

Class Struggle 76

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STOP THE GENOCIDE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN GAZA!

The new and ferocious attack by the genocidal state of Israel, the police for imperialism in the Middle East, is carried out with the complicity of the bourgeoisie Palestinian Fatah that has become the jailers of its own people. On Wednesday, 23 January, the heroic Palestinian masses of the Gaza Strip after weeks without electricity, water, food or medicine, broke down the border wall at Rafah and re-united with their class brothers and sisters in Egypt. On February 3, Mubarak made a pact with Hamas to use the army to close the border. On Monday February 4, the Egyptian army attacked the Palestinian masses leaving two dead and dozens wounded. It is clear that Hamas is just another bourgeois faction that attempts to control the Palestinian masses in Gaza, hoping that imperialism and the Zionist state will pay them to be the jailers in Gaza just as Fatah are their jailers on the West Bank.

Fatah and Hamas are factions of the national bourgeoisie of the Middle East. They are the agents and junior partners of imperialism, who repress and starve their own people, strangle the resistance of the Palestinian people. They made pacts with the Zionist state even while workers & peasants of southern Lebanon and Palestinian masses were defeating them. They back the Anglo/US invasion and occupation of Iraq.

They are also the partners of the Syrian and Iranian bourgeoisie that starves and represses their workers and peasants. They are the partners of the puppet regime in the imperialist protectorate of Iraq.

They collaborate with Egyptian bourgeoisie, which helps Israel to control the southern and western borders of the Gaza Strip, and of the Jordanian bourgeoisie headed by King Hussein which was responsible for the brutal 1970 'Black September' massacre of the Palestinian people in the camps on the right bank of the Jordan river.

In Lebanon, the Hezbollah faction of the bourgeoisie led by Sheikh Nasrallah has made a pact with the Siniora government and agreed to the occupation of the south by imperialist UN troops that protect Israel's border.

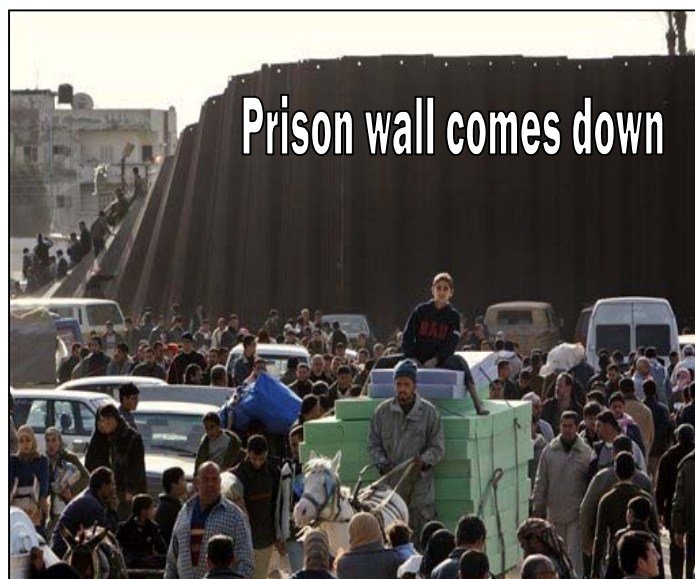
Hezbollah collaborates with Fatah and Hamas to isolate and prevent a united struggle of the Palestinian people against the Zionist state of Israel.

The native bourgeoisies, minor partners of imperialism, act in the imperialist interests to exploit the working classes. They negotiate with imperialism for their slice of the profits, but always join forces with imperialism to crush any workers anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggle.

For us, the liberation of the Palestine people must begin with a total break from the bourgeoisie, and their imperialist and Zionist masters, and with a united struggle of the oppressed and exploited people

throughout the region, from Egypt, to Afghanistan. The road to this liberation has been opened by the heroic Palestinian masses of the Gaza Strip tearing down the walls and calling on their class brothers and sisters to come to their aid.

The new martyrdom of the Palestinian people exposes yet again, the fate of the workers and masses everywhere at the hands of the leaders of the "Bolivarian revolution" such as Chavez and Fidel Castro, Fatah, Hamas, Hizbollah, and Ahmadinejad. The treacherous World



Social Forum sings the praises of Hezbollah, appeals to Spanish imperialism that supports Israel, to send humanitarian aid to Gaza, and begs all the imperialist power to lift its embargoes against Hamas. **Defeat the politics of the World Social Forum that betrays the exploited working class to the bourgeoisie in the Middle East and throughout the world!**

This is the same World Social Forum that diverted the workers opposition to the war, for the rights of migrant workers etc, into campaigns to vote for the imperialist Democratic Party. Both Hillary Clinton and Obama refused to lead opposition to Bush, and voted for funds to continue with the war and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and the brutal attack on the workers in the United States.

In the European powers, the Social Democrats and Stalinists compete, along with the imperialist bourgeoisie, directly to Al Fatah, to pact with Bush and the Zionist state and ensure the imposition of apartheid on the Palestinian people. These same forces, together with other traitorous leaders including the reformist currents of the World Social Forum, which is imposed in France, Italy, Germany and other European powers, have made social pacts to contain and stop the struggle of the proletariat of those countries that began to respond before the brutal attack by the imperialist bourgeoisie.

These are the same forces that in Latin America, with Chavez' and Castro's reformist bureaucracy at the head, have mis-lead the revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggle of the masses. These mis-leaders have put the working class, country by country, at the foot of the bourgeois regimes and governments. The "Bolivarian revolution" has today deepened a fierce attack on the masses, redoubling their suffering, overexploitation and the plunder of the nations of the South American subcontinent.

- Down with the pact between Bush and Olmert with Fatah. This betrays the heroic liberation struggle of the Palestinians!
- Down with Hamas pact with Mubarak to return the Palestinian masses to the concentration camp of the Gaza Strip!
- One working class; one revolutionary struggle throughout the Middle East!
- Tear down the Walls! The road forward is the one taken by the heroic Palestinian masses of Gaza: we must tear down all the walls put up by imperialism, the Zionist state and national bourgeoisies and unite the proletariat of the Middle East region!
- For the Destruction of the Zionist state of Israel! Make the Middle East the grave of imperialism and Zionism!
- For a secular, democratic and non-racist state of Palestine under an armed Workers and Peasants Government!
- For the defeat of imperialist troops in Iraq and Afghanistan! Long live the heroic struggle of the working masses against the Anglo/US invader!
- For a Federation of Workers and Peasants' Socialist Republics of the Middle East!
- End the plunder, oppression and massacres of imperialism and their national bourgeois junior partners!
- Workers of the world take to the streets to support the Palestinian people!





Our comrade, Roger Fox, died suddenly on Thursday 14 February, aged 50 years. Roger was a communist militant who supported workers and poor in struggle and fearlessly faced the bourgeoisie and misleaders of workers. As well as being a member of the CWG, Roger was President of the Waitemata Branch of UNITE! the national union for low wage employed, unemployed and beneficiaries. He was an uncompromising defender of union democracy and implacable enemy of treacherous union bureaucracy. His courage and leadership in the struggle for socialism will be badly missed by his comrades and by workers and poor people he supported everywhere. We know that his life as a dedicated communist will serve as an inspiration for many others in the years ahead as the Leninist-Trotskyist Fraction fights to re-found the new World Party of Socialist Revolution!

Tribute of the Leninist-Trotskyist Fraction

Read at the Graveside of Comrade Fox

During the cadre school that the LTF is holding in Buenos Aires we have learned of the tragic death of our comrade Roger Fox, a candidate for full membership of the CWG and strong fighter against the leaders of the WSF in his union.

We want to extend our condolences to his family and to all comrades of the CWG. But first, we want to say that we feel the death of this internationalist fighter of the New Zealand proletariat as a serious blow to all the internationalist cadres who fought and are fighting daily for the same program and the same cause as Comrade Roger Fox.

He died a revolutionary Internationalist worker.

As you say: Long live Comrade Roger Fox!

Long live the struggle of the comrade, which is that of all Internationalist fighters of the world proletariat!

He died a fighter of the revolution Socialist International, a fighter against the fraud of the "Bolivarian revolution" against the international proletariat.

He is a great fighter Comrade Roger Fox who in the last period of his life embraced the program and the strategy of the proletarian revolution.

We know that under the heat of the global crisis of capitalism, the actions of the WSF leaders will be exposed to the masses, the conditions are ripe for thousands of Roger Fox's to take the flags of their struggle and your struggle in the coming period and to dedicate their lives for the cause of proletarian internationalism, which is none other than the struggle for the triumph of world socialist revolution.

Therefore, we dedicate the second session of the school to the memory of Comrade Roger Fox.

VIVA CAMARADA ROGER FOX!

VIVA THE REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST WORKERS!

DOWN WITH THE BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION, ENEMY OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION!

FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS TO REAGROUP THE INTERNATIONALIST WORKERS TO PREPARE THE CONDITIONS FOR THE VICTORY OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION!

Tribute by the Waitemata Branch of UNITE!

Read at Comrade Fox's Funeral

Despite the high levels to which scientific and technological knowledge has advanced, the day has yet to arrive when every human being living on planet Earth has access to the material and spiritual resources needed to live a healthy, happy, fulfilling and creative life. When that day comes, the mass misery caused by blind

market forces and the colossal waste of life and resources caused by destructive wars will be a thing of the past.

Comrade Roger Fox was one of many who were convinced that the only force which can transform society toward this end is the global proletariat, not only through consciousness of its own exploitation but conscious of its historical role.

Conscious that is of its power when united and organised to change things.

And Roger was one who took upon himself the task of changing consciousness by challenging fatalistic ideas and by organizing for the tasks ahead. The primary task he assigned for himself was that of building a thoroughly democratic branch in a union

nominally formed to organize unemployed and beneficiaries along with casualised and low paid workers. His clear understanding was that beneficiaries are members of the working class, that their interests and those of employed workers are identical, and therefore we should stand together, march together

and organize together in the struggle.

He also clearly understood that to achieve ultimate victory it was essential for the ordinary membership of unions to exercise democratic direction over the officials. In seeking to do this in practice he encountered resistance and hostility from the bureaucracy, and this placed him under considerable personal stress.

Despite the risk that in

retrospect this may have placed his very life, he persisted in this struggle with dogged determination.

When the task is finally accomplished of building fully democratic unions capable of transforming society, Comrade Roger will be remembered and honoured for having placed himself right at the forefront of that struggle.



**Comrade Fox speaking
against restricted entry
at University of Auckland**

Workers: fight to protect our jobs!

