

Victory to the Palestinians

In April this year the Israeli state celebrated its fortieth anniversary. It has hardly been a happy forty years. For the Jewish people for whom it was supposed to be the promised land, it has meant continual war and three digit inflation. For the Palestinians things have been much worse. They have been forced to live a ghetto-like existence squeezed between Israel and the Arab states, Jordan and Lebanon, and subjected to the brutality of the Israeli state machine. April also marked an increase in the resistance of the Palestinian people. The Israelis have responded with poisoned gas and dropping bags of rock from the air to smash their asbestos roof camps. The position of the Palestinians is akin to that of the Blacks in South Africa. They are used as a cheap pool of migrant labour for super exploitation. Those who live in Israel are denied the right to social security. Those who live in the occupied Territories are shipped to do the dirty work for Israeli society. However, they are not even allowed to stay the night. They are subject to a pass law system which prohibits their movement, just like in South Africa. The Palestinian Proletarians are forced to fight for their survival. They are the vanguard of class struggle. Whilst not in possession of a revolutionary programme, they are going beyond that of the bourgeois nationalists of the PLO and PFLP.

When Israel was established forty years ago the Trotskyist movement warned that its formation was reactionary and Utopian. They considered it reactionary because it was propped up by imperialism. Utopian because a Jewish state could not survive surrounded by hostile Arab nations whose combined populations were then sixty million. How then has it survived albeit with difficulty? Since 1948 it has made quite a few border incursions. It has occupied the Sinai Peninsula. It has also occupied large sections of both Jordan and Lebanon. It has been able to use its military muscle to divide the reactionary Arab rulers. In the Lebanon it has blocked with Christian Fascists. It has been able to negotiate with President Sadat of Egypt at the Palestinians expense. It has raided Palestinian camps as far away as Tunis. However, the main factor guaranteeing the state of Israel has been imperialism. The Jewish people have been kicked around like political footballs, not just in Nazi Germany, but throughout the capitalist world and Stalinist Russia.

The Stalinist bureaucracy was a party to Israel's establishment. Israel was a cheap solution to the Jewish question. More important they wanted to obtain a major foothold in the Middle East. The Imperialists want Israel to police their super exploitation. It is much cheaper than sending in the Sixth Fleet. The fact that U.S. Secretary of State, George Shultz, flew into Israel to try and achieve a peace settlement shows how concerned the Imperialists are. They are concerned at the way Israeli is dealing with the Palestinians because, they are worried that it might blow up in their faces. They are concerned at how Israel is dealing with its resistance, but it is fully behind the state of Israel. It is easier to keep ones fingers cleaner at a distance. In Britain some members of the Liberal Party are feigning concern for the Palestinians and are supporting a mini state on the west bank of the Jordan. This is the programme of Yasser Arafat and the PLO. The PLO are, of course, far more serious and are fighting for it arms in hand. Either way it is Utopian. Israel is based on the exploitation of the Palestinians and cannot permit a free state. It can only survive by depriving the Palestinians of their national rights.

Trotskyists stand with the Palestinian Proletarian Fighters in their struggle against super-exploitation and deprivation of national rights. This does not mean that these fighters have a revolutionary programme. It is the task of Trotskyists to provide this. However, in no way does this mean

