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37 Bougainville war destabilises PNG!

April 1997

It has taken the bringing in of mercenaries to draw Australia's and the world's attention to Bougainville. It was apparently ok that the PNG armed forces assisted by Australia, carry out acts of barbarism such as mass murder and rape, enforce a blockade which has led to the deaths of many thousands (including pregnant mothers) deprived of medicine. This brutality is acceptable. But bringing in mercenaries is, apparently, not cricket. The PNG Government has been denounced internationally. Governments, and the International Monetary Fund have seriously threatened to cut off aid to PNG. Internally it almost led to martial law. The last sitting of Parliament was surrounded by troops. There has been rioting in the streets of Moresby and fighting between the armed forces and police. This has been resolved by the resignation of Prime Minister Julius Chan, who was responsible for bringing in the mercenaries. His People's Progress Party remains the party of government. The Howard Government is satisfied. So is General Singarok who led the coup.

The bringing in of mercenaries turned out to be a massive blunder. However this blunder was not accidental. Chan had no answers to the PNG crisis over Bougainville. Julius Chan is a pragmatic businessman who certainly faces a dilemma. For various reasons he can not afford to be the loser of Bougainville. This would destabilise his country as other nationalities might follow suite. His government would lose the benefits of massive copper mine worth many millions of kina in foreign exchange. He has to be seen as a winner for the sake of his political survival. The PNG armed forces have been demoralised and have suffered serious defeats at the hands of the BRA. Hiring mercenaries seemed the obvious and sensible solution. PNG forces have to be paid money. The government has been struggling to afford rations, let alone pay them a decent wage. Mercenaries can be paid in shares in the copper mine which they will profit from after victory. These shares would give them a monetary incentive to incite more Bougainvillians to enjoy the spoils of victory.

Unfortunately for Chan the bringing on of mercenaries has led to vehement opposition from Australia and the World Bank. In PNG it has almost led to a military coup and civil war. The military understandably don't like the thought of mercenaries. After all their power and privilege are threatened. Mobs rioted in the streets. The police and the military have opened fire on each other. Chan has so far survived an attempted military coup. Port Moresby has been in a state of chaos.

Much of the rioting is mass anger against poverty and corruption. Nuiginians see much wealth being dug out of the soils of their country. But very little is going to them. There is mass poverty. Many schools can barely or can't afford paper and pens let alone textbooks. Nuiginians see the superexploitation of imperialists like BHP and CRA. They also see the corruption of politicians such as Chan. The fact that mercenaries are white South African has hit home. Nuiginians do not want those reactionary grubs doing their dirty work on PNG soil. Unfortunately the anger has no coherent political direction. We would not be surprised if the tables were turned and Chan was overthrown. Chan has now repudiated his decision to bring in the mercenaries. However, the publication of their contract has exposed him as a liar.

The Howard Government is offering its services as a peacemaker. Well the peace offered would be peace on imperialism's terms. But Australia entering the war, or interfering in the internal affairs of PNG would be a bloody disaster. There would be more killed on Bougainville. No doubt the war will be declared against Papuan and Nuiginian proletarians. The figleaf of independence would be blown away as Australia would run the country as America did in South Vietnam. All efforts to send troops for whatever purpose (real or ostensible) must be opposed. Bougainville has been called "Australia's Vietnam. Well the whole of PNG might end up as Australia's Vietnam. We do not blame Chan for objecting to Australian interference regarding the mercenaries. We blame him for refusing to recognise the self-determination of the Bougainville people. We also think that any interference by Australia is reactionary. If you accept the logic of both the PNG Government and the Australian Government that Bougainville is an internal law and order question then why shouldn't PNG have the right to deal with an illegal upsurge in any way she chooses?

We reject the whole logic of both the imperialists and PNG compradors. The Bougainville people represent a nationality. It is a nationality forced, by armed force to join PNG due to the interests of imperialism. Imperialism opposes Bougainville independence because it fears destabilisation if all nations wanted their right to independence. Whitlam developed the PNG ruling elite to guarantee imperialists, Australian and otherwise the security for their investments. In the case of Bougainville they fear the loss of their sacred copper mine which is potentially one of the World's largest and most profitable. Of course realising this profit means superexploitation of labour and destruction of land occupied by the farmers there as well as fishing. The Bougainville people are Solomon Islanders. They should have the choice of joining whatever nation they choose, or alternatively independence.

