

KEATING RE-ELECTED. WHAT'S NEXT?

KEATING LABOR won the federal elections and won well. Given the fact that there are over one million officially recognised as unemployed this was quite an achievement. Keating has been forced to repudiate his kick start job creation packages promised in his "One Nation" package. So what has he to offer to fight unemployment? - nothing. To win the opposition had to come up with solutions. It didn't. The Goods and Services Tax would be, if introduced, a massive attack on the living standards of poor people. This is true because it is applied equally to the essentials of life as it is to luxury items. Hewson was promising tax cuts in other areas to compensate. This compensation would go to the middle classes and the rich and not to the poor. Anyhow it is the precedent of the GST which is serious. Any compensation would only be temporary. A GST would become a permanent fact of life a sinternational proeedema have shown. In other countries such as England, New Zealand or Austria, the rate of GST was promised to be minimal cufirst. Then it rapidly increased. Dr Hewson could not answer the question: what jobs

would a GST create? Because the GST would create no jobs. This was even acknowledged by Ross Gittins "card carrying economic rationalist" of the Age newspaper. Hewson was being dishonest to suggest that it would. He was totally exposed by Paul Keating during the campaign.

In the past Keating has had a media problem. After all he is acknowledged as being responsible for the "recession that we had to have" and has been portrayed as looking like an undertaker. He has been known for his millionaire friends and clock collection. He has been associated with Bob Hawke usurping traditional Labor for the extreme right. Hawke and Keating declared war on ALP policy on uranium, Timor, Aboriginal land rights, government economic intervention and radical reform. He has been able to change his style to present himself as a new man concerned with women's issues, and as part of the true blue Bankstown Labor working class tradition.

These were fear elections. Keating won massive support from both middle and working class people not because he has answers but because of fear of the alternative. Middle class people realised that Hewson threatened their beloved ABC and the public sector. This was no time for the middle classes to protest. Two notable losers from this election were the Democrats and the Greens. We shed no tears for either of these reactionary formations. The Democrats are a thoroughly capitalist formation who pose as radical to attract middle class dissident ALP voters. They won over many thousands when Labor attempted to introduce ID cards. On industrial issues they have always been right-wing.

The Greens are middle class radicals who blame technology instead of capitalism. They argue that for all classes "humanity" has an interest in uniting to "save the Earth". Some of their proposed measures are tokenistic, like petty consumer boycotts on "environmentally unsound" individual capitalists. Unfortunately they also positively support those they are considered "sound". Their attempts to go back to a pre-technological society are utopian and reactionary. The middle classes knew with a vengeance that it would be Labor who buttered their bread and voted accordingly.

Working class people feared the coalition's job contracts policy. Labor, orchestrated by Bob Hogg, launched a successful campaign against them. It promised consensus and economic peace. In this election, neither the bourgeoisie nor their mouthpieces such as Financial Review, voted Labor. Of course they were at pains to point out that they had voted Labor previously. They stated several reasons: it was time for a change; there were one million unemployed. But most important, they considered that Labor was not consistently committed to workplace reform and enterprise bargaining. However they did acknowledge the commitment to a more competitive economy. The difference, the real difference, is the rate of the attack on unionism, and whether or not to get the consent of the trade union bureaucracy, not on the question of "workplace reform ...to improve competitiveness" of Australian industry. All this is euphemistic for - reduce wages, smash Award conditions and trade union organisation. Martin Ferguson recently urged unionists to co-operate with the Keating by "showing that enterprise bargaining worked". In other words co-operate by reducing your wages and conditions or else!

The working class are in no way responsible for the crisis of capitalism. In no way should we be forced to suffer by reduced wages and conditions - or by losing our jobs. The union movement and Keating have once again signed a Prices and Incomes Accord. This is the Accord mark seven ! Once again the union bureaucracy is showing its co-operation in Keating's austerity programme. The Chamber of Manufactures has just congratulated this latest Accord as a responsible package.

Paul Keating at his Bankstown victory celebration thanked his supporters for "keeping the faith" but keeping the faith has very little to do with Labor these days. Gone are the days of socialism - even when defined as parliamentary nationalisation, or radical reform or radical Keynesianism, or significant minor reforms. What is left is a sort of sugared monetarism. Keating promises the same path as the Liberals only pursuing more humane methods. There are a few minor reforms calculated to placate hostility from either working or middle class people but, fundamentally, Keating is a dry. He is a dry nonetheless who knows how to put on the right image to please the right people. He has, however, no serious opposition within the labour movement.