equivocation in the struggle against the Israeli state. Some left wing groups, including the Spartacist League, Socialist Fight, and Socialist Echo talk about a united struggle between Jewish and Arab workers which transcends nationalism. Palestinian and Jewish working class unity would be a wonderful thing but the point is to establish under what conditions such unity, a meaningful unity, to fight capitalism can be achieved. Jewish workers can become class conscious but this requires unequivocal support for Palestinian self-determination and unequivocal support for their military victory against the state of Israel. With regard to South Africa, Trotsky pointed out that to push aside or to weaken national slogans, with the object of not antagonising the white chauvinists, would be criminal opportunism. So too in the case of Palestine and this the Spartacist League, Socialist Fight and Socialist Echo are guilty of. In no way can the national question be liquidated. The Israeli working class support the Israeli state armed to the teeth and backed by imperialism. For the Palestinians nationalism is a justified response to being kicked into the desert. In no way can the two nationalisms be equated. Despite serious limitations the nationalism of the Palestinians is progressive. A victory for them would be a major set back for imperialism in the Middle East. The Spartacist League, by claiming to oppose both nationalism's covers for imperialism by refusing to take a side in the existing war. In fact, they have even warned that a Palestinian victory would "reverse the terms of oppression". This is a chauvinist equivocation. The scenario could only be a conceivable possibility if, somehow, the Palestinians were to somehow gain imperialist sponsorship in order to establish a state Palestinian based analogous to Israel. Whilst some imperialism may trust Yasser Arafat under some circumstances, in no way would they trust an armed Palestinian working class with arms as the struggle might get out of control. In reality all imperialists are united in their defence of Israel. The self-determination of the Palestinians can only be resolved through proletarian dictatorship. The Spartacist equivocation that a Palestinian victory would 'reverse the terms of oppression' actually reinforces chauvinism within the Israeli working class. We must show that the Israeli working class has everything to gain from a Palestinian victory. It is on this basis alone that meaningful unity between Arab and Jewish worker can be achieved. It is on this basis alone that we can transcend nationalism and go forward to a Socialist Middle East. A victory for the Palestinians would accelerate the struggle for socialist revolution, not just throughout the Middle East, but in Europe and North Africa too.

Military Victory to the Palestinians

Self-determination for Palestine

Build a Trotskyist Party Break with PLO/PFLP

For a Workers and Small Farmers Government

Socialist United States of the Middle East.

The Poverty of the International Socialists

'And how could you support this rotten capitalist system?' says the haranguer on the street corner. It sounds a bit like the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Salvation Army. But no! It's the International Socialists and the sermon is for Socialism. Yet it's ironic! During the seventies it was the 1.5. who sneered at these hard programmatic Trots as religious-like, while they purported to be getting down to the nitty gritty of practical class struggle. They even wrote a pamphlet, 'Politics As Religion', aimed

mainly at the Healyites, but also at those who purported to be the continuity of the Fourth International. This attitude to political struggle would have endured the wrath of Marx, Lenin or Trotsky. It treats with contempt the whole tradition of Bolshevism. Struggles over programmatic points often appear petty, but often underlying these are fundamental questions for proletarian revolution. On the basis of struggles against the Liquidators, the Struvists, the Imperialist Economists, to name a few, the whole tradition of Bolshevism was established. I.S. deny the importance of this and counterpose practical shop floor struggles and building themselves. Today I.S. is more like a religion than the Healyites ever were. This is not a break in perspective, but rather it exposes the bankruptcy of the whole I.S. tradition.

I.S. broke from what claimed to be the continuity of the Fourth International following the Korean War. The Cliff group refused to defend the Korean Stalinists against U.S. imperialism Cliff's rationalisation, for this was that both China and the Soviet Union were state capitalist societies. This was a capitulation to imperialism. They did however point out that the so-called Fourth International was virtually uncritical of Stalinism. The Cliff group, which was around the journal *Socialist Review*, had pretty moderate reformist politics. It called for a 'sound wage and price policy', in other words a variant of the Accord and 'import controls and selective nationalisation'. I.S. played a role of reconciling the shop floor struggle with anarchism, all in the name of Communism. To do this it led to falsify the tradition of Lenin. He argued for a party based on the model of Rosa Luxemburg. He argued that the model was substitutionist and that Stalinism. Lenin had apparently lost sight of the fact that socialism was about workers self emancipation. What I.S. had lost sight of was the need to fight for communist politics. The I.S. conversion to Leninism in 1968 ostensibly influenced by the student upsurge in Paris that year conveniently gave ideological camouflage to the bureaucratic suppression of the growing ranks of I.S. dissidents.

