

83 May 2009

## Towards a million unemployed!

Everyone knows there is a recession and this recession has been brewing for a long time. At first Kevin Rudd was a bit blasé. He believed that Australia would weather the storm with only minor damage. Then it was predicted that an extra 150,000 would join the dole queue. Later it was estimated that the percentage of the workforce unemployed would reach seven percent! Now it is acknowledged that even this is a serious understatement and the real figure will be much greater. As many as a million people will be forced to live below the poverty line! Many will lose their homes.

Rudd's basis for optimism was as follows: Australia has a more regulated banking regime and the economy was based on the export of mining raw materials to the less affected Peoples' Republic of China. It's true that Australia is doing better than other countries. But this is relative. People are suffering. Rudd got it wrong. Australian mineral exports to China have suffered because China's exports of manufactured goods made from those minerals have declined rapidly. Chinese workers have suffered from serious unemployment also. So there is a reduced demand for Australian imported minerals. Australian mining workers have been laid off.

This recession has exacerbated the process of restructuring. It has been suggested that companies such as Pacific Brands have used the recession to do what they wanted to do anyway —lay off workers. Australian manufacturing has always been weak, undercapitalized, poorly equipped and suffering from a poor local market. For decades, since the post war boom of the sixties, manufacturing firms have folded and many more want to. The recession gives them a smokescreen.

Rudd's way of dealing with this is to give out money. He believes that if money is given to the right hands, people will spend and this will bring back confidence. The retail sector claims increased spending has helped their industry and saved some jobs. But this gain is minimal. Maybe it has stemmed the tide a little, saving a few jobs for a while. Rudd's spend big has not been any solution. The flood of unemployment is continuing and is expected to intensify. Working people should not be concerned about the welfare of the government or the bosses. Unless we put our interests first we will be forced to live below the poverty line.

**Every sacking must be fought!**

**Organise, occupy, expropriate the ruling class!**

**A shorter working week at the bosses' expense, without loss of pay!**

**No part-time work!**

### **Refugee crisis. Liberals fuel racism.**

Last month a boatload of refugees arrived near Ashmore Island in waters claimed by Australia. They found themselves confronted and escorted by the Australian Navy. Whilst there have been quite a number of arrivals from "boat people" this one was given more prominence because of a serious accident on board. Fire killed at least three and at least fifty more were injured, some critically from burns received. Some of the victims were children.

This was, of course, a massive tragedy and the victims have our full heartfelt sympathy. However, for the Liberals it was one more chance to play wedge politics and expose the Rudd Government as soft. In fact the Liberals blame this alleged softness as a contributing factor towards the deaths. Once again they expose their own racism and play on the racism of the Australian public.

Promptly after the tragedy was announced, Liberal Premier of Western Australia, Barnett claimed that he had contacted the authorities who claimed people on the boat set the boat alight. Of course as the allegation came on the same day as the tragedy it couldn't have been based on any serious investigation. Bob Debus, minister for home affairs also contacted the authorities. He received no such allegation. We doubt if any such allegation has been made at all. Barnett is playing the same game as Howard did with his "children overboard" allegation allegations which turned out to be false.

It may be true that some of the occupants may be responsible. Yes there could be criminals on any boat which arrives. There also may be criminals on any aircraft. Someone on the boat may be mentally ill. It also may be possible that there was some engine failure. Bob Debus is quite correct to refuse to make any comment apart from pointing out the fire was "fuel related".. Making any serious claim without a proper investigation is simply prejudice. Malcolm Turnbull accuses Rudd of being "soft on refugees". This, according to him is sending a bad message, encouraging people smugglers. His criticism of private entrepreneurs is touching. But the fact is that hiring people smugglers is the only way to safety for people suffering from the rulers in Iran or the Taleban in Afghanistan. These victims should not be forced to risk their lives on the open seas on unseaworthy boats. They should be welcomed to Australia by conventional means. They should be allowed to fly in legally.

We don't think that Rudd has been soft on refugees. He still uses the Navy to prevent their entry. Some have been forced to live on Christmas Island. He has been brutal on these poor victims and prevents their entry.

We are not only "soft on refugees" we oppose any immigration controls. Working people and oppressed should be allowed to live in any country they please. We welcome them to Australia, it is the job of revolutionary proletarians to support these and all refugees, Smash all immigration controls!