This election showed both the ALP lefts and the Stalinists as dead except as promoters of Keating with more leftwing rhetoric. The CPA is dead and so are its protectionist plans to defend Australia. Even their liquidated form, the New Left Party, has barely showed its existence. The lefts in the unions know that the ruling class won't permit any reformist government to carry them out. The left fundamentally accepts Keating as the best they can get. There is not a murmur of criticism from the AMWSU. Phil Cleary has been elected on protectionist programme in Wills. He is clearly a local phenomena. The only national opposition on an economic nationalist basis comes from the Greens and the Democrats. These middle class parties, apart from their utopian environmental philosophy, support racist protectionism and immigration controls. These are reactionary alternatives to Hawke's monetarist course. Fortunately they do not have influence in the

Labour movement. No doubt there is support for Keynesian methods coming from the fascist right.

Keating now controls the labour movement open slather. This gives him a hell of a lot of power to push forward right wing policies. Keating has no answers to unemployment. He is a captive of the capitalist system. He has the choice of obeying the laws of the system or going under. This will mean further attacks on working class people including unemployed.

The result of the fake Labor left's demise is that much of the anger from future attacks either on workers or unemployed will have no clear political direction. The political direction of stalinists and Labor left reinforces the system. So in no way do we miss it. It is possible that future anger could be spontaneously either left or right or a muddled mixture. It is the responsibility of communists to ensure that anti-capitalist lessons are drawn.

NZ Telecom workers face sack

THINGS HAVE BEEN hard for New Zealanders over the past ten years - especially the poor and working class. The current government is a right-wing National government with extreme right policies such as cutting unemployed off the dole for six months if they fail the work test. The government is committed to privatisation and user pays in social services. There is an Employment Contracts Act to smash unionism. Unionists are forced onto individual contracts. This way the bosses and the government get workers to compete with each other. The worker who offers the least gets the job.

National is a right-wing bosses' party. It is continuing an economic direction begun under Labour. It is Labour the bosses thank for dismantling the public sector and the welfare state. This was begun under Lange, assisted by Finance minister Roger Douglas. As part of this Rogernomics, Telecom was denationalised along with the Bank of New Zealand and other enterprises.

The purpose of denationalisation is to make Telecom more efficient from the point of view of capital instead of acting as an albeit inadequate service. In Australia mass pressure has prevented, at least for the time, the introduction of timed local calls. Well, in New Zealand they have them. It costs 20 cents for a mere minute's call from a phone booth.

The new owners, Ameritech and Bell Atlantic, have no qualms about laying off workers. Since 1987, 12,000 workers have lost their jobs from Telecom. This amounts to half the workforce. Those who remain have had no pay rise for two years and can work 14 hour shifts without overtime. But this is not enough to please the bosses in their bid to make NZ Telecom a profitable enterprise. Now Telecom workers have been told that another 5200 jobs are to be lost in the next four years. Many laid off will be unable to find alternative employment.

Telecom are using the layoffs as a gun to the head of the remaining workforce. They aim to both lay off and use the fear of lay off to reduce wages even further. The trade union bureaucracy will no doubt act as Telecoms accomplice - as they have done on many other occasions, in New Zealand and elsewhere. The only way the attacks can be fought is by workers control. It is vital that workers in Telecom unite to form shop committees. Not one single job should be bargained away. Nor should workers be forced to suffer an even lower standard of living.

A key demand is a shorter working week. Workers should not have to work 14 hours a day, whether it's called "overtime" or not. The working week should be shortened without loss of pay until everyone is employed. We need a shorter working week with wage rises which more than catch up for the rises in the cost of living.

A sliding scale of hours and wages is a vital weapon in the struggle against the boss's offensive. It is a concrete demand for the right to work at the bosses' expense. Bosses use the unemployed to undermine struggle. Unemployed people have been used as scabs to undermine or destroy trade union awards. By reducing the working week the unemployed can be given work. The workforce is increased and therefore stronger and more able to fight the boss. When there is unemployment the boss can play workers off. With the right to work the more force there is on our side.

