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Los Angeles Ignites

THE RECENT UPSURGE in Los Angeles, which spread to other U.S. cities including Atlanta, Seattle and Las Vegas, has been depicted as a race riot sparked by the brutal bashing of Rodney King by L.A. police officers. These struggles went well beyond that. What occurred was a rebellion by the oppressed against the racist imperialist state apparatus. The so-called rioters were not just black but proletarian. It is no accident that the most exploited and oppressed saw their interests in common with the black people. For millions "the American dream" means nothing but extreme poverty, homelessness, degradation and state repression. The real proletariat of the United States have nothing to lose but their chains.

Communist Tendency salutes those proletarians who stood up and fought the state apparatus. Within these struggles there was the potential for a revolution to develop. However, they had neither the perspective of overthrowing the state nor the programme to do so. Nor did they have the perspective of winning other sections of the working class and sections of the petty bourgeoisie to their leadership. These weaknesses have meant that with the help of the National Guard, George Bush has restored order. They have received a massive shock which has had a significant effect on U.S. politics. The ruling class are well aware that another L.A. type explosion not only could but will occur again. The only real question is when. We, the revolutionary vanguard, must be aware of this too so we can prepared to intervene to make the balance of forces on our side and the National Guard will not be able to re-establish "law and order" again!

The acquittal of the police officers who brutally bashed King was symptomatic of a thoroughly arrogant ruling class. Despite the fact that the U.S. is an imperialist power in decline, politically their most consistent political expression, the Republican Party, has notched up a number of significant victories. They have invaded Grenada and the national liberation forces in El Salvador. They have forced Nicaragua to elections where the Sandinistas were defeated. They have militarily defeated Iraq and through a series of provocations contained Libya and Iran. But most significarrtly, they won the cold war and what once was the socialist bloc of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is now a mass of independent national states administered by regimes committed to the introduction of capitalism

Within the United States the Democrats have been well and truly exposed and forced to retreat. After all, they stand for the same class rule and the same imperialism. They just want to administer it less ruthlessly and efficiently but with the appearance of humanity. The Republicans have shown

that by being ruthless and intransigent the U.S. can be victorious. So who has needed the second-rate imperialist Democrats?

In the past the Democrats have played an important role as the “soft cop” for the system, aimed at containing and co-opting potential rebellion against the system. At the end of the great depression Roosevelt’s New Deal was important in maintaining social stability. After the last significant upsurge by black people in L.A., Democrat Lyndon Johnson initiated the “Great Society” programme meaning a massive input of federal funding into welfare. The Republicans are actually blaming this for the current unrest because according to them it undermined black individual and entrepreneurial initiative. This is, of course, bullshit. Only a very small minority, even with the most favourable circumstances conceivable, could ever make it on capitalism’s terms. They are right in pointing out that Democrat welfare programs fundamentally change nothing. What these schemes do is create a bureaucracy which has been invaluable in diffusing anger and containing struggle.

For the Republicans, black workers are merely fodder for their drive to make superprofits and black unemployed, merely a drain. The new right Republican philosophy is: those who can’t make it are left homeless to scrounge charity and face police repression. This is what the past ten years of Republican ascendancy have meant to millions of not just blacks and Hispanics but all proletarians. Of course the U.S. state is a racist state and this means that it is the black people who suffer the most.

The upsurge in L.A. and other cities was unfortunately isolated. It was confined to the most exploited and oppressed who fought heroically. This is not surprising. Once again Lenin’s analysis of the division between the labour aristocracy and the proletariat is confirmed. As Lenin pointed out in referring to Britain, the lower strata of the proletariat proper were excluded from the electoral process, trade unions and sporting clubs. For Lenin the lower stratum included the unemployed. Lenin said that the upper stratum “bribed by superprofits”, identified with imperialism and its subjugation of the colonies. How appropriate for the United States today! It is the task of Communists to show the labour aristocracy where its real interests lie — with the proletarians against the state! The labour aristocracy gain from imperialism, identify with imperialism but are still wage slaves with an interest in overthrowing it. With communist intervention, revolutionary conclusions can be drawn and the upsurge can encompass the whole of the U.S. working class.