Communists support the right of self-determination for the Bougainville people. This means we are for the defeat of imperialism and the imperialist backed PNG Government unconditionally. This means irrespective of how they choose to fight the war. If all this hue and cry about mercenaries draws attention to the just cause of Bougainville self-determination — then well and good. But we must not fall into the trap of painting mercenaries as bad but legitimising the regular imperialist troops who are just as barbaric in policing the colonised world for the benefit of superprofits.

Workers action to smash all imperialist involvement, now!

Self-determination for the Bougainville people!

Britain; Labour Tories versus Tory Tories

Britain holds a general election in May. The party known as "Labour" is expected to win with a landslide majority. The Conservatives have been in since 1979. People are tired and want a change. Well at least the faces at the top will be different. But will there be any other changes. Unfortunately no! Labour leader Tony Blair is doing an excellent job out Torying the Tories. There will be no major reversals of Thatcherism. Blair takes pride in his commitment to the private sector. Of course he openly admits that he will not be subservient to the trade union movement or support their wage claims. Blair is music to business ears. There will be no massive spending on social welfare (let alone a welfare state). Of course Blair is supported by the bosses and their press. This includes Rupert Murdoch's "Sun. Capital is totally reassured that they won't be inconvenienced, let alone challenged.

Many workers and left reformists thoroughly hate this. So do many trade union leaders. There has been a split led by National Union of miners under Arthur Scargill. Scargill at least realises that Labour is not supposed to stand for attacking unions, privatisation and wage cuts. This is a start. However Scargill is a man with decades of experience in Labour politics. During these decades, the left was thoroughly and utterly defeated. Why? Scargill has some obligation to draw a total balance sheet of the Left's debacle. Revolutionary communists have drawn the conclusion that the Left failed because of his subservience to the capitalist state and capitalism requires a wholesale attack to maintain profitability. The choice is either, join the attack, refuse to join in and remain marginalised (if you can't transcend the system) or organise to overthrow the system. Scargill wants to go back to yesterday's Labour Party and be elected on a parliamentary socialist platform. The ruling class will see that he doesn't get to first base.

Communist Left does not rule out a tactical orientation to Scargill's new alternative Labour. However there can be no concessions to his nationalist chauvinism nor in his illusions in the British state. We are sure that when Labour is elected it will continue the Tory offensive and alienate more and more workers. The point is to fight for a revolutionary alternative to labourism.

War against the unemployed (or will the unemployed go to war)?

John Howard can, in no way be considered soft on the unemployed. He won office on the basis of pandering to the chauvinism of middle class people and the labour aristocracy. Before his election, he made no secret of his desire to attack those who made insufficient effort to look for work. This promise he has certainly kept. He did promise to maintain work programmes, training schemes aimed to educate unemployed people into becoming more acceptable for the labour market. This is a promise he has broken. And understandably so. Amanda Vanstone realised that these courses are very expensive. And the number of people who actually got jobs from their experience, very few. In any case she didn't believe in helping people.

Since his election he has introduced a dole diary to enforce the oppressive work test more efficiently. He has massively increased penalties for those considered in breach of the work test. In some areas, small industrial centers for example, it is blatantly clear that looking for work is a sheer waste of time. To increase chauvinism and paranoia he promoted a 'dob in a dole bludger' campaign to get the public to assist the Liberal attack. Fortunately there have been very few dobs-ins.

He has made it much more difficult for migrants to get the dole. This includes legal ones. This no doubt pleased the chauvinists who are part of his electoral base. Of course it means hard ship, extreme poverty and perhaps even hunger. Big and small business are very happy to pay migrants

the lowest possible wages, well below the award! Making it more difficult for them to get the dole will mean that more are desperate to work for such abysmally low wages.

Now he has promised to introduce a work for the dole scheme. The initial proposal was that it be for young people, those under twenty four. Now it is going to be available for older unemployed also. The aim is to get unemployed do do community work including work on parks, schools (etc) as they do in New Zealand. Of course the government will save money as it won't have to employ workers on award wages. There was also talk about young people doing military service. This will ensure that they are disciplined, under the control of the system and ready to be fodder for the next imperialist blood bath. This has yet to be confirmed. But it also hasn't been ruled out.

