

**South Africa**

# **Break with the ANC**

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**We wont pay for their crisis**

**Free the Kliptown Five**

**Fire the 90 days Act**

**Las Heras prisoners freed**

**Socialize Sealords**

**Revolutionaries take on the ANC**

**Privatising Punishment**

**No British jobs for British workers**

**Womens day every day**

**Guadeloupe strikes at Sarkozy**

## Brief Stuff

### Socialise Sealords

*At The Standard: "Despite making sound profits Sealord are laying off 180 workers in Nelson. They claim the move is part of restructuring and that there will be fifty new jobs aboard factory ships that will fully process fish. Remaining workers are also being asked to take a pay cut.*

*I'm not sure I buy that. Even with the 6-on/6-off shifts they run on these ships 50 people will struggle to process the same number of fish as 180. I know some NZ fish is catch-frozen and shipped to China for processing before being sold back into the NZ market. If this is the plan here (and so far Sealord haven't made it clear it isn't) then some serious questions need to be asked.*

*One thing is for sure though, John Key won't be doing the asking. He's quoted on the Herald on-line as [saying](#): "You'll always get quite a lot of movement in the labour market, so the challenge here, I think, is to try and hold on to as many (jobs) as you practically can and make sure you're sending the right signals that jobs are being created." Which basically means he sees this as a market decision that the government can, at best, send signals about. So what kind of a signal is he sending here and, if he thinks that nothing can be done, why did we just spend \$65K on a summit to save jobs? I much prefer the Maori Party's [position](#) which is that the shareholders need to suck this one up and not try to profit at the expense of their (low-wage) workers. I wonder what steps they'll take to see that happen?"*

Of course Key doesn't care about Sealord. The labour market moves like god. Key is only interested in profits moving up and wages moving down. That's capitalism. Workers choose wages cut by \$70 or lose their jobs. We say Sealord should be a cooperative, not left to number crunchers to moan about \$7m lost on excess wages. The Maori Party answer is pure utopia. They ask capitalists to take a cut in profits for what: to help "low paid workers". Don't have illusions in the Maori Party pious phrases about "low paid workers". The Maori Party is propping up the capitalism that survives on the back of low paid workers in their sell-out coalition with the National Party! You won't keep Maori workers on side with your Oliver Twist begging the bosses to hearten up. For low paid workers to survive you have to junk your capitalist survival of the fittest mentality.

Sealord is half owned by "The Maori People of NZ" via Aotearoa Fisheries, 50/50 with Japanese fish multinational Nissui that advertises on its glossy website like a cult religion talking about "creating value" out of its Nissui "genes". Workers do not rate a mention.

The Sealord workers could take a leaf out of the Japanese best-seller, *The Crab Ship* a 1929 account of a strike to get their industry unionised, written by Takiji Kobayashi who was then tortured to death at 29 by the secret police, now all the rage in Japan today where it

strikes a bitter chord as millions of workers face the dole and worse.

We say socialise the fishing industry let the workers run it and find new markets and conserve the rapidly depleting fish stock that the vast majority of the world needs to live on, not a few rich Asians dining out!

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### '51: A "glorious defeat"?

We see that Irish Bill on *The Standard* is exposing the Labourites hatred of strike action. He accuses Chris Trotter of celebrating the "glorious defeat" of the 1951 lockout. He's wrong Trotter doesn't "glorify" a defeat. Trotter thinks '51 was a victory for workers. It's the Labourites who see '51 as a defeat. That's why Irish Bill says if you see it as a victory you are in fact "glorifying" a defeat. The Labourites are proud of that defeat since they wouldn't want their betrayal of the lockout to be seen as having failed.

The Labour Party was conceived out of the defeat of 1913 to steer workers into parliament. In 51 Nash said neither for nor against. A bob each way. You see, having used anti-strike laws against the workers during the war, and attacked the Carpenters strike in 1949, strike action was seen as a vote of no confidence in Labour's reformist road to what...?

Nowadays according to Michael Cullen its called "democratic socialism" when it's neither. There was nothing democratic or socialist when in '84 Labour stabbed the unions in the back. In '91 Labour's bedfellow Ken Douglas and the leadership of some of the unions like the PPTA sold out the majority membership vote for a general strike to smash the Employment Contracts Act. That's why Labourites are against industrial disputes. For them unions mobilize members as voting fodder. The conveyor belt is blatant. The EPMU leader Andrew Little has just been appointed Labour Party President.

We have no brief for Chris Trotter. He is a reformist. But he is right to reject the pathetic line that Irish Bill runs about "glorious defeats". Of course it was better to fight and lose than to crawl away like licked dogs as Jock Barnes said. There are Labour Party defeats and there are proletarian defeats, and in our view this was a "glorious defeat".

'51 was a defeat since the bosses succeeded in smashing the Watersiders' union. The militant leadership of the unions were persecuted, blacklisted or dispersed around the country. But it was less of a defeat than if they had not fought. That would have proved that there was no union movement in NZ other than a tame Labourite bureaucracy. That would have been the sort of defeat you get when you don't even fight.

We don't celebrate the defeat of '51. But we do celebrate the militant workers who had split with the Labour Party and the right wing mafia bureaucracy of the "rat" Fintan Patrick Walsh who owned the biggest dairy farm in the country. Against the odds and Labour

Party treachery they stood up and fought for their rights. That's the same militant minority that will stand up to Key as the crisis dumps its shit on workers in NZ, and standup and fight against Labour to throw the CTU leadership out of bed with the bosses in their "partnership".

The only reason that we are getting the show of some fight against the 90 Day Fire at Will Act from the CTU is because they know that the 'left' in the unions is already fighting it and they don't want to lose control of the unions.

So Irish Bill comes in on cue, to shit on the militants and try to sow demoralisation in their ranks blaming workers for being unable or unwilling to fight. This is accompanied by a thinly veiled economic nationalism that calls on workers to identify with their kiwi bosses, naturally by voting for the Labour Party.

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## National identity sucks

A new FTA with ASEAN had got the debate about protectionism going again. Then Obama junks the FTA with the US and sighs of relief abound as our national identity is saved. How come national identity is so important? Because working class identity is suffering an all time low. On the other hand the bosses' class identity is on an all time high. How else can they pass off the massive subsidies going into their pockets in the national, indeed, global, interest? As if their disgusting bonuses are for the benefit of humanity. These are the last people we want to go begging to - to protect kiwi jobs for kiwis. Nationalism is a treacherous delusion because it sucks workers into a political alliance with their own bosses against workers overseas and makes the bosses' job of dividing and ruling us dead easy because we do it to ourselves.

Why is it that only workers are hung up on nationalism? As we said, it's a substitute for class consciousness, and a ready made answer for the bosses when they want to protect their investments. The bosses are not fools. Their money has no nationality. They lack any patriotism when they invest to make the highest profit. For them money is the beginning, the middle and the end of patriotism. They call it the national interest. So, national identity means signing up to the national interest, i.e. the bosses' class interest. It means signing up to protect kiwi jobs against foreigners, and when the bosses call us up, to go and kill other workers to protect their profits and investments. It means forgetting our class and signing up to be exploited ad infinitum by their class.

**The workers' answer is to socialize the companies that are laying off workers whether they are NZ or overseas owned. And to do it in cooperation with workers making the same fight in other countries. Workers have no nation. They have no fatherland or motherland. Workers have a world to win!**

## Kupapa\* fuck off the F&S

Like its celebration of the Bolivian constitution, the Maori Party wants National to scrap the F&S legislation and allow Maori to claim customary right to the F&S as an indigenous right. But this is not a matter of indigenous rights or cultural pride. It's the promise of a fat profit. And this will not be shared among all Maori. The Maori Party has sold out its working class Maori voters for the chance to grab title to the F&S. This is a huge resource already being plundered by Maori fishing interests in league with Japanese monopolies super-exploiting Maori workers. (see Socialise Sealords). This is also the case with the Treaty Settlements which benefit the 'tribal capitalists' and their bureaucratic mates and not the vast majority of Maori workers who do not have strong tribal affiliations.

When the F&S issue arose, we opposed the Bill, and instead called for Maori to occupy traditional F&S sites and for the Pakeha working class to support these occupations. We saw this struggle as opening the way to the uniting of workers across racial barriers to win workers control of key F&S resources and keep them out the hands of both multinationals and greed tribal capitalists. Today, our position is to reject the National/Maori Party deal completely. There is nothing progressive to come out of the repealing of the Act. This was part of the deal done between National and the Maori Party to keep the right wing National Party in power. The trade off is that the Maori Party which represents Maori capitalists will get their share of the national resources. Meanwhile National has blank cheque to attack all workers. Nothing good for Maori or Pakeha workers can come out of this deal to keep National in power.

All of this is covered up in kupapa words: "Our government takes pride in delivering on this part of the Confidence and Supply agreement between the two parties. It's an agreement that was intended to form the basis for an enduring and constructive relationship between our two parties. The Maori Party, and Rahui Katene in particular, have worked closely with Attorney General Chris Finlayson on the terms of reference for this review," says Mr Key. "This review is so important for us," says Dr Pita Sharples. "The issue goes back to the foundations of our party, the identity of our people as tangata whenua, and us fulfilling our promises to the people." "It is very pleasing to be here today," says Tariana Turia. "We want to put right an injustice that should never have happened, but we do not want to create another injustice for anyone else. We have said the Act should be repealed, and we are certainly open to hear what the panel might recommend about the best way forward for the country."

\* *Kupapa*: Maori who fought alongside the armed settlers against those Maori who fought to defend their land and independence from the settlers.

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## Obama's new right budget

**Michel Chossudovsky:** "This is a "War Budget". The austerity measures hit all major federal spending programs with the exception of: 1. Defence and the Middle East War; 2. the Wall Street bank bailout, 3. Interest payments on a staggering public debt. The budget diverts tax revenues into financing the war. It legitimizes the fraudulent transfers of tax dollars to the financial elites under the "bank bailouts". The pattern of deficit spending is not expansionary. We are not dealing with a Keynesian style deficit, which stimulates investment and consumer demand, leading to an expansion of production and employment. The "bank bailouts" (involving several initiatives financed by tax dollars) constitute a component of government expenditure. Both the Bush and Obama bank bailouts are hand outs to major financial institutions. They do not constitute a positive spending injection into the real economy.

Quite the opposite. The bailouts contribute to financing the restructuring of the banking system leading to a massive concentration of wealth and centralization of banking power. A large part of the bailout money granted by the US government will be transferred electronically to various affiliated accounts including the hedge funds. The largest banks in the US will also use this windfall cash to buy out their weaker competitors, thereby consolidating their position. The tendency, therefore, is towards a new wave of corporate buyouts, mergers and acquisitions in the financial services industry. In turn, the financial elites will use these large amounts of liquid assets (paper wealth), together with the hundreds of billions acquired through speculative trade, will be used to buy out real economy corporations (airlines, the automobile industry, Telecoms, media, etc ), whose quoted value on the stock markets has tumbled. In essence, a budget deficit (combined with massive cuts in social programs) is required to fund the handouts to the banks as well as finance defence spending and the military surge in the Middle East war."

Full article at:

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=12517>

## National stimulates profits

The reason that there is no so-called "stimulus" package in NZ is that National are not Keynesians. They are not interested in boosting consumption to increase demand and hence supply. They are supply siders. Theirs is a robbers' package. They will take their tax cuts and subsidies and only invest if labour and other costs of production are cut to the bone via the 90 days fire at will, 9 day fortnight to get wage cuts, gut the RMA, cuts bosses contributions to Kiwisaver, privatise the ACC Auckland Harbour Board, dispense with the ETS, suck Cullen's fund dry, and prepare the SEOs for privatisation. Then they can blast off with a range of

Public Private Partnership as the Rogernomics Mk 2 road to privatization.