I.S. got its big break in the late sixties with the growth of the rank and file shop stewards movement. I.S. adapted to this very well and became a small party. It related the shop stewards movement as follows: "We believe that the vanguard of the working class, in other words the most advanced section of the working class, the 200,000 shop stewards of this country, should be organised not only industrially but also politically. There should not be individual shop stewards, like individual marbles in individual shops, but a shop stewards movement that will have a political life of its own, and this will be the revolutionary party T. Cliff, *Idiot International*, June 1970.

Well firstly, shop stewards are not necessarily the most militant section of the working class. In fact, under many circumstances they can police class struggle. But also revolutionary politics is not merely a question of uniting workers, but fighting their bourgeois consciousness. How many shop stewards were racist? It is this type of question that wasn't even posed. I.S. had a whole lot of Convenient short cuts to 'unite the class' such as *Defend The Unions*, *Victory To The Miners*, *Kick Out The Tories*, *Vote Labour* and other short-term snappy programmes which call for action, but relegate the struggle for socialism to the indefinite future, if it mentions it at all. I.S. ignores the most exploited and oppressed layers of the working class. In the *Unemployed Peoples Union* it argued that the unemployed could do nothing except be in solidarity with employed workers on their picket lines and perhaps have the odd demo. In other words, whilst the unemployed were under attack at the dole office from the landlord and from bureaucrats, I.S. were prepared to offer no solidarity, not even within the organisation proclaiming to be their union. The fact that they do not have such a contemptuous attitude to students reveals their class prejudices. Lenin argued that there was a

division within the working class in imperialist countries such as Britain and to a lesser degree, Australia. He argued that privileged layer which identified with imperialism- the labour aristocracy - had organisations such as political parties and trade unions. The proletariat proper, he argued, did not. This formulation neither denies that the Labour aristocracy can be won over, nor does it mean patronising the struggles of the most oppressed (as the British RCG do). What it does mean is that it is the task of communists to break the working class from imperialism politically. I.S. deny this task. It adapts to the most privileged layers, including their vulgar prejudices.

In fact, I.S. have a consistent record of adapting to imperialism. The slogan 'Neither Washington Nor Moscow' is a capitulation to the imperialist cold war drive. The Soviet union has broken from capitalism. The fact that imperialism has an atomic arsenal stems from its need to dominate the world in order to maintain super exploitation of finance capital. The fact that the Soviet Union has nuclear weapons is a bi—product of its bureaucracy selling out the struggle for world revolution.

Putting the two on a equal footing covers for imperialist super exploitation and means a refusal to take a stand against the cold war drive. The slogan also ignores the role of British imperialism. The main enemy is at home.

I.S. have also a record of capitulation in other areas. When British Troops were sent in to Northern Ireland, they were supported by I.S. 'to give the Catholics a breathing space'. They have been suffocating ever since. This damning error has been corrected. However, I.S. have not seen fighting British occupation as an important priority. When the hunger strikers were dying in prison I.S. chose to do nothing because small demos were counter productive and alienating. No doubt I.S. will find small demos against the next imperialist war counter productive and alienating too. Taking up issues only when they get an immediate response means selling out to imperialism. Similarly during the war between Imperialist Britain and semi colonial Argentina, I.S. opposed both sides. It called the war 'lunatic'. It wasn't. Britain needed to fight to defend its imperialist interest. Removing an important military base would have been a mighty blow to British domination in South America, even if it was done by General Galtieri. I.S. refused to call categorically for Britain's defeat and this equivocation assists imperialism.