The massive layoffs threatened forces the workers to confront political questions. Privatisation is a massive attack on both the workforce and consumer. Who will renationalise Telecom? It was Labour who privatised in the first place. Labour has no intention of changing their rationalist outlook. The New Labour-led Alliance are a serious trap. They may talk left but will trap workers within the system. The overtly bourgeois partners are a guarantee to the ruling class. New Labour only stand for a New Zealand irrational form of capitalism anyway. The privatisation of Telecom and subsequent retrenchments are no accident. They are the logic of the crisis. A revolutionary party must be built which breaks from Labour and Alliance and fights for workers' and small farmers' power.

Of course, this means the struggle must go beyond a struggle against Telecom and involve other workers who are similarly threatened. Solidarity actions are urgent. They are especially urgent if and when workers on Telecom pickets come up against state repression.

Organise strike committees now!
All representatives under workers' control
with right of recall!
Resist any layoffs with direct workers action!
Demand a shorter working week!

For a massive increase in pay to be adjusted
with the rise in the cost of living!
Break from Labour and the Alliance!
Build a revolutionary communist party!
Bring down the Bolger government!
For a revolutionary workers' and
small farmers' government!

We in Australia have a lot to learn from the bosses' offensive in New Zealand. The ruling class are trying to bring in New Zealand measures here. Hewson tried to bring in the GST which they already have there. Kennett is modeling his employment contracts and anti-union legislation on New Zealand's. And by looking at New Zealand we can see what it means to have privatisation and timed telephone calls. We must fight internationally. Trans-Tasman working class solidarity is urgent.

The lessons of Cain

THE ELECTION OF Kennett was a massive defeat for Labor. Kennett did not have to announce policies. He could just point the finger at the "guilty party". The state government led by Kirner faced a massive state debt. Whilst Kennett's attacks have been massive, they are only continuing the monetarist path begun by Kirner. It was Cain Labor that sold the State Bank, sacked thousands of workers from public transport, replaced the St. Kilda and Pt. Melbourne railway lines with trams, attempted to close the Upfield and Williamstown suburban railways and Richmond Hospital. It is only militant mass protest and trade union action which stopped these closures. Kirner is now boasting about her monetarist credentials and how her colleagues lacked the "will to reform".

Labor governments, both state and federal, are rich in lessons: for the Cain and Kirner governments to have lasted ten years will be seen by many as a reasonable success story. However what is at stake is not just a state Labor Government rising and falling but the failure of a strategy. Hawke and Wran entered office to do nothing else than obey the system in the name of Labor. In Victoria, Labor was more idealistic. Cain entered office with a clear left Keynesian policy nicknamed Jollynomics (after treasurer Rob Jolly). This amounted to a limited state intervention into industry. It was an attempt to invest government money into capitalist enterprises to create jobs, make profits for the public sector and spend these profits on transport, health and education. It was a clever plan worked out by left-wing intellectuals who, whilst giving up the idea of socialism for the foreseeable future, believed with clever planning the existing state could be humanised. The plan blew up in their faces.

The death agony of Cain Keynesianism is also the death agony of the Socialist Left. Labor now knows that it dare not come to office on anything less than total subservience to the system. Not only is there no parliamentary road to socialism, there is not even a parliamentary road to radical reform. Now the Victorian Labor Party has learned that there is no parliamentary road to even monetary intervention. Kirner Labor has nothing to offer now except to protest at Kennett's lack of consultation in the pursuit of his monetarist goal. The Socialist Left has long been exposed as having no strategy except to hide behind the cover of a bourgeois leader. The Socialist Left jumped on Cain's boat. Now they sink with the ship. The Socialist Left are prisoners of the framework of Labor.

An important agent in the smashing of the Socialist Left has been the right stalinist breakaway from the Communist Party called Socialist Forum. The orientation of the Victorian leadership of CPA towards the ALP undermined any need of these stalinists for a separate organisation. The CPA has become a barrier to their opportunist appetites to influence the ALP. So they dissolved their organisation to pursue organisational unity with sections of the moderate wing of the SL led by Bob Hogg. Hogg was expelled from the SL for pushing through a rotten compromise on uranium. His role was taken by his wife Caroline Hogg who was mayor of Collingwood. Bernie Taft pursued his alliance with the Hogg-Schapiro wing of the SL to isolate smash and expel members of the SL who defied the dictates of the Cain or Hawke governments. Thanks to Socialist Forum the old NCC Catholic right-wing unions were readmitted and left wingers such as Bill Hartley expelled.