Obama's so-called stimulus is a mixed package and it barely qualifies as a New New Deal. Most of the public spending is a direct subsidy into the pockets of the bosses (no guarantee of stimulus) much less goes into increasing consumption. Mind you that was true of the original New Deal anyway. Obama is going to run up a record budget deficit to keep the army in Afghanistan to pressure Russia for control of Central Asian oil. His bail outs for the rich will leave the poor in their dust. Its business as usual, except that the workers who will pay for the crisis will take a little time to see Obama as just a sweet black face on the same old ruthless, predatory US imperialism (See Chossudovsky item)

What Key and Obama have in common in not only the task of keeping the capitalist system afloat by bailing out the ruling class, they have to make sure the ruling class continues ruling. That is why they pose as 'centrists' to fool the masses into thinking that they are pro-worker; hence the focus on health for Obama and jobs for Key. If they don't appear as pro-worker then popular unrest will immediately break out and threaten to destabilize and even bring down the capitalist system. As we point out in the article on 90 day fire at will article, the 9 day fortnight is not pro-worker but pro-boss because it is in fact a 10% wage cut replaced by a "creeping dole" paid for by the labour and taxes of workers. But Key hopes that his partnership with the CTU to manage the 9 day fortnight for 6 months will keep the lid on worker discontent more than 1000s of unemployed queuing up at WINZ.

## Privatising Repression

A bosses' crisis which attacks workers to make them pay for it, always creates a workers fightback. To head off that fightback the bosses use the popular front where workers parties and the labor bureaucracy tries to tie the hands of workers to prevent their independent mobilization. Behind the popular front the bosses organize their repressive arm of the state, like the 'Popular' army' in Bolivia; the police in Greece; always backed up by the military, and of course by "private" armies, mercenaries, and paramilitaries like in Colombia etc. This repression is done in the name of the state that represents the so-called national interest in which all classes are patriotically united. This means that state repression is held to be legitimate because it is not openly acting in defence of private property. So when paramilitaries operate openly they run the risk of being seen as extra-state and do not have that legitimacy. Bosses don't privatise the repressive forces unless they are desperate, or totally confident they will not cause a working class rebellion.

So in NZ the right wing National Party is greeting the depression and workers resistance by not only stepping up the level of state repression to criminalise youth and Maori gangs, increase prison sentences by limiting parole and flirting with the extreme-right wing ACT parties "3 strikes and your out" policy, and putting

unruly youth into bootcamps, it now proposes to build new prisons under Private, Public Partnerships (PPPs) and allow the running of those prisons by private contractors.

<http://tumeke.blogspot.com/2009/03/sensible-sentencing-and-prison.html>

Liberals and radicals object to privatizing the state sector because they truly believe in the need for a class-neutral state and law enforcement, and/or opposition to the profit motive or using prisoners as slave labor. They point to the US prison industry which is one of the most profitable industries.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&id=8289>

We support these objections but not for the reasons advanced. They want to reform the capitalist state to stop the abuse of prisoners' rights as human rights. Marxists, however, recognize that the state is the committee of the ruling class. It doesn't really matter whether the state or private sector runs the justice system it's the bosses' justice in the end. As soon as workers seriously fight capitalism the justice system exposes its class rule by systematically abusing prisoners in 'normal' jails, Guantanamo, the camps used for migrant workers, or the secret jails kept for 'terrorists'.

<http://www.fifthinternational.org/index.php?id=188,1538,0,0,1,0>

The only way to fight the abuse of human rights is to reject the inhumanity of the whole capitalist system and replace it with a system of working class justice, run by, and for, the workers.

(see *Las Heras Prisoners Freed, and Free the Kliptown Five*)

## I. W. D. Everyday!

The reason that there is an International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> every year is that women (and men) workers are not strong enough to make every day their day. Almost in resignation to this fact, IWD is in danger of becoming a token event instead of being held in the spirit of the women whose struggle inspired it in the USA

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Ladies%27\\_Garment\\_Workers%27\\_Union#The\\_Uprising\\_of\\_20.2C000\\_and\\_the\\_Great\\_Revolt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Ladies%27_Garment_Workers%27_Union#The_Uprising_of_20.2C000_and_the_Great_Revolt) and by those who made it the day of the revolutionary women's movement in the Russian Revolution,

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1913/women-day.htm> or the many examples of truly heroic struggles since such as the Iranian women who mobilized against Khomeini in 1979 to reject the Hijab (see the amazing footage in this

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZIR-CK4cro>)

Today it is clear that women are still the 'second sex' in the job market, and that 'woman bashing' has brutal physical forms and more subtle attitudinal forms.

<http://www.thestandard.org.nz/herstory-whats-happened-to-the-quality-chic-flick/>

Yet IWD is kept alive by small bands of radical and revolutionary women over the world despite the defeats that women have faced in the last decades.

<http://www.internationalwomensday.com/about.asp>

International Women's Day will become every day when women and men workers unite to overthrow the capitalist system, and when the last vestiges of patriarchal power are eliminated in a communist society.

## Bolivia's New Constitution

The new Bolivian constitution recently voted into existence recognizes for the first time in more than 500 years of colonial and semi-colonial occupation, the rights of indigenous nations within the state of Bolivia. Most of the reformist left has taken this to be a breakthrough in the struggle for not only indigenous rights but human rights.

What they overlook is that these bourgeois rights will remain just words on paper unless the peoples concerned have control over their own labor and the multi-national state's resources. This was the objective of the revolutionary uprisings of 2003 and 2005. The main demand was complete nationalization of gas and its use by the people.

The election of the MAS (Movement for Socialism) and Morales as President in 2005 subordinated that revolution to the interests of imperialism and the national land owning and mine owning bourgeoisie mainly located in the East. The Constitution is the result of a number of compromises with this bourgeoisie. So while it creates national rights for the indigenous peoples, it allows the bourgeoisie and their big imperialist brothers, who also claim national rights, to own the land and the mines and continue to plunder the resources of Bolivia. The much proclaimed provision in the Constitution that allows the state to expropriate private property if it is not used in the "social interest" is modeled on the Venezuelan Constitution. It gives the state bourgeoisie the power only to negotiate with the Media Luna bourgeoisie a few crumbs that can be put to "social" use after each fraction has taken their cut of the national wealth.

So, while the Aymara people are now recognized as a nation, they have no means of developing their nation with their own labour and resources. They remain the exploited subjects of imperialism, the mine and land owning bourgeoisie, and now in addition the ruling class Aymara, like President Morales himself, who have formed a state bourgeoisie to administer Bolivia on behalf of imperialism. In the event that Morales nationalizes land or minerals in the "social" interest, it is this state bourgeoisie that will benefit, not the masses. We are for a Workers and Poor Peasants Government in Bolivia that expropriates the bourgeoisie and wins its independence from imperialism, allowing the people to plan production for need and not the plunder and super-profits of the imperialist MNCs.

## **We wont pay for their crisis!**

### **JOBS JOLT THE BOSSES! SMASH *THEIR* GOVERNMENT'S 90-DAY BILL!**

#### **The time of crisis...**

Worldwide workers are being laid off en mass as the capitalist crisis deepens and intensifies. In one day TNCs have laid off 70,000 workers. Workers are losing their homes and families are breaking up as they are being made to pay for a crisis created by the system that never enriched anyone but the bosses. In Aotearoa 7% unemployment is predicted, with 20% for Maori. A third of employers have announced their intention to lay off staff in the next three months. On behalf of the bosses the Key government is taking advantage of this by making it easier for employers to fire workers. And, as if the already unemployed were individually responsible for their situation, WINZ is requiring them to engage in the futility of visiting three employers per day!

#### **...is a time to get organised:**

What can the individual do? NOTHING! But it is because it has been proved time and again that united and organised in unions the working class are a mighty force, bosses governments have conspired within our lifetimes to smash the union movement. The limited protection offered to unions by the recent Labour government resulted in slow union growth and modest wage gains. It is now up to workers own efforts to rebuild vital democratic fighting unions with full membership rights to the unemployed.

#### **The fightback is under way**

In USA and elsewhere workers are occupying factories to prevent their closure. Communities are uniting to resist evictions. Mass demonstrations are forcing the resignation of government ministers. In Auckland **Feb 28<sup>th</sup>** is to be **Day of Action Against the 90 Day Bill**. Form committees in your workplace, send delegates to planning meetings. Join the Rat Patrol.

#### **Unemployed UNITE!**

While our backs are against the wall! *Unite* is the union for unemployed, and *Waitemata Branch* is planning collective actions to prevent the unemployed being victimised by the crisis. 100% effectiveness will require 100% participation of the unemployed. We are as yet far from achieving that, so join up and lend your weight to the struggle.

#### **Waitemata Branch of Unite!**

## **Reject 90 day Jobs! Reject 9 day fortnights!**

## **Fight layoffs with occupations and workers control!**

## **For 30 hour week without loss of pay!**

*The government has come up with two direct attacks to make workers pay for the bosses' crisis. The 90 day fire at will Act was introduced under urgency as the key measure to create a reserve pool of cheap labor to cut wages across the whole economy. Labor Minister Wilkinson says it's 'voluntary'. But will WINZ stand-down workers who refuse these jobs or are fired under this Act? Unite Waitemata branch is organizing unemployed to fight the 90 day fire at will Act and to fight WINZ if it stands them down! And the Unite union Rat Patrol is taking the fight to defend workers to workplaces. The other measure is the 9 day fortnight for workers facing layoffs. But it's only for six months. It amounts to a cut in working hours and loss of at least half a day's pay. It's a creeping dole as the state will pay the minimum wage for only 5 hours on the 10<sup>th</sup> day. The boss has 6 months to get the workers to cut wages further or join the dole queue. The only answer to unemployment is workers occupations and control of those industries that close down or layoff lots of workers.*

#### **Making workers pay for the crisis**

It looks like John Key is cosying up to the CTU. Or rather the other way around. Helen Kelly was pretty chuffed by the Jobs Summit. When Key came up with the 9 day (and 1 day training) fortnight, Kelly insisted that

workers got paid for their training day. Key has agreed to a state subsidy around the minimum wage at \$12.50 per hour but for only 5 hours! This is in effect a creeping dole and as production drops, so will the working days get cut back. So get ready for the 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 day fortnight with wages cut accordingly. Here the

partnership of the CTU and employers is working well. The CTU is proving its usefulness to a rightwing worker-bashing government. Workers fearing unemployment will be forced to accept this deal and get a wage cut around 5 to 10% to start and more as the working days are cutback. **So the CTU and WINZ are in a partnership managing the reduction in wages so that workers will pay their share of the crisis!**

The CTU is also offering support for workers against the 90 days hire and fire Act. It's offering help to non-unionised workers too. They promise to leaflet workers and organize protests and pickets when workers are threatened by this law. But they are only doing this because the militant organizers in the unions are already organizing this fight. Unite union has already formed a **Rat Patrol** of union activists to educate and defend workers facing the sack within the 90 days. (<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU0902/S00528.htm>)

And the Waitemata branch of Unite is actively recruiting unemployed in West Auckland to build support for unemployed who will be pressured to take the 90 day jobs, and when sacked possibly face a WINZ stand down (see Unite Waitemata Leaflet.) The fact that Unite union is actively campaigning against the 90 day Act will give some substance to the CTU offer of help.