The proletariat fought the state but without ideological coherence. In fact, many of the spontaneous ideologies were counter-revolutionary. Much of the anger was taken out on Koreans. In L.A. many small shopkeepers are Korean and many ruthlessly attack black proletarians to

defend their interest. These small shopkeepers are, to revolutionaries, our enemy, not because they are Korean but petty bourgeoisie, siding with the repression of the proletariat. These anti-Korean prejudices were fuelled by a recent example of a Korean shopkeeper acquitted of murdering point blank a black person attempting to steal a \$1.50 orange juice. According to the court, the shopkeeper was suffering from stress. The U.S. courts are not pro-Korean — but they are pro-bourgeois and will stand up for their class irrespective of formal justice. This incident has been used to encourage black people to fight the wrong enemy. At a recent rally many Koreans held banners demanding JUSTICE FOR RODNEY KING.

The recent upsurge is changing the complexion of the current U.S. presidential campaign. George Bush is promising money to re-build LA. Most of this money will go to property owners. He is, fundamentally, unrepentant about his republican contempt for the black people and for the oppressed and exploited in general. The Democrats are aiming to make headway. Clinton, their candidate, has established an office in downtown L.A. to communicate with the poor, hoping to enlist them as Democrat voters. The main trump card of the Democratic party is Jesse Jackson, who has a strong record of supporting civil rights and social justice. His distance from the main party machine gives him some credibility. He will, no doubt, use this to channel anger back to the system with the hope that it could offer some alternative. This could have a serious role in diffusing potentially revolutionary anger. Even in its most left and progressive sounding form the Democrats are a dead end for the exploited and oppressed in America.

An encouraging development coming out of the upsurge is that black gangs have agreed to bury the hatchet and fight together instead of fighting each other. Hopefully they will take this one step further and see their interests in unity with all proletarians, not just blacks and fight the system together. In the U.S. the left has the responsibility to help them draw this conclusion. Most left wing organisations regrettably ignore the real proletariat and adapt to the labour aristocracy. Alternatively they merely cheer on the struggles of the most oppressed, whilst being oblivious to their political weakness.

The upsurge has exposed the real weakness of U.S. imperialism before the world. It is no accident that Bush didn't bring the army but instead chose the national guard. The army is to a large extent composed of blacks, proletarians and poor people who could change sides rather than shoot on their home communities. The National Guard are made up of whites from more privileged backgrounds. However, in a full scale rebellion the ability of the National Guard to re-enforce law and order would be limited. A successful revolution could well occur in the U.S.

This exposure of weakness hopefully will inspire rebellion in the imperialised world and show those in the C.I.S. what American capitalism means to millions of exploited and oppressed Americans.

British elections: the end of the road for Kinnock

MANY ON THE LEFT and in the labour movement were once again extremely disappointed with the Tory victory. This time the disappointment was greater. The Tories were no longer led by the iron maiden, Mr Major is a pretty dull, pedestrian leader and all the polls were going Labour's way. Since 1979 Tory attacks on housing, social welfare, wages employment have been devastating. And many once productive towns and cities in the north of England have been reduced to empty holes.

The Tories have consistently talked about economic efficiency". But economic recovery never seems to come. Yet the Tories reign supreme. Overall there was no fundamental swing against them. There was some swing to Labour in London and the Midlands but this was offset elsewhere. The Liberal democrats lost ground.

The results spelt the end of the road for Neil Kinnock. Of the eighty seats targeted by Labour only forty were won. In public opinion polls Mr Kinnocks rating lagged that of the Labour Party. Many in the Labour Party hate Kinnock but accepted him on the condition that he won Labour office.

Since 1979 Thatcher's intransigent imperialist policies dragged the country to the right. Labour and Liberal didn't oppose the system — just promised to administer it less efficiently. The more consistent Tories won. Within the Labour Party the man responsible for dragging the party rightward was Neil Kinnock.