The world capitalist credit crunch has the local capitalists under pressure. Auckland-based multinational Fisher & Paykel says lower rates of pay offshore, and a high NZ\$ exchange rate, are the reasons for shifting production offshore. As F&P's production line plant and machinery is exported to Thailand this proves again that capitalists do not recognise borders. We ask the question: why should workers? We need to unite our forces across borders, and mobilise internationally to fight and defeat the capitalist exploiters!

There is no other way to see a loss of 350 jobs, and an entire production line – than as a loss for the local working class. Once offshore, those jobs are gone!

But it will also be a loss for the international working class if fewer workers and their families can be supported from the wages paid out in Thailand on the relocated laundry machine production line.

The only thing that will stop this loss is the international equalisation of wages and conditions by a global working class. Without international unions, capital can take flight and relocate to the cheapest source of labour and raw materials. A truly international union movement can protect wages and conditions of work, so these are not undermined when capitalists move between countries. The objective must be to take this decision out of the hands of the capitalists by workers taking control of production internationally. But they will never do this if they don't start now to organise to fight for their jobs. However, first, they have to win control of their own union!

Union caves in with no fightback

The Engineers Union continues to behave like a paper-tiger union. All its fight (if any) is in legal paperwork. The Engineers Union (EPMU) officials appear to have rubber-stamped the bosses' plans to move plant, machinery and jobs. They have made no fight at all. As far as F & P's redundancy plans go, the Engineers Union (EPMU) has been a doormat for the bosses to walk all over. The EPMU does not even fight for the minimum rights of rank and file members under capitalist law. Workers have the right to choose to accept a redundancy package should their job be made redundant. If they decline for whatever reason to relocate to the Refrigeration plant (or to Thailand) they should be able to take a redundancy pay out. We hear that F&P Laundry and electronics division workers are not being given the option of redundancy when their jobs are going. Our sources say the bosses are avoiding redundancy payouts with the implied consent of the union representatives.

At the very least the union should have fought to defend the most basic rights, the defence of their jobs and the right to redundancy. We don't think that redundancy is a solution because it involves selling jobs. It is a concession to the bosses. But now the EPMU stops selling jobs and gives them away! Hey! Can't the workers object to their jobs being given away, and throw out the delegates who cave in to the bosses?

EPMU officials do have delegates at their Fisher & Paykel sites, but these delegates have been protected from being dumped by the members. The officials have neglected to hold elections for site delegates and site convenor, due in March 2007 as they are bound to do under the Union's collective agreement.

This trampling of union democracy is hardly new. In the early 90s, rank and file members lost the right to elect the union's senior officials such as the national secretary. These unelected high ranking officials have since enjoyed high salaries into 6 figures, paid from union subscriptions.

(Source 1999 Financial Report– Rex Jones received \$112,000; Sweeney

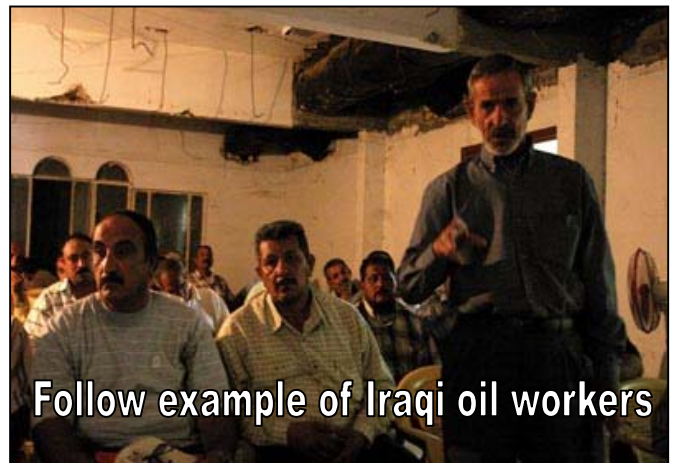
\$90,000; Connell and Boreham \$89,000 each, in directors fees).

Win control of your union

Workers whose jobs are on the line are starved of information. Union members need to demand this information from their delegates and from management.

The EPMU's lack of democracy and failure to fight the proposed redundancies shows why we need fighting democratic unions! A fighting union with an organised workforce could plan to occupy the factory to stop the capitalist shipping out the machinery. This would need the support of the working class community building picket lines that stop the bosses getting access to the plant. In that way we can defend the threatened jobs by forcing the bosses to negotiate. A fighting working class could take over the site and run it ourselves.

A fighting international union could bring international workers together to protect wages and conditions from being undermined. Workers in New Zealand can fight in solidarity with workers in



countries like Thailand.

Take control of your workplace!

- Demand more information – open the books on the F&P decision to export jobs and production.
- For union stop work meetings to discuss the bosses' redundancy plans
- Recall sellout delegates/site convenor – new elections now - propose candidates that want to fight against these losses.
- Build community support – take the issues home and tell family and neighbours that 350 jobs are under threat.
- Call a public meeting of union activists, your friends, families and neighbours to build networks of the working class ready to defend a picket line and defend your jobs.

F&P stands to gain from the Free Trade Agreements under negotiation. But workers will gain from FTAs like the P4/5 only under workers ownership and control! (see Box)

Tagging is Free Speech; it's not owned by Rupert Murdoch! No Boot Camps or Compulsory Training!

The capitalist media has played up a number of gang bashings recently. In particular, the killing of a South Auckland teenage tagger by a businessman is blamed on gangs. A new wave of gang hysteria is being stoked up. Why? Gangs were never more than a few thousand people. Today they probably number no more than hundreds. Gangs are the creation of capitalism, which leaves youth disaffected without hope. Gangs are a defence mechanism for those cut out of the mainstream. But they also provide convenient scapegoats to divert attention from what is really going wrong. Capitalism is slowly collapsing but the white fellas are worried about taggers invading their private property! Enter John Key to call for boot camps to discipline youth, and Helen Clark to weigh in with more compulsory schooling and training for 16 and 17 year olds

John Key's speech to the nation revived the hysteria on gangs. Sure tagging and violent attacks are often gang related. But which gangs? There's no doubt that gangstas dealing in drugs are upping the violence. Hey this is capitalist entrepreneurship. It's the law of the market. But John Key doesn't want to deal with what creates gangs, he only wants to criminalise them and turn them into convenient targets for the rotten society that has made him filthy rich. He ripped off tens of millions from speculating in the NZ\$, driving it up and down, while poor workers in NZ paid the price with their lives and livelihoods. But, gosh mate, gangs break the law, unlike currency trading. Hypocrites!

The whole gangsta thing is the bosses' way of depoliticising youth opposition and locking them up or worse. In the US gangs in Los Angeles were cultivated by the state to prevent them uniting as one force against the machine. Better that they shot each other up over territory than the profit system itself.

Good for business too as a whole gangsta culture of music, dance, and media mania was spun off.

The politicians and the media, all bought and owned by big business, point the finger at alienated youth and not at their exploitative, oppressive society. In NZ this is racist and youthist for sure, but underneath it's about class. It's about dividing the working class when poor whites are fed the mindless media shit that Maori and Pacific Islanders are the criminal class and not the bosses.

The tiny white racist National Front is a logical response to this vigilantism. It is the embryo of the fascist gang that blames and beats up on blacks or migrant workers for threatening their racial purity and national pride. Posing as defenders of the nation they are the shock troops of the bosses against the workers.

At the moment the piddling National Front is the official wing of

white racism. But don't let this fool you the unofficial wing is the whole of the redneck middle NZ that still thinks that it is the superior white race. Who needs the National Front when National is already in front?

Helen Clark, in her speech to the nation, came up with an alternative way to control wayward youth. Tut-tutting the racist rednecks, Labour's answer is to use schools and businesses to lock kids into indoctrination and exploitation until they are 18. Her plan cannot solve the problems facing youth such as precarious shit jobs, war and global warming. Can you see Labour taxing the bosses to pay for a decent education? And what will these kids do with their 'skills' when they are 'released'? The only knowledge that counts is that which makes a profit.

Compulsory education is no good when youth do not control what they learn. It is another two years exposure to a compulsory curriculum reinforcing the values of capitalism. Keeping young people at school or in training until they are 18 is an attack on their rights. It does nothing to improve the existing schooling system which is becoming more and more unequal. It is another gigantic subsidy to the employers who dictate what youth learn while exploiting their labour power.

What youth need is free, fully funded education, under their control. They should be able to decide how long they stay at school. They need unions as 'schools for revolution' and they need the collective power to expropriate private property. Tagging fences is lumpen behavior that results from alienation, isolation fragmentation. The gang youth need is a revolutionary party.

- Educate, organise, unionise, politicize, mobilize!
- Free lifelong public education and training!

Gangs are the creation of capitalism, which leaves youth disaffected without hope

Australia: Rudd says "Sorry" to Aboriginal people

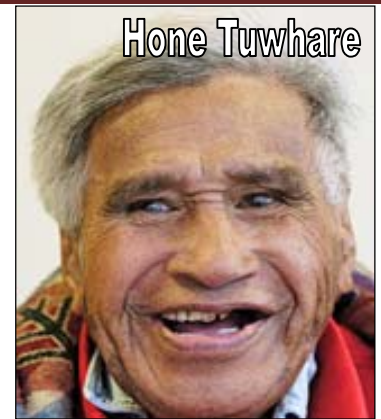
Saying sorry is a small step forward in that it acknowledges state responsibility for past atrocities to Aboriginals. What they are apologising for, however, is extremely limited given the forces of imperialism / colonization and the Australian state used to expropriate and oppress the indigenous peoples.

Of course the big issue is compensation and the Rudd government is stating clearly and categorically that there won't be any. Black stolen victims will have to fund and organise their own court cases if they want compensation. The workers' movement should both demand compensation and take strike action if it is not forthcoming.

But what about current atrocities? The Rudd government is complicit in the Northern Territory invasion of the Howard government. Demand the Labor Party repudiates the 'intervention'. Mobilise the labor movement to fight for land rights and mineral rights: Strikes and occupations!

Who's a real hero then?

Who's a national hero then? The one who famously "knocked off" Mt Everest and then spent the rest of his life 'nation building' in NZ, India and Nepal? What about the other bloke, the boiler maker who, joined the Communist Party and wrote great working class poetry for fifty years? When he died, Hillary got special newspaper supplements and dedicated programs on TV and Radio, and a state funeral. Tuwhare got a few articles and notices in the media and a special mention from the PM who loves 'the Arts'. But middle NZ did not queue in their thousands to be photographed viewing his coffin.



