an occupied people. The statement by the refugees attacked on February 23 shows why we must oppose the maintenance and extension of the imperialist occupation of East Timor.

Subject: Statement by IDPs at Airport
IDPS OF AIRPORTO PRESIDENTE NICOLAU
LOBATO

** Introduction*

The current violent incident in IDPS camp at the airport President Nicolao Lobato, in Dili indicated that the Australian troops have bad intention against the IDPS and the Timorese people. They overreacted by arresting and killing IDPS that have become victims of the political crisis that have been taken place within 8 months in Timor Leste. The Australian troops has captured IDPS of Comoro airport without showing any clearly evidence that those refugees are committing crimes or make violence against their colleague, or even Australian troops.

We demand the Australian troops should take responsibility for those killed and injured when they took military action against as number of civilians on Friday, 23rd February 2007. We condemn their

military action, because the Australian troops were using tanks and other war equipment to attack and terrorize IDPs. Two tanks smashed the barricaded door then fired tear gas with automatic guns against civilians as if they were in a battle against enemies in the battlefield.

Over all these attitudes are behind the acts of provocation to create instability in Dili and to dangerously extend this political crisis in the interests of Australian Troops in Timor Leste.

* Chronology of the Incidents

Exactly on Friday, 23rd February 2007, at 07.40 (Time Timor Leste) the Australian troops violently ran after our colleagues who were waiting for transportation to go to school, work or to hospital. They blockaded the front of IDPS main door, then Manuel Soares was captured and knocked to the ground and hit with a stick until he bled.

IDPS was shocked by the maltreatment of the Australian troops. As a result, some other IDPS wanted to come and witness their colleagues who were being arrested by Australian troops.

The names of the airport IDPS who became victims in that incident follow: **Manuel do Carmo** from District Baucau, Sub-District Laga; violently arrested by the Australian troops in front of the IDPS door, knocked to the ground, beaten with guns until his whole body was injured, and also pulling him like an animal and throwing him into the Australian patrol vehicle; **Delfin Sarmiento** from District Viqueque, sub district Uato-lari; arrested, but then escaped while being forced into the Australian vehicle when his T shirt the troops were holding came off.; **Julio da Siva and Viriato Soares**, from District Viqueque sub district Uato – Lari and Dilor; they both went to the IDPS camp and protested against the Australian troops that were brutally assaulting the IDPS camp at the time the Australian troops were arresting Manuel do Carmo.

This incident got strong reaction from people who came out of the tent to protest the attitude of Australian troops in front of the entrance door.

Australian forces drove two tanks into the IDPS door barricade which was not locked and fueled the situation. The children, old man and women suffered from tear-gas. Two were seriously injured and two others were lightly injured and one got shot dead right under the IDPS tent by the Australian troops. The troops wanted to hide the dead body to make it look as if he was shot outside of the camp so they then pulled him out of the barbed wire and his hair stuck to the barbed wire. Then the Australian soldiers cover up the dead body with black plastic and threw it into a maize field. However, many of IDPS were witnessing this and shouting at them so they recovered the body and put into an Australian military

vehicle.

Names of those killed and wounded follow:

Jacinto Soares From district Viqueque, subdistrict ossu, lia-ruka village; got shot to death on the spot by Australian forces under the tent of IDPS.

Antonio Dasi From District Baucau, sub-district, wailili village; shot by Australian troops in his chest and the left side of his stomach in the IDPS camp. He died the next day in national hospital Guido Valadares at 11.20 on Saturday 23rd February 2007.

Geraldo Guterres From district Baucau, sub-district venilale, Uai-Oli village; shot in both of his knees which were broken.

Cris Lopes From district Lospalos; shot in his leg and badly injured.

Julio da Silva From district viqueque, sub-district Uato-Lari; shot in his thigh –with bad injuries.

