

CONTENTS

- 2... Reactionary anti-terrorist legislation
- 3... Refugees: Australian barbarism exposed
- 4...Jean-Marie LePen: French Fascism
- 5.. Legal slavery: Howard's war against the unemployed
- 6 Argentina crisis desperation and revolt
- 7 -----Victorian AMWU disaffiliation from ALP

Barbaric Israel!

The horrifying pictures of destruction of the small city of Jenin have shocked the world. Old people have been murdered while their homes were destroyed by Israeli bulldozers. Were these poor victims terrorists preparing for a suicide mission? Hardly! The barbaric raids by the Israeli armed forces go beyond any just reprisal for Hamas suicide raids against innocent civilians. Israel is not destroying Hamas, it is destroying Palestinian civilisation.

Israel is claiming that camps like Jenin are the the breeding ground for suicide bombers. Indeed, they have a point. Jenin started off as a refugee camp. The refugees came from occupied Palestine now known as Israel. In camps like this Arab youth have no future. Of course they realise that the Israelis (and imperialist backers) bear the main responsibility for the situation. but they are hardly happy with Arafat and the mini-state. Many feel that they have nothing to lose by committing a suicide raid. After all, they believe, the profit Mahomed will look after them, rewarding them in heaven. In reality the suicide raids pose no threat to the Israeli state. They provide Israeli hawks the pretext for destroying Palestinian society. This they are doing with devastating success.

World opinion, including the United Nations, is condemning Israel. But on the whole the country that matters is the United States. The US is unhappy with the situation. But in no way will they take an overt stand and condemn. They certainly won't do anything about Israel. They dare not withdraw the support they have given to this imperialist bulwark which they need to facilitate their control over the whole middle east.

When he declared war on terror, George Bush realised that he needed Arab support. To achieve this end he was at pains to point out that the Palestinians, especially Yasser Arafat, were not the enemy in this war. He did this despite Palestinian jubilation, dancing in the street, when news came over of the September 11 terror raid. Yasser Arafat, realising what was at stake, was quick to condemn the raid and he has passed on his condolences to the victims. More recently, the US has shown open disagreement with the Israelis, making it clear that in their view Arafat was not a terrorist.

Israel was hoping that the terror raid would mean that the US would declare war on the Palestinians. They were initially disappointed. Nevertheless, the "war against terrorism" has given them the framework to conduct their bloody ruthless campaign. George Bush made it clear that the "war against terrorism" would not just be against terrorist organisations but against those countries that nurtured them. This rationalised the US war against Afghanistan. The Taleban who rule there didn't blow up the World Trade Centre but had permitted the El Qaida to operate freely in Afghanistan. They demanded proof before medicines.

Communist Left has warned that the current Palestinian mini-state, rushed through by Clinton, is not the solution to the Palestinian question. Israel can only exist by bloody repression. The suicide bombers are an act of desperation. They are a symptom of injustice. Unfortunately, with the sellout of the leadership of the Palestine national struggle they will continue. They will kill Israelis but not their reactionary state. All this will rationalise another

round of brutal aggression from Sharon.

The problem is Israel. Israel is an imperialist imposition over the Arab people. Its creation pushed the United States of the Middle East. We want unity between Arab and Israeli proletarians for socialist revolution. But for it to be a principled unity we must recognise the justice of the Palestinian cause. We must not put the Palestinian and Israeli question on an equal footing. Nor can we wipe the national question out of existence.

Israel's barbarism is receiving a strong reaction of anti-Semitism including physical attacks on Jewish people. This must be totally opposed. We are opposed to an imperialist sponsored state not the people of Jewish faith. We defend the right of all people to be free to practice their religion whilst arguing against all religion as the opiate of the masses

Reactionary anti-terrorist legislation

There is plenty in the current arsenal of bourgeois legislation to deal with the likes of El Qaida and any one who is their accomplice in terror acts such as September 11. The question is why do we need more? Because the government wants to take advantage of the situation to deal with the left is the answer. Basically any organisation can be deemed terrorist by the attorney general. And anyone associating with such an organisation in any way, no matter how minor can be liable to oppressive penalties - such as twenty five years jail! This puts those Australian activists in solidarity with national liberation movements at serious risk. It was not so long ago that Nelson Mandela was considered terrorist. So too were the leaders of Fretilin. Terror is often forced on progressive movements because of their isolation especially from the working class. This isolation reflects their middle class leadership. It also reflects the failure of the workers movement to take up their progressive demands. But in any case it is the USA which is the world's number one terrorist and it is becoming clear that America was behind the recent failed coup in Venezuela. It has been suggested that those activists who recently helped the refugees at the Woomera detention centre could be dealt with by this legislation. It is also feared that Arab and Palestinian organisations will be victims. No doubt this will be part of the reactionary campaign to criminalise Arab people in west Sydney. But basically all the attorney general has to do is label an organisation and its members and supporters face the prospect of a long jail sentence. The organisation has no right to challenge the "terrorist" label. This is outrageous!