It says something sad about NZ that ordinary people invested such value in the humble beekeeper as the paragon of the 'age of innocence' before winners had to be sponsored by some international brand. What they forget is that in his day Hillary was sponsored by the British Empire. He played the role of the kiwi colonial who scaled Everest 5 years after India's independence to become an instant Knight of the Garter. He was the handsome poster-boy for the British way of life even while he seemed to thumb his nose at it.

The humble beekeeper became the model of the 'better Brit' in NZ. Such national pride in when he beat the Brits at their own game and won the race to the South Pole in his converted farm tractors. He converted the US sponsors when he went to look for the 'Yeti' in the upper Ganges. His national fame wasn't the celebrity of personal gain but selfless sacrifice. That's why the Sherpas made him a God.

In NZ, Ed Hillary had to be a God too as he straddled an ever-widening social crevasse between the working class and the ruling class. He was Dick Seddon, Micky Savage and Norm Kirk rolled into one man. He represented NZ as the small, independent nation that champions the poor countries. He projected on the world stage the Labour Party ideology of 'nation building'.

But this Labourist ideal was always utopian. NZ has not de-colonised, has not returned the stolen land, still has the British Queen as head of state, and the SAS troops in Afghanistan kill freedom fighters on behalf of US imperialism.

Any embodiment of this impossible dream in the life of one man has to fail. We can understand why this must be so by looking at the life of the 'other' hero, Hone Tuwhare.

Tuwhare is the 'other' hero, a Maori in Aotearoa, the working class poet, who gives the rude 'up yours' to Labour's nationalist fantasy. Unlike the Nepalese who survive as an independent kingdom, his Ngapuhi iwi, has lost most of its land and some of its mountains. There are no Hillary's patronising this rural poverty.

Tuwhare does not leave his farm to climb mountains in other countries. He is separated from his mountain by empire and does

not subscribe to the myths of de-colonisation. He trains as a boilermaker in NZ Railways and joins the Communist Party. He joins the movement for Maori self-determination in the land march of 1975.

He rails against racism in NZ and South Africa. He sides with workers against the classless utopia. He takes his poetry into the factories, schools and the pubs. He leaves the Communist Party because he objects to the Red army invading Hungary in 1956. He rejoins and travels to China, and is expelled for some breach of Stalinist discipline.

In one of his better known poems, he laments the Maori figure standing in the gully at the bottom of Queen St and not beside Micky Savage on Bastion Point commanding the view of the Waitemata to the Pacific. He rubs the nose of the prudish patriarchy in his raw sexuality. His is an art of insidious cultural resistance and his

audience is the mass of workers who instinctively respond to his rude, honest, full-on fingering of capitalism.

His is the strongest voice uniting the Maori with class struggle since Te Whiti the Taranaki prophet of the 1880s (see box).

That is the heroic difference; Maori self determination and the working class life disrespectful of bourgeois pieties, the cult of the individual, and the myths of national unity and international human rights.

The working class heroes are those who fight the battles of workers and who sing the praises of workers. The bourgeois heroes are those who glorify the self-important citizen of ANZAC, defender of empire, the modern missionaries and standard

bearers of barbarous 'civilisation'.

Hillary is a 'national hero' because he stands astride the class divide of the bourgeois nation and injects some humanity into inhuman capitalist society. Tuwhare is the working class hero because he puts a fist up to strike such myths and lies and reveals the true ideas and repressed feelings at the heart of existence. Centuries after the statues of Hilary have been drowned by the sea, the words and gestures of Tuwhare will live on.

Te Whiti o Rongomai of Parihaka

Te Whiti's critique of settler capitalism was consistent with other 19th century utopian socialists. He wanted to retain the collective ownership and cooperative labour of Maori society and marry it to the technological advances of the settler society. But he didn't want to do it on the settler's terms. He rejected money as the 'evil' in European society because it was money that allowed the settlers to get Maori into debt and then to take the land. Te Whiti knew that without money the turning of land into a commodity to be alienated would be more difficult. It would be impossible if Maori organised communities like Parihaka where the land could not be mortgaged by individuals or families.

But this dream of a moneyless new society could not be because capitalism was already worldwide, used money and debt to expand, and had the overwhelming military force to enforce submission to its rule.

Drawing the conclusion that a moneyless or reformed capitalism can be realised in today's global capitalist system any more than in the 1880s is to continue to place one's hopes in utopian dreams. Fortunately capitalism has created its own gravediggers. Not only the impoverished indigenous peoples around the world, but hundreds of millions of poor farmers and workers, who can join forces to overthrow the system that privatises their land and labour while it destroys their livelihoods and their lives.

Their revolution will not just be to recover what was originally stolen historically but to recover all the wealth that they have generated in the hands of the capitalists since. So that not only will they take back the land, they will take back all the wealth on the land, and of industry, banks and all the social assets built by their labour.

Unions as workers' schools for revolution

The Waitemata Branch of the Unite! union is leading a campaign to build rank and file opposition to the current moves of the union officials of three unions, Unite!, the National Distribution Union, and Service and Food Workers' Union, to amalgamate with little or minimal participation of the members. Amalgamations, while making unions bigger, usually build bureaucratic monsters. It is important for the rank and file to fight back now to take control of any amalgamations and rebuild the unions as fighting democratic organisations. (See 'Rank and File Network Formed' below). Class Struggle supports this initiative as a step towards building fighting, democratic unions that can act as "schools for socialist revolution". In this struggle, workers can learn a lot from the history of militant unionism in NZ, especially the fighting tradition of the Red Federation.

If you look at the Unite!, NDU and SFWU constitutions, they look good, especially the Unite constitution that aims at unionising low paid workers, unemployed and beneficiaries. The NDU one looks good too in that it seeks to represent industrial sites, has locals which bring local activists together, and represents 'special interest' groups like women and Maori.

In practice these unions are not democratic in representing the members. Delegates may be elected by local members, union officials are not. They have no obligation to actually represent member's views, report back to, or be accountable to members. The 'supreme' decision making bodies, congresses or AGMs are reduced to rubber stamps of the officials and isolated delegates. Members or delegates who fight for something different to the officials view are easily sidelined by the officials control of access to rank and file members.

Of course it's got to be this way as the union officials are empowered by the bosses law to regulate and control their members. In exchange for being legally allowed to organize within capitalism, unions must act inside the limits of the ERA or risk court decisions against them and penalties such as loss of union assets etc.

And of course the officials cover their backs by saying that the members are inactive, passive, and need to be led by experienced 'unionists'. Yes workers are passive when they have been led to believe that the only thing they can do is follow the officials orders, stay inside the law and vote every 3 years for Labour. You can't get much more passive than that.

Way ahead for activists

Getting active does not mean turning your back on this monster being born. After all the unions today are the rump of very powerful unions that were created over a century ago and which have survived against the odds; including fighting back and putting up heroic struggles against the bosses and their state.

We need to reclaim the best traditions of that history of militant unionism. This means organising the rank and file to demand proper all up elections of delegates standing for the principles of rank and file democracy and campaigning for a living wage and decent conditions.

It then means pushing those policies to the limit and working for mass support and industrial unity across all unions to break the ERA and force employers and the state to concede the right to strike and of mass pickets. In the process the union officials will be left high and dry backing the ERA and the bosses.

We need new unions like those of 1890, Red Fed of the 1908-13 period or a TUC of the 1951 lockout. The popular wisdom (bosses mythology) is that these radical union movements were defeated. Yes they were, by capitalist class forces. If they hadn't NZ would be a very different place today. Yet without these struggles the labour movement would be even weaker than it is today.

Some fighting history

In the 1890s the unions forced the bosses to go to court to deal with workers rather than face militant unions. This allowed the militant unions to develop and be strong enough to split in 1908 to form the Red Federation. The worldwide threat of revolutionary upsurges in 1913 and in the immediate post war period forced NZ reformist unions to create the Labour Party and to divert industrial struggles into parliament.

The price of this was compulsory unionism that gave the labour movement large memberships. The militant wing faced the bosses state in 1951, when again internationally, in the face of decolonisation and the Chinese Revolution, the ruling class decided to try to smash the workers again. The bosses won that by imposing a neo-fascist clampdown on the country - bringing out the army to work the ports and mines.

Even though the '51 lockout was a defeat for militant unions, it entrenched compulsory unionism and created the basis for workers to win back some of the value they produced for the bosses in the form of healthcare, social welfare and relatively high living standards in the decades that followed. The strength of the reformist unions and their labour (reformist) party was based on the power of militant unionism.

Enter the ERA

So it is a myth to argue that these militant struggles led to total defeats. Each time workers were defeated, they were never forced to concede their most important historic gains. They kept their unions and to some extent their material gains.

The Employment Contracts Act did not force labour back 100 years as some argue; Unions were not smashed, they were quietly deregulated. Ken Douglas and Co kept the lid on the fightback. But again, the old Labour tradition of state arbitration that goes back to 1894, was revived in the form of the ERA in 2000 by the Labour -

Alliance Coalition Government. Unions are now tied to the capitalist rules by the ERA's "good faith" and the employment courts.

The ECA proved to empower officials to go into sites and recruit members. It was the only real gain of the Alliance. It created a labour movement foundation for former Alliance MPs to get into the unions and put pressure on Labour from the left, and to plan for a return to a Micky Savage-type Labour government in the future.

Alliance in drag?

The proposed amalgamation above is a step towards the fulfillment of that plan. Building the biggest union in the growth area of the NZ semi-colonial economy, casualised cheap labour, will create the constituency for a future New New Labour Party.

Today that party is conceived in the image of both 1930s Labour but increasingly 21st century socialism as it is taking shape in Venezuela. This is not some wild utopian dream either. NZ is heading downwards in the OECD and is virtually a colony of Australia. The populist politics of Hugo Chavez, and the indigenist politics of Evo Morales win lots of sympathy among young and Maori workers in Aotearoa.

The problem is that unions tied to populist parties there or here, cannot develop the working class struggles beyond parliament. Parliament is one branch of the bosses' state, and for workers to get a living wage and decent conditions it is necessary to take power, smash the state, and expropriate the bosses property. Unions tied to the capitalist state hold back and prevent workers from taking power. That is their role in trying to reform capitalism. Union leaders refuse to move beyond reforms of a "labour" or "socialist" party to revolutionary action - unless the workers take the leadership.

To educate workers in what is needed to take control of their unions and turn them into organs for workers power, the battle must be to

We need a new 'Red Federation'

build fighting, democratic unions now - in a phrase, we need a new Red Fed.