• Demands

Due to the above facts, all IDPS of Presidente Nicolau Lobato demand strongly and urge the government of RDTL, UNMIT and international forces in Timor Leste to take necessary measures based on the prevailing international law against the forces as follows ;

- **Immediate withdrawal of Australian troops out of Timor Leste.**
- **Request the sovereign state of RDTL to take immediate measures to remove the Australian forces from Timor Leste.**
- **Request the sovereign state remove the representative for UN security in Timor Leste, as he is responsible for the problem.**
- **Request the representative of the United Nations force in Timor Leste take responsibility for the families of victims and to bring the Australian forces involved before an international tribunal.**
- **We totally reject the news broadcast on TVTL as the information was not based on the facts of what to place at IDPS Comoro.**
- **We totally reject the claim of the Australian forces made on the internet that we shot at them with Ambon-Arrow as a false attempt to cover up their bad attitude towards the innocent IDPS.**
- **Over and above these demands, if they are not met, all IDPS will take strike action in Dili and in particular at the President Nicolau Lobato Airport Comoro Dili.**
- **An appeal to the sympathy of all Timorese to provide necessary support to defend the IDPS human dignity.**
- **Demand the RDTL government and the UN representative to cooperate closely to serve the Timorese people.**
- **We demand the UN forces to take action in Timor Leste impartially and not to get involved with any group or political party.**

COMITE ORGANAIZ

Revolutionary upsurges in Latin America:

Today, there is an intensifying crisis of the global capitalist economy. The US is bogged down with a new 'Vietnam' in Iraq. It is facing popular opposition to its wars which now extends to a section of the Democratic Party. The recent upsets in the stock exchanges show how fragile the world economy is. World growth is now being driven by China where all the contradictions of an outdated capitalism are coming to a head. To contain mass popular uprisings the imperialists are enlisting the Castroites, Chavistas and former 'Trotskyists' to defend the rule of capital under the guise of populist or 'socialist' regimes. Aware of this strategy in Latin America, the Leninist Trotskyist Fraction fights to help rank and file workers to form united fronts to demand united strike action against the 'left' regimes of the World Social Forum that are containing the revolutions in Latin America. In this we aim to expose and replace the treacherous leaders of the 'left' political parties and labor organizations with democratic assemblies based on elected delegates of the rank and file - in other words, soviets. Here's a leaflet on the struggle our comrades in Workers Democracy are fighting in Neuquen in Argentina.

Argentina:

April 9th: National stoppage to condemn the assassination of Carlos Fuentealba

While Julio López¹ is still missing and the comrade workers of Las Heras are in jail, now THE CHALK IS SOAKED IN BLOOD The same as (former Presidents) Menem, De La Rúa and Duhalde..(President) KIRCHNER, and (governors) SOBISCH² and ROMERO³ STARVE, REPRESS AND MURDER the ordinary people. ON MONDAY, APRIL 9 let us make a NATIONAL STRIKE AND A LONG TERM PLAN FOR ORGANIZING THE STRUGGLE! With pickets, roadblocks, walkouts, marches and factory meetings all over the country we must impose -and conquer from the base- a true mandate for struggle. We must avoid the trap of collective bargaining being set by the treacherous union bureaucrats and the government to starve us. We must win by our force all the demands of the teachers and all the fighting workers! THE JUST STRUGGLE OF THE TEACHERS MUST WIN!

For a general strike of all the teachers of the country up to:

- ◆ Put the criminal Sobisch and his cronies in jail, and dissolve his entire murderous police force!
- ◆ Throw out Romero and the antiworker and repressive lawmakers of Salta!
- ◆ End the militarization of Santa Cruz province schools ordered by Kirchner and his friends of the provincial government!⁴
- ◆ Free the political prisoners in Las Heras, our brothers the oil workers!

For a National Congress of rank and file delegates of the affiliates of the entire CTERA (the national teachers union) to be held now in Neuquen to Unite all the teachers that are struggling all over the country against the bureaucrats that have isolated them province by province and handed over their struggle to the bosses' state!

Carlos Fuentealba, a Neuqueno teacher is a new martyr of the working class struggles. He was deliberately shot in the nape of his neck at a very short range with a tear gas grenade during the ferocious police repression ordered by Sobisch. The teachers were shot at with tear gas and rubber bullets, having to flee across the fields, chased by the murderous Neuqueno police. The teachers in Salta were also savagely repressed by Romero's police. The schools in Santa Cruz full of police and gendarmes⁵ sent by Kirchner.

¹ A crucial witness in the trial against a police chief that tortured and murdered pregnant women - political opponents to the dictatorship in the 70s and robbed their newborn babies to give them to repressors' wives.

² Governor of oil and iron ore rich province of Neuquen; this is also a VIP tourists resort for its ski and trekking facilities.

