

SMASH THE QUEENSLAND STATE!

The Bjelke-Petersen Government has banned the left (and a few other groupings) from winning support for its politics through organising street marches. The left's response to Petersen has been to go down on its knees and ask Petersen to restore "freedom". When under attack, the various left organisations do not reply by counter attacking the Petersen Government by extending and intensifying the fight against it but instead limit their activities further than before the march ban by concentrating on making one of their activities, demonstrations, legal. The fight for revolutionary politics is sacrificed to the struggle for 'legality'. This is what Petersen wants. No really revolutionary grouping however can **expect** a capitalist government National, Liberal or Labor to legalise its activities. Capitalist governments fight the workers' movement by all means, legal and illegal. A capitalist government while it has power will legalise or ban revolutionary activities depending on its conception of how it can best defeat the left. The left's answer to a capitalist government prepared to 'legalise' some left activities and ban others can only be to prepare for every possibility of Government action. It cannot force "democracy" on an unwilling capitalist government. It cannot assume therefore it will always be "legal".

No left grouping in Queensland says this because no left grouping in Queensland is revolutionary: A revolutionary communist nucleus has yet to be built in Queensland. The first demand of such a nucleus would be, not to beg for the right to demonstrate - a reformist democratic demand - but for the abolition of a separate Queensland State Government and the establishment of a centralised Australian republic - a revolutionary democratic demand. In fighting for communism, one includes in the programme transitional to a workers and small farmers' government, those democratic demands which were revolutionary in the progressive epoch of capitalist but in the imperialist epoch of decline are rejected by the capitalists because any revolutionary demand of the previous period could not be limited to purely bourgeois objectives but would push the working class into a leading role and carry over into socialist conclusions. All other left groupings support democratic demands **only when they are reformist**. Only the Communist Left endorses revolutionary democratic demands. The other groups respond to Petersen by demanding he legalise them, although they claim to be Petersen's irreconcilable enemies. The Communist Left says Petersen must be fought in a revolutionary way, by speeding **up** the fight for the abolition of Queensland and all state governments.

The Queensland reformist left "democratic rights" have been taken away because the Queensland left **never fought** seriously for the most elementary democratic rights of the most proletarianised stratum of the working class, the black workers. For decades the Queensland Acts allowed black workers to be arrested for walking down some streets or even sitting on park benches. There could be no question under these circumstances of their "right to march". The protests now made to preserve University students right to march never developed around black workers right to walk down a street. The repeal of the Queensland Acts was left to the A.L.P. which failed to carry out the job. The smashing of the Queensland state apparatus is the only way the Queensland black workers can win any kind of rights. Even that is not enough. But a left which cannot defend the democratic rights of the most oppressed section of the working cannot defend anybody else's democratic rights. The reformist left groupings like the ALP are compromised by racism.

The present Queensland government is led by an allegedly farmers' party, the National Party. The fake left, which long ago forgot there were farmers in Australia, in spite of the fact that Australia's only Communist member of Parliament represented a rural area, cannot fight Petersen because it has no policies for small farmers. The Trotskyist position is the so-called "independent" farmers' parties never represent farmers but only sections of urban capital manipulating the farming vote; in the Australian situation, this means that the farmers' parties are the most direct representatives of imperialist overseas capital. Unless the Petersen government is fought on this basis, an attack on its subservience to overseas capital being used to create divisions between large and small farmers, to build a workers' and small farmers' government, Petersen will not be beaten. The first step to win the small farmers, at this stage, is, as Trotsky wrote in relation to Canada, to win the workers to a revolutionary political program which sees the working class as the emancipator of all the exploited instead of a group fighting solely for a narrow conception of economic interest based on racist privilege. This requires a total break with the "old traditions" of the reformist Queensland labor movement.

The smashing of the Queensland state apparatus, in itself a democratic demand, is in practice inconceivable without the smashing of the entire Australian capitalist state. The Fraser Government, maintaining a verbal opposition to Petersen for "image" reasons, refuses seriously to check its most reactionary laws. Labor, under Tom Burns, "fights" Petersen by trying to ally with the Liberals; the federal Whitlam government never fought Petersen with half the fury the populist Lang government was fought in N.S.W. in the thirties. Only the working class under revolutionary leadership can smash the Queensland state apparatus and to do so it will have to smash the entire Australian capitalist state.

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