A Monster Union or a Union Monster?

PRESS RELEASE FROM WAITEMATA BRANCH OF UNITE! UNION

Unite members will be interested to read in the media that amalgamation talks between the heads of Unite!, the Service and Food Workers' Union (SFWU) and the National Distribution Union (NDU) have reached the point of 'agreement'. Of course the Unite News invited us as members to make submissions on this question. But that is a very different thing from the membership driving and controlling this process. Is that the way to build strong, democratic unions?

It seems to us that it is a good thing for relatively small, enthusiastic and campaigning unions like Unite!, SFWU and the NDU who work in the low-paid casualised job sector to unite. The bigger combined union will have more members and resources to fight for the interests of its members and recruit many more into the reviving union movement. But isn't this something that the membership should be driving? Why is this amalgamation being done from the top down? The unions are its members, and those members should be in control of everything their union does. It's called union democracy. There are a number of questions that we want to raise about this process. Why these three unions? Are there other unions in the low-paid sector that can be included? We hear that SFWU is offloading Elder Care workers to the Nurses' Union. Maybe there are other cases of groups of workers who need to be included in one big low-paid workers union.

What about membership?

Matt McCarten is quoted in the NZ Herald as wanting to introduce 'life membership' to cover members that may move from job to job. This is a very welcome move since it recognises implicitly that today's casualised low-paid job sector involves periods of unemployment 'between jobs'. But this 'portable' membership should not be confused with 'lifetime' membership which today means a membership that is earned by long service to a union. 'Portable' membership should be equally valid for employed, unemployed and beneficiaries, recognising that the working class is composed of all of these groups. Unite under Matt McCarten has been reluctant to acknowledge the equal rights of employed, unemployed and beneficiaries according to the constitution of Unite!, a union established in the 1990s to all of these groups.

Unless the rights of these groups are considered to be equal and recognised by any amalgamated union in its Constitution, then a bigger, more powerful union will not do anything to overcome these divisions in the working class.

What about the new Constitution?

We also see that Matt McCarten has generously offered the Unite! name to a new amalgamated union. We are right behind the spirit of this offer, but we would be very worried if the new union was to be organised on the basis of the existing Unite! Union. Matt McCarten has built up a strong membership of casualised lowpaid workers, but we don't think that these workers have any real democratic control of the union. In Unite!, for example, the officialdom has at Matt McCarten's instigation actively and successfully opposed democratic rights such as those of ordinary members to observe at Management Committee meetings and has successfully failed in its democratic duty to furnish branch secretaries with minutes of those meetings. We don't think that the elected officials of these three unions have the authority under their constitutions to make these decisions without the active participation of the members. Nor do we think that Unite! with its record under Matt McCarten is the model for a bigger, better union. 'Consulting' members to rubber-stamp a top-down agreement is not union democracy, its union bureaucracy. We think that the members of these three unions should be responsible for amalgamation negotiations, the conditions of membership and the Constitution of any combined union. To ensure the active involvement of the members in these negotiations Waitemata Branch of Unite calls for:

(1) each of the unions take the current proposals to all up meetings of their members, so that they can be debated and voted on, and for negotiation teams to be elected from these meetings to take forward any resolutions from the members.

(2) if the members agree to proceed with amalgamation, we call for a Constituent assembly of the delegates of all the memberships of each of the unions to meet to decide on the terms of amalgamation, membership and a new Constitution.

Rank and File union network formed

On 22nd January a Workers Forum on the proposed amalgamation of the NDU, SFWU and Unite! was held at the Onehunga Community Centre , hosted by the Waitemata Branch of Unite!. Around 20 union activists and organizers attended. A good discussion was had and agreement to set up an informal rank and file network came out of the meeting.

The meeting kicked off with a discussion of the need for amalgamation between these unions. Most of the meeting agreed that amalgamation was only good if it was run in members' interests. There was general dissatisfaction with the process of amalgamation undertaken by the officials of the three unions concerned and dissatisfaction with lack of

proposals from the officials to involve the members in the process. Some workers heard more about it through the bourgeois press than within their union. The general feeling was that it was already too late to involve the membership, and that the whole process needed to have had active member involvement from the start. Examples of past union

amalgamations and constitution reforms that had happened without democratic involvement of even elected executives were discussed.

A former executive member of the Storepersons and Packers Union reported that when the NDU was formed his union exec was not consulted. Those with experience of the EPMU amalgamations that followed the ECA in 1991 reported that smaller unions were taken over with only token ratification votes after deals had been done at top tables.

Those who have had experience in recent campaigns, (*Supersize my Pay*, the *Progressive* lockout and *Clean Start*), argued that there was scope to develop union solidarity without the need for official amalgamation, and expressed concern that the current amalgamation would not be warranted unless it could advance the role of unions as fighting and democratic organizations.

Lifetime union membership?

There was a discussion of how unions could unite the different sectors of the working class, in particular that of employed and unemployed. The question of 'lifetime membership' was discussed. This is when union members can keep their membership active when moving between jobs or unemployed. It is a realistic option when work is so casualised and workers have to move sites and jobs so often. "Unite!" National Secretary Matt McCarten's has possibly recognised that he has to recruit & organize unemployed workers as well as the employed. Waitemata Branch members said they had been fighting to get McCarten to honour the "Unite!" constitution and treat unemployed and beneficiaries as equal members to employed members for years. It was vital that any new amalgamated union had this written into its constitution.

An EPMU organiser spoke of the success of this union in uniting workplaces under common agreements. This was the way to mobilize the power of the unions. Others argued that this had to be balanced by geographic branches or "locals" to allow workers in different workplaces to support each other, and employed and unemployed to unite. The NDU constitution was discussed as it had provision for industry as well as local (or community) and special interest (eg Maori, Pacific Islander, women, youth) members to elect delegates to its congresses.

This raised the question of whether any of these sectoral, local or special interest methods of representing members was truly democratic. The experience of members of all three unions was that although the formal rules and paper constitution provided for member elections and participation, in practice, union practices & elections were run by officials. In reality, delegates tend to be selected and trained by the officials and were not accountable to the membership. Sometimes they were not even bound to canvass or speak on behalf of their members.

The meeting endorsed the two proposals circulated in the Waitemata Branch leaflet (included in this issue above) and decided to form a rank and file network. It set as its first task a critical review of the constitutions of the Unite!, NDU, and the SFWU. It agreed that the basis of this review would be the fundamental principles of democratic unionism; that unions unite all the sectors of the working class as one class; and that the rank and file members will elect delegates and officers who must be accountable and replaceable by the membership.

The right to recall delegates and officials!

Coming out of this review would be a draft model constitution for the new union that would be circulated as the basis of a second Forum.

Free Trade Agreements,.. P4, 5, 6, 7? What's in it for Workers?

The P4 is a 4-way Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between NZ, Singapore, Chile and Brunei. The Labour Government is delighted that the US wants to join the P4. This will give NZ bosses the FTA they want with the US by the 'back door' as Phil Goff says. The US already has FTAs with Singapore and Chile. So does NZ. It is now at the point of agreeing rules for freeing up capital investment. The US is interested because it can use it to remove any remaining barriers to US capital investment.

The Greens are correct to say that this will make it like NAFTA (North American FTA) which allows US corporations to take Mexican and Canadian states to court if they pass laws that interfere with the rights of US investors to make profits. The Mexican state lost a case when it tried to impose environmental limits on US firms. A P4 that becomes a P5 with the US or, P6 with Australia, or P7 with China, would give US corporates a free hand in riding roughshod over any sort of labour, social or environmental protections.

Such a free hand should be rejected by workers by independent class actions. The Greens think that public opinion can stop such deals. We say the NZ state is the bosses' state and will sign up to all of these FTAs.

The solution for workers is to campaign for workers control of the NZ and US companies that will profit from the FTAs and fight for their nationalization under workers control. Phil Goff claims that NZ investment in the US is mainly shares owned by NZ investors. There is little NZ direct foreign investment apart from big companies like Fonterra, Fisher & Paykel and Fletcher Building. All these companies grow and profited from massive state subsidies. Fonterra is farmer owned but plans floating shares to raise capital. We say make Fonterra a farmer/worker cooperative with funding from a state bank. Re-Nationalise the BNZ, and nationalize Fisher & Paykel and Fletchers under workers' control.

For Socialist trade agreements! - All trade under workers control

Observations on the World Situation

The financial crisis in the US has not yet developed into a full recession by devaluing constant and variable capital in the imperialist heartlands. It is a partial devaluation of capital in the most speculative and least productive areas (home financing, high-risk loans etc), which has spread into the banking system. The state banks are meeting this crisis by reducing interest rates and increasing subsidies (cheap loans) to finance capital to stave off recession.

The January 22 cut in the Fed borrowing rate of 0.75% to 3.5% means that interest rates may now be less than inflation. The tax cut package of \$150 announced by Bush will barely scratch the surface of household debt. If it proves that the US has already entered recession in the last quarter of 2007, while overall production would be in decline, this will reflect a devaluation of the least productive capital and the cheapening of constant and variable capital in areas of more productive investment. This recession will act to counteract the Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall (TRPF). It will lead to concentration and centralization of capital (eg. mergers of the big capitalists) and raise the rate of profit.

This financial crisis in the US takes place against a fundamental upturn in accumulation of the world economy since the early 1990s resulting from the combined impacts of 'neo-liberalism' on the 'third world' and capitalist restoration on the 'second world'. This had had the effect of a massive devaluation of former state owned assets and privatisation of these assets in the semi-colonies and the destruction and privatisation of assets of the former degenerate workers states. A massive historic defeat of the working class was necessary to allow imperialism to impose this destruction and re-valuation of assets. It enabled the world economy to emerge out of its stagnation of the 1970s and 1980s.

However, the current financial crisis, along with the cyclic crises of the 1990s, shows that as capital goes into a period of accumulation it faces once again the onset of the TRPF and a rising overproduction of capital in the world economy. That 'fictitious' capital cannot be valorised against existing values so seeks to increase its value by speculating on the changes prices of existing values. Thus accumulation necessarily is accompanied by a succession of financial crises or devaluations as fictitious capital is destroyed. e.g. the sub-prime mortgages are written off, Latin America, Asia, DotCom etc. This proves Marx's law of value (total prices = total value) that capital cannot accumulate on the basis of unequal exchange.