**Make the bosses pay for their crisis**

The CTU bureaucracy in partnership with the bosses doesn't want to fight redundancies unless it doesn't cost the bosses anything. So the six-month 9 day fortnight is OK even if it is a cut in wages. It will put workers in the position of forcing them to accept further cuts or join the dole queue. We are against any cut in hours if it means a cut in pay. We are for shorter working hours on a living wage.

But workers can stop sackings and wage cuts before they happen. If the boss closes down, occupy the plant and keep it running. There are many examples of such opportunities lost. Feltex, CHH, Kaiapoi Woolen Mills etc. Instead of paying for their crisis we need to turn it into our opportunity. If John Key's "iconic" F&P is bailed out then it must be nationalized without compensation under workers control. No compensation for two reasons. First, at F&P like all companies it is workers who create the company income. Second, F&P like all companies in NZ has received public subsidies for years. It must be under workers control because, first, only workers have an interest in working and seeing the results of their hard work meeting the needs of the people and not profits. Second, workers have the knowledge and motivation to keep innovating new useful products whether the market says yes or no.



In the case of companies like Pacific Brands, Sealords (see item in Brief Stuff) and Izards who are making workers redundant because of the global crisis, we are for workers occupations to take control of the company, prevent the machinery from being stripped out (as Australian unions are doing with Pacific Brands), and continuing production under workers management. In the process workers will be able to make democratic decisions about whether they want to cut their wages and hours to compete on the capitalist market, or begin to trade with other worker- managed factories around the world like in Argentina or Venezuela.

If this fails and workers are isolated and sacked they should make sure that are still unionised and refuse to sign up to 90 day fire at will. Unionised unemployed are a force that can resist being forced to act as cheap, casualised labour to force down wages, or what is worse, strike-breakers when workers are on strike or locked out. If WINZ cuts off the benefit then the organised unemployed should occupy WINZ in protest. If that fails (they all get arrested) and are forced to do the 90 days or starve, then and only then should they ring the CTU hotline for advice. Because all that advice amounts to is how to put in a personal grievance which won't win because the bosses' law allows you to be turned into a cheap labor wage slave for 90 days and 90 days and 90 days and 90 days.

The only way to defeat the 90 days bosses' weapon to create pool of cheap slave labor and the 9 day fortnight to cut wages is to organise and fight it as a working class movement.

- Make the bosses pay for their own crisis!
- No privatizations of ACC, the Cullen Fund, AHB etc!
- No Public Private Partnerships!
- Jobs for All on a living wage!
- Fuck the Creeping Dole!
- Unite the employed and unemployed by reducing the working week until there are jobs for all with no loss of pay!
- If companies close or make mass redundancies, occupy, and continue production under workers' management!
- For nationalization of all bailed out companies without compensation and under workers' control!
- For workers' defence committees and pickets to protect occupations!
- For a National Congress of Workers to work out a workers program to fight the crisis!

## Socialist Fight leaflet

**“British Jobs for British Workers”****No support for these chauvinist, xenophobic strikes!**

*“A trade union led by reactionary fakers organizes a strike against the admission of Negro workers into a certain branch of industry. Shall we support such a shameful strike? Of course not. But let us imagine that the bosses, utilizing the given strike, make an attempt to crush the trade union and to make impossible in general the organized self-defence of the workers. In this case we will defend the trade union as a matter of course in spite of its reactionary leadership.” Trotsky 1939*

Socialist Fight (SF) unequivocally opposes the current ‘wildcat’ strikes because they were called on the reactionary basis of ‘British jobs for British workers’ (BJ4BW), it was on this xenophobic basis they were spread, with the assistance of the right wing media and on this basis they were tacitly endorsed by the entire Unite and GMB leaderships [two main unions involved]. We place the blame for this situation squarely on the backs of the reactionary Labour movement leaders; Gordon Brown and the Labour party leaders for endorsing the reactionary slogan, borrowed from the British National Party (BNP), the Unite, GMB and other union leaderships for tacitly endorsing and pursuing negotiations on that basis. A major weight of responsibility also rests on the shoulders of those left groups and organisations, the Communists Party of Britain (CPB), the Socialist Party of England and Wales (SPEW) and others who have acted as left apologists for these bureaucratic misleaders of

the working class. When similar demands were made on the French TU leadership they immediately rejected them as reactionary chauvinism and insisted on the demands like ‘we will not pay for the bankers/capitalism’s crisis’.

We reject the compromise of Keith Gibson of the Lindsey strike committee and the SPEW. This does not repudiate the original BJ4BW demands, which were displayed so openly on the pickets. It is rather a cover for it, hoping we will forget, or close our eyes, to what it is really about. Gibson says that “Stewards and Union Officials asked to meet with IREM a.s.a.p. after Christmas to clarify the proposal i.e. would IREM employ British labour?” [IREM is the Italian sub-contractor which is non-union]. Then it explains that the walkout took place when “Shaws’ [British sub-contractor] workforce were told by the Stewards that IREM had stated they would not be employing British labour.”

(<http://www.socialistunity.com/?p=3513#comments>). He admits here that the initial walkout was about the nationality of the workforce, not about wages, conditions

or any of the other red herrings he and his apologists have been trying to drag across the trail ever since.

The SP motion, now the property of the strike committee and the mass meeting, but not the property of the Unite leadership - Simpson, Woodley or Jerry Hicks - says “Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled

union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available”. That is simply BJ4BW in another form. We reject the notion that “Union control of hiring is always preferable to the bosses controlling hiring. Enforcing an illegal closed shop would be a massive advance for the working class movement in this country”. On what basis would the union nominate people for jobs? The only issue that may be in question is equal access to jobs, but that is down to the subcontracting system itself, not nationality. When socialist in British trade unions fought discrimination against nationalists in the north of Ireland they were always

referred back to the Irish Region (Region 11, Northern Ireland in the case of the TGWU). Here, in the best workers’ traditions, Loyalist craft engineering unions (like we have here), with all the history of privilege and empire loyalty had contempt for other workers and ensured they (nationalists) did not get to join the craft unions and did not get jobs.

Discrimination proceeded swimmingly, all in the name of the best trade union practices, the power of the unions was consolidated and the NI ‘troubles’ ensued. This ‘union control’ is only a demand for ‘local’ communalist discrimination; the predecessor of the SPEW in Ireland was quite comfortable with that. And British and Irish based union leaders turned their heads away and pretended they just did not see. In a certain sense this demand is more reactionary than national chauvinism; presumably workers from the south of England, Wales and Scotland, let alone Ireland, would quickly be sent packing by our ‘local’ TU registrar of jobs.

As one comrade said, “But the SPEW states that it is the bosses who are setting one nationality against another.



Yes but why play the same game? It is the BNP, say the SPEW, who are attempting to sever fraternal relations between workers from different nations, but the SPEW want union control of a register of locally skilled workers presumably to facilitate local jobs for local people. Some are trying to find socialist gold under this militant dross of nationalism. But that seems like an attempt at alchemy' (BB). You cannot endorse the strikes and repudiate the aims, they are the same. If you endorse and seek to spread these strikes you are dealing a crippling blow to the British Labour movement.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Workers Power (WP) and SF are not siding with the Gov/bosses. The line-up is clear. The strikes have the enthusiastic support of the BNP, they have the support of the capitalist media, more enthusiastic the more you move to the right. The TU bureaucracy as a whole who would scarcely lift a finger to fight job losses or pay constraints while countless billions are handed over to bankers almost without conditions are enthusiastic supporters of these illegal but highly reactionary strikes.

The CPB, the SPEW and the TU bureaucracy are supporting it for entirely reactionary reasons. The bosses are 'opposed' because that is in their immediate short term financial interests, but they are not anything like as opposed as they would be if the plant was occupied, and the right of private property was thereby challenged, as in Waterford Glass. The government is 'opposed' but really not like they would oppose a real workers action, **in the long term interests of the class as an international whole**, like Gate Gourmet. They are for 'law and order' and against 'trouble' in general but if they have to have 'trouble' they could not get better than this from their point of view. Where are the threats to sequester the union funds, where are the high court judges injunctions, where are the brutal police attacks? Where is the class consciousness of those who cannot see the difference? And we reject with contempt those backward workerists who say we are siding with the Tories because Kenneth Clarke made an anti-racist statement criticism of the strikers. Tory anti-racism bad, workers racism good, declare these political idiots.

It was entirely correct of the Campaign against Immigration Controls (CAIC) to picket the Unite HQ and SF endorses the action. The prejudices of localist craft trade unionists would have been easily overcome and the strike orientated in a healthy direction if it had got a lead from the top. But Unite gave them their head. Principled socialists would seek to argue and struggle politically with these workers to explain that workers cannot win in national, let alone local isolation. No, we need a rank-and-file movement in the unions to combat this. It is entirely nonsensical to talk of the form being reactionary and the content being revolutionary as if this was some kind of Marxist dialectic.

These are reactionary strikes for reactionary ends which can only win by driving foreign workers out of the country and setting in train the destruction of the entire working class and its organisations and all their historical gains. Fight them now, fight the reactionary leadership of the class who are responsible for this appalling situation or it

will get worse. Do not try to find the silver lining; it is not there. They do mean what they say. If they occupied the plant and forged international solidarity that would be an entirely different strike, with entirely different leaders. To pretend otherwise is to defend the existing leaders and to prepare more defeats. This is differentiating the left in Britain; it goes to the core of class politics. Fight the reaction without reservations and you will find new revolutionists who will come forward to champion the interests of the class as an international whole.

In conclusion we quote from an Italian socialist group, the Communist Workers Party, "Our hope is that the SWP may be physically present in the struggle to denounce what is becoming a falsified reality i.e. that by which Great Britain is being occupied by foreigners, and British workers are being forced out of jobs because of them". Yours Ottaviano Scipione, PCL-Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori - Italy (Abruzzi Region)

- **Occupy to prevent plant closures and job losses!**
- **For a comprehensive programme of public works, council house and infrastructure building to overcome unemployment!**
- **The trade unions must take responsibility for organising the unemployed now, before they fall prey to fascism!**
- **For a militant 'no platforming' of fascists combined with United Front demands on workers leaders to fight capitalism AND fascism!**
- **No to Popular Fronts compromises with capitalism like the Peoples Charter!**
- **Make the bosses and the bankers pay for the crisis - not the workers!**
- **For a rigorous progressive taxation system, comprehensive prevention of tax avoidance scams by transnational companies and the rich and a wealth tax to make the capitalists pay for the crisis!**
- **For a genuine rank-and-file movement in the trade unions to fight the bureaucratic labour lieutenants of capital who lead today's trade unions!**
- **For direct employment by all firms of all labour, end the pernicious system of sub-contracting and agency working!**
- **For an open conference of all those political groups and individuals who oppose these reactionary strikes!**
- **Build a revolutionary socialist leadership to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism internationally!**

**Contact: Socialist Fight: PO Box 59188, London, NW2 9LJ. Email: [Socialist\\_Fight@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Socialist_Fight@yahoo.co.uk)**

## Argentina: Las Heras Political Prisoners released

On Friday February 27 the Las Heras political prisoners Jose Rosales, Germany Perez, Hugo Gonzalez, Dario Catrihuala, Ramon Cortes and Juan Pablo Bilbao, were released. They had been jailed for three years by the oil company bosses and the Kirchner government, subject to all kinds of torture and inhuman treatment, as an example to intimidate the working class.