³ Governor of oil, gold and timber rich province of Salta, the same rascal that repressed the unemployed oil and construction workers of Mosconi and Tartagal some years ago, months before the beginning of a workers and popular revolution in Argentina that ousted De la Rúa.

⁴ Santa Cruz is also a very rich province, the main oil and gas resources of Argentina lay at its plateaus and at its coast-line. Kirchner was governor of Santa Cruz for many years during the Menem, De la Rúa and Duhalde's governments.

⁵ The gendarmes are supposed to police the borders against smugglers -not teachers. But they are used to beat and chase workers in strike, as they did in Salta some years ago, in Las Heras last year, in Neuquen against the oil workers of the Pride Co., and many, many other places in the border provinces.

This is the answer given by the president, his cabinet ministers and governors –all of them servants of the oil companies, the corporations and the big bosses –to the just struggle of the teachers who demand a living wage to keep up with the high inflation. Meanwhile Kirchner's government goes on giving the bosses and the imperialist monopolies all sorts of subsidies and tax exemptions. These bosses and monopolies together with their banker partners have the administration keeping a reserve of 36 billion dollars in the Central Bank for them as a fund to guarantee their investments

The workers are fighting to break out of the control of the jailers within their own ranks, the union bureaucrats of the CGT and the CTA. As usual, they are facing collective contracts devised by the bureaucracy with the agreement of the bosses and their state. These contracts guarantee the starvation and misery of the workers and juicy profits for the national and imperialist exploiters. But if the workers rebel against their misleaders and follow their own path, the authorities resort to the same methods as the military dictatorship as they did in Las Heras last year. Now they have filled Santa Cruz' schools with armed gendarmes and police as an occupation army to prevent the teachers from protesting. They have unleashed a savage repression over the teachers in Salta. It is the same repression suffered by the scores of people from Entre Rios province and the eco-activists who were demonstrating in Buenos Aires port against the paper pulp factory Botnia and its pollution of Uruguay⁶ River.

Also the police have repressed the people –among them the members of leftist groups –on National Route 14 who were protesting against the repression in Neuquen. All of them are going to be prosecuted as criminals by the bosses' "justice". The federal and provincial governments have to smash the rebellion of the teachers because this struggle puts in question the ceiling of 15% on wage increases agreed among the national and imperialist bosses, the authorities and the treacherous union bureaucracy in the new collective contracts. Not only that these contracts do not cover the 60% of the workers who are working "in black"⁷ or under short term contracts⁸, or unemployed.⁹ The high inflation (an average of more than 1% per month, and 3% last month) erodes the generalized very low wages day after day.

The bosses in Argentina, whose growth cycle is based on the increased exploitation of the working class, receive from the government a bonus from the overvaluation of the US dollar (that is, an under-valuation of the Argentine peso) to let them export with extra profits on the world market. Thus, they cannot allow the demand for a minimum wage equal to the basket of basic goods, increased monthly to keep pace with the rate of inflation (a demand raised by the teachers and the rest of the workers in the Patagonian provinces¹⁰), become a demand of all the workers in Argentina. So last year they sent their hound dogs (the police and the gendarmerie) to chase and torture the oil workers of Las Heras; and today they send their hound dogs against all the fighting workers to smash them with metal clubs, tear gas and pepper gas, rubber and lead pellets. Murderers!

Kirchner, Sobisch and Romero are now discussing cynically which is the best way to repress – i.e. murder –the workers and the ordinary people. Kirchner and his ministers say that they are "better" repressors than Sobisch and Romero, because these two let the workers in struggle build roadblocks and street barricades and then send the police to repress openly, wounding and killing demonstrators. Instead, Kirchner and his men, act first. They occupy the "territory" with the troops of the gendarmerie –as last year in Las Heras, and now all over Santa Cruz –so to terrorize everybody... they say to "discourage" people... Thus nobody dares to protest and fight against low wages and exploitation. All of them are cynical, shameless criminals. One way or another, the police, the gendarmes and the undercover agents, are all sent by them to beat, wound, arrest and murder the workers in struggle! They are the thugs whose hands are soaked in the workers' blood, that of Víctor Choque, Teresa Rodríguez¹¹, Aníban Verón¹², Kostequi, Santillán¹³ and the martyrs of December 20¹⁴. They have now soaked the teachers' sticks of chalk with Carlos Fuentealba's blood!