It is important to acknowledge the law of value to reject the bullshit ideas of the exchange theorists that explain the growth of the world economy as the result of unequal exchange. For example, Henry Lui writing on the world economy and China in particular, credits the growth over the past period to US 'dollar hegemony'. That is, the US has stolen value produced by its trading partners by printing dollars to pay for the commodities it imports from them. This

leads to global dollar reserves, which contribute to the hugely overvalued US dollar. Clearly, this explanation is a variation on unequal exchange theory, where the commodity money, in this case the US dollar, is artificially overvalued and allows the US to pay less for its imports and force its partners to pay more for their imports.

While unequal exchange is undoubtedly a major counter-tendency to the TRPF, US 'dollar hegemony' cannot account for the dominance of US imperialism. Similarly, Petras' more familiar theory of unequal exchange based on US buying commodities cheap and selling then dear is also fundamentally flawed. Imperialism does benefit from 'primitive accumulation' or 'theft' of raw materials and labor power, but cannot sustain a period of renewed accumulation on this basis.

The onset of this period of accumulation in the 1990s can only be



explained by Marxist concepts. As Trotsky himself theoretically envisaged, such a new period could arise out of a historic defeat of the world's working class by imperialist globalisation ie capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. One which had the impact of a 'Third world war' in the destruction of value and the restoration of the rate of profit.

Today, 18 years into this upturn, we are once more facing a massive overproduction of capital that cannot be invested productively without further huge attacks on workers and peasants (by wars, invasions (re-colonization), fascism). The gain for capitalism of this would be to drive down the value of labor and of raw materials –to create a new basis for capital investment and exploitation. As the US recession spreads world wide it will see unemployment rise and commodity prices fall. Because of the real internationalisation of capital, workers and peasants in every country, including those of the imperialist states, are facing

renewed massive attacks on their living standards, and are today potentially able to unite as an international class force.

The outcome of this crisis will therefore depend on the international resistance of the working class to these attacks. If this resistance is isolated and contained by the World Social Forum (WSF) in alliance with 'progressive' capitalists and 'democratic' imperialists, then imperialism will succeed in making the workers and peasants pay for its crisis. If the revolutionary Trotskyists can win the workers vanguard from the WSF and unite it in a new communist international, then we can make the imperialists pay for their own crisis.

NZ: Crisis, Free Trade and Socialism

There is a lot of speculation about how the global crisis will impact on NZ. Some say that a FTA with China will rescue us. But China is booming capitalism that exploits its workers and demands cheap raw materials. The only sure thing is that the crisis will be at the expense of lower wages and worse conditions and attacks on our democratic rights. Workers everywhere must unite and go on an international offensive for socialism!

How will US credit crunch hit NZ?

The US credit crunch will impact in the short term on NZ in the relative devaluing of the Kiwi \$dollar. For NZ workers this means our labour is revalued as not as worthwhile in the world capitalist market. A chunk of US\$ speculative money capital will be eliminated and the US\$ we move to revalue on the basis of the actual strength of its productive capacity. NZ is linked to growing Australia and Asian economies and is benefitting from strong commodity export prices. This is despite an overvalued Kiwi \$ that results from high demand due to high interest rates.

The Austral/Asian bloc will benefit from the devaluation of the US\$ as the Euro and Yuan pic play a larger role as 'world money'. The US\$ has played the role of world money since 1971 when it went off the gold standard. Today most countries hold US\$ reserves because they expect to be a store of value which can be exchanged at value for commodities. This means that competition for the US\$ as world money holds up its value even when the US is running a huge trade deficit. By printing dollars with a value well in excess of what they can be exchanged for in US commodity production, the US can consume much more than it produces in value and maintains an artificial 'dollar hegemony' over the world economy.

This 'dollar hegemony' is waning as today the US\$ had declined from 80% to 40% of world money. The end of US dollar hegemony will force the US domestic economy into line with globalised market values to which NZ has adjusted over the last 20 years. This means that there will be less need to hold US\$ reserves and the EU and China can diversify its investments from USA\$ bonds. This will bring a major realignment of the world economy from US\$ hegemony in which it was able to transfer value from other countries to itself, towards an economy in which the US will have to create value by more productive investment domestically and internationally.

FTAs are really about buying up assets

The only reason that NZ is chasing Free Trade Agreements with nations in the Asia Pacific such as China and the P4, is that it hopes that this will allow more access to NZ exports. NZ has reduced tariff protection to almost nothing so that it has everything to gain from China and the US doing the same. Free trade will benefit NZ because it has already restructured to develop comparative advantage. The prices of US and China goods imported into NZ are likely to fall faster than the price of NZ exports. China is already moving from being a low wage country by increasing investment in high technology. The current crisis in the US will switch productive investments in high technology bringing it into line with its external investments in Asia,

Latin America etc.

Of course, from a capitalist standpoint, the objective of free trade and investment in all three countries, as well as other FTA's (see box on FTA's and the P4), is to increase the rate of exploitation and cheapen the labour content of the commodities produced, so as to gain greater world market shares and more profits.

However, the US and increasingly China is investing more and more of its surplus capital as Direct Foreign Investment so that it can exploit the productive resources of developing countries and emerging markets. What they are looking for in NZ is a free hand to

buy up the remaining private and state assets. From a working class standpoint, the benefits from growth for the capitalist investors, in all three countries, are at the expense of the workers. Therefore, workers in these three countries have very different class interests from the capitalist owners.

Workers answer to FTAs are STAs

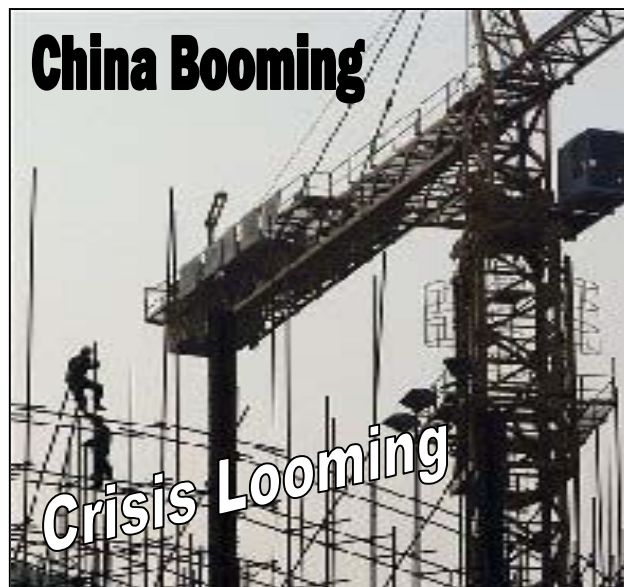
In response to FTAs the interests of workers is not to appeal to their own capitalist class to protect their jobs. This leads to the 'race to the bottom' as workers sell out their wages, conditions and other workers jobs in the hope that they can keep their own. In every country were workers have tried this protectionist

strategy they have been defeated and lost their jobs anyway.

The only way for workers to keep their jobs is to take control of production. This means socializing the means of production i.e. labour and materials. This is the only way to make sure that production is planned for the benefits of workers and is ecologically sustainable.

In order to build up the power to socialize production, workers have to fight now for more control of production. This does not mean joint ventures in which the nation state concedes ownership to multinationals. Capitalists are happy to operated 'shared production' as in Iraq or Bolivia, because they extract their super-profits anyway. The local state is the bosses' state and does not represent workers at all. So 'joint ventures' or PPPs (Public-private partnerships) between local states, like the NZ state, are really deals between the national capitalists that manage the state, and imperialist capital that dominates the global market.

Socialism means occupying and expropriating capitalist property, turning that property into workers property, and planning production for need (not profit). Workers in every country need to unite and coordinate internationally to plan Socialist Trade Agreements. This would take the alternative agreements such as ALBA, between Venezuela, Cuba and other Latin American states, and turn them into agreements administered and controlled by workers organizations independent of the local bourgeois states and imperialists.



Setback for Chavez? Which way forward for Socialism?

The Bolivarian populist regime in Venezuela is the flagship of the World Social Forum's plan to build an alliance of states to fight for 'globalisation from below' by negotiating with 'democratic imperialism' for better terms of trade to fund 21st century 'market socialism'. Is the recent loss of the constitutional referendum also a setback for socialism?

Constitutional Reform defeat

The narrow defeat of Hugo Chavez constitutional reforms last month has forced a 'rethink' within the Bolivarian movement. 3 million former Chavez voters stayed at home giving the anti-Chavez national bourgeoisie a small victory. Chavez accepted responsibility for making a mistake in holding the referendum and has called for a 'pause for reflection' on the road to the Bolivarian Socialism. <http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/3089>

Meanwhile the founding Congress of the PSUV is currently meeting with the delegates debating a draft program and reporting back to their 'battalions' for discussion and decision making. The referendum setback has also seen more debate in the movement around the course ahead, and raised distinct tendencies in the PSUV against Chavez earlier expressed wish. He says he is now happy to see the various 'Chavista' parties forming tendencies inside the PSUV!!

One such tendency is the MAREA socialist current of Stalin Borges and Ismael Hernandez of the C-CURA wing of the UNT. This was the majority of the C-CURA that joined the PSUV to fight for a working class program against the bureaucracy. It seems that their voice is being heard not only inside the PSUV but in the wider trade union struggle. The MAREA current in the PSUV has publicly condemned the sacking of a prominent C-CURA leader Oswaldo Chirino from his job in the Venezuelan state owned oil company the PDVSA. Chirino is one of the leaders of a minority in the C-CURA that refused to join the PSUV on Chavez terms of liquidating any political tendencies. Instead he called for the formation of an independent workers party. He also called for a no vote on Chavez constitutional referendum.

The sacking of Chirino follows a long struggle in the oil workers unions for a new agreement with the Chavez oil ministry. Chirino is one of the leaders of the largest oil union, Fedepetrol, which has 35,000 of the 60,000 oil workers. The agreement has been in negotiation since April 2007. In September workers were attacked by Anzoátegui state police as they tried to enter the negotiations. The state governor objected only after 4000 workers took to the street to protest. The contract settlement in November did not meet all of Fedepetrol's demands and included a drastic provision inserted by the oil ministry that forced all the unions to amalgamate into the *United Confederation of Energy Workers* (FUTEV). Around the same time Chirino was told he did not have a job.

In the last issue of *Class Struggle 75* we argued for a tactical entry into the PSUV to fight for the right of tendencies so as to split workers from the bourgeois fractions, but with no illusions as to the class character of the PSUV. We said that Borges had a false idea of the PSUV as a potential workers party, whereas the task of revolutionary entry could only be to split the workers out of the popular front party into a workers revolutionary party. It seems on the face of it, that despite these illusions in the character of the PSUV the MAREA current is coming out openly against a Chavista state ministry. Has Borges left behind his illusions in the PSUV?