### **Pakistan faces collapse**

It is taking a long time, but the West may win in Afghanistan. The price of this victory will be Pakistan. Osama Bin Ladin is living there and so does El Qaida. In fact they control the North West Provinces and Swat. They have surrounded the North West city of

Peshawar. There are regular reports about suicide bombings. Moderate leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated. An attack with great social consequences was that on the Sri Lankan cricket team. Apart from religion, cricket is one of the few things which tie Pakistan together.

Pakistan is a reactionary state. It was formed with one common denominator, the Moslem religion. It is a cobbled together mixture of many nationalities with different cultures and languages. Some like the Punjab are divided between Pakistan and India. When the state was formed millions migrated from India to Pakistan to live in the country of their religion. The people known as the Mohijirs are on the bottom rung of Pakistani society. They formed a national liberation front to fight the reactionary Pakistani state which discriminates against them.

Pakistan is an extremely poor country. It is a country where poor peasants and proletarians suffer a low standard of living. There is no significant communist movement. Stalinism has indeed been compromised. So the likes of El Qaida and the Taliban offer a pole of attraction. It is very easy to blame sin for Pakistan's failings. Many refugees from Afghanistan are crossing the virtually open border on Pakistan's North West Frontier. They provide a force for Moslem extremists in their fight against "sin and corruption".

The Pakistan Government is compromised: by corruption and by its alliance with the USA. After all, the USA is fighting their Moslem brothers in Afghanistan. This war is completely unjustified -- the US alleged that Osama Bin Laden was hiding in Afghanistan. The Taliban rulers demanded proof of his participation in the World Trade Centre terror attack. This is fair enough. They were prepared to negotiate. But Bush and cronies didn't listen. They just invaded.

Naturally Moslems hate other Moslems being invaded and attacked without valid reason. So El Qaida has been able to recruit within Pakistan.

Pakistan is now facing a crisis of terrorism. The terrorists have a social base especially amongst Afghan immigrants. They have support amongst Pakistan's armed forces. The whole country might explode into sectorial violence.

In no way do we wish a Taliban government on the Pakistani people. The position of women will be degraded from its current low level. They face oppression and discrimination. They would not be allowed to attend school. In Taliban controlled Afghanistan schooling for women was illegal and forced underground. They were forbidden to earn any money. We are totally opposed to any form of Islamic regime. But thanks to the ruling and liberal elites (such as Benazir Bhutto) throwing in their lot with the US, the Taliban are seen as fighters against imperialism. It's time the proletariat under a revolutionary communist banner fought imperialism for a socialist revolution

## **Fiji under martial law**

Fiji's former Prime Minister Qarase was ecstatic when Fiji's Supreme Court handed down its ruling --the military coup which overthrew his government was illegal. However he was going to learn very quickly what this moral legal victory would mean. The President abolished every institution of Fijian democracy and handed power to Bainimarama. Fiji is now a military dictatorship.

The press is censored and foreign journalists have been kicked out of the country. Civil law has been abolished. Qarase cannot appeal because there is no justice system to appeal to.

People like Qarase will never learn. When the interests of capital are interfered with by democratically elected governments then capitalism's state, the armed forces and the military dispense with democracy.

This is especially true in Fiji where capitalism is less stable but it is also true in countries such as Britain, Chile and Australia. In Australia they used the Governor-General and the Senate to dispense with the democratically elected Whitlam Government. In Chile they used a military coup and imposed a military dictatorship which slaughtered many thousands of leftists and workers. This is the fourth military coup in Fiji.

Rudd and other democratic Commonwealth countries are talking tough. A coup like the one in Fiji is bad for their image. They are talking about kicking Fiji out of the South Pacific Forum and sanctions.

Bainimarama wants to talk. He thinks he can persuade Rudd that his actions are in the best interests of Fiji (read Fijian capitalism). Yes, it is in their interests to stop governments who may interfere with profits. For the sake of Fijian capitalism these governments must be dealt with.

Qarase has not merely failed to learn the lessons of Chile and Whitlam; he has failed to learn the lessons of his own country. When Fiji finally gets on its democratic feet again, the next government which advocates pro-working class measures will be dealt with also.