The proposed scheme amounts to slave labour. It is difficult, if not impossible for a young person to live off the youth dole. It will mean even more suffering if hard work is required.

The bosses economists are happy to see young people abused like this. But they consider this to be merely cosmetic. They are demanding Award restructuring which is their fancy term for depriving workers of their basic union rights. They consider that Howard is avoiding his right wing responsibilities.

The opposition from Labor in parliament has been non-existent. Apparently they are too scared to confront Howard on an issue which he (apparently) has widespread public support. Well, for starters, you can't always believe bourgeois public opinion polls. Beazley assumes Howard's mass support on the basis of a boss's mouthpiece. However, irrespective of Howard's support or otherwise, any one principled would feel disgusted at Howard's attacks and want to defend young people. Beazley doesn't care.

Keating Labor introduced work for the dole on the sly. It was often part and parcel of Newstart training schemes, it was given the euphemism "work experience".

There is a major philosophical difference between Howard and Keating on the question of how to deal with the unemployed. Keating Labor wanted to restructure the economy in order to make Australia "technologically advanced". We were supposed to become "the clever country". And all sorts of schemes were devised to make unemployed 'suitable for the labour market'. These "programmes" were expensive to run. Only a very few gained work from the courses and experience. Most unemployed were simply abused, finding the courses a waste of time. Unemployed were also taught reactionary crap about working for nothing to please the boss and undermining trade union awards.

Howard is currently having problems getting the work for the dole scheme through the Senate. Good! But we're not banking on this causing anything but a minor delay. Neither Labor nor the Democrats, Greens and others are philosophically opposed to making young people work for underaward wages on cheap labour slave labour schemes. A workers and unemployed campaign must be developed to make Howard's plan unworkable.

We must campaign for real jobs for real (award) wages and conditions. As the crisis hits harder it will become even clearer that no boss's government will give us any work except slavery. We must support a shorter working week with wage rises until everyone is employed. This can only be achieved by strong on the job organisation. Unemployed need a strong fighting union dedicated to

fighting cheap labour/ scab labour schemes. Both workers and unemployed need and a political party dedicated to fighting for working class political power.

No tears for Deng Xiaoping!

To bourgeois commentators, Deng Xiaoping was the last of the communists. We think those in the Cultural revolution got closer to the truth when he was described as China's second worst capitalist roader. Certainly he was party to all the right turns within the Chinese bureaucracy made since the sixties. He was a significant accomplice of US imperialism in foreign policy — especially when the Soviet Union existed.

It is noteworthy that sincere and deeply felt condolences came from former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Mr. Lee admitted that he learned a lot from Deng. Indeed Chinese stalinism taught Lee and the Peoples Progress Party of Singapore how to have an authoritarian organisation. Lee in turn taught the Chinese how to discipline the workforce. Lee defends Deng's role in Tiananmin Square. Deng knew the danger of revolution. Oh indeed he did! Deng certainly knew that he and the imperialists were on the same side — against the workers of the World.

Deng's most famous quotation goes like this "It doesn't matter if it's the black cat or the white cat. The cat that catches the mouse is the good cat". This is non colour prejudiced. But what he is talking about is not colour but class. What he is really saying is that it doesn't matter if communists give privileges to the bourgeois forces or the petty bourgeoisie so long as they deliver the goods. Well for the sake of minor gains, Deng is prepared to promote bourgeois privilege which could wreck or deform the revolution. Deng's quote reflects the method of pragmatism—the method of Henry Ford. Both philosophically and economically, Deng and Ford, had they lived at the same time would be on the same side of the class line. Deng has gone and good riddance. Unfortunately his successors have vowed to go down the same road to 'economic reform' (capitalism) even further. The wages of Chinese workers will be bargained away for the benefit of imperialists like Nike. This is the heritage that Deng began which will be continued. It will mean austerity and poverty for millions of Chinese working people. Political revolution is urgently needed so they can obtain even a basic existence let alone a living wage. We are confident-Chinese workers and peasants will relegate Deng to the dustbin of history.

Free Dita Sari. Indonesian unionists facing death penalty.