Not at all. It is good that his faction has supported Chirino in his fight against the oil ministry. But the problem here is not just a bunch of right wing Chavista bureaucrats dominating the oil industry, but a Chavista state bourgeoisie that has to be smashed. The PSUV is not a bureaucratized workers' party, it is a popular front party. And the Chavista state is not a bureaucratized workers' state, but a bourgeois semi-Bonapartist regime. This will become clearer if the Chirino faction in the oil unions mobilizes a UNT congress for his reinstatement and to repudiate the oil ministry settlement.

This is of course a demand that should be immediately raised by revolutionary Trotskyists who have entered the PSUV, to expose the Borges cover of the left leg of the popular front. It will be difficult when Chavez seeks to discipline the popular front in a confrontation with Exxon Mobil and US, but revolutionaries have to be clear that only a revolutionary working class party

with a revolutionary program can win the struggle against US imperialism by taking power at the head of the working class and the poor peasants.

From state capitalism to state socialism?

Such a revolutionary program is necessary to expose the hollow pretence of 'socialism' in the draft PSUV program. This is full of talk of socialism, but very vague on how the existing state power that has served the bourgeoisie for centuries can become 'popular power'. <http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/3095>

It seems that the draft program embodies the fundamental misunderstanding of the 'democratic socialist' left in Latin America, which is, that the state is the instrument of the class that has the power to take it and use it. This misconception is what lies behind the 'socialist' currents of various kinds inside the PSUV. It is the utopian view that peoples' power can be 'constituent' power, in the sense used by Hardt and Negri, and now very fashionable in the Latin American reformist left. As the draft program puts it:

"Of course, all methods of action lead to an end: the taking and exercising of power. This is because possessing power signifies the possibility - the only concrete one - of directly carrying out in practice the programs for substituting one political structure for another, and for changing a defective society for an ideal society. A political party that does not aspire in some way to take power has no reason to exist."

This will result from a process:

"3. *Build Popular Power*. Socialise power: The program of the PSUV has as its objective making reality the slogan "in order to end poverty you have to give power to the poor", or better said: the people. That is to say, build a government based on Councils of Popular Power, where workers, campesinos, students and popular masses are direct protagonists in the exercising of political power. The program of the PSUV proposes the socialising of political power, establishing the direct exercising of decision-making power by the masses in their organisations; their unrestricted right to scientific research and the free artistic creation, and the democratisation of access to all cultural policies."

More specifically this is a transition from state capitalism to state socialism:

"4. *Planned economy. Communal state*: The program of the PSUV proposes to move in the direction of a democratically planned and controlled economy, capable of ending alienated labour and satisfying all the necessities of the masses. Throughout this period of transition, which at this moment marches from a state capitalism dominated by market forces towards a state socialism with a regulated market, the aim is to move towards a communal state socialism, with the strategic objective of totally neutralising the law of value within the functioning of the economy."

Or as we have argued in *Class Struggle* for some time, "state socialism" in this sense is really "market socialism" implemented by a bourgeois state, or as the draft program puts it:

"A society with property models that privileges public, indirect and direct social, communal, citizens' and collective property, as well as mixed systems, respecting private property that is of public utility or general interest and which is subjected to contributions, charges, restrictions and obligations."

But how is it possible to "neutralise the law of value" while still "respecting private property"? "Subjecting [private property] to charges, restrictions and obligations" is exactly the definition of the "shared production agreements" of the oil multinationals with the puppet regime in Iraq, and the "mixed system" in Cuba. By this means does the law of value, and the market, assert its domination.

Yet this program is full of revolutionary rhetoric coming out of the mouths of reformists, including fake Trotskyists, in living contradiction with the state's ongoing defence of private property. Wherever this contradiction raises itself, inside or outside the PSUV, it is the task of

revolutionaries to actively insert the lever of the revolutionary program to win the militant masses to that program.

Book Review

The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism

Naomi Klein (2007) <http://www.naomiklein.org/shock-doctrine/resources/chapter-resources>

What is Shock?

The recent book by Naomi Klein is useful for its exposure of the capitalist program. The details of the capitalist agenda are laid bare. The research team has done a huge job and gathered from many sources, although most of the details are documented elsewhere, the book is a useful resource.

The idea that Klein hangs it all on is "shock" as both a psychological and economic process. The book exposures methods used by the CIA (and / or / with military) to smash resistance and expropriate any form of state property in order to expand capitalism. The intellectual guides to these methods are traced to Milton Freedman (free market economist) and Dr Ewen Cameron (a psychiatrist who experimented on people for the CIA –using torture). Cameron's methods are seen in the CIA manuals and continue in their practices in US military prisons (eg. Guantanamo, Kandahar) and in the military regimes the US has backed (and trained).

What Klein does is tie together the psychological processes of shock/ fear/ terror; as human responses to natural disaster or war or extreme economic conditions (such as bank failures, or high inflation devaluing wages) with the introduction of 'free market' reforms. The book clearly exposed the leadership of the 'free market' capitalist agenda through the institutions of the IMF, World Bank, US State - CIA, and Chicago school economists. In fact, Klein asserts that these institutions have their 'free market' plans ready to go today at the first request for help from any nation state, for every single nation.

Democratic Capitalism

While Klein criticises from the left, she desperately clutches to an underlying belief that democracy could successfully oppose the capitalist agenda. Essentially her analysis of events stays within the capitalist framework by remaining in a democratic socialist plan (to reform capitalism – to make it work,... more for the people).

This means she fails to draw the essential lessons from the historic events she discusses. What one is left with after her discussions (eg. of Pinochet's coup against Allende) – is a sense of betrayal of democracy. Her enemy is restricted to the regimes and their backers, - the people in the roles of actively oppressing. Capitalism as an economic system that breeds these defenders of the capitalist regime is not really questioned.

The Marxist reader will see that driving the capitalist agenda is the falling rate of profit which drives capitalists' desperate need to expand. The capitalist expansion into new areas of economies by picking over state sectors, is a desperate measure to restore profitability (by buying up state oil and gas, mining, rail, water, electricity,... and list goes on).

Russia is merely another chapter in her book. Klein does not recognise the qualitative difference between a coup in Chile and the capitalist counter-revolution in the former workers states. While in Chile the entire state sector was exposed for capitalism to pick over, in the former Soviet Union the entire economy was exposed. From practically no profits leaving Russia prior to 1991 the capitalists were expropriating US\$2 billion per month by 2001.

Capitalist Restoration

We consider the restoration of capitalism was a world historic defeat for the international working class. While Chile may have been a blood

transfusion to temporarily revive capitalist profits, the fall of the USSR to capitalists was a whole new body made available for transplant. Since the 1917 revolution capitalism has encircled the Soviets with hostile imperialist intent; to once again exploit the working class, extract raw materials and reap the profits. Since 1991-92, imperialism was let loose in the former soviet state.

What should we hope for?

What hopes does Klein offer? The final chapter gives a summary of "people's" resistance. This is the most misleading chapter of the book.

Klein places confidence in court processes for convicting a few of the former regime members, citing Ken Lay (Enron) as an example. This places false hope in another aspect of the capitalist regime – the legal system – to deliver justice. When faced with the economic powers of capital, legal systems are too little, too late, too corruptible, and too vulnerable to the power of the armed forces.

Klein also places hope and faith in democracy, citing Venezuela's polls that rated 57% of the people happy with their democracy and Uruguay where a "left" government had opposed privatizations. She cited France and the Netherlands for their rejection of the EU constitution. She clings desperately to democracy - To so quickly forget the many examples given of the capitalists using military forces to ride right

over democratic institutions. These have occurred in the countries where capitalism failed to capture a 'democratic' victory and force through a pro-capitalist reform by elected dictatorship.

Workers co-operatives are another progressive step, according to Klein (e.g. Brazilian peasants' land reform and Venezuela's co-ops). We can see the progress in the internal relationships – with no exploitative capitalist as a direct owner. However, as soon as the co-operative is in a trade relationship it meets the capitalist law of value. The external pressures can mean a co-operative becomes organized along capitalist lines and so the tensions of capitalism can still be played out within the co-operatives relationships.

Cooperatives do not equal socialism

NZ's history is littered with failed farmers co-operatives though process of development of larger scale farming and the largest co-op is organized along capitalist lines for marketing and expanding, with all-but capitalist ownership. Without an analysis of capitalism encircling the co-operative, the need to overcome that hostile environment is not exposed.

The book had described how after the Dec 2006 Tsunami, in Sri Lanka the government had forced fishing villagers into refugee camps and found up coastal land for capitalist (tourism) developments. In Thailand, Klein found an example of resistance to that agenda – villagers "reinvaded" their own lands. They had to pass armed guards on the payroll of developers –that were there to keep them out. The villagers demanded tools for rebuilding and camped out while rebuilding their houses.

The real lessons from these histories of capitalist expansion are – capitalist leadership is well developed and prepared to exploit the worst of situations for any profits. Capitalism is an ongoing disaster and only a communist leadership can build an alternative. Workers and land users are forced into conflict with capitalists to regain their means of production.



Book Review***No Left Turn: The Distortion of NZ's history by Greed, Bigotry and Right-wing politics.***

By Chris Trotter. Random House, NZ, 2007

Keeping the social democratic torch alight

Chris Trotter's new book is an attempt to revive the flagging hopes of the social democratic left in New Zealand. He sees NZ history as a long struggle of the working class majority to win state power and bring about the ideals of an egalitarian democracy. That they have been prevented, as the subtitle of the book says, is down to "greed, bigotry and right-wing politics". Basically the right-wing minority with the power and wealth conspired to keep the worker majority out of power for most of NZ's history. But in the periods when workers did win parliamentary support for progressive legislation that Trotter uses to hold up hopes in the 'pot of gold at the end of the rainbow' and boost our hopes of taking power some happy day.

Trotter borrows heavily from the late Bruce Jesson, the left republican intellectual and journalist. He paraphrases Jesson:

"So it is in these shaky isles. While the successors of those who came to these shores in search of power and wealth remain locked in bitter conflict with those who came in search of equality and justice, nothing of enduring worth can be constructed in this country."