⁶ Botnia is the Finnish company building a timber pulp processing factory for making paper on the Uruguayan side of Uruguay River. This river is the natural border between Argentina and Uruguay, where the government of Tabare Vazquez, a social democrat, has given a permit to this company without consulting Kirchner. On the Argentinean coast, the inhabitants live on attractive sandy beaches popular with locals and foreign tourists. Fishing is abundant in the crystal clear waters which now run the risk of being poisoned by cyanide and other chemical products used to process the raw material of paper.

⁷ That is, they are not registered thus they enjoy no benefits or legal coverage, work long hours for a pittance and can be sacked at any time. Even the unions do not protect them.

⁸ These contracts are not covered by most of the benefits of the labor law: the workers under them do not enjoy severance payment, holidays, sick leave, wedding/birth leave or allowances. etc. Most of them are disguised as "supply contracts"; that is the worker is not considered a worker but a "supplier", so that he or she is not covered by any insurance for accidents or industrial illnesses.

⁹ The rate of unemployment is very high, though less than it was six years ago. The government figures say unemployment is now around 9%. But it records as "employed" workers all those unemployed that are receiving 50 dollars a month from the state agencies, as a payment for community jobs, like serving soup in a soup kitchen, or sweeping sidewalks in downtown streets in some provincial cities.

¹⁰ The Patagonian provinces are: *Neuquen* –with a great tradition in working class fighting, as that of the unemployed in *Central-Co* ten years ago; the first "piqueteros"; the construction workers of the great dams of *Alicura* and *Piedra del Aguila*, etc.; *Santa Cruz* –where Las Heras oil fields are, as well as *Pico Truncado* gas fields, *Rio Turbio* coalmine and other traditional hot spots of working class struggles; *Chubut* -where there have been harsh and long strikes in the fish factories and in the oil fields;- *Tierra del Fuego* -where the police, some years ago, murdered Victor Choque, but could not break a metalworkers' strike that went national- and *Río Negro* -home of teachers and fruit packers' strong strikes and protests .

¹¹ Teresa Rodríguez was a young mother that worked as a house cleaner for the rich. She was shot dead by the police when they entered violently the working class neighbourhood where she lived, shooting indiscriminately, breaking doors and terrorizing the children, in order to make thousands of unemployed end their protests which included roadblocks and street barricades. The workers had lost their jobs because of the privatization of the state oil company to Repsol and other imperialist corporations. The tenth anniversary of her death is this April.

In Neuquen, the rebellion is generalized. The bridges that connect Neuquen with Rio Negro province have been cut by the pickets of teachers, ordinary workers, students and militants of all kinds.

The politicians of the Neuquen legislature, all servants of the bosses, with the support of the union bureaucracy of the CGT and the CTA, are trying to negotiate a deal so that Sobisch does not fall at the hands of the rebellious masses. They want to stop him from being ousted as De la Rúa was in 2001. They are speaking of an "impeachment". This is aimed to drag on so that the term for Sobisch as a governor ends first and he is saved. Or they could do as with Ibarra, the responsible of the death of the 189 young victims in the fire at Cromagnon¹⁵ (a Disco) who now stands again shamelessly as a candidate for Mayor of Buenos Aires City.

We must take up the demands: "Out with Sobisch!" and "We will take revenge for comrade Carlos' death with a general strike!". These cries were in the mouths of thousands of teachers and workers in struggle, who now are occupying the bridges and the streets! Down with Sobisch! General strike for an indefinite time all over Neuquen until the murderous Sobisch has gone! Jail Sobisch and all the repressors! They are all "Pobletes"¹⁶. Dissolve the murderous provincial police!

The authorities say they are going to "investigate". There is nothing to investigate! All of them are guilty, they cannot be judged by the same justice that permits the militarization of the schools, that orders the police to jail the workers as criminals and have our brothers of Las Heras in jail since last year, that have put Canteros¹⁷ -and keep him in jail, and have prosecuted more than 4500 working class fighters. Only the workers and popular organizations that have been attacked by these mercenaries can judge them.

For workers and popular tribunals formed by the teachers, the relatives of our murdered comrade and by the workers and popular organizations! That those tribunals judge and condemn all those responsible for the repression and for the murder of Teresa Rodriguez and Carlos Fuentealba!

We have to create a National Congress of rank and file delegates of all CTERA to be held in Neuquen. That will allow us to unite all the teachers in struggle; to deal with the union bureaucrats that keep the struggles isolated and divided and that betray them to the governments; and to vote for a teachers' general strike all over the country to adopt these demands.