Dita Sari is an Indonesian trade unionist. She is a real unionist (as opposed to a government stooge) who fights for decent wages and conditions. Imperialism talks about "human rights". This is a hypocritical fraud. Brutal barbaric dictatorships such as Suhartos are maintained to enforce superexploitation of the working class. Dita Sari has stood up for democracy in Indonesia, trade union rights and for freedom for the East Timorese. Because of this she is extremely dangerous. Being a dissident in Indonesia means a death sentence — especially if you are a member of the radical PRD. Dita is facing a possible death sentence. We in Australia must come to her assistance— by taking direct action against Indonesia.

The bosses try to divide us internationally. We can overcome this by internationalism. We must defend Dita Sari not merely because we care about a decent unionist but because we must fight the system internationally. Bosses, if they can get away with it, will build factories in Indonesia and pay

slave wages. Meanwhile they will sack workers in Australia. The way to beat this is not crawling to the government to protect industry “keep industry in Australia” but international solidarity for decent wages and conditions for Indonesian workers. Unions committed and run by the members must have the right to legally organise. Dita and all unionists imprisoned must be freed. Dita’s struggle for free and decent trade unions must become our struggle.

Black Redfern under threat.

There has been a political climate of racism in this country. It comes as no surprise that the yellow bourgeois media should beat up crime stories about the Black community in Eveleigh, Union, Caroline and Hugo Streets Redfern. There have been reports about drugs been pushed and kids carrying out theft. From all these reports it has been concluded that the bulldozer must be brought in and residents evicted. Even if what is alleged is true the Block hardly rates as one of the hotbeds of heroin dealing. The dealers are indeed small fry. That is if you believe what is reported. Will other areas where drugs are sold face eviction, bull dozers and police brutality also? It would be bloody staggering if this happened. You would need to quite literally declare war on at least half of working class Sydney including Waterloo, Macquarie Fields Campbelltown. We think that the Redfern Block has been singled out for special treatment.

For the likes of Hanson and Howard, getting rid of the block would be a feather in their cap. It would be a victory against “Black self-determination (which they oppose) and political correctness. There are larger Black communities within the Sydney metropolitan area. But the Redfern Block stands out as a symbol of Black proletarian struggle and Black solidarity with the trade union movement. It is these traditions which they want to wipe. As well they want to pander to white middle- class and labour aristocratic chauvinism. A victory over the block could boost their support amongst their reactionary social base.

Of course there is the Olympic Games to consider. And this is what concerns the Carr Government. An obvious and conspicuous Everleigh Street would indeed draw attention to Australian racism and give Australia a well deserved bad name. Other Black communities are more hidden. Also joining this reactionary alliance are Black bureaucrats such as Mick Mundine. They are playing up to and pandering to respectability, and the cops

— to sell out Black pro(etarians. Black activists on the Block are well aware that these bureaucrats are working hand in glove with the establishment to give Black support to reactionary ‘law and order’. They therefore support state repression against their own people. For years they have been usurping control by disenfranchising local Black militants from what is supposed to be their cooperative. Only a concerted campaign last year won back membership to these activists. The Mundines, of course, don’t live in the area.

There has been a conscious campaign by the bureaucrats to refuse to do repairs, let houses run down and drive people out. The current campaign has been going on for years.

The Redfern Block was a minor gain for the Black proletariat. A Black Housing Cooperative was established when the New South Branch of the Builders Labourers Federation gave Black proletarians who had occupied houses physical and material support. It was only then that the Whitlam Labour Government gave official recognition. However, just as you can’t build socialism