The Crisis of Victorian Capitalism

Relative to the rest of Australia Victoria has been a strong manufacturing state. It has also a strong rural economy. Unlike elsewhere in Australia there has been a strong alliance between the manufacturing and rural bourgeoisie. As in the rest of Australia manufacturing only developed significantly after the second world war. This manufacturing is undercapitalised, poorly equipped and suffers from a small local market.

The alliance between manufacturing and rural capital is reflected in the strength of the Liberal Party which is strong even in rural areas. Malcolm Fraser in Federal parliament held the rural seat of Wannon which in other states would be designated as National Country Party. Although the Liberals form a coalition they are the overwhelmingly dominant partner.

Labor attempts to administer the system by cementing an alliance between the labour bureaucracy, the working class, especially the labour aristocracy, sections of the middle class with sections of capital. In Victoria the unity of the ruling class has made this difficult and this has forced Labor to the left, Victoria was also the centre of the dispute with Catholic right-wing unions who broke away to form the Democratic Labor Party. This allowed the left to achieve a dominating position as most of the hard right had departed. Maoism has also influenced Victorian labour politics within the trade union movement. The Victorian labour movement has strong left-wing traditions. The defeat of the imperialist forces (including Australia's) in Vietnam has had a strong radicalising effect. This was especially true in Victoria. In Melbourne May 1970 an estimated 70,000 marched through the streets of Melbourne against the Vietnam war.

During the sixties the Australian Labor Party was overwhelming "socialist". Socialism was seen as the nationalisation of industry from the commanding heights of parliamentary reform. However the emerging Gough Whitlam was to declare war on the Victorian executive. He demanded that three leading members, Bill Hartley, Bob Hogg and George Crawford be withdrawn from their positions. From this the "Socialist Left" was born as Hartley, Crawford and Hogg rallied their forces from the union movement or from the Vietnam moratorium. From the middle class intellectuals who joined during the moratorium, a new guard emerged. In the late seventies this new guard developed a more pragmatic approach of "interventionist" policies which put off the struggle for socialism even more into the distant future. Whilst from then on the Socialist Left was the largest and dominant faction, it was also prisoner of the machine. This was shown clearly when the Socialist Left promoted successfully right-winger John Cain as state ALP leader.

Throughout the sixties and seventies, Bolte and Hamer administered Victoria pragmatically. They offered a few token programmes of public works to appease interest groups. In 1973 under the slogan "Hamer makes it happen" the Liberals offered an expansion of public transport. In 1978 the Hamer Government commissioned the Lonie Report. This report called for a public transport system based on commercial principles. This meant slashing it to ribbons. Country trains were to be replaced by buses. This was strongly fought by community activists in the areas, about to lose their trains, and the trade union movement.

During the mid seventies, unemployment began to hit with a vengeance. Hamer was exposed as having no answers. A whole series of land scandals hit in 1978. The HCU was revealed to have spent millions on useless rural land. Labor lost narrowly in 1979. But in 1982 Labor was swept to office led by John Cain, son of the previous premier John Cain Senior who was Victorian premier during the fifties. The victory was also strongly linked to working class anger against Fraser which led to the victory of Hawke federally in 1983.

The Strategy of Cain Labor

The appointment of John Cain Junior was the brainchild of Bob Hogg and the pragmatic wing of the SL. They got their idea from New South Wales Labor who elected Wran as leader and promoted Labor under the banner of Wran, a respectable conservative personality. Just as Wran was elected as the big figurehead, Labor in Victoria was subordinated to their figurehead John Cain. It was "Wran's our man" in N.S.W. and "John Cain for Victoria" with any mention of Labor somewhat subdued in the background. Both in N.S.W. and Victoria, Cain and Wran appeared to play independent roles by not joining either of the main factions. They were both, of course, right-wingers. Within the Socialist Left this was rationalised by "we have the numbers and therefore Cain is under our control". In reality it was Cain who controlled the Socialist Left. The SL had no perspective for power except on Cain's terms. And whilst Cain was the brainwave of the Hogg new guard, his support within the SL was unanimous except for Paul White who was then part of the pseudo-Trotskyist Labor loyal tendency Socialist Fight.