The teachers in the SUTEBA locals that oppose the union bureaucrats will strike and march next Monday with the demands: "Out with Sobisch's repression, Kirchner and Romero, for the victory of the teachers' struggle, self-organised convening of all the teachers in struggle and a national plan for the struggle". They have in their hands the power to vote in their local meetings for the convening of a National Congress of Teachers and to propose that this motion is raised in the meetings of the teachers all over the country.

ON MONDAY, APRIL 9, WE MUST BUILD A MILITANT STRIKE AND A NATIONAL PLAN FOR THE STRUGGLE

The teachers in Neuquén, Santa Cruz and Salta have been struggling for weeks, but they are divided and isolated province by province, due to the actions of the national bureaucracy of the teachers union (Yasky and Co.). It took a teacher's death to make them "condescend" to call a national strike, which they now want to turn into a "national mourning" day so that they are able to let off some steam from the huge anger of the teachers and all the workers, because they want keep their jobs and their privileges of office untouched. Their words: "Death is the limit!", is the mask of the actor that they hope will cover their hypocritical inaction. They have not made any attempt to find Julio Lopez –whose disappearance is a political responsibility of Kirchner's administration – they have not called for a single day of strike action to demand freedom for our imprisoned brother workers in Las Heras.

¹² Annabel Veron was the eldest of several workers murdered during the great repression in Mosconi by Romero's police in 2000 and 2001. The unemployed were blocking the routes asking for jobs and compensation for the loss of their jobs when the state oil company was privatized, as well as for public works to improve the bad living conditions of the working people in the province. The workers' rage went against the city hall and the police station, which were burnt to their foundations.

¹³ Maxi Kostequi and Dario Santillan were two young protesters that were shot in cold blood and at very short range in July 2002 by the police while they were leading a march to commemorate the uprising of December 20, 2001 and to protest the failure of the government to meet the dire needs of the people. First the officers shot Maxi and left him to bleed on the floor in Avellaneda train station lobby, near the capital. Then, Dario who knelt to help him was shot in the back while he was trying to stop Maxi's bleeding.

¹⁴ Dec 20, 2001, during the street battles, mounted and infantry police troops murdered some 40 workers.

¹⁵ Two years ago Cromagnon, a Disco without permit to function, got ablaze while more than 2000 people –most most of them working class teenagers, and even young couples with their babies –were crowded in a room for 700 people, attending a rock festival. The Disco, actually a warehouse with its walls and ceiling covered with cheap ornamentation, caught fire creating poisonous fumes and a rain of burning plastic material. But the people could not get out because of a locked door, and the lights had gone out. There were no fire extinguishers and the delayed arrival of the fire trucks and ambulances left 189 dead and almost 800 survivors injured or with severe shock and crippling. Ibarra was the Buenos Aires City mayor who denied responsibility when everybody accused him and his administration of having permitted Cromagnon and many other places to operate illegally, due to their corruption and disrespect for poor workers and youth.

¹⁶ This is allegedly the name of the police officer that shot Carlos Fuentealba.

¹⁷ Canteros is a factory worker imprisoned after the police repressed a riot in Haedo train station, to the West of Greater Buenos Aires. He was waiting for the train on his way to work. The riot was caused by the anger of the people tired of waiting endlessly, every day, for the trains that link the Greater Buenos Aires cities to the Capital. The high proportion of accidents and delays has made the service completely unreliable. Besides being late, the wagons are old, full of holes, dirty; and crowded. Moreover, from some time the trains have been prone to derail. They were privatized some years ago with the excuse of providing a better service, and now the companies receive a substantial subsidy from the government for not increasing the fares. However, Canteros, a pacific father of two, was not participating in the riot. That is why he did not run when the police got near him, and then planted a gun in his backpack to frame him.

Meanwhile, “the other” pro-Kirchner union bureaucracy (under the command of Moyano and the CGT) now hypocritically calls for a “mourning strike” of... one hour! ... yet they religiously count one by one the millions that they steal from the Social Services¹⁸ with the blessing of the state and the government; they send their thugs to beat those workers that are fighting for their rights, and betrays to the bosses the activists in each factory or workplace so that they can be sacked. The bureaucrats from the CGT and the CTA are given the task of keeping the present bourgeois regime alive and well, and they receive as a reward for their services control of the millions of dollars of the social services and the compulsory union fees¹⁹.