The Kirchner government appears to have released the prisoners fearing that their deterrent effect was exhausted and that they might become a rallying point for a new mass offensive in Argentina or internationally. They were released just at the time when workers are beginning to mobilize in opposition to a new round of attacks on the working masses provoked by the global economic crisis. The oil and construction workers of Patagonia are raising the same demands they raised three years in the massive strike by workers at Las Heras. The government and oil companies have released the prisoners in the hope of avoiding the same upsurge of class struggle they faced at that time.

Thus the government of Cristina Kirchner models herself on "Obama" who posed as a Democrat and defender of human rights by announcing the closure of Guantanamo while keeping Iraqi resistance fighters, Afghan and Palestinian prisoners in secret CIA jails and expelling or jailing immigrant workers. Kirchner poses as the "champion of human rights" when along with her husband Nestor they locked up more than 5000 militants as political prisoners, allowed the assassination of the teacher Carlos Fuentealba, many killed through the bosses negligence at work like the 10 Bolivian migrant workers at Alua, and the disappearance of Julio Lopez.

Kirchner wants to create the impression of a 'democratic regime', and hopes that the release of the prisoners will give them a free hand to free the assassins of the military dictatorship. Much as in the past the regime released elderly assassins like Etcheco Latz, it wants to exchange the whole genocidal officer caste in jail for the comrades of Las Heras. Once again the old theory of "amnesty" means that the dictatorship is "forgotten" so that the regime can call on the officer assassins next time it wants to repress the struggle of the exploited. It was the unrelenting struggle of hundreds of organizations and actions nationally and internationally, and the campaign of *Workers Democracy* in Argentina and the FLT internationally, together with the workers of the French Hospital and Brukman that helped to break the silence around the 6 worker political prisoners of Las Heras, and took the struggle to the workers in Argentina and internationally to win the release of these comrades after three years in prison.

The comrades have been released. But they are on



parole because they still face a trial and run the risk of being convicted for a maximum of life imprisonment. This is likely if the employer succeeds in defeating the proletariat and imposes the social pact in the face of the global economic crisis. That is why the fate of the comrades, like that of all militant workers, including those still in jail or facing prosecution, depends on the struggle of all workers and their organizations making common cause with the Iraqi and Afghan workers and the Palestinian people of Gaza to defeat the imperialists and the Zionists and other bourgeois lackeys that kill or imprison all those who resist the "wars for oil".

Conversely, if labor unions and popular organizations come out in support of the comrades of Las Heras, fighting to drop the charges, the oil workers return to the struggle against sackings, for equal pay for equal work, the end to black-market work, reinstatement of sacked, dividing the working hours among employed and unemployed with wages pegged to inflation, renationalizing and expropriating Repsol without compensation and under workers control, and link this struggle to the international proletariat, then we can defeat the "wars for oil".

That's why Workers Democracy calls on all labor unions and popular organization that have worked to free the comrades of Las Heras to redouble the fight to drop the charges of more than 5000 militant workers who are in jail or facing charges. Build a fund to support the comrades and the families from facing poverty and hunger. Above all we call on them to join forces to convene a National Labor Congress, with delegates of the rank and file of the labor movement to confront the attacks by the monopolies, the enslaving employers, Kirchner's government and the union bureaucracy of the CGT and the CTA, to make the capitalist pay for their own crisis.

From *Workers Democracy* we make the call for the released comrades of Las Heras who are willing to do so to take the leadership in the fight to release all the political prisoners. Without a doubt we cannot fight and win a strong National Labor Congress while our best fighters are in jail as the political hostages of the bosses and the Kirchner regime.

# South Africa: Revolutionaries challenge ANC

The capitalists and their parties claim that there is a world economic crisis and they use this to justify mass retrenchments, cuts in social expenditure and a drive to attack and undermine workers gains that have been won through centuries of struggle. But what is the nature of the crisis and who is responsible for it? More importantly what can be done about the crisis?

## PARLIAMENT IS ON THE SIDE OF THE CAPITALISTS

### Break the alliance with the ANC and SACP!

#### Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL) has been excluded from the April elections

One of the rights that has long been fought for, has been the right to organise, form political parties and to contest elections. Even this right is under threat. All the parties in parliament sat on their own and set the deposit for taking part in all provinces and at national level at R540 000. WIVL submitted all the requirements, including a list of 29 candidates from 5 provinces, from urban and rural areas. All the Electoral Commission (IEC) was interested in, was if we had the deposit. The IEC, set up by the ANC Popular front government, acted on behalf of the monopoly capitalists to exclude working class organizations such as us. Many capitalist countries simply require a list of signatures to show some support, in order to take part in elections. Such a simple provision is denied to the working class here.



The only way forward for the working class is to organise independently of the capitalists and of parliament; we must build workers' defence committees to defend ourselves from the ongoing attacks by the capitalist class and their agents. Now, more than ever, we need to build an independent revolutionary working class party. We invite working class fighters and activists to join us in the fight against the world system of capitalism-imperialism.

#### Why are we participating in these elections?

Many people have asked us why we are participating in the elections when we believe that Socialism will not come through parliament. We are participating in these elections because many people have the illusion that parliament can bring about an improvement in their lives. Our main aim by participating is to confront the representatives of the capitalist parties head on. We

will put forward proposals and demands of the working class. The very responses of the representatives of the capitalist parties will help reveal to the mass of the working class what the true role of parliament is. The role of parliament is to give the masses the illusion that we have a real say in the running of the country, when in fact, *we are being ruled by the dictatorship of the class of capitalists.*

It is because the capitalist parties realise that they will be exposed by us, that they will try everything to keep our representatives out of parliament.

We have strict conditions on our representatives to

ensure that they advance the working class struggle and do not get co-opted. Our representatives will sign pledges in advance that they will be subject to instant recall, they will receive the average wage of a skilled worker; they will only serve 6 months (representatives will be rotated); they will place the struggle of the working class outside of parliament above any parliamentary work.

#### So what is the cause of the so-called crisis of the bosses?

Their drive to increase profits has hit a major obstacle. Their profits have begun to fall more sharply because they cannot extract enough surplus value from the world working class. This has led to capitalists diverting their money from investing in production into speculating in housing, food, shares, derivatives, etc. It is the collapse of this speculative bubble that has sparked off the current crisis, which is but a symptom of falling profits in productive sectors. Over the years, they have so cut down on workers to increase their rate of profit that a point has been reached that there are too few buyers (too few in employment to buy commodities) so the rate of profit has started to decrease more rapidly. The capitalists are so used to making massive profits that a slight decrease is for them a 'crisis'. The supermarkets are full of food, the car dealers are over-stocked with cars, but there are too few buyers to purchase at the high level of prices. Thus the crisis is not that there is too little, but too

much! Capitalism means the wealth of the world is in the hands of a few capitalists, while the working class of the world is kept in starvation.

### **Imperialist Capitalist monopolies continue to make huge profits**

Last year, the SA government collected R161 Billion in company taxes on profits. This was at 28%, which meant that companies made profits of R580 Billion last year. If



we consider these are only declared profits then it is safe to assume that the real company profits were closer to at least R700 Billion. So clearly, there is no crisis of profits in South Africa. The rate of profit in the neo-colonies like South Africa, have always been much higher than in the imperialist centres. Now the imperialists are demanding even greater profits from the neo-colonies to offset their falling profits at home.

When the big bosses talk about crisis and when workers talk about crisis, we are talking about different things. When the bosses talk about crisis they mean that instead of making 3000% profit their level of profit has come down to 2500%. When workers talk about crisis, we mean high unemployment, starvation and early death of millions of workers.

### **Superprofits come from commodities sold way above their real cost of production**

The real cost of a bag of cornflakes is 30 cents. But will the giant food producers or retailers reduce prices so that the millions of starving can eat? No, because it means that their rate of profit of 5700% would come down to 100% or 200% - this they are not prepared to do.

Not too long ago the price of Platinum was \$440, then speculation drove up the price to over \$2000. Now that it has dropped to \$1000, Anglo Platinum wants to retrench 10 000 workers, yet they were quite comfortable with the same number of workers when the price was \$440. They have become used to a higher profit level and are not prepared to sacrifice this.

Over 40% of petrol used in SA is locally produced at less than \$20 per barrel by Sasol. When the company was starting up, the working class, through our taxes subsidised them but now they are making massive profits they continue, with the active help of the ANC government, to keep the price of fuel artificially high. The main shareholders today of Sasol are US banks such

as the Bank of New York, JP Morgan Chase, SSB, State Street.

### **Why doesn't the ANC impose higher taxes on imperialist monopolies? It is possible to raise company taxes**

In the days of 'apartheid' the company tax rate was 48%. The ANC government alliance has reduced company tax to 28%. As a measure within the capitalist system, the government could easily raise the company tax rate to 50%. This would raise an extra R200 billion per year for social expenses and the companies would still be making R350 billion profit per annum. In several European countries the rate of company tax is 48%. The rate of company tax in the USA is 35%. So why does the ANC government not raise company taxes? The excuse that the company would just up and run does not hold water as they pay much more in tax in other parts of the world.

The truth is that the ANC government, with the active support of the Cosatu and SACP leadership, are fundamentally pro-capitalist. They are the junior partners in the imperialist exploitation of SA. When capitalism is in crisis, with the masses in uprising, as they were here in 1985-1994, the capitalists sometimes rule through a Popular front. This Popular front is a multiclass alliance, which generally has the support of the trade union leadership, which ties the working class movement to support the capitalist system. In essence the leaders of the ANC-Cosatu-SACP popular front pose as pro-worker, but divert the struggles of the masses into a dead-end, away from a struggle to overthrow capitalism, that is, away from the struggle for Socialism.

### **Popular fronts have a history of betrayal of the working class**

The popular fronts of the MDC in Zimbabwe, of the MAS in Bolivia and the PSUV in Venezuela are similar examples where the struggles of the working classes are diverted away from struggling for power. Recently the miners of Huanuni in Bolivia rose up to demand that pension age be dropped to 55. The army of Morales (the supposed left leader) was set upon the workers to crush them. Two miners were killed and the leadership of the trade union federation sat with folded arms while the workers were put down. These miners have adopted a resolution calling for the immediate replacement of their sellout trade union leadership. On the other hand when US-imperialist back fascist bands took over almost half the country, Morales did nothing to stop them, hundreds of workers and peasants have gone missing, several were killed. The workers were kept disarmed while the fascist bands operated freely. Such were the anti-working class steps taken by a Popular front in Bolivia, from which the world working class should draw strong lessons.

### **A brief analysis of the recent budget**

All parliamentary parties, without exception, generally welcomed the budget. The Cosatu leadership had warm words of praise for the budget. The Cosatu and SACP leadership justify support for the ANC because we have

a 'developmental' state. The Cosatu and SACP leaders believe we have to go through a period of 'democratic capitalism' to build conditions for Socialism. This is a smokescreen to hide the real aim of the ANC-SACP-Cosatu popular front alliance, namely that a section of the black middle class becomes the junior partners of imperialism, at the expense of the demands of the working class. Let us examine a few areas:

**a] Housing**

It is estimated that the current housing backlog is 1.5 million houses. Due to population growth the number of houses needed each year just to keep pace with this is 200 000. Let us assume that a decent home is 90 square metres. Each house would cost R270 000, then with a budget of R19.6 Billion only 73 000 houses can be built. This is not even enough to cover population growth. This means that the current 7.5 million people without housing will always remain homeless and the number of homeless people will increase each year by 600 000. Even if the small RDP houses are built it will only amount to 163 000, still less than population growth; still the number of homeless will grow by 180 000 every year. To completely wipe out the backlog in housing requires R400 Billion (at today's over-inflated housing prices). When the government talks about R700 Billion for infrastructure, they clearly do not have housing in mind.