Victorian state Labor had a clear economic strategy. It was an interventionist strategy. This was based on establishing the Victorian Economic Development Corporation [VEDC]. The Jollynomics strategy amounted to targeting \$670 million in under-utilised statutory reserves and invested at "a commercial rate of return". The money made with this "commercial rate of return" would go to public transport, schools, hospitals and public housing. That Cain Labor's intent was idealistic is not disputed. The 1984/85 Budget, for example, offered an extra \$20 million to help the unemployed get housing and \$15.8 million for extra hospital staff. There were some minor gains from money invested. Overall the gains could never be described as satisfactory.

The other side of the VEDC strategy was the provision of jobs. By supporting, investing in and co-operating with private investment in manufacturing, jobs would be created. It was acknowledged that there would be serious risk in this area. After all, if an industry goes broke, public money is lost with it. Cain Labor knew that there was a restructuring away from heavy industry. They aimed to promote new industry science and skills based.

To pursue their capitalist economic strategies Cain Labor required the co-operation of the labour bureaucracy - to sell out the struggle for decent wages and conditions and contain strike action. This he got. On Cain's election, Dick Clark, FEDFA leader assured the Age that "even if Labor knocks us back on the 35 hour week, I know that the rank and file will not be party to strike action".

Within the union bureaucracy Cain had the loyal assistance of the Stalinist Communist Party. In Victoria the CPA had a stronger orientation to the ALP than elsewhere. Within the CPA a right faction developed in the midseventies led by Victorian state leaders John Sendy and Bernie Taft. This tendency's perspective was to develop mass movements around the so-called "progressive policies of the ALP". They were fully subordinate to the ALP. When Cain was elected, Taftite Phil Herrington was in raptures about the supposedly "most radical Labor Government since the second world war". He also insisted The Cain government can expect tolerance". What he is saying is, the CPA was prepared to act as Cain's agents to discipline the working class.

The election of the Hawke government in 1983 did not fit in with Cain's plans. There was a clear conflict of direction. The Hawke government pursued monetarist policies. They wanted to reduce government intervention. This was shown by their retention of John Stone as economic adviser who was economic adviser to Fraser. In fact there was antagonism between the two governments on deregulation. According to Tribune, Hawke considered Hogg and Jolly the "Melbourne mafia". The Victorians responded by claiming Hawke and Keating to be "clones of Stone". However they were united around the Prices and Incomes Accord - the principle that government and the union bureaucrats should unite to discipline the union movement. The Accord was the brain child of leading CPA member Laurie Carmichael.

Cain Labor proved very successful at policing unions for the Accord. In Victoria there were vicious attacks on the Builders' Labourers' Federation and the Food Preservers. In 1987 Cain used the brutal paramilitary police, the Special Operations Group, to raid the Builders' Labourers' Federation. "Only Labor could do it", boasted Mr. Crabb. We have to agree!

The Cain Government co-operated with business in establishing quite a few manufacturing enterprises. The most significant was the Portland aluminum smelter. Portland is a small city in western Victoria. The government made a deal with Alcoa which meant the Portland aluminum smelter received a government loan on favourable terms, government investment and cheap electricity.

Up until 1988 Cain Labor was a limited success, from the bourgeoisie's point of view. The rate of growth was greater than that of the rest of Australia and the rate of unemployment a good one percent lower. Financial Review reported Keating

stating that the Cain government had "delivered the bacon". Rob Jolly was boasting that manufacturing was growing by 80%"and "business investment scheduled to grow by 60%". However, Cain had already been forced to retreat on expanding the public sector - especially in public transport.

Previous Liberal Party policy was to allow public transport to run down. Cain Labor wanted to promote it on capitalism's terms. To do this they brought in a bourgeois expert" from Hertz Rent-a-Car, Mr. Lynn Stouse. His business advice for the railways was "[t]here is no question the system could be cut drastically. First, leave your long heavy lines, Ringwood and Frankston. Others like Alamein and Upfield could go." Mr. Stouse was also down on "archaic industrial practices" meaning that workers had some rights. The response of the Cain government was to reduce staff by abolishing overtime. In Victoria in 1986 railway workers were paid \$200 per week below the national average. They depended on overtime to make ends meet. The result: as calculated, thousands left the railways to seek work elsewhere. The government then began to attack the metropolitan railway system. St. Kilda and Port Melbourne lines were replaced with trams. This was met with resistance by unions and community activists. They then attempted to remove the longer Upfield line which was met with a stronger resistance. In 1989/1990 the government attempted to remove tram conductors. This was met with militant defiance. Their struggle was successful.