In Fiji as elsewhere the revolution must go all the way. The problem with this coup is that it is not only the reformists who will suffer, unionists and proletarians will suffer also, in prison. So will bourgeois democrats.

Workers therefore must break from Qarase and forge a revolutionary proletarian party committed to smash the Fijian state. For a revolutionary workers' and small farmers' government!

A revolutionary party must take up the democratic demands, recognising all cultures. It must take up the demand of the republic which in Fiji's case can only be achieved simultaneously with the dictatorship of the proletariat which will, of course, transcend it. It must have a programme of agrarian reform. It must be committed to building workers' militias!

Once again the popular front has shown itself to be a death trap for proletarians and working people.

## **Revolution in Madagascar**

Statement by Leninist Trotskyist Faction On March 8, 2009 the revolution in Madagascar began. The former French colony, an island of almost 20 million inhabitants bigger than France, is located in the Indian Ocean, a 250 miles off the coast of Mozambique and South Africa. On that day the armed forces refused to obey the orders of the President Ravalomanana, to repress the workers and poor peasants who had been in a state of rebellion since mid-January'. Hundreds of rank and file mutinied and took control of the Soanierana base, the main arsenal of the Malagasy armed forces, 6 kilometers from Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. Their press release said: "We no longer respond to the orders of our officers, we respond to our hearts. We were trained to protect the people and property, not to attack the people. We are the people".

Why did the ordinary soldiers side with the exploited?

Since late January, the working class and poor peasants had been fighting in the streets, holding demonstrations, general strikes and clashes with the police and the mercenary presidential guard. Over 1100 have been killed. During those two months of fighting the union bureaucracy of the four unions of the CTM (Confederation of Malagasy Workers) set up a "Council of the Republic for economic and social affairs" uniting - government, employers and unions and condemning the struggles of the workers and peasants as "vandalism",

But what is decisive, without doubt, is that the militant workers and peasants lynched some of the police, and left their bodies hanging from trees and lampposts in Antananarivo. These actions proved to the rank and file soldiers that the workers and peasants — their parents, brothers, uncles, cousins etc were willing to go all the way in their campaign. Convincing the soldiers that they had the strength and confidence to mutiny against their officers and with their weapons join the rebels.

As Trotsky said of the revolution of February 1917: "... (the disarmament of the Pharaohs [police. Ed] becomes a universal slogan. The police are fierce, implacable, hated and hating foes. To win them over is out of the question. Beat them up and kill them. It is different with the soldiers... The critical hour of contact between the pushing crowd and the soldiers who bar their way has its critical minutes. That is when the gray barrier has not yet given way, still holds together shoulder to shoulder, but already wavers, and the officer, gathering his last strength of will, gives the command: "Fire."... The guns waver. The crowd pushes. Then the officer points the barrel of his revolver at the most suspicious soldier. From the decisive minute now stands out the decisive second. At the critical moment, when the officer is ready to pull the trigger, a shot from the crowd falls on him... This decides not only the fate of the street skirmish, but perhaps the whole day, or the whole insurrection. The street fighting began with the disarmament of the hated Pharaohs, their revolvers passing into the hands of the rebels. The way to the soldier's rifle led through the revolver taken from the Pharaoh. (History of the Russian Revolution, Goizanz 1934:

128-142, our emphasis).

In Madagascar, the way to the soldier's rifle was through the policemen hanging from trees in Antananarivo with their pistols passing into the hands of the rebels, which then gave the soldiers the confidence to disobey their officers when given orders to suppress the people. In this way, the March 8 revolution began. Since late January a growing crisis developed out of a split in the bourgeoisie between the pro-US faction led by President Ravalomanana and a pro-French faction behind Andry Rajoelina, mayor of Antananarivo. Ravalomanana appointed himself president of a "Transition Authority" to hold a referendum. At that point, the rank and file soldiers who had remained "neutral", as the guarantors, ultimately, the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole, mutinied.

This mutiny on March 8 was the beginning of a workers and peasants armed insurrection that overthrew Ravalomanana and his regime. This could be called a classic "February Revolution" that causes a revolutionary crisis and creates a power vacuum in the regime.