Most of the R700 Billion will be used for the Eskom scam (which we have written on extensively - see our website). In summary, the government plans to double the electricity generation capacity within 20 years. 'Growth' in the economy has come from public works, financial services and tourism. How many power stations are needed to power the smile of a tour guide? The companies who will benefit are the shareholders of General Electric and Murray and Roberts (with the major shareholders such as Bank of New York, State Street, JP Morgan Chase, SSB, etc).

Most of the budget deficit of R90 Billion is not for housing or any social need, but for building power stations that are not needed, even by capitalist industry. The ANC government is prepared to borrow from imperialism to fund projects of imperialism but are not prepared to go to the same extent to put the millions of shack dwellers in proper houses. Their stated commitment to abolish slums is a lie, proven by their own budget figures.

**b] Unemployment**

By September 2008, the number of formal jobs was put at 8.4 million. This figure has dropped over the past 10 years from over 9 million. This means that the supposed job increase of 2 million jobs since 2002 have not been formal jobs and in fact have been largely confined to

public works. These 'jobs' have already disappeared. Since 1994 half the number of 50 000 commercial farms were wiped out and over 1.5 million farmworkers lost their jobs. Every year there are 500 000 school leavers. Thus the number of unemployed increase at least by 200 000 every year. Yet the government plans only to create 400 000 'fulltime- equivalent' jobs through public works schemes over the next 3 years. Instead of employing 400 000 new municipal workers with benefits, the government chooses to privatise municipal services through these casuals in public works.



The Cosatu leadership fully supports this casualisation of the public sector. The government has redefined the meaning of who is unemployed to exclude millions who have given up looking for work and the millions who starve in the informal sector. Last year they even redefined the meaning of 'discouraged' to exclude a further million workers from their books and put them in the general category of 'not

economically active'. The government claims unemployment has come down when in fact it has not only gone up but will always keep increasing under the current government plans.

**c] A further tax for low-wage workers is being planned**

The ANC government is planning to introduce an extra tax of 12-15% for all workers. This is supposedly to go for workers' pensions. When a worker leaves a job, you will not be able to claim any of the money, you must wait until you go on pension. The average life expectancy is less than 50 and 3 out of every 10 workers will die before the age of 40. This means that the 'pension' deduction will go to the banks and that most workers will not even see this money. But what will happen is that your take-home pay will be reduced by 12%. For example, if your wage is R2500 per month, your take-home pay will be R300 less.

**d] Cuts in pensions and grants**

Pensions and grants rose by 5% or less. This means that in real terms the government cut pensions and grants, ie with the new level of R1010 and R240 pensioners and grant holders can buy less than what they could last year. Yet, the Cosatu leaders and all the parliamentary parties hailed this budget as pro-poor. Pensions are cut, while at the same time the government is bailing out the mining monopolies by R2 Billion and the motor bosses by hundreds of millions of Rands. The 310,000 that are currently being retrenched by the monopolies are not being bailed out at all.

**e] Education**

Education is being privatised and many of the school leavers can hardly read or write. In addition about 4

million youth between 7 and 24 years are not attending any educational institution.

**f] Health**

From 1994 to date, the number of hospital beds per 1000 people has dropped from 27 to 17. Two-thirds of health expenditure goes to the private sector. Cosatu unions have investments in privatised health care.

**g] Ongoing neglect of the rural areas**

The budget allocates R1.8 Billion to 'rural development' while R179 Billion is allocated to 'economic services'. The government spends more on spying on the resistance to big capital (the Intelligence budget is R3 Billion) than on the millions in the rural areas. The 'bailout' by government of the monopoly capitalists receives hundreds of billions (2010 stadiums, Eskom, etc) while the rural poor are left to die of starvation and unemployment. Clearly, under the Popular front government of the ANC-SACP- Cosatu alliance, the rural poor face only further starvation and early death.

**All the parliamentary parties are capitalist**

The international prices of wheat, maize and sunflower seeds has dropped by over 40% in recent months, yet the major retailers and food producers have not lowered food prices on this scale. Not a single parliamentary party has waged a campaign for food prices to come down. Not a single one of them opposed the Eskom scam; not a single one of them demanded that the price of bread should be dropped, after Tiger Brands and other producers were found guilty of collusion over raising the price of bread since 1994. The Cosatu leaders have waged no centralised campaign against the current bloodbath of retrenchments, yet they praise a capitalist budget that supports profiteering by the bosses. They should have called a general strike to stop the retrenchments but do nothing because they are too busy campaigning for the election victory of the capitalist ANC. The fight against high food prices was reduced to a one-day strike for workers' to blow off steam- no prices have come down. Workers' sanctions should have been called in support of the masses in Zimbabwe, Swaziland, the DRC and Gaza, but only irregular pickets and once-off stoppages have been held.

**Palestine**

Both DA and ANC have similar positions on Palestine, calling for a 2-state Bantustan for Palestinians. Not a single parliamentary party has been prepared to call for a decision of parliament to implement sanctions against Israel. The Cosatu leaders support a campaign of

boycott and sanctions only in so far as it leads to a 2-state Bantustan for Palestinians.

**We expose the DA's plans to starve the working class**

The DA claims that it has a 'plan' to address unemployment. For this they put forward the setting up of Export processing zones (EPZ's).

The reformist ILO has done a study over 20 years of EPZ's and concludes that these are areas of low wages and high exploitation. Today there are over 27 million workers in 850 EPZ's worldwide, 90% of these workers are women. These are areas where there are regular mass dismissals, child labour, no minimum wages, where security guards and paramilitary are used to bash even the right to belong to a union. Worker leaders have been murdered, such as in Bangladesh; often police use physical violence to crush union organization; there are no minimum conditions such as the right to overtime pay and a limit on the working day; in

Thailand, long promoted as an Asian Tiger, child labour works for 90 cents per hour- this is what the DA wants to reduce the working class to- absolute slaves.

The worst capitalists like Coca cola, Nike are serial perpetrators of human rights abuses in the EPZ's; if the capitalists do not like the conditions, if for example the government wants to

clamp down on their practices, they just leave; this happened in Malaysia where a few years ago when workers wanted more rights, 60% of the EPZ bosses left overnight. What is more, EPZ's are like another country- not covered by any local law (or any law for that matter); the capitalists there pay no tax at all.

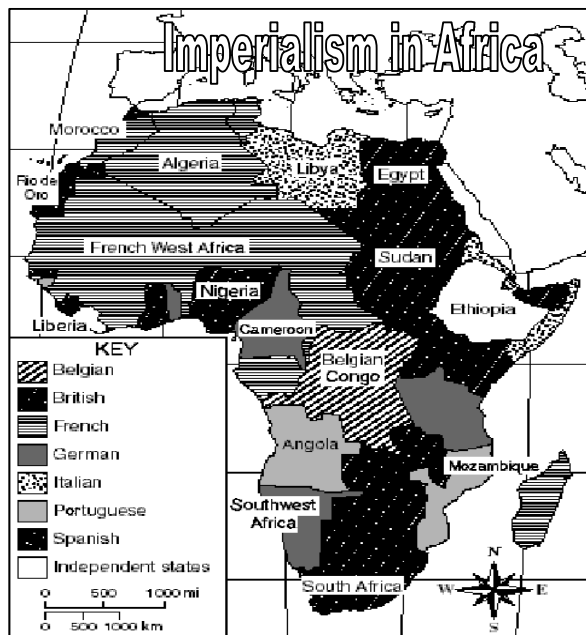
The DA reflects the worst side of the current capitalist crisis: the capitalists have made massive profits for many years, now that their profits are falling slightly, they want us to bail them out. They want to shift the burden of their crisis onto the working class by taking back what little rights we have. They want to reduce our wages and crush the unions. Every year the capitalist companies in South Africa repatriate over R200 bn in profits to their principals in the imperialist centres. For years while the tax rate was reduced from 35% to 28%, the capitalists continued to mass retrench workers. They have failed to produce jobs and what the DA wants for them is to further reduce the company tax rate. This is an obscene way to increase profits as the capitalists will just continue retrenching. The DA says 'we are one nation' when they want our votes, but when it comes to sharing company profits, they believe in a 2-tier labour market. No to the bailout of the capitalists- retrench the bosses!



**We expose the attempt by COPE to split the working class**

Workers International Vanguard League condemns the attempts by COPE (Congress of the People) to split the workers' movement by wanting to form a new trade union and/or new federation. Belatedly this splinter of the black middle class has discovered that they have no base among the working class. As is typical of the middle class they want to use the working class to fight their battles for them; they want to use workers for votes in the April elections.

Their manifesto is based on 'macro economic stability' that the country has enjoyed' (read: they support the GEAR economic policy responsible for opening the working class to increased exploitation, increased suffering and starvation); they believe the key is 'enterprise development' (read: more black capitalists to share in the exploitation of the working class); they believe in joint decision-making with big business in all that government does. Let's put it clear: big capital is retrenching 310 000 workers, they have deliberately



starved us through high prices and kept us homeless by profiteering on housing. This is the same big capital that COPE wants to have a joint decision -making over government.

In other words, the programme of COPE is to become the new boss boys of imperialism in South Africa, they want to become the South African MDC. With a capitalist programme, what sort of union can these opportunists build? Only monopoly capital will gain from having the working class even further divided.

Now is the time we need working class unity against high prices, against retrenchments, against imperialist backed war in the DRC, in Gaza, against the ongoing imperialist plunder of Zimbabwe. If the trade union leadership are not advancing working class leadership, let us mobilise to change them; but let this be on a clear working class programme, and on the basis of working class unity.

We call on the working class to reject COPE and their opportunist 'trade unionism'.