The collapse of Jollynomics

Whilst in 1988 the Labor Party could claim some gains from Jollynomics, 1989 was to see the whole strategy blow up in their faces. In January the VEDC loss of over \$100 million through poor management decisions was exposed. This was followed by the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society. As a result of this collapse, thousands of residents of Geelong lost savings and the deposits for their homes. Then the government was exposed for subsidising Portland Aluminium smelter to the tune of \$10 per month in electricity. Next came the announcement that the Tricontinental Bank had losses of over \$2.7 million dollars. The Tricontinental Bank was a key component of Jollynomics. It was the division of the State Bank which intervened on the money market. This was the final nail in the coffin of Jollynomics.

Kirner's Surrender

John Cain resigned as premier, leaving the Socialist Left to clean up the mess. The new premier, Joan Kirner, made it clear that there would be a change of direction. "For five years the Cain government highlighted a certain style...that's gone

As workers News reported 'Moody's were not convinced that Labor would end its `interventionist' approach because of the strength of the Socialist Left" Kirner declared. "Moody's are absolutely wrong. The government is determined not to intervene where private industry can do it better." While in office Kirner was good to her word.

The Kirner government proceeded to act like any monetarist government. The 1990 budget cut government spending by \$508 million. Eight thousand jobs were to be abolished including 1600 high schoolteachers; 1800 in transport; 1500 in health. She privatised the State Insurance Office and the 35% share the government held in Portland aluminium smelter. Families were calculated to be worse off \$9 per week. John Halfpenny, president of the THC, curtailed any talk of strike action, pledging the trade union movement's loyalty to Kirner.

In July 1991 Joan Kirner announced the loss of a further 12,500 jobs and a 6% increase in power, gas and water charges and a \$70 increase in private car registration and an 11.1 percent increase in state taxes. She asked Victorians to share the pain.

Kirner made it clear she supported privatisation and increased private participation in government projects. All this came at a time when Paul Keating was pushing through his agenda for privatisation federally. He could point the finger at Victoria to disarm any defenders of the public sector.

These are merely the highlights of a ruling class offensive which Cain and Kirner began and Kennett is continuing. There has been strong and justified grass roots anger at what Kennett is doing to Victoria. The problem is that the alternative posed is the Kirner offensive, privatisation, massive job losses and a massive reduction in government services and increase in service charges. There have already been two token general strikes since Kennett was elected. They have been led by John Halfpenny of the AMWU. Halfpenny is a former CPA member who joined the ALP aligned with Socialist Forum. He is using his trade union credentials to chain workers to Kirner Labor.

Jollynomics didn't work! This is the important lesson which must be learned if we are to fight back against the bosses' offensive. Capitalism in Victoria during the current economic crisis will not only not permit parliamentary legislated socialism or widespread nationalisation. It will not permit guided Keynesian intervention. Even as modest as Cain Labor is and even with the disciplined support of the working class. There is no going back to Cain! There are only two choices posed - capitalist austerity or socialist revolution. Kirner and Halfpenny have chosen the former. We must choose the latter. Kirner and Halfpenny are not merely fighting for a reactionary alternative. They are doing their utmost to demobilise struggle now!

There have been many breakaways from Labor over the past ten years. These are in response to attacks by both state and Federal government. Many community activists have been justifiably angry at Cain's health, education or housing cuts. Strong action groups emerged angry at Cain Labor cutting rail and tram services. As well splits have occurred from attacks on unions such as the Food Preservers, the Builders' Labourers' and Nurses' Federation. Also splits have occurred due to Labor selling out uranium mining and acting as loyal agents of US imperialist foreign policy. Peace organisations have broken away. There has been plenty of talk about "an alternative party to labour" but the activists have taken a

long time to Come up with an alternative. What is emerging is a rainbow coalition inspired by the New Zealand Alliance and Phil Cleary, reelected federal member for Wills.