This struggle cannot be left in their hands, because they are the true jailers of the working class. We must not allow that to happen!

To win we need to take this fight to the streets! Therefore, we must turn this 9 April in a militant, generalized national day of strike with pickets, roadblocks, factory and workplace meetings, walkouts and rallies in and around the workplaces. We have to paralyze the country against Kirchner, Sobisch, Romero and the rest of the ‘slaveowners’, representatives of the imperialist monopolies and the national bosses, repressors and murderers of workers and ordinary people.

It’s the blood of the murdered comrade Fuentealba, shot in his head, that calls for an uprising of the workers and the people! On Monday 9: let’s paralyze the country in a general strike! Let’s follow the example of the workers in Buenos Aires City subway that have said they stop working next Monday! Let’s block the routes and highways, comrade piqueteros! Let’s take primary and high schools, colleges and universities, comrade students! Let’s take to the streets, because the demand of the Patagonian teachers and workers is the same as ours!

UNITEZ! STOP FIGHTING DIVIDED AND ISOLATED!

AS IT WAS IN LAS HERAS, THE DEMANDS AND THE STRUGGLES OF THE TEACHERS AND THE REST OF THE WORKERS IN SALTA AND PATAGONIA ARE THE DEMANDS OF THE ENTIRE ARGENTINEAN WORKING CLASS!

ONLY ONE PROGRAM, ONLY ONE STRUGGLE!

- **Down with the collective contracts agreed by government, the bosses and the union bureaucracy!**
- **A minimum living wage of 2,400 pesos (around 800 dollars) for the basic basket of goods! It must be adjusted monthly according to inflation!**
- **Enough of “work in black”, “wages in black”²⁰ and of wage taxes²¹**
- **Enough of first class workers vs. second class workers! Everybody to the registered payroll with the same rights and wages!**
- **Jobs for all, distributing the available hours of work among all the workers!**
- **For an increase in the education and health budgets! The money must come from the 50 billion dollars that the bankers robbed from us; from progressive taxes on the rich; from the nationalization without compensation and under workers control of the private schools, colleges and universities and the private hospitals and health centers; from the 36 billion dollars that the exporters are keeping in the Central Bank to guarantee the dollar at 3.10 pesos for themselves and miserable wages of 300 dollars a month for the workers²²!**
- **Punishment for the murderers of Carlos Fuentealba and repressors of all the workers!**
- **Down with the police and gendarmerie occupation of the schools, hospitals and the streets of Las Heras and all over Santa Cruz!**
- **Freedom for the imprisoned Las Heras workers and for all the political prisoners in Argentina!**
- **We want Julio Lopez back alive now!**

¹⁸ In Argentina, the Social Services (which include health services, social insurance, hotels, restaurants and spas for the vacationing workers, and in some cases courses or even technical schools for improving the workers’ knowledge of their trade) are specific to each trade or group of trades and are administered by the unions. The bosses are obliged to deduct 2-3% from each worker’s pay for the corresponding union social service and to pay an equal sum to the “tax”.

¹⁹ The unions in Argentina receive the 3% of the pay of each worker as a fee (even if the worker is not affiliated). The bosses match that amount as they do with the social services “taxes”. If you want to affiliate, you must pay separately a monthly subscription as a member. The union may reject your affiliation if they consider you do not deserve to be a member (for example, if you actively oppose the bureaucracy).

²⁰ Sometimes even the registered workers “work in black” as long as a good portion of their wages are not registered or they are legally registered as “lump sums” which do not qualify for the deduction for retirement, the holiday leave payment, the severance payment, the “aguinaldo” (a thirteenth-month payment that all the workers receive each year, divided in two quotas –one in July and the other in December) or the percentage of increase in the wages.

²¹ In Argentina, the workers do not pay taxes on their wages or monthly salaries, unless they earn a sum above a line that was established long ago and at a time amounted to a rich man income. But the inflation has made the line irrelevant; now it is equal to the (real) basic basket of goods. So that any worker that earns more than a very miserable wage must pay a tax, which is intolerable.

²² Without the intervention of the state central bank, the exchange rate would be 2 pesos for each dollar. This trick feeds inflation and misery for the workers.