### **The revolutionary uprising creates a power vacuum in the regime**

For nearly a week between Sunday and March 16, there was no government in Madagascar. Faced with the insubordination of its base and the opening of the revolution, the leadership of the armed forces had remained on the sidelines, waiting for an agreement between the two bourgeois factions. It issued an ultimatum saying that if the two factions had not come to an agreement in 72 hours, the generals would take control of the government. Ridiculous: no one could believe that a handful of generals and colonels whose troops had mutinied and taken over the largest arsenal in the country could mount a coup.

Ravalomanana ignored the ultimatum and remained in one of his palaces surrounded by the mercenary presidential guard and a few thousand followers. The generals saw that Rajoelina was at the head of an armed mass insurrection and decided that the best way to save bourgeois property and the bourgeois regime was to allow Rajoelina to become the President,

On Friday March 13, Rajoelina along with the generals and the officials of the Transitional Authority occupied the presidential palace. To give some semblance of legality to Rajoelina's investiture as president of Madagascar they gave Ravalomanana four hours to resign. Ravalomanana finally resigned on Monday 16 so that on that day the power vacuum was finally filled by Rajoelina.

The working class and poor peasants who fought with such heroism and spontaneity, attacking the police, dividing the army and toppling Ravalomanana, found that suddenly they faced the question of who would take the power and rule Madagascar. Since there was no revolutionary leadership with a program to fight for power, the generals stepped in and appointed Rajoelina leading the pro-French faction of the bourgeoisie to fill the power vacuum. Thus the "dual power" of the masses mobilised on the streets and backed by the ordinary soldiers was for the present suspended.

### **The workers, poor peasants and soldiers began a revolution with their "dual power"**

But the revolution has already begun: the government of "national salvation" of Rajoelina is weak, the regime and all its institutions are destroyed, and most importantly, the state is completely broken down because his pillar, the armed forces were destroyed and divided by insurgent masses who heat the soldiers to rise up against the caste of officers and moving with their weapons on the side of the exploited,

The masses are still in the street, rebel soldiers sent tanks to the capital to counter any possible attack by the mercenaries of the presidential guard, and in the streets, squares, including the churches, can be seen carrying their weapons defending the workers and poor peasants. The soldiers were ordered to clarify things very well for the media that they do not take orders from

Ravalomanana or the military, not even Rajoelina.

The revolution has begun and Madagascar and has already gone beyond the heroic workers and peasants of Bolivia 2003-2005, and the revolutionary struggle of the working class and students in Greece in December 2008: it has split the ranks of the army from the officers and the workers and poor peasants from the bourgeois state to create a dual power situation. The evidence is the masses of armed soldiers who mutinied and have control of the main military base and the entire arsenal of the country.

There are two powers now in Madagascar: one of the weak regime of Rajoelina, supported by a fraction of the national bourgeoisie, by a military leadership that neither controls the soldiers the main arsenal: the union bureaucracy, which was overthrown by the insurgent masses, and the leading government officials recognised by the majority of the imperialist powers and governments of various countries of Africa. The other power is that of the workers, peasants and armed soldiers, which is the only power recognised by the broad exploited masses,

This dual power situation can only last a short period of time: sooner or later one must impose itself on the other. Either the working class, peasants and soldiers will centralize its national bodies of power and form a national workers and peasants militia to organize and mount a successful insurrection (in which a government of workers, poor peasants and soldiers rule, that is the dictatorship of the proletariat) or, imperialism and the bourgeoisie, deceiving and dividing the masses through class collaboration and the terror of fascism will smash the revolution with fire and drown it in blood.

But this will not be resolved in a single act, but over a period of time. We are at the beginning of a great revolution in which the masses have won a "brilliant victory" in the words of Trotsky referring to Russia in February 1917, the German revolution of 1918—1919, the Hungarian revolution of 1919 and the Spanish in 1931. Today, the masses feel victorious as they are armed in the streets, cities, villages, and the countryside. It's the bourgeoisie that is terrified of losing everything, its status, power and property. But as Trotsky said in 1936, of all those brilliant victories: it was only in Russia that the proletariat power in their hands, expropriated their exploiters and, therefore, knew how to create and maintain a socialist state. In all other cases, the proletariat, despite his efforts, was stopped. In its leadership, the first revolt was that the power fell to a military dictatorship" Leon Trotsky Whither France

### **The struggle for land, bread and for national independence against the brutal imperialist plunder**

The beginning of this revolution in Madagascar is not an isolated storm in a clear sky. It is, first,

part of the general revolutionary uprising that shook the French colonies from Guadeloupe,

Martinique and Guyana in Latin America, the island of Reunion, a few miles from the coast of Madagascar, and Polynesia. Thus, while the Malagasy working class, peasants and soldiers began their revolution, on the island of Reunion the exploited workers had been on a general strike since March 5, for the same demands as their brothers of the West Indies. But unlike in Guadeloupe and Martinique, as of Monday 11 March, the masses threw out their leaders, and leaving behind the "peaceful protest" took to the streets French style.