It has been promised that unions will not be subject to this in relation to picket lines. All we say is don't bank on this promise. The authorities could change their mind at short notice. In fact this legislation could be used to target the whole of the left. This legislation must be smashed totally. The workers' movement must act decisively to smash the new anti-terrorist legislation -- root and branch!

Refugees. Australian barbarism exposed.

The ABCTV documentary show Four Corners blatantly exposed the brutal methods that the Australian armed forces used against people seeking refuge in this country. These poor victims of Saddam Hussein or the Taliban in fear of their lives and forced to flee in unseaworthy ships, paying exorbitant amounts to people smugglers. During their trip they suffer from dehydration and malnutrition. They have been greeted as they approach Australia by military personnel with electric batons and double strength capsicum spray. One group in unseaworthy craft were forced back to Indonesia. They had to wade through the sea to get ashore. Most of the refugees were sick or injured. Some were carrying sick people or children. Three of their number haven't been seen since. They are presumed to have collapsed and drowned wading to shore.

There have also been reports about their barbaric treatment within the refugee camps if they reach Australia. Children have serious psychiatric disorders. The Federal government refuses to accept the findings of the psychologists. Yet they were appointed by the South Australian state government! The Phillip Ruddock method of confronting this is to refuse to listen and reiterate his government's strong stand in protecting Australia's borders.

The government has lost some credibility amongst liberal bourgeois public opinion. But basically this does not matter. It is Australian chauvinist public opinion which really matters. And this is fully in support of a ruthless stand against the refugees. Ruddock is also assisted by a weak kneed "opposition" called "Labor" who give bipartisan support for defending Australia's borders and even the refugee camps (which they claim credit in establishing). Crean only promises to act in a slightly more humane way.

Revolutionary communists reject the whole frame work of the debate. We have no interest in defending racist white Australia ever ruthlessly or humanely. We reject the artificially created queue which they use to divide potential residents into those welcome (after a long wait) and those sent home. We reject the division between real refugees and others. We have no interest whatsoever in the racist Australian state. We put class interest first. Basically anyone should be allowed to come to Australia whether they are in fear of their life or just like the weather here. We wish to welcome all those unfortunately detained in barbaric prison camps. They should be freed now!

SMASH ALL IMMIGRATION CONTROLS!

The issue of immigration controls is of vital importance not just for the refugees themselves. Nor is it just an issue for those suffering from the racist backlash due to the refugee issue. The Howard Government is using the issue to win consensus for its agenda. It is an agenda which attacks not just migrants but Black people, unemployed, trade unions and all working people. Every worker has an interest in standing up for the refugees and against the racist Australian state. It is the job of every communist to show workers their class interest.

Most unions have taken a stand in support of refugees. The CMFEU and AMWU have contingents at rallies. But despite having memberships in their thousands, union contingents are small, only a few march. The reason for this is that the union's position is only an official position which has not been debated amongst the rank and file. At a public meeting on the refugees and the labour movement December last year, Amanda Perkins AMWU organiser explained that she had been booed, jeered and had half full coke can thrown at her for standing up and arguing what was official union policy. Some of the boos were supporting her against the leadership. Unions who try to impose principled positions by administrative and bureaucratic means do so at their peril. This only breeds grass roots hostility.

The radical left have stood up for the refugees. They have provided both publicity and practical material assistance. Unfortunately their campaign has not transcended their milieu. The Socialist Alliance want comfortable demos which they can effectively control. To mobilise working people would embarrass and threaten them.

The Easter Sunday rally for the refugees at Villawood mobilised the Socialist Alliance milieu very effectively. There was token participation from unions, migrant groupings and human rights groupings. Once again there was no attempt to communicate the issues with the local working class communities. At Villawood there were DSP authorised posters for women's liberation and John Pilger's meetings. But nothing concerning the refugees and why ordinary people should take a stand.

The fact is that the Socialist Alliance believe in liberal moralism and bourgeois public opinion rather than working class power. This approach is suicide for the movement. We need a workers' movement to fight racism. And fighting racism means opposing the Australian state.