I.S. was cocky and confident yesterday. Today the rank and file bulletins have folded and its on to campus' Cadre building and soapboxing on George Street or Bourke Street. Now we have the downturn. May we ask a question? When is this downturn going to end? How many jobs have to be lost? How many unions have to be smashed and how much treachery must the bureaucrats be allowed to get away with before I.S. consider it worthwhile to enter the working class again? This is a vital question which must be answered. Propaganda groups go through various stages of consolidation- true. But in Britain, I.S., which became Socialist Workers Party, considered itself 'The smallest revolutionary party in the world'. Revolutionary it has never been, but it has had real roots in the working class which it is abandoning. A recent pamphlet by Mick Armstrong does not even discuss when the upturn will occur, or under what circumstances. However, you can get some idea from other I.S. publications. Duncan Hallas, as follows: 'The extra employment of some 1,400 workers followed the investment of f250 million (into a car plant) and without the success of the new Maestro, there would not have been a rebirth of confidence among the workers'. Perhaps I.S. will join the campaign for investment manufacturing in order to get confidence back. If they are waiting for similar investment in Australia they are going to be out of luck. Manufacturing only

developed as a byproduct of the post-war boom. This manufacturing development had serious defects. The post-war boom was a product of massive defects for the working class and is unlikely to occur again

I.S. claims to oppose racism, but it does not see the struggle as fundamental to creating a class conscious working class. I.S. see racism breaking down through the self confidence and self action of the working class, This is wrong. Some countries with the most militant traditions of Trade Unionism also have a strong tradition of racism. Australia is an example. I.S. opposes racism in its newspaper but does not let its formal opposition alienate it from shop floor militants. Because I.S. is bankrupt in dealing with the major problems facing the working class today it goes back to campus and puts out a 'Socialist' version of the Daily Mirror. Simple slogans for simple workers, abstract rhetoric about revolution, coupled with nostalgic stories about the militancy of the seventies. It must be stressed that the campaign's I.S. is nostalgic about were hardly revolutionary. The Socialist hails the Greenbans of Jack Munday's N.S.W.B.L.F. It draws no serious — lessons about their weaknesses. It doesn't mention that they only worked during a building boom. It doesn't mention that the leadership had no programme to fight unemployment and it doesn't mention that the bans were often imposed in a non-class way and that leadership cuddled up to trendies in Hunters Hill. Perhaps few unsavoury facts might spoil the nostalgia. The fact is that unless these lessons are learned the B.L.F. will be led to defeat again.

The Socialist also hails the Queensland Civil Liberties struggle. The name gives it away. Since when do revolutionary communists call bans on left wing marchers a question of Civil Liberties. For revolutionaries it is a question of state power. I.S. in Queensland accepted the discipline of the movement and even attacked the S.W.P. for not doing so. It did, however, make a political intervention. It formed Labor voters for Georges and Harris. In other words, it was totally subservient to the left wing of the Labor Party. I.S. is nostalgic about the British Anti Nazi League, which was seen by Neil Kinnock as the alternative to street fighting. This proved correct. During September 1978, whilst the ANL was having a carnival, which included speakers and a pop concert, the National Front marched unopposed through the streets of East London (the area where blacks live). Duncan Hallas pointed out that defending the black people would ruin the ANL. He was right. The ANL was indeed an alternative to defending the black people against fascist attacks. The ANL was an initiative of the British International Socialists, who were then renamed Socialist Workers Party. The ANL sought an all class alliance against the Nazis. The price of this alliance in theory and practice was the repudiation of direct action lest it offend bourgeois allies. The ANL in the final analysis repudiated a real fight against the Nazis by working class direct action.

So how could you support this rotten capitalist system? The problem is that I.S. don't want to overthrow it. Opportunism in the upturn, street corner rhetoric plus nostalgia for that opportunism in the downturn. This is the diet that I.S. offer. Socialist Action their breakaway share, the same theoretical framework, but think that more mass work can still be done and that the downturn is not as bad as I.S. think it is. Their difference is one of degree. Any tendency which has had roots in the working class and is forced to desert these when the working class is under savage attack (through wage cuts, unemployment and even union smashing), for theoretical reasons, must be declared bankrupt. The working class is under attack now. The working class needs revolutionary communist politics now. Yet I.S. is running away soapboxing and on to campus. It's time members of

International Socialists and Socialist Action reconsidered and rejected their whole theoretical framework and study the politics of the Communist Tendency.