In many ways Neil Kinnock played a very similar role in British Labour as Bob Hawke did in the Australian Labor Party. Both started off on the left. Neil Kinnock supported Tribune. Both moved to centre to enlist left support. Kinnock was supported by the left against Hattersley. Both then proceeded to turn against the left, to smash it as a significant force, only to co-opt it when the left proved its bankruptcy. Ken Livingstone, the former left Lord mayor of London, pledged his loyalty after being defeated. Kinnock has defeated the semi-Trotskyist Labour loyal Militant expelling many of its leaders. He has defeated the popularist economic nationalist Tony Benn. He scabbed on the British miners' strike. He has pursued a consistently imperialist foreign policy. Whereas in Australia, the bosses needed Hawke to contain militant class struggle, in Britain they have not needed Kinnock to form a government.

Kinnock has made the Labour Party fit for the ruling class. The problem for Kinnock is: despite his loyalty, the ruling class has not wanted his services in government. So now Kinnock is out.

This election Labour was once again a party for no one. The electorate is rigged towards the middle classes which were scared off by the threat of higher taxes. The Murdoch press made a very effective campaign on this playing on middle class fears. Kinnock did little to inspire the working class. Many did not see the point of voting for this pale version of the Tories. So Labour did not pick up the required seats. The Major campaign did just enough to distance himself from the worst of Thatcherism so as to stop dissatisfied Tories from swinging, yet hold on to enough of it to appease the faithful. He was hardly inspiring but did enough to hold on.

The loss poses serious problems for Labour. If Labour becomes more Tory it might appease the establishment but it will lose more working class support. It is up to the British left to provide the political alternative to fill the vacuum in British working class politics. It means providing not merely an organisational alternative to Labour but a political alternative. This means a break from supporting the capitalist system to overthrowing it.

the continuing war against migrants

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD migrant workers are under attack. In Britain those of West Indian, Pakistani, African and Indian origins suffer regular state and racist harassment. They are often assumed to be illegal until proved otherwise. In France there is a similar campaign against Algerians and those of West Indian origin. In Germany there is a campaign against Turkish workers. Many from Kurdistan face prison or even death from the brutal Ozal regime on return. In the United States, migrants from Mexico or Latin America are ruthlessly sent back over the border. In New Zealand there is a state campaign against Polynesians. Australia too is now putting its foot down. Now that the system does not need Asian workers with many factories closing, the state is coming down like a ton of bricks on migrants it considers unnecessary. This includes those who have reasonable fear that returning home might mean a death sentence.

Hundreds who took to the seas in fear of their lives from Kampuchea are now detained in Port Hedland and Villawood. The Australian Government kept them imprisoned “examining their case “. Now after examination the Australian government has decided to send them home in fear of their lives. Communist Tendency defends these people’s right to migrate here unconditionally. We defend them irrespective of whether their fear is real or otherwise. Unfortunately much of the debate has centered around whether they are legitimate or not. This is the wrong framework. It creates a division between the “legitimate” migrants and the “illegitimate “ones. We must oppose all immigration controls. It is possible that some might be counter-revolutionaries who deserve to be put on trial. In no way must we entrust the Keating government to the task of determining who is.

The Kampuchean migrants have received much publicity through the media and from the left through demonstrations. The International Socialist Organisation has been influential in their organisation. As well as the Kampuchean, there is a wholesale attack on all migrants by the Keating Government. This has been endorsed by the A.C.T.U. Recently Michael Easson has urged the government to “take initiative” and to deprive newly arrived immigrants from the dole. The idea is to discourage them from coming here. The government is putting more restrictions on those who do not speak English from staying here.

Traditionally Australia has been a virulently racist country. Australia openly flaunted a “white Australia” policy for immigration. Whilst this has had bipartisan support, the strongest supporter of “white Australia” was the Labor Party. Australia only dumped the “white Australia” policy during the seventies. The motives of the ruling class for supporting this were hardly altruistic — they wanted the Asian workers as cheap labour and to undermine hard-fought for working conditions. By ignoring migrant workers, the racist A.C.T.U. has played into the bosses’ hands.