within one country, you can't build an isolated collective amidst the ravages of a racist capitalist society. There was no strategy proposed by either the Black people or the unionists (supposedly led by "communists") to unite Blacks with other proletarians and fight the system together. The Black community has been ravaged by capitalism — its poverty, its racism, its state repression, and its creation of a bureaucracy within its own ranks. In fact, this bureaucracy has become a Black capitalist class as they are technically the legal owners. Working class unity is needed to overcome this situation. When the community was formally established, the BLF was there. But where is the union movement now? Well apparently the union bureaucrats don't interfere in "a dispute between Black people". In other words, all it takes is a few Uncle Toms to toe the racist line in some way and the bureaucrats will do nothing. They also bemoan the "drug problem" Surely they can see that Black working class people needn't be evicted. Surely they can see that homes should be renovated and not bulldozed. They don't even seem to be inclined to defend unionisation. This is a thorough and utter disgrace. Of course the working class is stronger than its bureaucratic "representatives". Lobbying should go on. If the bureaucrats don't act, the rank and file might. In any case they would at least have heard arguments against racism. The ISO resolution which takes a stand in defence of the Black is limited as it doesn't call for direct action where appropriate. Workers are only asked to take a moral stand. It is indeed important that we confront the drug issue. Heroin and other drugs should be legalised. We do not approve of dangerous addictive substances (this includes cigarettes and alcohol). But the "effectiveness" (or rather lack of) of drug laws has only achieved the criminalisation of young people and is an excuse for state repression. Drug laws never catch the big dealers who own the means of distribution and exchange. These will be caught when they are expropriated by proletarian revolution. Anyhow the drug issue is a diversion. Many community members who don't touch drugs in any way will be evicted by this offensive.

The community is still prepared to fight. They need the support of the whole of the working class, if hundreds, or thousands of unionists stood with the community against demolition and eviction this offensive could be defeated.

The "Socialist" Party becomes the Communist Party¹¹ Part 2 The Socialist Party after the split

The Socialist Party of Australia recently renamed itself the Communist Party. The SPA was formed out of a split in the CPA. Those who split away were sympathetic to the bureaucrats in Moscow and the stalinist strategy of what's called the World Communist Movement which is the stalinist movement. In RED 36, we discussed political issues of the split from the CPA (to form the SPA).

Despite the fact that the new party oppositionists were only a small majority of the pro-Moscow opposition, the SPA did start to grow and expand from its modest beginning. It had the support of union leaders and most important, the blessing of Moscow. There were also recruits from the CPA who were threatened by that party's new radicalism. Divisions within and without the Party were to remain for some time. Alf Watt and Edger Ross continued on with Australian Socialist for six months until it became clear the union bureaucrats supported SPA. Alf Watt supporters remained active in the CPA throughout the seventies. Watt and Ross argued that the new party was premature as 'marxist-leninists' were gaining ground.

The Socialist Party behaved in a pretty predictable fashion. It supported peace unity and solidarity with the "socialist countries". It had the old minimum programme of uniting the people against monopoly as the "first stage" of the revolution. The second stage appeared to never come.

For peace the SPA meant supporting uncritically and unconditionally, deals with the soviet bureaucracy with imperialism. SPA believed you could have “peaceful competition” between two antagonistic social systems. It believed the Soviet Union would triumph in this competition. The SPA saw as its role as promotion of the virtues of the soviet Union as this would facilitate the victory for socialism here. The SPA stood for unity. Well unity of the working class is a fine ideal. But what they meant by unity was crawling to Laborites such as Whitlam, Dunstan, and even the notorious Grouper John Ducker. Unity with such treacherous bastards meant white washing sellouts. Often they were party to the sellouts themselves.

Of course, during the early seventies, they were totally different to the Aaronsite CPA who were very militant. Typical of this militancy was the record of the NSW builders Labourers Federation led by Jack Munday, Bob Pringle and later Joe Owens. The green bans of this union became famous throughout Australia and even overseas. Many of the bans were exemplary and supportable

But the NSW BLF also pandered to the middle class putting conservation before class interest. They also believed that they could maintain bans indefinitely under capitalism. They certainly didn't have a programme. When the crisis hit the building industry, the CPA supported leadership had no answers. They were ripe for overthrow and this was done by the Maoist Federal leadership led by Norm Gallagher. Gallagher in his takeover collaborated with the bosses and traded off hard fought for working conditions such as working in the rain, which the NSW leadership had achieved for members. The takeover was therefore part of the ruling class offensive. The NSW leadership had to be defended. SPA were shrill in their criticisms of Munday for “lack of unity” and SPA officials in the tradesmen's BWIU refused to defend the NSW Branch. They also didn't defend BLF pickets in the Rocks.

Also treacherous was their refusal to defend rank and file plumbers organising to defend their strike action against scabbing. In Sydney, July 1972 the Plumbers Union went on strike for a much needed interim wage rise of \$15 to be increased to \$33. The bosses responded by employing scabs. Unionists organised against this. Vigilante squads went around the jobs to drive them off. These squads had notable successes. On the whole these scabs were driven off by pressure and persuasion. The alleged violence was not necessary though it have been totally justified if required to enforce the strike. Violence against scabs is totally justified.