N.S.W. STATE ELECTIONS - REQUIEM FOR LABOR

In the sixties in Newcastle there was a saying going around that a dead horse would win if it was endorsed by the A.L.P. An overstatement? May be! But it certainly conveyed the spirit pervading in Newcastle that whether it won or lost nationally or state wide Labor would hold the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie seats although the margins may vary. In fact according to the Malcolm MacKerras school of political wisdom there are safe Liberal, safe Labor and swinging seats and the art of politics is guessing how many of the latter will change hands.

The recent state election in New South Wales was significant not because Labor merely lost but because it broke the mould of New South Wales politics. An anti Labor swing spread through not just Newcastle but working class areas like wild fire. Swansea is at the entrance of Lake Macquarie

on the outskirts of the Newcastle metropolitan area. Being on the lake and close to beaches it has a holiday atmosphere about it. However, it is a true blue working class area. Most of the residents are Coal Miners and Steelworkers at B.H.P. or workers at Munmorah and Vales Point Power Station. Before the election it required a 25% swing for Labor to lose. This was achieved by an independent. Of course the Independents which stood and won were a mixed bag. Dawn Fraser for example is a lifelong Labor supporter. Many could have voted for her as a protest knowing that if was elected Labor would get a message without serious political

This is not true, for the Newcastle area where the only left independant was Margaret Henry. If there was one message which Labor put over loud and clear was that the independents in Newcastle were Liberals in disguise. We happen to agree with them. However, this message was counterposed to providing political answers and was treated with contempt. Of course there were local factors. Electoral redistribution in Swansea favoured the Liberals with the middle class suburbs of Valentine and Eleebana being included in the electorate. Also there was the question of whether or not to build the bridge over the mouth of Lake Macquarie. This was opposed by the Swansea locals but supported by Yacht owners who lived in the neighbouring suburbs and the successful independent. Yes these factors had a bearing. However, the swing in the Newcastle area (and else where) can only be described as a working class revulsion against a party founded in its name but which has treated its electorate with thorough and utter contempt. It is well known that the top dogs in the N.S.W. branch of the A.L.P. wine and dine with the likes of Alan Bond on their million dollar yachts. Meanwhile public transport in Newcastle (despite recent introduction of electric trains) is running down. Working class people in Newcastle have no need for White Elephants such as Darling Harbour and the Monorail. They have neither the time nor the money to come to Sydney and enjoy them. They also hardly consider them hardly a trade off for decent hospitals.

Labor formed out of the Trade Union movement yet to-day it is a key agent for making working people pay for the economic crisis. Labor had been in for a long time in New South Wales and the ruling class are indeed grateful for its services. Neville Wran pioneered the 'new look' Labor image which was slick and conservative and made it clear that it would make no policies which would inconvenience the power of capital even to a minor degree. By using slogans such as "Wrans our Man" Nifty Nev was making it clear he was in charge and not the Labor Party. The right wing of the

Labor Party learned from the sacking of Gough Whitlam that Labor could only gain office by being totally submissive to capital. The Labor Party under right wing leadership hammered out a new image to sell to the bosses. The Wran Government served as the loyal agent of multinational capital and The Fraser Government putting the burden of the crisis onto the backs of working class people. It was on the basis of the success of the Wran Government (from the boss's point of view) that laid the basis for the bosses putting their faith in Hawke. The price for this right wing Labor strategy is the working class people which Labor was built by. Bob Hawke boasted that he could keep Australia together but shortly it will be clear that the party that tried to be everything to everyone now means nothing to no-one. It can neither attack the Unions adequately enough for the bosses nor serve the workers. It is Labor which is cutting back on the public sector. It is Labor that supports wage cuts. It is Labor which both advocates massive lay-offs in the name of the economy and is declaring war against the unemployed. It is Labor which is paving the way for the Liberals and the New Right.