**What do we propose?**

- **Put up company tax to 50% now!** This will lay the basis for immediate building the houses for all and other social needs.
- **Break the alliance with the ANC and SACP;** Replace the Cosatu leaders with working class fighters who will advance working class interests and who will pursue real working class independence.
- **Expropriate all the banks,** place them under working class control and centralise them into one entity.
- **The SA revolution is part of the world socialist revolution:** The SA economy and the ruling classes are connected by a thousand threads to the world economy and imperialism. The highly developed division of labour in the epoch of imperialism excludes any notion of a successful revolution in one country. The success of the SA revolution will be absolutely dependent on successful revolutions in one or more advanced imperialist-capitalist country and the tangible support of the international working class. The best solidarity with the SA revolution would be a successful socialist revolution in one or more of the imperialist centres.
- **Jobs for all: reduce the working week, without loss of pay to 35 hours,** share the work among all those who can work; those in the mining and dangerous industries to a 30 hour week (without loss of pay); all work should be divided among all those who can work. In the case of retrenchments the relevant company should be expropriated and placed under workers control [wherever we speak of expropriation in this programme, we mean expropriation without compensation]
- **A sliding scale of wages and price controls:** Presently, the enormous jump in food and energy prices is wreaking havoc to the point of desperation in the lives of the employed and unemployed workers and their families. The capital-labour relations has always been characterised by starvation wages, high prices and exorbitant profits. We demand that wages should increase whenever there are price increases (a sliding scale of wages). No to one- or multiple year agreements. There should be the establishment of workers committees to monitor high prices in every workplace and in every area. Reduce the price of basic food by 50%; expropriate without compensation and place under workers' control all food retailers and producers.
- **Good Housing for all:** Housing provision has been privatized and left in the hands of the banks. The state subsidy supports privatized housing as it is completely inadequate for the necessary housing needs of the working class. The profiteering by the

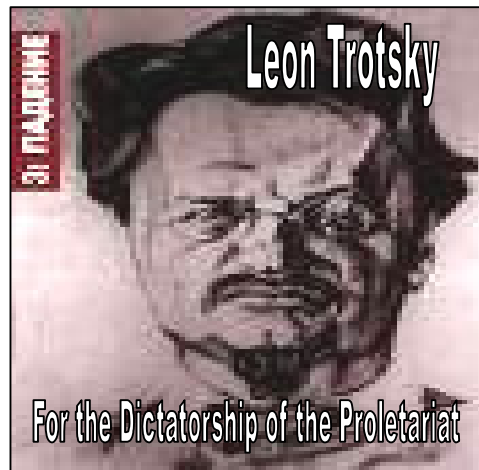
developers and the credit Act excludes the vast majority of the working class from adequate housing. Under these circumstances mass homelessness will not only be a permanent feature of capitalist SA but will continue to increase every year. We demand the immediate provision of adequate, low rental housing for all (pensioners, the unemployed and extremely low waged workers to be exempt from rent payment). We demand that all vacant buildings, offices, hotels be expropriated and made available for housing; we demand that vacant office space of big capital, insurance companies, lawyers, accountants be expropriated and made available for housing need; mansions and large estates of the capitalists and the upper middle class be expropriated and made available for housing; dismantling of the group areas and the resettlement of the working class near places of work and in the urban centres; the rural working class should be given permanent security of tenure, the immediate upgrading of their dwellings and expropriation of the buildings of the capitalist landowner and the resettlement of the rural working class in appropriate dwellings.

- **Expropriate monopoly land owners:** 90% of the agricultural land belongs to the commercial monopoly capitalists; the immediate task is to expropriate (without compensation) of all this land and the establishment of workers control; nationalization of the land in the former Bantustans and the return of such land to those who want to continue subsistence farming, with the support of the state through increased allocation of land, implements, credit and seeds, with the vision of encouraging such farmers to form co-operatives and eventually collectives that would be incorporated into the socialist farming collectives.
- **For a United Palestine:** the calling of a debate on sanctions against Israel and promoting immediate workers' sanctions against Israel, Zimbabwe and Swaziland; forward to a united Palestine; forward to working class power in Palestine, Zimbabwe, DRC, Swaziland.
- **Free liberatory, universal, compulsory Education:** The current schooling system is a mechanism for maintaining the class domination of the capitalist class. It places obstacles in the way of the working class as a whole from acquiring scientific knowledge. Universities and their professors currently play the role, by and large, of justifying the system of capitalist exploitation. The first demand on education is that the schooling/education system becomes an organ for the complete abolition of the division of society into classes; it should be an organ of communist regeneration of society. The struggle for this fundamental change of the basis of education goes hand in hand with the struggle for free, compulsory, general and technical education from crèche, kindergarten, pre-school, primary to secondary school. The freeing of women and a special emphasis that the education of children is a social responsibility. All pupils should have their food, clothing, shoes and scholastic equipment provided free by the state. Support for students, especially for working class students to enable them to attend universities; many-sided state aid for the workers, semi-peasants and peasants (such as there are): further education institutions, libraries, adult schools, open universities, courses, lectures, cinemas, etc. The extensive scientific and technical, professional training of all students above the age of 17.
- **Abolishing of segregated areas:** The interconnection of the banks and housing provision means that under capitalism the segregated group areas will remain. This is the objective reality that underlies and perpetuates racism. Side by side with the integrated housing demands as set out in demand 4 above, the demand is made for integrated schools and social amenities and services.
- **Free universal Health care:** Over 70% of the national expenditure on health goes into the private sector. Only 7 out of 45 million people benefit from this. The rest of the people (38 million) face a collapsed health system that makes profits more important than health. We demand that all private hospitals and clinics be expropriated and free health care be provided to all. There needs to be a speedy training of a new generation of socially conscious health workers.
- **End to Privatization of state assets:** In the current period of capitalist decay, the profiteers desperately seek new fields to exploit as they struggle to overcome falling profits. Electricity, public land, schooling, water, health care, social welfare, etc all become targets of the capitalists. We demand the expropriation of all privatized state assets (without compensation) and for them to be placed under working class control.
- **An end to the stranglehold of imperialism over the economy:** All the banks, the major food companies, the big mines, in fact over 80% of the JSE (Johannesburg Stock Exchange) are controlled by imperialist banks and monopolies. These imperialist companies are therefore the primary reason for the mass unemployment, low wages, high prices, mass homelessness, collapse of what little health care there was, super-exploitation of the working masses and oppression of the peasantry across Africa. Imperialism made massive profits during the period of National Party rule, on the back of the most brutal exploitation and slavery of most of the working class. Only when imperialist rule was threatened by revolution in the 1980's did they accept a transition to a limited, bourgeois democratic rule. Now they continue to profit at a rate higher than ever before. We demand the immediate expropriation of all imperialist assets and for them to be placed under working class control.

- **An end to tribalism and regionalism:** For hundreds of years the capitalist class has depended on the mechanism of 'divide and rule'. One such mechanism is the promotion of tribal divisions. The overall result, irrespective of some privileges to one or other group, is the continued poverty of the masses. We demand an end to all tribal councils and their replacement with workers councils, where leadership is elected, subject to instant recall and who receive the average wage of a skilled worker. In fact all elective structures should be on the same basis. All provinces should be disbanded (they are modelled on the lines similar to the ex-Bantustans) and a new system of central planning introduced so that the differences between urban and rural are abolished.
- **Away with xenophobia:** The development of the SA economy has always been based on the labour of workers from all over the world. Workers from Malaysia, China, India, southern Africa, Europe, etc have from time to time played a role in building the economy. Once again, the media and institutions of the capitalists play up artificial, national differences to divide the working class, with the sole objective of maintaining control, ie of ensuring the continuation of exploitation of the entire mass. There are only 400 capitalist families that control the bulk of the world's wealth. The same imperialists who are behind the wars in Africa and South America, in the Middle East, who are behind the exploitation of workers in every country, are also responsible for the exploitation of the working class in SA. We have more in common with the migrant worker than with the local capitalist. We reject the notion of 'illegal migrants'. We stand for international working class unity in struggle against our common enemy- world imperialism-capitalism. Workers have no country and indeed the world is our home. Our struggle for Socialism cannot be separated from the world struggle for Socialism. In this struggle we stand shoulder to shoulder with all workers of the world.
- **Equal rights for women:** To solve the Gender question we believe that what has been traditionally regarded as 'women's work' should be socialised: We thus demand cheap, public laundries; cheap public restaurants/eating houses; child care and education should be a social responsibility. Nursing mothers should have crèches at their workplace. Light duties should be prescribed pre and post-birth for an adequate period. Housing cleaning should be a collective responsibility.
- **For the formation of workers' defence committees:** The capitalists and their agents are launching ongoing attacks against the working class,

through high prices, mass retrenchments. The capitalists' desperation for greater profits is increasing. This means that attacks on the working class will intensify and as in the case of Bolivia, may mean the possibility of workers facing armed fascist gangs. It is necessary for workers to become organised in our workplaces and in our communities through setting up of rank-and file defence committees. These committees may become the embryos of workers councils that reflect workers' democracy outside of parliament, and will be the basis of building local, regional, national and international struggles and campaigns.

- **For the Dictatorship of the proletariat:** Change will come outside of and against parliament: In essence, what we stand for is the total transformation of the political-economic-social relations- ie the establishment of working class power. The transition to Socialism can only be through the dictatorship of the proletariat (the dictatorship of the majority), organised in soviets (workers councils), with delegates subject to instant recall, earning the wage of average skilled workers, the disbanding of a standing army and the rule of the armed working class; as opposed to bourgeois parliamentary 'democracy' (in reality the dictatorship of the handful of capitalists) we propose workers councils which will be legislative and executive at the same time.



- **Federation of Southern African Socialist states:** Due to the inter-connection of the

Southern African region we stand for the establishment of a federation of Southern African Socialist states as a transition towards a Union of Soviet Socialist states in Southern Africa. At the same time we stand for the establishment of a United Socialist states of Africa. The broader context however, must always be the advancing of the world Socialist revolution, which will not proceed in a straight line but will open up various possible combinations that cannot be determined in advance. At the same time it is imperative to realise that any revolutionary overthrow of capitalist relations in Africa, or anywhere in the neo-colonial world, cannot be sustained without a successful Socialist revolution in one or more of the imperialist centres.

Issued 21.02.09 Workers International Vanguard League, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Community House, 41 Salt River rd, Salt River, 7925 ph 021 4476777 email [workersinternational@gmail.com](mailto:workersinternational@gmail.com) website [0](http://0) Gauteng: ph 0834832038; Free State ph 0761866147; Eastern Cape ph 0734751732; Western Cape: ph 0822020617; Mpumalanga ph 0766462481 Kzn: ph 0763657361

Statement by WIVL

## Free the Kliptown Five

Stop Press: The five comrades were fined 3000 rands or 2 years in jail on the 13 March.

The national organiser of the WIVL, Thabo Modisane and 4 other activists having been found guilty on the 10th March 2008 on a charge of public violence. The charges relate to a protest by the community in Kliptown, under the banner of the Anti-Privatization Forum, on 3 Sept 2007 when they took to the streets to demand houses. On the 14th August 2007 the community had handed over a memorandum calling for their local councillor to be recalled and for adequate housing for all. In the town where the Freedom Charter was adopted on 26 June 1955, Kliptown, thousands still live in shacks despite the document promising houses for all. To date, one and half years later, the memorandum has not been responded to.

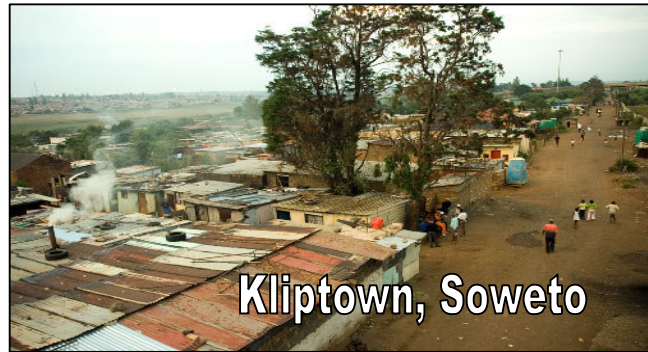
The housing struggles in Kliptown, Soweto, reflect the true meaning of the Freedom Charter, namely that a section of the black capitalist will benefit out of the democratisation of the country. In the words of Nelson Mandela when commenting on the so-called nationalisation clause from this Charter, from the June 1955 edition of the Liberator magazine:

*'The breaking up and democratisation of these monopolies will open up fresh fields for the development of a prosperous Non-European bourgeois class. For the first time in the history of the country the Non-European bourgeoisie will have the opportunity to own in their own name and right mills and factories, and trade and private enterprise will boom and flourish as never before.'*

What is important further, is that this development of a black capitalist class, is at the expense of the demands and rights of the working class. What follows from this is that the new black managers, the ANC in government, then adopt all the repressive measures of a capitalist regime, which indeed they are. The monopolies remain largely untouched and the black capitalist class are thus junior partners of imperialism. The ANC are incapable of even fighting for the demands of all the black middle class, let alone that of the working class. Yet, the Cosatu and SACP leaders all call for a resounding electoral victory for this capitalist ANC.