Moreover, Madagascar has become a shining example in the colonial and semi-colonial world, of Africa in particular, of mass resistance to the global crisis and the fierce inter-imperialist disputes of control of resources, land, markets, cheap labor, etc., which have imposed unprecedented levels of exploitation of these nations.

70% of the population lives below the poverty line on less than one euro per day. The workers are super-exploited in the chrome and other mineral mines owned by imperialist corporations, particularly Japanese, also in the maquiladoras located in the so-called "free trade zones" and the services linked to tourism. Much of the population live in the countryside, in small plots without title deeds, achieved thanks to the anticolonial struggle and the expulsion of the French landowners, but can only plant subsistence crops. Thus, of around 33 million hectares of arable land, only about 3 million are exploited.

Madagascar, since it ceased to be a French colony, has been ruled by France as a semicolon. In 2002 Ravalomanana became president winning elections against the former president who was a direct agent of French imperialism. Ravalomanana, a wealthy businessman, who owns a chain of supermarkets and large stores (looted and burned throughout the country by the rebels since January 21, 2009) created free trade zones for mainly German maquiladora companies, and signed contracts for the exploitation of mines by French imperialist corporations. He also leased 1,300,000 hectares (equal to half of Belgium) for 99 years to a South for growing palm oil and corn for biofuel exports to South Korea. In return the consortium has made false promises to "invest 6000 million dollars" and "to create 70,000 jobs" etc.

French imperialism, the former colonial power, was livid with anger that their competitors were stealing part of their business. So France hacked Rajoelina and his fraction of the bourgeoisie with Development Aid and financed the purchase of two islands Nosy Hara and Mitsa to develop for business and luxury tourism. Thus, the bourgeoisie was divided into two fractions, one around Ravalomanana, client of the US, Germany and Korea, and the other around Rajoelina in the pay of French imperialism. This split in the bourgeoisie saw both fractions competing to exploit the masses, but that around Rajoelina was able to divert the masses justifiable hatred towards imperialism towards the downfall of Ravalomanana.

This anger was fuelled in part by the displacement of peasant families and the expropriation of 1.3 million hectares leased to Daewoo Logistics. The announcing of the lease and the first attempts to evict the peasants brought about a mass revolt to defend their land rights. The mayor of a village who was ordered by Ravalomanana to evict the peasants off the land for Daewoo, refused to do so, saying that he "would be lynched by the peasants."

This uprising of the rural poor, together with the struggle of the working class and the exploited of the cities against slavery and poverty wages of the transnationals in the maquiladoras was against the starvation caused by imperialist super-exploitation. The riots in January and early February, condemned by the sell-out union leaders, were the justifiable response of starving workers and farmers to feed their children, in the face of their poverty the owner of the supermarkets Ravalomanana, and the imperialist businessmen and rich parasites from France, the US, Germany and Japan were living it up in the luxury tourist resorts.

### **No support in the government of Rajoelina agent of French imperialism!**

The Malagasy bourgeoisie has as its main objective to make sure that the regime of Rajoelina resolves the dual power situation by disarming and repressing the masses. First it has concentrated all power into the hands of the Presidential office and the generals. It has dissolved parliament and has announced new elections within two years. Second, it deceives the masses with false promises. It promises to halt the lease of land to Daewoo, to regulate the transnationals, lower food prices etc. Meanwhile during this period of Presidential military rule the Malagasy bourgeoisie will bargain with all the imperialist powers including France to retain a better share of the wealth produced by the exploited Malagasy.