But he couldn't be more wrong. To say that conflict between these two forces is unnecessary and prevents real progress, is to reduce class struggle to the megalomania of 'extremist' and 'undemocratic' leaders who herd workers as if they were sheep. This is an insult to workers, especially as it is not true. In fact Jesson understood clearly that class struggle was not an epithet for 'extremists' pissing on the workers, but a real force that pushed people to extremes to fight for their class. Yet he could not see that the middle class is a potentially fascist force unless it is won over by a powerful working class.

Jesson made the mistake of seeing classes as a colonial hangover which could be overcome, or pushed to the margins, in a republican Aotearoa. Founding the republic was the task of the middle class socialist intellectuals. He died disappointed. He argued in his last writings that the new right won in the 1980s because the 'left' intellectuals did not put up a fight. The sad irony was that it wasn't a failure of the revolutionary left to fight. It was Jesson's 'left', the social democrats in the Labour Party and unions who didn't fight. They were not the vanguard of a republican anti-imperialism after all. They were part of the middle class who had always been in an alliance with international finance capitalism.

Historically they had earned their money dividing the working class and isolating the militants so they could be more easily smashed by the farmers and the bosses. This was the pattern in 1912, WW1, 1930s, 1951 and in the 1980s. Despite the arguments of Jesson's one-time political ally, Owen Gager, that the Labour Party under Harry Holland betrayed the anti-war movement during the First World War, Jesson never recognized the historic treachery of social democratic intellectuals. Today, when a new fight against the new right is emerging, Trotter follows in Jesson's footsteps, parading the petty bourgeois social democrats as the salvation of the working class.

Why another old Labour Party Story?

Or to put it another way, Trotter in following Jesson, is retelling the old story of the sell-out Labourites for today's consumption so that the new layers of militants will reject revolution and stick with the worldwide 'socialist' utopia

of the reformist World Social Forum. To do this he has to render the outright betrayals of the Labourites in the past as necessary, just and strategic, isolating the militant wreckers and rendering the completion of the democratic socialist project possible today.

This means patching together a 'democratic socialist' version of NZ history from the books of the petty bourgeois intellectuals who provided the ideological smokescreens for the 'good' men Trotter worships - the men who straddled the great divide between the greedy and the needy - Dick Seddon, Micky Savage and Norm Kirk. The first is W Pember Reeves the author of 'Aotearoa: Land of the Long White Cloud'.

Reeves was the first Minister of Labour in Seddon's earth-breaking Liberal government until he was sacked and sent off to London as High Commissioner. He was a 'Fabian Socialist' - the first official current of petty bourgeois intellectuals who saw the British Labour Party as the vehicle for democratic socialism.

Before he was removed for his 'extremism' Reeves was responsible for the Industrial, Conciliation and Arbitration Act which created a state

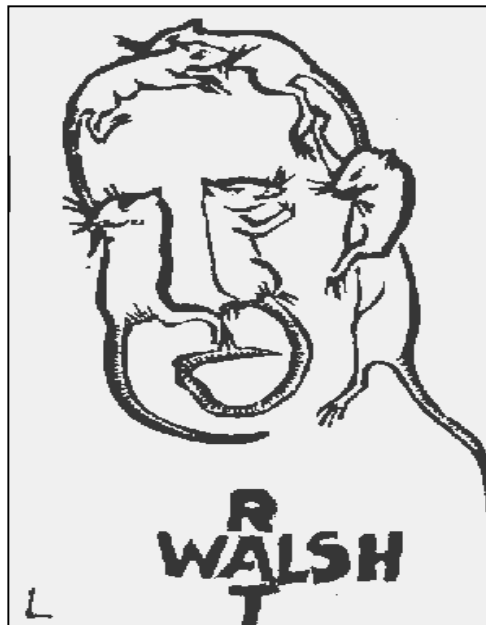
Arbitration Court as 'referee' between labour and capital. But the great divide opened up again when the Court refused a wage order and the Red Fed broke from the Court in 1908 and began a strike wave that ended in the defeat of the General Strike of 1913. Of course Jesson was right up to a point. Working class militancy between 1908 and 1913 was imposed by British imperialist shipowners and mineowners.

But if NZ workers were going to defeat British owners they had to lead the national struggle to socialism - to nationalize industry, banks and the land - and not capitulate to the local capitalist agents of the British bosses and the militant petty bourgeois farmers who enlisted as Massey's 'Cossacks' to break the General Strike. The militant left was defeated by the bosses' state which used scabs and the military to impose the class alliance of the middle class and the bourgeoisie on the unions. This defeat was compounded by the jingoistic rallying of workers into the colonial class alliance that went to fight the bosses' war.

But wait! The great hope for the future which could build a majority from the left and centre in the image of the Liberal Party (which had united workers and small farmers) was about to be born from the battle of the extremes - a social compromise in its conception - the Labour Party. Here of course Trotter has to argue that something good came out of an un-necessary class confrontation. Yet, almost every historian has recognized that the Labour party was an attempt to reconcile militant and moderate wings of the labour movement in the aftermath of the outbreak of class struggle. It gave birth to the vehicle of democratic socialism - the Labour Party, its main ideologues like Bill Sutch, and provided its leaders like Savage, Semple and Fraser.

Bill Sutch was the giant of social democracy from the 1930s to the 1970s. [Books] All social democrats in NZ are at heart Sutchites and Jesson and Trotter are no exception. The 'golden age' of NZ is period from the election victory of 1935 to 1949 when Labour was defeated in a right wing backlash linked to the onset of the Cold War and of US hegemony in NZ.

The issue is whether this period creates the template for re-founding democratic socialism in NZ, or a historic settlement that would only last so long as the middle-class and capitalist class profited from it.



'State socialism' or bust

The Sutchites take the first view. The workers and working farmers now formed the majority in NZ. Labour's victory was a triumph for social democracy. It insulated the economy and nationalized the critical productive and distributional sectors, and introduced social security for the working class. What Jesson and Trotter after him call the 'post-war settlement' was a class compromise in which workers, petty bourgeois and capitalists all appeared to all benefit from economic growth. It was ended when Labour swung to the right to keep the centre onside after the war.

FP Walsh the leader of the FOL was backing Fraser's rightward shift to keep the bloc of workers, poor farmers and manufacturers in power and to stop a right wing government from breaking the settlement and smashing the labour movement. He almost succeeded in 1949. What went wrong? As Trotter says: "Had the militants held their fire during the 'scoundrel years' of 1946-49, it is more than conceivable Fraser and Walsh could have made it across the churning waters that separated wartime stringency from peacetime plenty." Labour lost 47.2% to National's 51.9%.

The right wing National government, aligned to the rich farmers and foreign capital, came to power in 1949 determined to smash the unions so that they did not gain from the post war economic boom. Workers had fought the war on behalf of capitalism, suffered the

losses, and now demanded a better share of the new wealth. When Labour and the FOL under Walsh denied them that victory bonus, the same unions that formed the backbone of the Red Fed in 1908 split from the FOL to form the TUC.

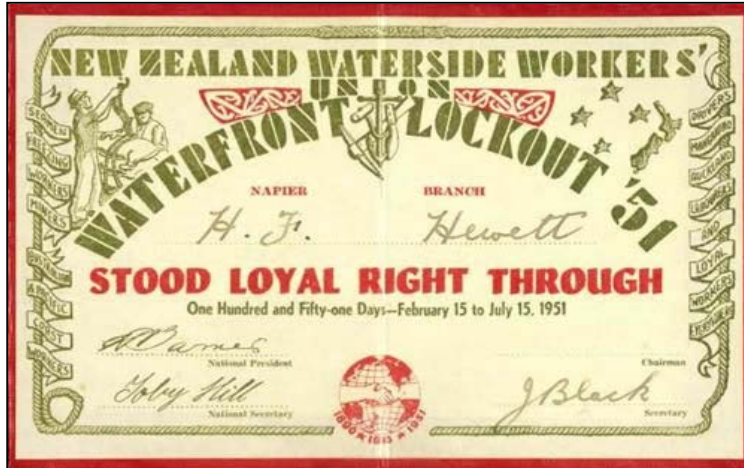
Now, according to Trotter, Walsh had his own stabilization plan to allocate fair shares in postwar wealth, but it would be allocated centrally from above by the FOL tops, the Government, and the bosses representatives in committee. He was determined to drive through this corporatist plan. He would smash the militants to save the whole labour movement and the prospects of selling his 'stabilisation plan' to Labour or National governments. He made sure the militants would rise up against the FOL by baiting Jock Barnes to force a confrontation that could only end in their total defeat. Unaware that they were pawns in this plan their struggle was "heroic but futile".

For Trotter then, the militants let down the moderate majority by resisting Labour's right swing, and were then sacrificed for the sake of defending the gains of the whole labour movement. Trotter tells us that not only Barnes but the whole militant wing of the movement brought their defeat on themselves for breaking with the moderates. Had it not been Walsh who did the dirty deed, National would have done it by breaking the Labour class alliance and smashing the post-war settlement for good. The Labour Party could never have recovered from such a defeat. Oh Dear!

Revolution and decolonization

Trotter is adamant that workers had no choice but to huddle inside the Labour Party to shelter from the rampages of capitalism in this period. The evidence is that post-war attempts at socialism outside the Soviet sector did not survive. But it was the Stalinist bureaucracies that played the main role in the defeating the socialist revolutions in Greece and Italy. When Trotter says that any attempt by the left to push towards socialism in NZ would have been smashed by an anticommunist bloc of local capital, the US and sections of the petty bourgeoisie, how does he know this? The evidence shows that the traitors were not the militants who went into fight to defend the interests of the whole working class and won the support of most workers and small farmers, but the leadership of the FOL and Labour Party who sided with US imperialism and the NZ capitalists, to split the militants from the moderates to then smash them.

The revolutionary Marxist argues that the war was an imperialist war which drafted workers to kill one another. But the war also had the effect of arming and radicalizing workers and in some countries such as Yugoslavia, Greece and Italy popular armies routed the Nazis and took power. These were not isolated ultra-left insurrections, but mass movements of workers and poor peasants. The imperialists had no means of defeating these movements by themselves. The Stalinists were the only force that could do this because they dominated the mass Communist parties and the unions. The US and Britain did a deal at Yalta in which the SU would get control of Eastern Europe in return for containing and defeating the revolutionary movements in Western Europe. The SU did this with ruthless efficiency justifying it in the name of workers joining with 'progressive' national capitalists to form 'democratic socialist' popular front governments.