Jean Marie Le Pen. The rise of French fascism

There has been widespread concern within France, throughout Europe and elsewhere about the rise of the extreme right racist and fascist Jean Marie Le Pen and his Fronte Nationale. Le Pen has won through to the final round of the French Presidential elections depriving Mr Joison of his chance to be elected President. There is no chance of Le Pen being elected. The Socialists and Conservatives will unite to deprive him of that, His success will have a massive affect on French politics and give rise to the rise of the extreme right throughout Europe.

The ruling class find Le Pen an inconvenience. After all he is opposed to the Euro being French currency and wants France out of the European Union. The Left hate him because they realise what fascism means the exacerbation of racial hatred, state repression and the smashing of the organised working class. Make no mistake: Le Pen and his

crories must be dealt with. It is only by working class means that fascism can be destroyed. Relying on the state only exposes the workers' movement and/or the left as weak, dependant on the class enemy.

The general response to Le Pen is shock horror linked to bold pronouncements about stopping fascism. Naturally, the radical left harks back to Hitler and the mass murder of the Jews. Frankly this moralism will not work. Class struggle is stronger than moralism. This applies unfortunately to counter-revolutionary movements. The fascists are winning because sections of the middle class and chauvinist sections of the working class identify with chauvinism and see Le Pen as the best fighter for their interests. It is this which must be confronted.

In France fascism grew out of the seeds of anti-Algerian prejudice. But who planted these seeds? The Communist Party of France! They opposed Algerian immigrants as a major political issue in France. The fascists continued their campaign by showing that they were more militant and consistent chauvinists. Hence we now have a mass fascist movement of fascists recruited to a certain extent from the ranks of former communists.

The other attraction to the fascists is that they mean business in opposing European unity, the euro and the multi-nationals. They do this from the point of view of France, of course. Their independent France will be at the expense of the working class, to the extent of smashing workers organisations. When globalisation is seen as the problem, national capitalism appears to be the solution. This is advocated by the reformists and the fascists. The reformists have been shown to be impotent!

The worst mistake the French left can make is to fall in behind the banner of the popular front - behind the chauvinist banner of the tricolour! Firstly, it means joining the attack on immigrants, minorities and the working class in the name of the French nation. Secondly, it exposes the left and the workers' movement as weak, ripe for smashing. The middle class look for power. Through the popular front the left offers submission. A workers' movement hidden behind a patriotic banner is hardly a pole of attraction. Very much the contrary.

When will they ever learn. The popular front has been shown to be a death trap so many times throughout history. In Spain, in Germany, in Turkey, in Chile to name the most blatant examples, a politically weak working class, weakened by surrender to the bourgeoisie, has been physically smashed either by the fascists or the state machine of the ruling class. Yet the Stalinists never learn. Unfortunately they have been joined by some "Trotskyists" notably the Australian Democratic Socialist Party and the British Socialist Workers Party. We must say; never again! The workers' movement must never be smashed in this way again. We must fight by proletarian means and not subordinated to the popular front.

How the fascists will now proceed remains to be seen. What is clear is there will be concessions to them from the bourgeois parties for fear that the fascists will steal their chauvinist social base. In other words, more attacks on minorities and immigrants. The left must make no concessions to chauvinist poison whatsoever. Workers' defence must be built to defend any minority under attack. All immigration controls must be opposed. Workers' defence also must be built to physically fight the fascist menace. With Le Pen's electoral success, this must begin now!

Legal Slavery! Howard's war against the unemployed!

Work for the dole has been on the agenda when the Liberals adopted it as policy. Labor counted his by Newstart which meant training schemes with a component of work for the dole. Nevertheless Labor's philosophy was different. They did believe that training schemes could be beneficial in making the unemployed employable with new skills and education. In practice most of the schemes turned out to be Mickey Mouse. Most of them were worth nothing. Even those worth a bit had a shelf life of no more than six months

Anyhow they cost too much Millions of dollars were spent making the unemployed busy, keeping them off the streets and the unemployed figures' look better simply by reclassification. Very few real jobs were provided from these schemes. They were a conducting medium for government and bosses propaganda on making unemployed feel guilty for their situation and claiming that unemployment is the fault of the individual. They were boring and patronising.

The Liberals put an end to Newstart simply because it was costing the government too much money. They also saved money by privatising the CES and rechristening them as Job Networks. This saves them millions of dollars in wages as public servants do have rights and this restricts the work tasks and forces the government to employ more. Private employer can be more flexible about their work place practices. This means they can force one person to do many jobs. This applies to the job network industry as much as it does elsewhere.

It was of course, only a matter of time before the Liberals introduced systematic work for the dole. In July this year Abbot's new slave labour scheme will be introduced. What does this involve? Every unemployed person under the age of 50 who is not doing training or part time work will have the choice of either community service or work for the dole or part time military service. Yes, that's right. Unemployed could face conscription. These are posed as "options". It is implied that unemployed people will somehow be free to choose. Yes, some might have limited freedom. But for others who may be rejected for work for the dole or community service, the army may be the only "choice" left.