On the 18th April last year (2008), there were confirmed cases of cholera in Kliptown. One of the first people to contract it was Kelebogile Malefane, who died on the 12th June 2008 of this preventable disease.

The response of the ANC government to years of protest by the Kliptown community for houses? They built a R200 million white elephant, called Freedom Charter Square. Part of the square is a 4 star Holiday Inn, which cost R23 million to build. This hotel remains mostly more than half-empty while 30m from its doors lies a sprawling squatter camp where raw sewage flows in the streets.



The magistrate in this case repeatedly postponed the case more than 20 times to give the police more time to find 'evidence' against the 5 accused.

On Friday 13th March 2008, the 5 face the prospect of being jailed for the crime of being leaders of the resistance to capitalist non-delivery to the working class. The case is being held at the Protea North magistrate's court in Soweto. Public violence carries a possible sentence of 5 years in prison.

It should be the capitalist parliamentary parties who should be on trial for the crime of keeping the working class without homes and of being the agents of profits for monopoly capital.

We call for a national and international campaign against the victimization of these working class activists. We are calling for mass protests at the court on Friday 13 March 2008 as part of a further general mobilization of the working class. The finding of the court exposes the true nature of the coming April elections, namely that it is a contest between the bourgeois parties as to who will be the new manager to serve the capitalist masters. Not a single one of them can commit to building decent houses for all the working class; thus it follows that every single one of them would support the arrest and jailing of activists who find themselves at the leadership of the working class. A vote for any of the parliamentary parties is a vote for more cholera, more homelessness, more starvation, more arrests of activists.

The capitalist monopolies made over R700 Billion in profits last year. Yet the ANC-SACP-Cosatu Popular Front bails out these same capitalists with hundreds of billions of Rands (Eskom electricity scam of new power stations, the 2010 stadia, etc). The capitalists continue to retrench hundreds of thousands of workers; no-one is bailing out the over 20 million starving; who will bail out the Kliptown 5? It is only united working class action, nationally and internationally can stop the imperialist attacks. The deeper their crisis, the more they will adopt harsher measures against working class fighters.

Forward to decent houses for all! Organise or starve!  
Shaheed Mahomed, Secretary, Workers International Vangu, 41 Salt River rd., Salt River 7925, South Africa  
ph 0822020617, fax 0880214476777  
[workersinternational@gmail.com](mailto:workersinternational@gmail.com) web  
[www.workersinternational.org.za](http://www.workersinternational.org.za)

## FLT: International Solidarity with the Kliptown 5

Comrades and friends of WIVL,

We have received your letter dated on March 10th, where you tell us about the charge “of public violence” against 5 activists who belong the Anti-Privatization Forum.

Of course, in representation of the Secretariat of International Coordination and Action -SCAI- of FLT, we call on you to launch together a true international campaign to prevent the South African worker and popular fighters from being put in prison.

Besides, we also take as ours the demands: Forward to decent houses for all! Organise or starve! Since these are slogans and demands of the entire international working class.

As you may see in the Argentine LOI-CI paper we sent you, with an international campaign, we helped to free the worker oil fighters of Las Heras (southern Argentina) from prison after three years of rotting in the jails of the bourgeois regime of Argentina.

Comrades, your call and campaign has been already sent to all the groups of FLT and International groups with whom we have a relationship with the aim of starting fast a campaign of pronouncements of all the world worker organizations.

We should not expect less than that. In the secret CIA jails the combatants of the Afghan and Iraqi resistance are rotting in there. Meanwhile the Guantanamo prisoners are kept in jail and thousands of Palestine fighters are kept like hostages in the prisons of the murderous Zionist State of Israel. Two Afro-American workers, leaders of Oakland dock workers have already been prosecuted for leading the struggle against the imperialist war within the heart of United States.

From FLT, we affirm that the prosecution and conviction of 5 worker fighters of South Africa is part of the repression against the anti-imperialist and popular workers in the whole world side by side with the brutal attack launched against the working class' labor conquests at worldwide level by the imperialist bourgeois front in bankruptcy whose crisis is shifted on to the backs of the masses with starvation, misery, unemployment, high cost of living and as it couldn't have been any other way, with repression and counterrevolutionary wars.

In advance, comrades, we are with you in your struggle. We'll publish your letter to be known by all the worker

organizations where our groups fight along side the exploits in Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand and Central America.

Only an International campaign of the World working class can overturn the charges against the 5 South African activists and free from the jails the Iraqi and Palestine resistance, the worker fighters against the war in USA and the more than 4000 prosecuted immigrants separated from their children who are in prison under the yoke of the imperialist US regime.

Release from the jails of the Zionist state the thousand of Palestine prisoners and non-prosecution and unconditional freedom to the 5 worker fighters of South Africa who face the cynicism and cowardice of building 4 stars hotels which cost \$2.3 million alongside the shacks of the slave workers in South Africa!

For a single International campaign of the worker organizations to liberate from the jails all fighters who confront the capitalist barbarism, its repression and its counterrevolutionary wars!

Freedom for the prisoners of the combative Oakland dock workers who fight in USA against the imperialist war of extermination and

genocide launched by the butcher Bush over Iraqi nation!

Long live the South African working class! Long live the Afro-American workers who confronted the imperialist counterrevolutionary Wars! Freedom to the prisoners of the Iraqi and Afghan and Palestine resistance! Freedom to the more of 4000 Hispano-American immigrants who are in Obama's jails separated from their families! As WIVL of South Africa says: Organise or starve! For the internationalist unity of the world working class!

11/03/09

Carlos Munzer, Laura Sánchez y Martín F. for the Secretariat of International Coordination and Action (SCAI) of the Fracción Leninista Trotskista (Leninist Trotskyist Fraction)



# Guadeloupe: Indefinite General Strike

We reprint an edited article by the French Tendency CLAIRES (Communism, Self-organisation, Internationalism and Revolution) which it wrote for discussion inside the new Anticapitalist Party (NPA). The does not imply that we share all the political positions of the Tendency.

## After six weeks of general strike in Guadeloupe and four weeks in Martinique

The workers and people of the Antilles (West Indies) show us the way forward. This is the indefinite general strike, called and prepared by a united front of the trades unions, with a program based on a program of demands, backed by mass mobilisations and pickets. MEDEF has refused to concede anything, but Sarkozy wants to end the general strike by making concessions because he fears that it will spread to the other colonies and even to France. But the general strike continues!



French government bears responsibility.

On February 18 Sarkozy announce the resumption of negotiations with the LKP. This temporarily defused the risk of a widespread explosion but was not a solution. Today the MEDEF still refuses to make any concession, while the government, based mainly on small and medium businesses, tries to end the general strike

It's time to fight for the General Strike in France in solidarity with that in the Caribbean because our demands are the same and the main enemies are the same: the MEDEF [Employers Federation] and Sarkozy! The leaders of the workers in France must call and prepare a General Strike on a platform urgently as the only way of ensuring that the demands of the Colonies are won and that they are not isolated and repressed.

In Guadeloupe and Martinique, the strikers themselves will decide the objective of the strike. But the attitudes of the Sarkozy regime and the MEDEF make it obvious that any real satisfaction of their demands will be impossible without a radicalisation of the struggle. Already the LKP (Collective against Exploitation) in Guadeloupe and the Collective of February 5 (CF5) in Martinique has acted to occupy the companies to take control of production and form strike committees organised into a central strike committee.

The French state lacks legitimacy in the colonies, the LKP and the CF5 has the confidence of the masses and the authority to form a Government of the workers, based on the expropriation without compensation of the major companies, and able to take up the right to self-determination.

**The government, the employers, the UMP and the PS use all means to end the general strike**

After failing to repress the workers in Guadeloupe on the 16 and 17 February, the French colonial state had to retreat temporarily in the face of a strengthening general strike, with more roadblocks, youth arming themselves, and a union leader shot dead, for which the

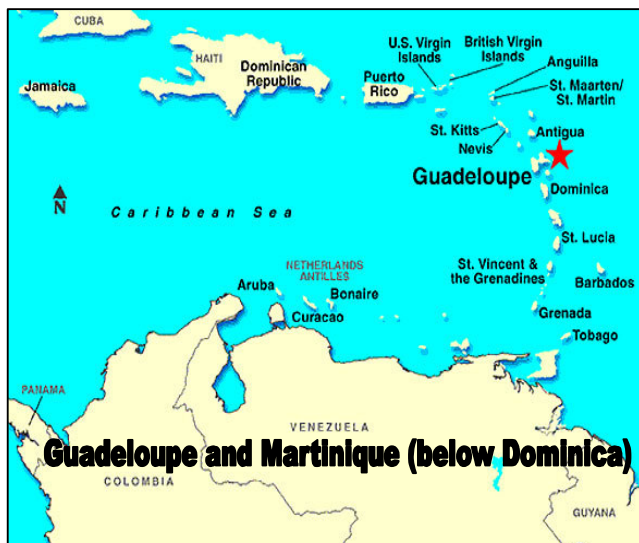
without damaging the interests of the capitalists. The proposed agreement is to increase the salaries by 200 euros for those between 1 and 1.4 times the minimum wage (the majority of employees), 6% for earnings between 1.4 and 1.6 times the SMIC, and 3% for wages above that). But for three years, employers will pay only 50 euros per employee. Local authorities will fund 50 euro and the State will cover the remaining 100 euros from the Social Security budget. The current agreement on offer in Martinique has a similar content.

[Ed note: The strike concluded on Wed 5th March with the acceptance of the 200 euro increase per month for low paid workers]. *Moreover, in Guadeloupe, the draft agreement was signed only by a minority of employers, employing approximately 17 000 out of 85 000 as the MEDEF and the CGPME. The LKP has agreed in principle, but while negotiations with the prefect and the bosses continue it calls for the continuation of the general strike, and for workers to enter business premises to force all the other bosses to sign. In Martinique, the CF5 is divided between those who want to sign right away and those who want to continue the general strike or at least consult the strikers.*

*MEDEF is standing firm because it knows that a real victory for workers in the Antilles would lead to a radicalization and to mobilizations in the other colonies and in France itself. The government, meanwhile, tries to break the strike by dividing the strikers and trying to get the LKP to call for the resumption of work of those workers covered by the agreement. The government hopes to prepare "public opinion" to accept a crackdown against those militants who want to enter business premises to force the bosses to sign the agreement. The prefect deployed mobile policemen to prevent them from entering companies producing violent clashes.*

*The strength of the employers and the government is based on their clear analysis of the situation in France. Indeed, workers came out strongly on 29 January, the strike of non-tenured faculty continues from February 2 and is joined by a growing number of students who are beginning to block the universities; the mobilization of hospital workers against the new Bachelot law [named after the Minister of health who proposes to privatise the health system] promises to be powerful one on 5 March. There is a rising level of anger among workers throughout the country. According to the polls, 78% of the population of France supports the strike in the Antilles and 90% of the left.*

In a word, a defeat of the employers and government in Guadeloupe and Martinique would create the very real specter of a general strike that would affect the heart



of French capitalism and would therefore, at a time when the world goes into an increasingly violent crisis, have huge international implications. If they find no agreement with the LKP and the CF5, they run the risk of hardening the general strike, because workers cannot accept to have a four to six weeks general strike for nothing. Moreover, the longer the strike lasts, the greater the risk of contagion to France, despite the deliberate policy of union leaderships to leave our brothers and sisters isolated in the Antilles by refusing to generalize the mobilizations and leaving the next day of action until 19 March.