- **No popular or working class fighter should be prosecuted! Acquittals for all of them!**
- **Against the repression by the police and the gendarmerie, against the gangs of thugs of the bosses' parties that Kirchner and Sobisch send to act as scabs and to beat Neuqueno and Santacruzense teachers and other workers in their workplaces and neighborhoods! The workers have a legitimate right of self defense! For workers self-defense committees to confront the repression and the thugs sent by the bosses' parties and the union bureaucracy!**

On Monday April 9 let's make a militant national strike that can be the first step in a national plan towards and indefinite general indefinite strike to impose all the demands of the workers and the people, to make the bosses and the government of Kirchner and his governors –all of them, whatever the party – fall. That's the way to re-open the road of 2001!

The capitalists are making vast super profits, and they get them from the sweat, hunger and the blood of the workers and the rest of the exploited. Enough! The way to put an end to all this misery is to again make heard the shout:

“ALL OF THEM MUST GET OUT! NOT EVEN ONE OF THEM SHOULD STAY!”

TODAY MORE THAN EVER WE NEED A NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF STRUGGLE TO ENSURE THE CONTINUITY COORDINATION AND ORGANISATION OF THE FIGHT TO CONFRONT AND DEFEAT THE UNION BUREAUCRACY!

Hundreds of working class organizations, all of them combative and brave are longing for the unity and the coordination of everybody that is fighting. They are who must impose the unity and the coordination so that the Argentinean working class stands up again. For the rising up of all the people that suffer and have lost their homes from the floods, for the rising up of the workers of the sweatshops, the millions of workers that work in black or under fake contracts, the millions that work 14 hours a day to get less than a quarter of the living wage, that cannot make ends meet due to the high inflation, all those that with their effort, keep running the education and the health of our children!

There are a thousand and one opportunities to coordinate and centralize everybody that is fighting, to prevent the betrayals of the union bureaucracy. The leaderships of the left currents and parties²³, under the influence of Chavez and Fidel Castro –Kirchner's friend –and to the World social Forum, are responsible for the decentralization and isolation of the struggles against the antiworker and repressive Kirchner administration. They consider Kirchner a “centre left” government that can be “convinced” to be “a good boy”, to make Julio Lòpez appear. In this way they provide a ‘left cover’ for what is really as repressive, right-wing, anti worker and pro-imperialist a government, as those of Menem and De la Rúa. They prevent workers from fighting Kirchner in the same way they fought Menem and De la Rúa.

Stop subordinating the working class to the government of the oil companies, of the IMF and of the Videlista bosses of Techint²⁴! Stop painting the workers' foes as friends!

We must unify and centralize the fighters because that is the only way to win the fight. No doubt that the treacherous misleaders of the CTA and the CGT –after Monday 9 April –will try to remove us from the streets and the struggle; they will sit down at the same table as the slaveowning bosses and Kirchner ministers to sign the miserable collective contracts to starve us! They are committed to rescue Sobisch, Romero, Sancho²⁵, Kirchner and all the servants of the exploiters.

Today more than ever we need a National Committee of Struggle for all the fighting workers continue fighting after the Monday 9 strike. The locals of SUTEBA (the teachers union) who oppose the union bureaucracy have the power to vote and propose a national congress of rank and file delegates of all the teachers to be held in Neuquen.

From Democracia Obrera, we call on the metalworkers and the phone (communication) workers of FOETRA who are against the fake collective contract aimed at smashing their wages; we call on the subway workers²⁶ that are going to strike on Monday and whose benefits are at risk if the teachers are defeated; to the workers of the French Hospital that cannot go on fighting as isolated as they are now; to the workers of the (national and provincial) state hospitals that are currently in struggle; to the hundreds of workers organizations opposed to the ATE²⁷ and CTA bureaucracy that have taken the locals and workplaces from the hands of that bureaucracy; to the workers of the Garrahan Hospital²⁸; to the combative piquetera movements, to constitute now this National Committee of Struggle to unite everybody that is fighting, to confront and defeat the union bureaucracy and to smash their new fake collective contracts aimed to starve us!

“The liberation of the workers will come at the hands of the workers”

April 7, 2007 DEMOCRACIA OBRERA (WORKERS DEMOCRACY)

²³ In Argentina, the left currents and parties, including the fake Trotskyists, are very influential. They are the leaderships in many local unions or factory committees. They have representatives in the legislatures in some provinces and in some town councils; they direct piqueteros' organizations, and have a strong say in lots of workplace and neighbourhood assemblies, committees, etc.