The whole framework is oppressive. It is hard enough work as it is to survive on the bare subsistence that the government pays us - the dole. It is even harder to have to work for it. The government is creating more misery and hardship. All governments, Labor and Liberal, accept unemployment as "necessary for the economy". They also welcome it as a weapon to undermine trade union militancy. Most of the unemployment is beyond their control. No capitalist government can overcome the crisis of capitalism. pay). This way they didn't have to employ any!

So trade unionists also have an interest in fighting this legal slavery. It is vital unemployed and employed workers and unemployed unite to fight these oppressive attacks. It totally damns the current trade union leadership that fact that in response to these oppressive attacks they say and do absolutely nothing.

One organisation which is organising a campaign is the group based around unemployment and other social security issues based in Redfern called Standup! Standup! is a broad grouping which includes members and supporters of Communist Left. Whilst it is only political parties which can offer programmes which have the solutions, we think Grass roots organisations are important for practical struggle.

Standup! have e-mailed virtually every union. Only one has responded, the CMFEU. Its representative Shaunagh Sullivan assures us that the union can't do anything because of anti union legislation which forbids bans on work for the dole. A decent union would treat such legislation with contempt. We have however received some support from the Labourhire Action Group which is within the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. We hope this support is translated into trade union policy and action.

The struggle to defend the unemployed from these reactionary attacks requires revolutionary leadership from a revolutionary communist party. This is a matter of urgency!

Standup! is a grass roots organisation of unemployed people and those fighting attacks on government services. Standup! has an office at South Sydney community Aid 180 George

Street Redfern.

Standup! meets every 2nd and 4th Wed 5pm at South Sydney Leagues club Chalmers St. Redfern

Argentina: crisis desperation and revolt

It doesn't take much knowledge of the situation to bet that the May Day will be humungous. In March there was a massive National March of Workers with marches in all major cities culminating in the massive one in Plaza de Mayo Buenos Aires. And there was a massive show of force on April 25 called by the National Picketers Bloc. Down with Duhalde! Down with the IMF! May Day looks like being even bigger

Argentine people of many classes will be there not because of any love for protest. They want a show of force against the government and the bankers which they all hate. They are bitter and angry about what the agenda of capitalism means for ordinary people in that country - austerity poverty and even hunger. Recently a quiz show offered as its prize for winning the contest a job. Fifty percent of the population are now unemployed. Many are owed their wages!

Just a fortnight ago, the government froze bank withdrawal (to stop people withdrawing money and leaving the country). The government left a loophole which allowed operators to withdraw a limited amount from automatic tellers. But all but a handful of banks have decided not to replenish their machines. Automatic tellers are now empty and there is therefore no money for anyone. Small shopkeepers are only honouring credit cards to long established customers. Middle class people are faced with the possibility of losing their life savings. A quiz show offered as its prize for winning the contest-- a job. Fifty percent of the population are now unemployed. Many are owed their wages!

The freeze has had a massive effect on business. It has meant that businesses especially small ones. Basic commodities are becoming unavailable such as bread and petrol

When will the freeze be over? Well Duhalde says "God will decide what happens" Well actually the IMF will have more to do with it. The IMF will consider a package when Argentina offers it a "responsible plan". but what does this involve? Well it means no money to the provinces for essentials such as hospitals and education.

Starve or starve! These are capitalism's options. and very few in Argentina today have faith in capitalism because it does not have the capacity to pay them let alone provide the infrastructure for a decent society.

Leading member of the ostensibly Trotskyist grouping Workers Party (Partido Obrero) Vinente Belvenerra has claimed that the policy of the IMF is to plunder Argentina "in the same way as the Zionist Gendarmes of the US are smashing every vestige of Palestinian National Authority infrastructure by literally bulldozing whole towns" he goes on "In their frenzy to restart the cycle of capital accumulation, the 'worthless' productive forces (among them first and foremost the workers themselves) must be smashed." The imperialists are staking everything -they are risking the possibility of revolution- to smash both economically and physically the people of Argentina. Whether or not they will be able to get away with it is up to the working class. And indeed there are a massive growth in organisation militancy and conscious class struggle within these committees. These committees apart from organising protests organise collective food distribution.

But there is much more going on in terms of militancy in that country. for a start the strong militant unemployed organisation the Picketers bloc have been blocading roads and factories demanding multinationals employ. This is a massive movement in Argentina. They have even raided police stations. There has been spectacular growth in recent months They see the need for unity with employed workers.