Walsh was a rightwing labor bureaucrat operating hand in glove with the Labour Party leadership of Fraser. The FOL was a bureaucratic machine with its numbers bolstered by compulsory unionism. Walsh collaborated with Fraser to suppress rank and file militancy during and after the war. When the big one blew up in 1951 he could be trusted by the bosses to isolate and smash the militants in an alliance with the National government's emergency regulations and US imperialism's backing. His role as the leader of the 'responsible unions' was warmly appreciated by both the Auckland Chamber of Commerce and by the National Party. http://eprint.uq.edu.au/archive/00000935/01/tb_bchp_04.pdf

What we see here is evidence that the Labour Party, while based in the unions, had to first protect the profits of the bankers, manufacturers and farmers, before it could pay out to the workers. To retain any hope of being the government Labour had to promise to control the labor movement on behalf of the capitalists. To do this it had to defeat the militant unions who objected to wage cuts when profits were climbing.

Walsh played the same role in NZ that the Stalinists did in Europe, blocking with the capitalists to smash the militant left to stop them winning the support of the majority of the working class to defeat the National Government and the rotten leadership of the Labour Party and FOL. Of course this was the position of Jock Barnes and is argued forcefully by Tom Bramble in his Introduction to Barnes' memoirs *Never White Flag*. [See review in *Class Struggle*, 34] <http://communistworker.blogspot.com/search/label/Jock%20Barnes>

For Trotter though, Barnes did not represent the interests of the working class at all. He was an embittered maverick. The defeat of 1951 was the lesser evil; the militants could never have won, and the vehicle for democratic socialism survived, if tarnished and burned off on the left. The Labour Party could live to fight another election and implement the 'corporatist' Walsh Plan where the union, government and bosses representatives collaborate to develop the economy and share out the increased productivity of the workers. Labour can bide its time with its structures and historic gains intact until a new opportunity to push forward the boundaries of democratic socialism arises.

That opportunity will not come until the postwar boom is over. Then facing a massive economic crisis, it is Labour that rejects its social democratic past and openly embraces imperialism with Rogernomics.

..Continued in next issue

No light at the end of the bosses' tunnel vision

The Government is looking at a Public Private Partnership (PPP) to finish Auckland motorway connection underground through Helen Clark's electorate, The Waterview tunnel will cost more than \$2 billion. This is gross profiteering. No more motorways! Block the tunnel! We need free public transport, trolley busses, cycle-ways and light rail along all the existing motorways and bus-lanes!

The Automobile Association says the tunnel will add nearly a \$billion of value to the Auckland region each year. What they mean is that more cars, more oil and more freight will be produced to fill up the new motorway and that this will add value and produce more profits. But for the workers it will produce more costs. More profits mean more greenhouse gas emissions and climate change! Who seriously thinks that climate change will not have drastic consequences for the vast majority of the world's workers and peasants in the coming decades?

This is why we cannot trust any capitalist to do anything about climate change. The market will not respond to climate change in time. There is no way that capitalists will agree to limit their profits to reverse climate change. As John Key reveals, capitalists are hungry to put their spare cash into a motorway tunnel and charge workers tolls to get to and from work.

Nor can we put any trust in any bosses' government or any political party since they are all committed to protect private property and profits. Moving to (public private partnerships) PPPs to build new state houses, and PPPs to build motorways shows that governments serve big business. A good example is the suppressed Chapter 13 of the 'State of the Environment' that shows that the increasingly corporatized dairy industry is a massive polluter of the environment. Governments' are locked into building costly infrastructure to subsidise the bosses' profits at the expense of our wages and our future.

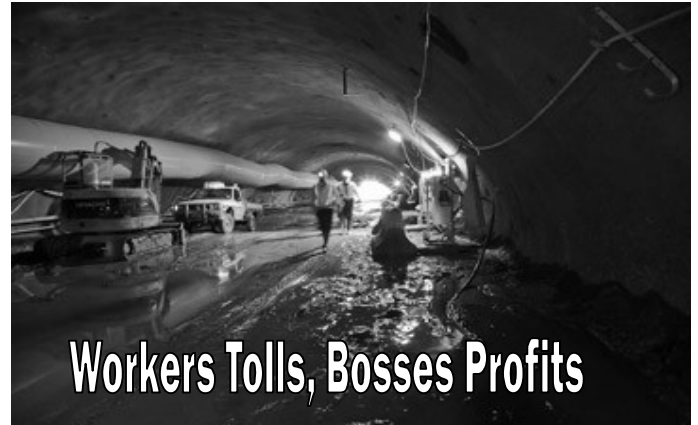
We need to make fundamental changes to the capitalist economy right now. And only workers can do it. It is a matter of mobilizing the majority of workers to stop the anarchy of the market.

In all of the areas where the market currently decides, production of energy, transportation, food, health, education etc workers must put forward plans for coordinating these activities to free them from the clutches of the market.

Mobilising the unions and the community to block the Waterview tunnel will stop this gross profiteering. A workers' transport plan will spend the money on public transport! Campaign to stop the massive state subsidies that fund dairy farming to pollute for profit. Tax the polluters and socialize the state funded value of the land. Capital gains tax on the 'unearned increment!' State subsidies to the industry should be state shares in a cooperative! No sell off of Fonterra shares to Queen Street farmers! Put it under working farmers' cooperative control!

State housing based on cheap state loans should not be subsidies to homeowners or private speculators! Build rental houses under tenants' control!

Workers plans have to be decided and implemented



independently of the bosses' state. Such plans have to be discussed and voted on in the unions and communities, and then action plans worked out to make these happen. Some examples:

- **Impose a community moratorium on new motorways. Demand massive central government spending on public transport. For bus-lanes and light rail only every motorway.**
- **Re-nationalize the railways, airlines, HEP, oil and gas fields, forestry and fishing, under workers' control, with no compensation to the private profiteers.**
- **Tax the dairy industry for pollution! State subsidies to dairy must become state shareholding in the industry. Tax the unearned increment and nationalize the land.**
- **Demand that the state fully funds health, education and housing, and cleans up the environment. It is intolerable that the people of Patea have to put up with the health hazard of Asbestos from the old Patea Freezing works.**
- **Tax the rich to pay for it, including capital gains on land speculation which drives up workers housing costs.**

But such plans cannot be realized through capitalist parliament. The capitalist state represents the interests of the bosses, so even nationalizations that are not under workers control are no more than subsidies to the bosses. State/market 'shared production' such as joint ventures and Public Private Partnerships like the Government which are already in place for the Orewa bypass, are public handouts to the private sector. The public partner guarantees the private partner a profit.

The only demand that workers should make of the state is that it pays for our plans out of the taxes because it comes from the surplus value we produce. As a result it will become obvious that we have to get rid of the state and replace it with a workers' state that expropriates the bosses' property as workers' property.

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.

Class Struggle is the Bi-Monthly paper of the Communist Workers' Group of New Zealand/Aotearoa, a member of the

Leninist Trotskyist Fraction [LTF]

The other LTF 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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Class Struggle is also on our website

<http://www.geocities.com/communistworker/>

CWG blog at <http://redrave.blogspot.com>

Working women built International Women's Day

Origins of International Women's Day

From the beginning of the 20th century, large numbers of women in industrially developing countries were entering paid work. Their jobs were gender segregated, mainly in textiles, manufacturing and domestic services where wages and working conditions were extremely depressed. Trade unions were developing and many women workers fought as unionists in the industrial disputes that broke out.

International Women's Day emerged from these early struggles of women workers. In 1908, on the last Sunday in February, socialist women in the first of a series of actions in the United States took place in large demonstrations calling for the vote and the political and economic rights of women. They saw these demonstrations as marking the first US Women's Day.

International Conference of Socialist Women 1910

It was Klara Zetkin from the German Socialist Party; who moved the question of rights for women from a national issue to an international one at the second International Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen in 1910.

At the conference there were over 100 women from 17 countries, representing unions, socialist parties and working women's clubs. Also present were the first three women elected to the Finnish parliament. It greeted Zetkin's suggestion for an International Women's Day with unanimous approval.

The Conference raised other issues regarding women workers, calling for maternity benefits which, despite an intervention by Alexandra Kollontai on behalf of unmarried mothers, were to be for married women only.

It also decided to oppose night work as being detrimental to the health of most working women, though Swedish and Danish working women who were present asserted that night work was essential to their livelihood. These debates around the conditions of women's paid work continue today when women workers all over the world still work long night shifts.

The notion of international solidarity between the exploited workers of the world was a long established socialist principle, and was expressed in the organization of the Second International. The idea of women organising politically as women was more controversial within the international socialist movement in the early 20th century, not only between

men and women, but between feminist and socialist women's movements. This question was taken up by Lenin in a discussion with Klara Zetkin in 1920.

Feminism and Socialism

The differences between feminism and socialism were discussed by Lenin and Zetkin during an interview in 1920.

For Lenin the 'women's question' was always about social equality for women: *"We must create a powerful international women's movement on a clear theoretical basis. There is no good practice without Marxist theory"*.

Zetkin saw women workers as central in achieving the Russian revolution. It was the first proletarian dictatorship, dedicated to the social equality of women and pointed to the importance of an international communist women's movement to complete the work for the revolution.

Lenin's position was more complex. He objected to the focus on sex and the family as the main point of political discussion for women when the country was surrounded by counter-revolutionary forces. Neither should prostitutes be organized as a special revolutionary militant section, ahead of other working women in Germany. Women's issues should be integral to proletarian class struggle and revolution.

Although Lenin argued that there should be no separate organization for women in the mass movement, in the Communist International and the Communist Party there must be special bodies to undertake systematic work with women.

To abolish *"the humiliation of women and the privileges of men"* to defeat the bourgeois relationships and bring women into the social economy the Party would replace private domestic work with communal kitchens laundries nurseries and educational institutes of all kinds.

This would prove that real freedom for women was possible only through Communism and the abolition of the connection between the social position of women and private property in the means of production:

"They must realize what the proletarian dictatorship means for them: complete equality with man in law and practice, in the family, in the state, in society; an end to the power of the bourgeoisie."

See Klara Zetkin, *Lenin on the Women's Question*

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/zetkin/1920/lenin/zetkin1.htm>

"We are bringing women into the social economy, into legislation and government. All educational institutions are open to them, so that they can increase their professional and social capacities. We are establishing communal kitchens and public eating-houses, laundries and repairing shops, nurseries, kindergartens, children's homes, educational institutes of all kinds. In short we are seriously carrying out the demand in our program for the transference of the economic and educational functions of the separate household to society. That will mean freedom for the woman from the old household drudgery and dependence on man. That enables her to exercise to the full her talents and her inclinations."

Lenin in 1920, quoted by Clara Zetkin