Today, with its desire to move closer to the Japanese and the Asian bourgeoisie the Keating Government cannot afford to support “white Australia” blatantly. Asian people, including the ruling class would understandably and justifiably find this offensive. But by posing immigration restrictions in terms of a language test, the government has achieved the same end, restricting Asian migrants with polite rhetoric. Incidentally the Indonesian and Malaysian bourgeoisie have assisted Keating by preventing boat people from getting past Indonesia.

Imperialism is an international system. The bourgeoisie move their investment from country to country to where the most profit can be made. The nation state remains an important weapon for them against the working class. Politically nationalism ties the working class to the bourgeoisie. It is an important weapon in persuading workers that they have more in common with “their own” bosses than with the workers of other countries. In this way the bosses get workers to support the system and its attacks on wages, jobs and conditions. The way to fight ruling class internationalism is not more consistent economic nationalism, tariffs and protection, but proletarian internationalism. We must fight in unity with, for example the Filipino working class for jobs and decent wages. And not for jobs and decent wages at their expense. We must fight for the right of working people to live in whatever country we please irrespective of the bosses profitability. For this reason we must oppose all immigration controls.

Phil Cleary: member for Wills

FOR THE FIRST TIME in history the Labor Party has lost the seat of Wills. Wills is a very strong working class electorate in north western Melbourne. Because it is hardly an electorate that is likely to vote Liberal it was considered an appropriate seat for Bob Hawke when he was making a bid for parliamentary power. Bob Hawke was finally deposed and resigned his parliamentary seat, so a bi-election was called. Understandably the electorate took out its anger on both major parties — Labor and Liberal.

Phil Cleary seems to have some decent qualities. He is a working class bloke, angry at the Hawke Labour government for its attacks on wages, jobs, social welfare and its subservience to capital. Clearly the people of Wills identified with his anger. The problem is, however, the politics he fought for. As he pointed out himself, Cleary stood up for a clear programme and not as a sporting personality.

The main problem for Cleary was not capitalism but “economic rationalism”. In other words, just when the capitalists have no qualms in showing that the logic of their system is austerity, Cleary wants to show that it can operate in the interests of ordinary people. Consistent with this he gave his preferences to those irrational defenders of capitalism — the Australian Democrats. The Democrats are capitalism’s trendy face who offer token progressive policies to co-opt the left and not-so-left middle classes to attack the working class. It is the task of class conscious proletarians to ruthlessly expose the anti-working class nature of this party and show that its progressive rhetoric is merely a veneer. The worst possible mistake is to act as a left publicity agent for this reactionary party as the Democratic Socialist Party does.

What Phil Cleary concretely proposed was more protection for “Australian manufacturing”. This is the reactionary programme that advocated by the stalinists such as the New Left Party. In fact all of the stalinist parties endorse protection. They merely take up what the bourgeoisie advocated during the fifties and dumped as the crisis showed that a protected economy could not be maintained. Economic protection is reactionary. Manufacturing in Australia developed after the Second World War under the umbrella of protection. Protection maintained it in a state of backwardness, poorly capitalised and under- equipped, ripe for collapse as the economic crisis hit during the seventies. Protectionism is also reactionary because instead of an international fight for jobs it plays off Australian workers against Asian workers by effectively arguing that Aussies can have jobs but Asians can’t. This is racist. It actually assists the bosses to divide us internationally.

There is nothing new about Phil Cleary. He merely opposes Labor — with yesterday’s Labor Party policies. He even denies being a socialist as he is “unclear on what this means”. The lesson of his victory is that whilst many workers are rejecting Labor organisationally they still support the underlying reformist political framework. The Democratic Socialist Party claims to advocate “alternatives to Labor”. However their “alternatives” amount to trying to find a reformism that “serves working people” For revolutionaries, Labor has betrayed not just for bad policies but because it administers the capitalist system. Revolutionaries show that the only government that “serves working people” is one committed to overthrow the capitalist state. Despite an honest concern for working class people the political framework of Phil Cleary is reactionary. He deserves no support from us.