²⁴ Techint is a company that owes the biggest steelworks in Argentina, Mexico and Venezuela, and that made its fortune under the Videla dictatorship. It is a partner of Kirchner and Chavez' governments.

²⁵ Sancho - a Kirchner crony- is the governor of Santa Cruz.

²⁶ Their leadership is controlled by a fake Trotskyist group.

²⁷ ATE is the civil servants and state workers union. With the teachers union CTERA, it is the backbone of the CTA.

²⁸ The biggest and more important Paediatric hospital in Argentina and in South America, its very combative workers have also a left wing union leadership.

What We Fight For

We fight to overthrow Capitalism

Historically, capitalism expanded world-wide to free much of humanity from the bonds of feudal or tribal society, and developed the economy, society and culture to a new higher level. But it could only do this by exploiting the labour of the productive classes to make its profits. To survive, capitalism became increasingly destructive of "nature" and humanity. In the early 20th century it entered the epoch of imperialism in which successive crises unleashed wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. Today we fight to end capitalism's wars, famine, oppression and injustice, by mobilising workers to overthrow their own ruling classes and bring to an end the rotten, exploitative and oppressive society that has exceeded its use-by date.

We fight for Socialism.

By the 20th century, capitalism had created the pre-conditions for socialism –a world-wide working class and modern industry capable of meeting all our basic needs. The potential to eliminate poverty, starvation, disease and war has long existed. The October Revolution proved this to be true, bringing peace, bread and land to millions. But it became the victim of the combined assault of imperialism and Stalinism. After 1924 the USSR, along with its deformed offspring in Europe, degenerated back towards capitalism. In the absence of a workers political revolution, capitalism was restored between 1990 and 1992. Vietnam and China then followed. In the 21st century only Cuba and North Korea survive as degenerate workers states. We unconditionally defend these states against capitalism and fight for political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy as part of world socialism.

We fight to defend Marxism

While the economic conditions for socialism exist today, standing between the working class and socialism are political, social and cultural barriers. They are the capitalist state and bourgeois ideology and its agents. These agents claim that Marxism is dead and capitalism need not be exploitative. We say that Marxism is a living science that explains both capitalism's continued exploitation and its attempts to hide class exploitation behind the appearance of individual "freedom" and "equality". It reveals how and why the reformist, Stalinist and centrist misleaders of the working class tie workers to bourgeois ideas of nationalism, racism, sexism and equality. Such false beliefs will be exploded when the struggle against the inequality, injustice, anarchy and barbarism of capitalism in crisis, led by a revolutionary Marxist party, produces a revolutionary class-consciousness.

We fight for a Revolutionary Party

The bourgeois and its agents condemn the Marxist party as totalitarian. We say that without a democratic and a centrally organised party there can be no revolution. We base our beliefs on the revolutionary tradition of Bolshevism and Trotskyism. Such a party, armed with a *transitional programme*, forms a bridge that joins the daily fight to defend all the past and present gains won from capitalism, to the victorious socialist revolution. Defensive struggles for bourgeois rights and freedoms, for decent wages and conditions, will link up the struggles of workers of all nationalities, genders, ethnicities and sexual orientations, bringing about movements for workers control, political strikes and the arming of the working class, as necessary steps to workers' power and the smashing of the bourgeois state. Along the way, workers will learn that each new step is one of many in a long march to revolutionise every barrier put in the path to the victorious revolution.

We fight for Communism.

Communism stands for the creation of a classless, stateless society beyond socialism that is capable of meeting all human needs. Against the ruling class lies that capitalism can be made "fair" for all; that nature can be "conserved"; that socialism and communism are "dead"; we raise the red flag of communism to keep alive the revolutionary tradition of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, the Bolshevik-led October Revolution; the Third Communist International until 1924, the revolutionary Fourth International up to 1940 before its collapse into centrism. We fight to build a new, Fifth, Communist International, as a world party of socialism capable of leading workers to a victorious struggle for socialism.

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The other members are the International Workers League (LOI-CI) Argentina, International Workers Party (POI) Chile, Revolutionary Trotskyist League (RTL) Peru, Red October International (ORI) Bolivia, and the Trotskyist Fraction (FT) Brazil.

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