Phil Cleary has a programme consistent with the Stalinists of seeing "economic rationalism", not capitalism, as the problem. He supports economic nationalism; openly courts bosses who oppose the monetarist agenda; supports reactionary measures such as protectionism. As bosses are welcome, his is clearly a popular front campaign. The Rainbow Coalition is not the alternative we want. We need an alternative based on class principle - on revolutionary struggle. We need neither the hard economic rationalist face of capitalism nor the attempts to run the system humanely. Victorian workers need a revolutionary party. Unless there is a clear revolutionary alternative, struggles will be sold out. The struggle has received by two significant sellouts by officials of the Tramways Union and the Australian Railways Union on behalf of their members. The Tramways Union have agreed to effectively consent to the abolition of conductor for the retention of services on lines which Kennett was threatening to scrap. This is an agreement of treachery. No doubt Kennett hopes to create a division between unionists and public sector consumers by "showing" that selling out unionism will save services. United we win! Divided we fall! Not one job nor condition nor service should be traded off. It is even worse considering that the conductors have not even begun to struggle. In 89190 conductors fought a heroic struggle against Cain threatening their abolition-and won. But now they give up against the Liberals! This is hardly an inspiration. The bureaucrats will no doubt rationalise their capitulation on Trades Hall. Halfpenny will demobilise struggle out of loyalty to Kirner. We need a politics which supports class struggle unconditionally revolutionary politics! A break from the framework of reformism is vital for the defense of jobs, services, and unionism against Kennett's attacks.

Samoan workers strike against Japanese imperialists

In January, this year the first strike against private enterprise in Western Samoa occurred. ~ It was against the Japanese multinational Yazaki. This was a strike against low wages and conditions. It was also a strike in defence of the right to organise. This strike was an important step in the establishment of a organised working class in Samoa. The bosses act internationally as the actions of the employer Japanese multinational Yazaki show. Well so must we. A strong internationally united working class will stop bosses like Yazaki playing workers off along national lines and super-exploiting workers of the Asian and Pacific and all colonial countries.

Western Samoa is supposedly an independent nation. In reality it is a colony of New Zealand. New Zealand, like Australia, is supposedly an independent power. Actually New Zealand and Australia are politically dominated by Britain through the Queen and Governor-General and economically dominated by Japan and the United States. In exchange for domination both Australia and New Zealand have a small sphere of influence in the Asian and Pacific region. In small countries such as Fiji, Samoa and Tonga the tribal chiefs rule hand in glove with the imperialists.

They worked a 12 hour shift from 6am to 6pm. This contravenes Samoan law. The government, however allowed the company to break the law. Their Labour Inspector said that working women for 12 hours on their feet is "good exercise".

Understandably the workers, overwhelmingly female, got angry with the company and its treatment of them. To dissipate any anger the company set up the Yazaki Samoa Employees' Association. This is a company union which deliberately did nothing. So the workers formed a breakaway Yazaki Employees' Association Inc. When the company found out about the breakaway secret association they started sacking YEAI members. A mass sacking of 200 workers on one morning convinced the workers to strike.

The workers demands are modest. They are only demanding the right to their own representatives, the right to an employment contract, a modest wage increase from \$WS1.25 per hour to \$1.75 per hour. This has been met with hostility from the company and brutal repression from the government. On January 14 the Western Samoan police brutally attacked their picket. One woman received a gash to the head, another a broken arm and other strikers were badly bruised. Other strikers have had their hair pulled. The Samoan Prime Minister informed the strikers that he was "saddened by their actions". He urged them to go back to work. Within the next few days the majority returned to work although a minority remained fighting.

Yazaki is a Japanese multinational manufacturer of automotive wire harnesses, operating in many low wage countries such as Mexico, the Philippines Thailand and Taiwan. It has recently transferred some of its operations from Australia to New Zealand to take advantage of lower wages. Many of its workers employed were Samoan in national origin. The company took the next step of setting up operations in Western Samoa. There they were given the red carpet treatment by the Western Samoa' government

The workers in Samoa were paid \$WS1.23 (about 75c Australian) per hour which is below the average wage for Samoa although greater than the minimum permitted.

To strengthen their position, the Samoan workers need allies - in Australia and New Zealand. Next time workers in Samoa are victimised they should be backed up with action - direct action against Yazaki. We must not tolerate Samoan workers working twelve hours for a pittance. They must get wages, union rights and conditions equal to workers in Australia now! It is in our interest that there is international workers solidarity against an international ruling class now!

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