But events are still up in the air. power vacuum has been filled but the split in the bourgeoisie has not been mended. Daewoo and the Yankees have not given up. They are condemning Rajoelina's "coup" and promoting a pro-Ravalomanana demonstration on March 24 in Antananarivo "in defense of democracy". that is to say a "democratic front." Imperialist bastards, talking about democracy for which they paid Ravalomanana in Malagasy currency. which came with accessories such as a state of siege, police killings of more than 100 workers, and a real coup against a popular uprising!

Rajoelina seems to be adopting a type of "Bolivarian" popular front in which he wants to break the unity of the workers and peasants and soldiers to strangle the revolution and subordinate it to the French fraction of the national bourgeoisie. But before he can do that he must disarm the masses on the streets. And to do that he has to break the soldier rebellion and get them to obey orders to repress the people. He must convince the workers and poor peasants to return their seized weapons to the police and accept the "authority" of these same murdering bastards that they yesterday hung from the trees.

The masses, armed and victorious, feel strong. The bourgeoisie, are weak and scared, and afraid that the crisis will expose the lies and demagoguery of Rajoelina, leaving the masses strong enough to finish the revolution they have started. But if they do not take the power the popular front will arise to tie the hands of the masses and paralyze their will, while behind the scenes the forces of the counterrevolution, the military officers, or fascist bands, or both, gather strength to smash the revolution. We must not forget the tragic lesson of Bolivia!

### **For a National Delegates workers, poor peasants and soldiers at the Soanierana Base held by rebels! Set up and centralize the national workers and peasants militia!**

Any program that claims to be for revolution in Madagascar today must begin by calling for workers, peasants and soldiers not to give the slightest support to the government Rajoelina, nor fall into the trap of "democratic front" backed by the US, Ravalomanana and other killers of workers and exploited. It must call for the insurgents to continue their offensive and revolutionary struggles and to occupy the lands. mines, factories and banks! If they stop they will not get bread for their children from the supermarkets! The same with the soldiers. Do not surrender or give up your weapon to Rajoelina's generals! Do not stop; complete the military insurrection to defeat the officers!

If you stop disbanding the police they will rearm and kill you! Let's not stop: create popular courts of the workers, peasants and soldiers to try and punish Ravalomanana. his presidential guard of mercenaries and those who killed the more than 100 worker and peasant martyrs during the fighting. No time to lose! Every minute that the uprising is stopped the bourgeoisie gains strength!

"Who has weapons... has bread, land and jobs with living wages". The armed insurrection brought the workers close to winning bread, land, decent wages and the end of the imperialist rule of Madagascar. Therefore, that armed power must be expanded and concentrated into a powerful militia. Every factory, every business, every industry, every village and every quarter, must choose one delegate for hundred workers, poor peasants and soldiers, to meet at the Soanierana Base and create a National Congress of workers, peasants and soldiers together with a national militia!

That National Congress of delegates of the exploited masses will take into its own hands the authority to impose solutions to problems facing the masses and unite all the exploited in the oppressed nation, led by the workers, and make the imperialists and the national bourgeoisie pay for their crisis!

- **Workers, poor peasants and soldiers take up arms to win bread!**
- **Imperialist out! Get out Daewoo Korea- Pacific U.S! Get out French Development Aid!**
- **Expropriate without payment all US, French, Japanese and German transnationals under workers' control!**
- **Nationalise all the mines, factories in the**

**Free Trade Zones, tourism and all other imperialists interests!**

- **Repudiate the external debt and all political, economic and military treaties with imperialism!**
- **Impose capital controls and a monopoly on foreign trade!**
- **Nationalise the land with cheap loans to poor family farmers who wish to work their land!**
- **Collective farms on uncultivated lands under workers control to provide food for the people of Madagascar!**
- **Expropriate without compensation under workers control all capitalist supermarkets and food outlets!**
- **For Popular Committees to control prices and supply Local councils of workers, peasants and soldiers!**
- **Jobs for all on decent wages. No more slavery! Maquilas Out!**
- **Sliding scale of wages and hours of work, on a living wage pegged to the cost of family cost of living!**

- **Expropriation without payment under workers' control of any plant that closes or sacks workers!**

A National Congress can raise these demands but only a Workers Government backed by a militia can impose them. Because in Madagascar, as in all semi-colonial countries, it will not be the national bourgeoisie who are the junior partners of the imperialist powers. but only the working class that has no interests in defending imperialism or capitalist property that will end the imperialist yoke and win land, bread, work and wages, health and housing for the exploited. Only a government of armed workers, peasants and soldiers, with the revolutionary party at its head, can smash the bourgeois state, break with imperialism and expropriate the expropriators.