Nagorno-Karabakh: Nationalism and the C.I.S.

FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS there has been a war going on. The war is between two nationalities which were within the Soviet Union — Armenia and Azerbaijan. The war is over the internal state within Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan is a Moslem state. Armenia is Christian. The Nagorno-Karabakh people, like the Armenians, are Christians. Within the Soviet Union they wanted to join Armenia. They were prevented by force not just by Azerbaijan but also by the Soviet Union regime led by Michael Gorbachev. The result has been bloodshed.

Today there is no Soviet Union but the Commonwealth of Independent States. However, the very fact that such a war occurred was a serious reflection on both the previous Gorbachev regime and the regime of Joseph Stalin. Gorbachev declared that any decision by the people to join Armenia was “unconstitutional”. In his decision he was adhering to the constitution drawn up by Joseph Stalin.

For Leninists the self-determination of any nation should be a right. It was in this spirit that the Bolsheviks gave the Baltic states their independence. Stalin reclaimed them by brute force. However Nagorno Karabakh merely wanted to change nations within the Soviet Union. Even this was unacceptable.

Revolutionary communists support the right of national self-determination not because we want nations to divide but because unless there is real national equality than internationalism will not be a reality and the national question will not be redundant. The Commonwealth of Independent States is a graphic illustration of this. Stalin and his heirs brutally repressed nations and now with liberalisation all types of national antagonisms are emerging. This poses massive problems for Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin, of course, is no Leninist and will brutally repress any serious attempt for national self-determination from any national grouping within the Russian Federation.

There is now talk of a settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Apparently the acceptable solution is for Nagorno -Karabakh to be independent. This is still not adequate. Why shouldn't they have the right to join Armenia? It is chauvinist to deprive them of this right. This “solution” is, according to Armenian president TerPetrosyan, a proposal to prevent Turkey joining the conflict. Armenia has been shelling towns in the Azeri

enclave of Nakhichevan. Turkish president Turgut Ozal has put troops on alert to defend his fellow Moslems. Ter-Petrosyan has warned of the possibility of “world war”. This is a bit far fetched as it would only occur if another imperialist power thought it had enough at stake in standing up for Armenia. However, Turkey does have imperialist ambitions. Once again the banner of “Pan-islamism” is a cover for imperialism and totally reactionary. Iran also has threatened intervention.

Nationalism poses a serious dilemma for Boris Yeltsin. Nationalism was a key component of his petty- bourgeois counter-revolution. He cannot be seen to be too repressive. Nor can he afford the whole C.I.S. to be blown apart by national antagonisms. Before the counter-revolution the Soviet Union was an economically interrelating whole. If parts of the union secede or don't cooperate in producing resources then this exacerbates its collapse.

As we stated in Red 17 neither Yeltsin nor the imperialists know how to make a proper functioning bourgeois dictatorship in the C1S. At their meeting on the CIS, members of the Spartacist League challenged this. They claimed that Yeltsin had a programme of nationalism and trade with the imperialists. Nationalism is a bourgeois movement but the aspiration to be ruled by a bourgeoisie

does not create that bourgeoisie. Most of the C.I.S. remains nationalised due to the failure of any class capable of owning the means of production. The imperialists are hardly likely to invest as Russian industry is totally unprofitable. As a result the bureaucratic nationalisation remains despite Yeltsin's desire for capitalism. Russian workers suffer from the defects of both systems. Bureaucratic scarcity and inefficiency and inflation and unemployment . Only political revolution can solve the mess that is the Commonwealth of Independent States.

BWIU/FEDFA secretaries' dispute.

FOR ABOUT FIVE WEEKS during April and May secretaries Went on strike and set up a picket line. Their complaints were not uncommon. They wanted a negotiation procedure over any forced lay-offs. They wanted the principle of seniority recognised. They also wanted their union reps accepted. They are members of the Federated Clerks' Union. Their bosses had treated them with contempt.