We need a new working class party. However, it is very important to learn the lessons of Labor. Labor did not merely betray because of bad policies and leadership. These policies were forced upon Labor by the framework in which it operates. Labor betrays because it stands for loyalty to the capitalist system and loyalty to the capitalist state. The new party must not only stand for different policies, but also stand for a break from parliamentary politics and the overthrow of capitalism. As capitalism will not permit the minutest of reforms especially in an economic crisis and especially in Australia with its reactionary constitution, therefore it must be overthrown. The Communist tendency stands for a revolutionary alternative to the Labor Party. Giving critical support to the A.L.P. can be a very important tactic when only experience can shaken working class illusions. But when the working class are deserting in droves such critical support even like a rope supports a hanged man, merely reinforces an antiworking class party. The Socialist Labor League and the Communist League by their critical support are doing the working class a gross disservice. Redirecting those workers who are fed up with betrayals back towards the Labor Party does not further their political education but retards it. It is time we started building a revolutionary alternative now!

WORLD EXPO'88

World Expo '88 is Brisbane's spectacular contribution to Australia's Bi Centennial celebration. No doubt it will bring in millions in investments and persuade many how great it is to be Aussie. However, there is a price to be paid. There has been an Expo led boom in property values. West End, Woolloongabba and South Brisbane have been until recently suburbs where working class and poor people could afford to live close to the City. Thanks to World Expo '88 rents have doubled within four months and an estimated four thousand forced out of their homes. The Expo created housing crisis has spread throughout Brisbane. In fact the closest you can now rent a caravan is twenty kilometres out. Expo has also meant more police repression. Cops have been patrolling the South Brisbane area to harass anyone who they consider to be spoiling the scenery, such as Black people and homosexuals. There has been a campaign to arrest as many homosexuals as possible with over 70 charged. Communist Tendency shares with the Black people anger at 200 years of imperialist exploitation, state repression and genocide. However, what has to be shown is that the Bicentenary is the enemy of all working class people. Be Australian and accept poverty is what the bosses are saying. Therefore we must reject poverty and reject being Australian.

FRENCH FASCISTS FORGE AHEAD

In Marseilles just a few years ago the Communist Party of France (PCF) used to address crowds of 25,000 which filled the local football stadium. In 1988 crowds are still flocking to the local football stadium but not to hear the Stalinist P.C.F. The crowds are now flocking to hear Jean Marie Le Pen of the Fronte Nationale. Marseilles former stalinist stronghold is now a fascist stronghold and many of those present have been swung directly from Stalinism bordering on Communism to Fascism. Fascism stands for the physical liquidation of the working class. Make no mistake Le Pen is one. In one of the more liberal French newspapers Le Pen's ex wife has recently been writing sordid stories about the true thoughts of Jean Marie Le Pen such as 'Aushwitz wasn't so bad'. These have created quite a splash but didn't stop the massive swing to the Fronte Nationale. Anti Fascists take note - when Fascism is seen as answering political needs no amount of moral exposure i.e. links with the Nazis will beat it. In Marseilles the F.N. won working class people over to seeing Algerians as the cause of the crisis.

It is no accident that the F.N. recruited directly from the Stalinists. It is Stalinists who initiated anti Algerian hysteria seven years ago when the F.N. was only on the fringes. The Fascists have taken on the Stalinists as the most consistent racists and won. The problem is that there is no organisation on the far left prepared to show that working class interest lies with defending the Algerians and for smashing all immigration controls. Groups such as Lutte Ouvrier (Workers Struggle) only see racism as lack of confidence which can be 'fought' by promoting trade union militancy. This will only allow the Fascists to make more inroads. The Stalinist P.C.F. bears direct responsibility for the rise of fascism in France as it initiated the racist anti Algerians campaign. Fascism is more than racism. It stands for the physical liquidation of the working class. It must be physically smashed through a united front for direct working class action. However, the chauvinist poison from which fascism feeds has to be fought as well.