### **The revolution in Madagascar shows the way for the other French colonies and France itself!**

The beginning of the Madagascar revolution is a new blow to French imperialism. Already shaken by the revolutionary uprisings of the colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique where general strikes and factory occupations raised the specter of revolution and inspired the metropolitan French proletariat to open up a pre-revolutionary situation. Sarkozy and his 5th Republic imperialist regime has contained the revolution in the Antilles but, the fire is still alive on the island of Reunion, where the masses, looking to the onset of the Malagasy Revolution, threw out their leaders and continued with an indefinite strike

The revolution in Madagascar shows the way for the other French colonies and semi-colonies to win national Independence and land, bread, work and living wages!

long live the general strike ended and the street fighting of the masses of Reunion!

- **French imperialism and Occupation troops out of Reunion, the Seychelles and Mauritius Islands!**

The armed power of the Malagasy workers, poor peasants and soldiers, raises the program for the common struggle of all the

French colonies and semi-colonies against French imperialism. At the same time it raises the program for the French proletariat to extend its struggles from the barricades and factories for jobs and wages in France to take up the fight against "their" own bourgeoisie for the victory of the anti-imperialist struggles, the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners, and the immediate removal of imperialist troops from the colonies. It's the massive strike actions in France condemned Sarkozy's crony Rajoelina and raised the demand for workers to power in Madagascar it would unite the workers and peasants of the colonies with those of the imperialist heartland and create the conditions for successful socialist revolutions in the colonies and semi-colonies.

The international character of the revolution in Madagascar

The revolution in Madagascar reopens for the first time the period of defeats following the strangling of the South African revolution in 1994 by the popular front government of the ANC, the South African Communist Party and the union bureaucracy of (OSATC). This huge betrayal of Stalinism and the Popular Front was an historic defeat for the masses of the oppressed and exploited of the whole continent.

Ellis' defeat led to Africa becoming a reservoir of slave labor of 600 million workers. hundreds of thousands of workers fled in a desperate attempt to get to the imperialist powers of Europe. Tens of thousands of black workers and peasants died in the struggle to reach Europe and those who survived became a caste of super-exploited workers in the imperialist countries, and then when the crisis hit, deported en masse. In the most recent period of growth, imperialism has increased its investment in Africa to exploit for example the rich oil reserves in Nigeria, diamond mines as in Sierra Leone and the minerals in the Congo. China entered the race to plunder Africa along with other Asian countries to use the land to produce food and crops for biofuels, As the crisis worsens the scramble for Africa intensifies as the various imperialist powers compete to plunder its enormous natural wealth.

But as Marx and Engels said over 150 years ago, the bourgeoisie produces its own "gravediggers", the proletariat. The flow of capital into Africa in recent years has expanded and strengthened the working class. So, today, as capitalists try to solve their crisis by attacking the workers, Africa is not only a site for fierce anti-imperialist rivalry, but by a mass black working class that has begun to resist these attacks on their jobs, living standards and their lives. The vanguard of this black proletariat in Africa is the Nile. where the Arab and Muslim masses revolted in the Maghreb from Morocco to Egypt in defence of the Palestinians, opening the road to the socialist revolution and a Federation of Socialist Republics of North Africa.

This vanguard has now been joined by the insurgent peasants and workers of Madagascar, widening the struggle towards a united socialist Africa by opening the front for a Federation of Socialist Republics in Central and South Africa.

As we said above these revolutionary uprisings in the colonies and semi-colonies of France and other imperialist countries must become adopted by the working classes in the imperialist heartlands. In France, Britain and the US, the millions of oppressed migrant workers treated like slaves become the vital link to combat the treachery of the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy in fusing the revolutions in the colonies, semi-colonies with that of the imperialist heartlands. Such international revolutionary unity can also reverse the counter-revolution that has restored capitalism to the former workers states and re-open the road to the Once again Trotsky writing in 1932 on the role of Black workers in revolution has been vindicated: "... the Black workers, by virtue of their whole position, do not and cannot strive to degrade anybody, oppress anybody, or deprive anybody of his rights. How do not seek privileges and cannot rise? To the top except on the road of the international revolution. We can and must find the way to the consciousness of Black workers, the Chinese workers, the Indian workers, and all the oppressed in the human ocean of the colored races to whom belongs the decisive word in the development of man/cinici (Closer to the Proletarians of the "Colored" Races! Leon Trotsky, 1932).