It is, of course, not unusual for bosses to behave in this way. What is of concern is that the bosses are from the so-called "left" unions—the Building Workers Industrial Union and the Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association (FEDFA). Both of these unions are craft unions. They represent the most privileged layer of workers who defend their privileges at the expense of the more oppressed and exploited.

The BWIU has treated builders' labourers with chauvinist contempt. This is shown by their attacks on the Builders' Labourers' Federation. The BWIU did not merely want to defeat the leadership of the BLF. They want builders' labourers to be subordinate to their craft union leadership. The BWIU has had a consistent record of selling out the B.L.F. This is true not just for the current Maoist influenced leadership but for the previous leadership led by CPA members Jack Munday and Joe Owens. The BWIU has stood for unity with the likes of right-wing Catholic grub John Ducker.

During the eighties they stood "for unity "with the Hawke government, the Prices and Incomes Accord, the smashing of the BLF and chauvinist programmes such as Australia Reconstructed. The leaders of the BWIU left the CPA when it put on a militant face, joined the Moscow SPA, left that organisation when it opposed the Accord to join the Association for Communist Unity and are now part of that Communist Party degeneration product called the New Left Party. In reality what they want is a "communist "cover for their bureaucratic sell-out. It is of no surprise that such a union with such a treacherous leadership would treat its secretaries with chauvinist contempt.

A union has to employ staff in order to operate. In doing this it is different from other employers in that the wages for staff are paid from workers' dues and not out of the pursuit of superprofits. There are also circumstances where union principle comes before the interests of staff such as if a staff member was giving information to the boss and sabotaging strike action.

No such allegation of that nature was made against Judy Whitehead or Margaret Bernhardt when they were sacked by the unions. Employees of trade unions are still dependent on their job for their livelihood. The union is obliged to be totally principled in their dealings with them. As the leaflet put out by the secretaries points out "the management of the BWIU/FEDFA made clear statements in the Commission on 25 February 1992 of no planned redundancies, consultation with delegates and agreed to seniority in principle. What has occurred to the clerical staff since 25 February 1992?

two clerical staff made redundant seniority ignored no consultation with delegates on criteria for redundancy”

(Leaflet STAFF DISPUTE BWIU/FEDFA HISTORY OF EVENTS CONCERNING CURRENT DISPUTE)

The staff can hardly be accused of being impatient. The first staff were sacked from Parramatta office in May 1991. The Arbitration Commission is an instrument of the state despised by the best industrial militants. It was not the secretaries that took the dispute to Arbitration but the BWIU/FEDFA. who sought an order to have the picket lifted. No doubt they would have had it enforced by cops. The failings of the BWIU to pursue the question of redundancies in a principled way was exposed by the findings of Justice Glynn:

“I would have thought that the employer would have bent over backwards , taken all possible steps to have accommodated the employee...”

“there still have to be serious and constructive discussions as to redundancy policy and practice, certainly within the FEDFA and I believe with the BWIU. The criteria of the mechanism for retrenchment should not be decided unilaterally. In that area there should be genuine input from employees...”

“Having heard what has been said this morning it is clear that industrial action was taken not out of malice but out of frustration...”

All of the above as cited by the secretaries’ leaflet.

All this thoroughly exposes the credentials of the BWIUJ FEDFA. Clearly they can only communicate with their employees — when they are directed to do so by the Industrial Commission! No real Marxist-Leninist would treat working people with such gross contempt. It’s time to remove the labour aristocratic chauvinist bureaucratic leadership from the working class. A leadership that flaunts union principles in relation to its union secretaries cannot defend them in relation to its members.

War in Bougainville.

DESPITE A RECENT MAJOR VICTORY for the Papua New Guinea armed forces the war with the Bougainville Revolutionary Army in what’s known as the North Solomons province continues. The PNG forces last month established a base on South Bougainville Island. Despite the PNG forces ascendancy no one has any idea when it will be over. The BRA are the military wing of the Panguna people, small farmers whose land and fishing has been damaged or destroyed by the copper mine owned by Australian multinational Conzinc Riotinto Australia. They support the traditional Melanesian socialism based on land tenure. This means that not only do they reject the working class as the sole consistently revolutionary force, they are anti- working class.