This extremely dangerous situation for the French bourgeoisie, which explains the excitement and divisions between the employers and the government, and the intervention of a Ségolène Royal demanding (so unusual!) that employers grant the Guadeloupe workers on the lowest wages a 200 euro monthly increase. The Socialist Party, in fact, has the most elected legislators for the "region" of Guadeloupe and is therefore well aware that the continuation of the general strike could jeopardize its own power, rightly identified by the workers and the people as a mere left variant of the colonial policy that has always been implemented by the French State. In addition, the SP representing that

sector of the bourgeoisie that want to avoid a avoid a general strike in France, asked Sarkozy to add some more concessions to workers and fewer to banks in his plan to "save capitalism". The SP support for wage claims of the poorest workers is therefore a minor tactical difference with Sarkozy.

**The standoff with the bosses and the state shows that to win workers must ask who has the power**

The intervention of the PS shows that it is the question of who has the power that is being raised in Guadeloupe and Martinique. Indeed, the contempt displayed by Sarkozy in refusing to meet the demands, and the start of the crackdown by the police have completed to discredited the French regime. The legitimacy of the colonial State, openly serving the bosses and the "békés" [rich creoles] has long been lost for the workers and the people, as evidenced over the years the success of the UGTG, union independence, and autonomous organizations. Yet it had maintained the illusion that it could provide social benefits to the workers in colonies - although those gains were actually imposed on the bourgeoisie and the state by the class struggle in France and the colonies. But in dismantling these longstanding social gains, allowing rising unemployment and poverty in the colonies, refusing today to meet basic demands, the "republican" veil that masked France's colonial rule has been finally totally discredited.

Moreover, while the reformist leaders of Reform and the LKP and CF5 launched the strike primarily to raise immediate economic demands, the depth, duration and dynamics of the strike has tended to break out of this narrow framework. In particular, the strikers have organized the production and distribution of certain goods and services, including gasoline, gas, and electricity to maintain the strike. So the logic is for the spontaneous emergence of production and distribution controlled by the workers themselves. Similarly, the marches and pickets while organized and managed by the LKP and the CF5 have a logic of self-organization which breaks out of the controls of the leaders.

Indeed, the main leaders of the LKP and the CF5 are militant but in the cause of reform. [see footnote]. That's why they seek an "end to the crisis". But are the workers and the people of Guadeloupe and Martinique willing to stop a powerful strike of four to six weeks for such a meager result? It is up to them to decide, but nothing is less certain, as shown on the 17-18/02 by the unruly behavior of young strikers against the LKP organisers, the riots in Martinique on 26/ 02, and the demands by the 30 000 demonstrators Pointe-à-Pitre on March 1 who rejected any agreement by the LKP until it was guaranteed by all the bosses and the government. In addition, the call for a general strike on the island of Reunion [in the Indian Ocean] on March 5, opens the possibility of the spread of the uprising in the Antilles, and out of control of the reformist leaders. And in France, workers are increasingly likely to want to follow suit.

In Guadeloupe and Martinique, there is evidence now that the real satisfaction of claims is impossible without radicalization. Indeed, the refusal to give the MEDEF and the government shows better than long speeches impasse reformism: even a general strike for six weeks is not enough to impose the satisfaction of claims the most basic! It will be for workers to decide whether or not to strike if the LKP and the CF5 call for resumption of work. But it is clear that the only way to truly win is to go further, to radicalize the general strike and self-organization.

Therefore, based on the power of the general strike, workers can propose to continue the struggle, but on the basis of a new program to fight with new methods and requiring the leaders of the LKP and CF5 to incorporate and implement them:



- For the implementation of a General Assembly [GA] of all the companies on strike, the election of strike committees and federations at all levels, with mandated and recallable delegates (union or other) and a Central Committee to conduct the strike on the basis of militant workers democracy. Only then can the strikers control their own strike, decide for themselves what they are willing to accept from the State and employers and in particular how they will continue their movement, so that it continues until all their demands are met.
- For the GA and the strike committees to vote to occupy the companies under workers control to make them work to meet the needs of the people, deciding what should be produced and how it should be distributed. This is the condition to prevent deterioration of the general strike, to keep public support and develop the ultimate, revolutionary, self-organization of the strike.
- For the withdrawal of all French repressive forces, whose very presence is a threat to further struggle. For the formation of workers and popular centralised self-defence committees: it is the only way to collectively impose a deterrent force against the state forces of repression, to avoid the trap of isolated initiatives and to minimize the effects of the

**uncontrollable proliferation of weapons smuggling in the Antilles.**

There is no other solution for the general strike to radicalize and strengthen itself in the context of reform and to avoid the trap of divide and rule set by the government. This is what the revolutionaries should explain to workers, independently against the reformist leaders who want to end the strike while the claims are not met. They must say this clearly, in particular the leaders of Workers Fight, a group linked to LO and plays a leading role in CGTG, those of CERCASOL and GRS (related to the NPA) and those of the Alliance of Workers and Peasants (related to the POI and in senior positions in several unions, including FP and UGTG).

At the same time, the situation itself shows clearly that a general strike is not enough, and raises the question of who holds the political power. Faced with the French colonial state and its servants in the UMP and PS, which have always served the "Békés" and all the big bosses of the West Indies, there will ultimately be no alternative to the seizure of power by the workers themselves. At this stage, the workers in the Caribbean do not consciously have this goal, but they have long been sick of the colonial power, the UMP and the SP and trust the LKP in Guadeloupe and the CF5 in Martinique. That is why it is legitimate to demand of those who are leading these workers fronts to claim they have the power and to form a provisional government as the alternative to the discredited French state and its forces of repression, its prefects, its regional and general political representatives.

This obviously would cause a break with the bourgeois parties openly participating in these fronts. But the majority of workers and people would support such a government to meet their social and democratic demands. This government would have to expropriate without compensation the large companies and large fortunes of the Békés, and centralize the planning of production and distribution controlled by the workers themselves. To mobilize all categories of workers (public and private sector workers and employees, but also small farmers, shopkeepers and artisans, students ...) and to ensure the right to self-determination of the Guadelupian people oppressed for centuries by the French colonial state rule, such a government would convene a constituent assembly of workers and oppressed people, who freely decide the status of the country, its structures, its laws, including redefinition on an equal basis, its links with France. It would decide on its relations with neighboring countries, including Cuba and other Caribbean islands, Venezuela and the countries of Central America. Finally, the government would speak to the workers and peoples of other colonies and the workers in metropolitan France to make the same call and engage the in same struggle against the French State.

**To support the struggle of workers of the Antilles and for our own demands, we must fight for the indefinite general strike in France**

The workers of France cannot remain spectators, we must show solidarity with workers and the people of Guadeloupe and Martinique. This should not be an abstract solidarity, but the best help we can give them is to fight for the indefinite general strike in France. For that is the only way to raise the question of who has the power and force the employers and Sarkozy to give up repression in the colonies and to meet our demands both there and in France. Therefore we must:

- Convince our co-workers to participate in massive demonstrations of support for a general strike in Guadeloupe and Martinique, and fight for our organizations to actually mobilize all the necessary support to the strikers in the colonies;
- Build and develop of ongoing struggles, such as the indefinite strike in higher education, the mobilization of the hospital workers against the Bachelot law, strikes at the post office in the private sector for wages and against dismissal, etc..
- Build strike committees in companies and institutions to prepare for an indefinite general strike, without waiting for the new "action day" which the union leaderships use to demobilize workers. The aim is to concretely help workers to build their movements to prepare for the indefinite strike. We must also create a self-organization of the ranks to demand that the political union leaderships stop their "dialogue" with the government. They must follow the leaders of Guadeloupe and Martinique in urgently preparing and calling for the general strike and pickets on the basis of a platform which includes the main demands of workers:
  - Meet the demands of workers in Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guiana and Réunion;
  - No to repression, immediate withdrawal of forces of repression of the French state from all the colonies;
  - EUR 300 monthly increase for all;
  - No redundancy, no closure of business;
  - Opening of books and publishing the bonuses of managers and capitalists;
  - Cancellation of all job cuts in the civil service;
  - Removal of the tax shield to tax the rich;
  - Withdrawal of all counter-reforms of the government: the general review of public policy (Revision Générale des Politiques Publiques - RGPP) [to increase public sector efficiencies, i.e. cut public spending], postal service reform, reform of schools, decrees amending the status of faculty and competitions for recruitment of teachers, LRU law [restructuring of the universities as businesses], Bachelot bill against the public hospital closures and relocation of utilities useful to people, etc.. ;
  - Fight the repressive immigration laws, immediate halt to raids and deportations.

The NPA and other organizations that claim to be Anti-capitalist must fight for the implementation of the general strike and take concrete measures to build it. They have already called for demonstrations of solidarity with workers of the West Indies. However, the SP has boycotted it, while the PCF and the main trade

union branches are calling for it only because they fear above all the extension of the general strike in France. Thus the NPA and other organizations that claim to be Anti-capitalist must together, against the leadership politics of the main unions, take bold initiatives to prepare the political conditions for the general strike: they have a crucial responsibility in this situation.

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**Footnote:**

Support for the united front and even for their leaders when they are victims of attacks by the bosses and the government does not prevent criticism of their politics. In this case, the platform of demands of the LKP, which includes almost all the unions, reformist political parties (such as PCG) and "extreme left" (including Workers Fight linked to LO), but also bourgeois (as Les Verts), as well as cultural associations, contains a long list of very basic demands including wages, hiring contractors, transport, living conditions, the right to training, the right to organize, defense of cultural identities, and so on. There are also a large number of highly questionable demands, typically reformist, which are against the interests of the workers and people of Guadeloupe. For example, the LKP claims higher wages but not on the basis of the needs of employees. It advocates the participation of employee representatives in the governing bodies of the company with voting rights, ie for the association of trade unions in the implementation of management strategies. It does not call for a ban on layoffs and plant closings, but a "social plan" in case of redundancies, with "reclassification and mandatory training. It does not rule against public aid to private companies, but only for their "return (...) in case of redundancy." It does not rule against working on Sundays or even against its extension, but the "duty of an agreement or Branch Company before any work permit on Sunday," As the struggle against the "masters of education " is developing in France, LKP demand a moratorium of 4 years for the reform of teacher recruitment, the time allowing the establishment by the UAG [Université des Antilles-Guyane] Masters of professionalization and the output of the first promotions. It decides unilaterally for the 'exemption from property tax for the benefit of farmers throughout the country, without distinguishing between large and small farmers. It does not call for expropriation without compensation of large companies, but supports the building of a luxury hotel on the basis of providing jobs, when these companies have been enriched by plunder and exploitation, and have sacked many workers! Finally, it says nothing against the French State and does not call for the right of self-determination of the people of Guadeloupe. The union the UGTG itself, which leads the LKP, despite its anti-colonialist and progressive militancy is reformist. Thus it supports the border police in acting to stop illegal immigration as «law-abiding professionals of the Republic » (cf . [http://ugtg.org/article\\_759.html](http://ugtg.org/article_759.html)).

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# What We Fight For

## 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 labor of the productive classes to make its profits. To survive, capitalism became increasingly destructive of "nature" and humanity. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 program*, 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.

## Fight for Communism

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

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**PO Box 6595, Auckland, NZ. Mail address:**

**PO Box 6595, Auckland, New Zealand.**

**Email [cwganz@yahoo.com](mailto:cwganz@yahoo.com)**

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