The revolution in Madagascar demonstrates that the vanguard of the international proletariat must declare war on the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy who are the agents of capital inside the working class. Only by defeating these traitors can the working class solve the crisis of revolutionary leadership, on which, as it says in the Transitional Program of 1938, rests the fate of humanity.

For a new Trotskyist world revolutionary Party founded on the Fourth International program of 1938!

The revolution in Madagascar proves once again that workers, poor peasants and soldiers in Madagascar must solve the leadership crisis of the revolutionary proletariat. Based on its spontaneous insurrection the workers could only go so far: to overthrow Ravalomanana, to weaken the bourgeois state by splitting the army, and to create a situation of dual power. But to succeed in going all the way to a proletarian revolution they need a revolutionary leadership. And just as the revolution in Madagascar is not "national" but has an international character and content, the only leadership that is capable of taking the revolution to victory is an international revolutionary leadership.

Each insurrection and semi-insurrection that has taken place, in Greece, in the West Indies and other French colonies, in France itself where the workers are standing up to fight, poses the question of who shall rule. Standing in the road dictatorship of the proletariat in these countries. Thus the revolution in Madagascar poses again the question of power, not only in that country, not only in Africa, but of the world revolution.

of the revolutionary proletariat are the parties of the labor aristocracy and bureaucracy which are social patriotic and social imperialist. The Malagasy revolution which now poses the question of power and the urgent need to arm the masses to overthrow the bourgeois state, has become an acid test which separates out the reformists, and the centrists — disguised as Trotskyists' — from the revolutionary internationalists.

Already the Bolshevik fraction of the international working class is entering the fight to expose and defeat the reformists and centrists traitors. It seeks to intervene in the revolutionary events in Greece, Guadeloupe, general strikes in France, the uprisings of the Maghreb, the Palestinian struggle, and now the revolution in Madagascar. As the proletariat enters into combat the reformists and centrist strain to contain the new layers of fighters and subordinate them to the Popular Front of many colors. Against these counter-revolutionaries the healthy forces of international Trotskyism are fighting to unite around the banner of the Fourth International and the program of its Founding Congress of 1938.

To refound a Trotskyist international it is necessary for the healthy forces of Trotskyism to regroup in an international conference that does not make verbal boasts about "socialism" and "revolution", but proves in practice that it can defeat the counter-revolutionary leadership in the critical revolutionary struggles, and build a new revolutionary international that the international working class deserves to lead it to victory and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Fourth International was founded in 1938 to fulfill the task that is stated clearly in its program:

Our task: the abolition of capitalist domination. Our goal: socialism. Our method: the proletarian revolution. “ We must reunite the revolutionary internationalists around the world are committed to completing the task, method, and goal of the Fourth International set for us by Comrade Trotsky in 1938.

Leninist Trotskyist Fraction, March 24

Communist Left publishes this statement because we believe class conscious proletarians in this country and the vanguard should be informed about what is going on in Madagascar. We do however, wish to state clearly that we are not in solidarity with the LTF, and that there are methodological weaknesses in this article.

What is fundamental is the downplaying of the need for a revolutionary party.

The article raises a number of principled demands which we support. We especially support the expropriation of multinationals and a sliding scale of hours and wages.

We also agree with their call for a National Congress. They correctly state that these demands can only be carried out by a workers government. This we agree with. But what is not spelt out is that this can only be achieved through a revolutionary communist party and there is no call for a revolutionary communist party.

For a revolution not to degenerate, the proletariat must lead. It must win hegemony over key non proletarian sectors such as the peasantry. Otherwise the revolution will degenerate into bureaucratic degeneration or worse capitalism.

CLA salutes the heroism of the Malagasy proletariat and oppressed. This article makes some excellent points about the malignant counter-revolutionary role of the labour bureaucracy.

Whatever happens, the proletariat in this country must learn the lessons so we can create a successful revolution in Australia and everywhere.

The party is also vital after the revolution

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