In no way can class conscious proletarians identify with the BRA. However, key demands they raise are supportable. The people of the North Solomons including the islanders of Bougainville should have the right of self- determination. This means they should have the right to become independent or to join the Solomon Islands. Their national identity should be their choice. Some analysts, such as the Spartacist League, argue that they are not large enough in population to constitute a viable

nationality. However they number over three hundred thousand which is greater than many small states such as Kiribati or Grenada and as large as New Caledonia.

The culture, language and racial characteristics of the people of Bougainville are much closer to the Solomon Islands than to the people of Papua or Nuigini. They are only part of PNG thanks to boundaries drawn up by the imperialists. Neither the imperialists nor the PNG bourgeoisie were prepared to give the people a choice. The PNG government has a hell of a lot to lose if Bougainville seceded. The copper mine there is an important earner of foreign exchange. Like most imperialised countries, PNG has a massive debt to the imperialists including Australia and Japan. The workers and poor peasants are paying for this with severely low living standards. Behind the PNG government is Australia. In 1990 Gareth Evans promised military aid and even troops to back the PNG government. Whilst there is, as yet, no direct intervention, Australia will intervene if the local compradors lose control. It is very important for the working class in Australia to understand what is happening there and take action against imperialism and especially against direct Australian intervention.

This war has also had an important bearing on the Solomon Islands. There is strong sympathy for the BRA. Many also believe that Bougainville and the North Solomons should join the rest of the Solomon Islands and leave PNG. The war has spread into Solomon Islands territory. The BRA are believed to have military bases there. In April PNG forces blew up an oil tank on Shortland Island. This contributed to a breakdown in relationships which is now being resolved. The Solomon Islands government has agreed to sell out the BRA. They have stated that they recognise Bougainville and the North Solomons province as an integral part of PNG. The BRA do, however, still have an office in Honiara and have an official representative stationed there. Michael Somare has claimed that BRA are permitted to "roam at will". It remains to be seen how far the Solomon Islands' government will go to appease him. The Australian government is also concerned. They have offered to assist the Solomon Islands' government police the border.

In June there will be a general election in PNG. The Bougainville question is an issue of contention between the PANGU Pati dominated government and the opposition led by Pius Wingti. Pius Wingti wants a quicker resolution to the conflict. He doesn't say, however, what concrete measures that his government would use to hasten a PNG victory. Namaliu, the prime minister and leader of the PANGU Pati, is contending that the failure to re-negotiate an agreement when Wingti was prime minister led to an aggravation of the conflict.

Namaliu is taking a fake token anti-imperialist stand attacking those such as BHP as CSR as parasites. He's right of course. But his way of fighting" this is to propose the re-negotiation of agreements. In no way will imperialism accept agreements on any terms but their own. Imperialism stands for ripping off the PNG workers and small peasants. In reality Namaliu is working hand in glove with Paul Keating and the world bank. Namallu appears to have learned from Keating that the way to keep popularity is to take a token stand and make antiimperialist noises with no practical consequences.

In PNG there are many local and regional candidates. This is because of the diverse national and tribal groupings. No party is likely to get an overall majority and the question of who governs may depend on what agreements can be galvanised. The main opposition to the comprador PANGU comes from Pius Wingti. Apart from demanding a tougher line on Bougainville, Wingti is demanding a tough stand against corruption. Those with a reasonable memory will remember that when Wingti was prime minister, his ministers were tainted. What this "campaign against corruption" means is a

tougher austerity drive against the poor. Also campaigning is the Papuan nationalist PAP. This party's slogan is "Papuan first"— a racist slogan.

There is no expression of political consciousness for the working class. Socialist revolution, led by the proletariat, is the only way out of imperialist austerity for the PNG exploited and oppressed. Papua and New Guinea are dominated by imperialist powers including Australia. So we the class conscious in Australia have a responsibility to give the working class there maximum support and to oppose Australia mini-imperialism in PNG and throughout the Pacific.

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