The working class is also been militant but not quite as spectacular and prominent. The Brukman clothing factory has been occupied and placed under workers control. There has also been an occupation by the ceramic tile workers of Zanon of Neuquen. These have been supported by the popular committees. While in San Juan according to a declaration by the National Picketers bloc "the heroic struggle of public sector workers has all but reached the stage of insurrection." The workers movement is on the upsurge. The potential for revolutionary struggle is bright indeed!

There is no denying the combativity of the Argentine masses both middle class, working class and unemployed.

The decisive question is leadership and programme. For Argentine people today revolution is the only way to avoid starvation! If the ruling class wish to smash us we must organise to smash them. Revolution must be put on the agenda. This requires a Bolshevik party. The working class are the vanguard of the revolution. They must be educated to their historic role. class people must be won to the proletarian vanguard. Unfortunately most of the contending revolutionary groupings fail. The Workers Party for example raises the demand for a constituent Assembly. But revolution is subordinated, almost forgotten about. Revolutionaries raise democratic demands to win over to revolutionary vanguard, to sharpen the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. Not to forget about it or relegate it to the indefinite future. Its time such a vanguard was created now! Any delay in Argentina may cost lives.

AMWU Victorian Branch Disaffiliation from the ALP

It is encouraging that some section of the union movement has finally got the message that loyalty to Labor gives you nothing. Unions spend a combined sum of millions of dollars to prop up a party that kicks them in the teeth. In the eighties a Prices and Incomes Accord was signed. In the Agreement unions surrendered wage increase or deferred these to the indefinite future in exchange for a few goodies which Labor usually offers anyway.

It didn't take very long for Senator Button to rip up the agreement by making it clear that his government would allow car workers to be laid off. The problem was, and still is that even though Labor makes it clear that it will sell out unions and even support legislation which makes effective unionism illegal, the union movement doesn't rip up the agreement. It is still loyal. Basically it is giving Labor members hard earned dues for nothing. or even less than nothing. Labor promises to attack wages and conditions.

It is good that after all these years some major union has got the message. But it is not enough to merely oppose Labor Labor must be opposed from a revolutionary point of view. Labor does not merely betray because of bad people. If you are loyal to the capitalist state you must betray working people. The only alternative which will serve working people is one which is committed to

It is doubtful that the AMWU Victoria has this perspective. fundamentally the AMWU over the years has been protectionist and so has the Victorian branch. No break from protection has been made. Workers don't need an economically rationalist Labor Party. They don't need a protectionist one either. Protectionism unites us with the class enemy and divides us from our class comrades in other countries.

It is doubtful that the ruling class would permit a protectionist party to have any influence, but even if it did the price would be wages and working conditions. We would pay so the boss could receive government money is what their schema amounts to. It is basically no alternative at all. Protectionism also hastens the drive to war between contending imperialists. Whilst we are glad Victorian AMWU have learned the folly of backing Labor, we hope that they draw a proper balance sheet about why Labor is so right wing and is, in fact, an antiworker party. We suggest they study the programme and analysis of the communist Left which is the only grouping to have presented a marxist analysis of the collapse of manufacturing and put forward a revolutionary programme

New Zealand: The end of the Alliance.

It is surprising many that the "war against terrorism is meaning the end of that popular front bloc called Alliance. It doesn't surprise us. Alliance was formed as a rotten bloc between old style Labour Party people who refused to accept the economic rationalist agenda and popular front lefties who were seeking a mass base. for a long time this arrangement has survived but has not been entirely comfortable. There is nothing like a crisis to smash a rotten bloc. The "war against terrorism" means that US cracks the whip. Woe betide if you show dissent. So do social

democrats toe the line? Of course they do! And it is a bit much to expect the likes of Anderton to swim against the stream unless there is a mere trickle. Anderton wants another Labour Party. To fight on principle against the USA would really isolate him with regard to a social democratic audience. This he wouldn't do even if he considered opposition to the war drive to be the principled line. On the other hand radicals of the Alliance are antiwar activists and they are uncomfortable going all the way with the USA. They want to protest. And there protest is an embarrassment to the reformists Of course there is a conflict of principle and the logic is split. This is precisely what is happening.

We shed no tears for the Alliance. There is nothing new about unprincipled blocs exploding. Basically both components should look at their principles or rather their lack of them. The working class does not need a mish mash of protectionism combined with a few reforms mixed up with middle class protest politics. Whilst we are glad this rotten bloc is over, we hope the participants learn the lessons. The main one is that rotten blocs and class collaboration are not the answer, revolutionary communism is.