The vigilantes were received with virulent hostility from the bourgeois press, notably the Sydney Morning Herald. There were plenty of scare stories about alleged “violence”. Of course the Labour council of NSW were part of the hysterical chorus also. It came as no surprise that John Ducker moved a resolution condemning the strikers. He claimed falsely that the vigilantes had used a crowbar. The resolution which effectively opposed militant defence of strike action was supported by the Socialist Party. They too stabbed the plumbers in the back. The CPA, to their credit were on the strikers side and organised public meetings and press conferences in their defence. During this dispute John Ducker paid tribute to the SPA as the “real marxist leninists' who” courageously fought for the true marxist -leninist principle”.

The next example of treacherous SPA “unity” concerns the Dunstan government. Don Dunstan has been hailed as a progressive. But behind the trendy facade lurked a desire to contain working class struggle. During the sixties Dunstan went to europe and brought back was a new concept

— worker participation. This he sold to the labour movement. He also sold it to the bosses as being for their benefit. With worker representatives on company boards, workers could become responsible for the profitability of the company — and pay for the crisis of the system. That was the theory and practice of worker participation. The CPA and the far left stood up against it. Well so they should have. But the SPA were silent, full of praise for Dunstan's progressive measures. They also attacked the CPA for being sectarian to Dunstan. But there was nothing about Dunstan's plans for co-optation. They were simply his left cover.

Another example of SPA unity concerned the rank and file power workers group known as ECCUDO located in NSW. ACTU policy was to fight for a 35 hour week and ECCUDO were the vanguard. Unlike bureaucrats who paid lip service to the demand ECCUDO actually fought for it. They organised at rank and file level. Of course they came up against a right wing Lewis Government committed to fight against them. The Lewis Liberal, of course, did its utmost to sabotage action. There were power blackouts supposed to be caused by strikers but were actually initially initiated by the Liberals and bosses. The press, of course, cooperated with a hysteria campaign. Labor Council of course capitulated. Many of the leading activists in ECCUDO were CPA but the CPA were hardly consistent in their support. The CPA/ALP Left led AMWU only gave, at best verbal support. Even in this they weren't consistent. In fact CPA member Frank Bollins actually attacked the "irresponsibility" of union militants. Where were the SPA? They were "in unity" with Labor Council, of course.

When revolutionary communists talk about working class unity we mean other workers taking action with workers in the vanguard. We do not mean subordinating struggle until it is acceptable to the labour bureaucracy or Labor Party. When workers are under attack or in action, it is the responsibility of other sections to unite with them, in action. Communists have never supported, or covered for workers participation schemes, as in South Australia.

Understandably the SPA were dismissed as conservative, or worse, by the more militant sections of the working class. These workers, often politically eclectic, were repelled by their bureaucratic conservatism. Nevertheless, the SPA certainly found a niche amongst conservatised bureaucratized stalinists who feared that CPA might threaten their position. They also grew courtesy of the endorsement by Moscow and the World Communist Movement.

Whilst they were conservative and bureaucratized, the SPA had a clear political direction. The CPA did not. The CPA was well aware of Whitlam's desire to co-opt the union movement. But they had no clear perspective of how to deal with it. The CPA vacillated between left wing criticism and liquidation, praising ALP so-called "progressive forces". The CPA also adapted to the Australia Party (predecessor to the Australian Democrats). They vacillated between ultraleft statements about Guy Fawkes as the only person to enter parliament with good intentions on one hand, and the parliamentary road to socialism on the other. The SPA knew where they stood with their parliamentary "first stage" of the revolution. Both supported Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government in Chile. The SPA pointed out that this was consistent with the strategy of the World Communist Movement (read stalinist). We agree. The CPA at least made some reassessment after the bloody September 11 coup of 1973. At their next congress they proclaimed that they had a one stage instead of a two stage revolution.

The SPA gained through internal squabbles within the CPA. In December 1973 John Sedy CPA President presented a document opposing "ultraleftism". He called for mass movements behind

Labor's so-called "progressive reforms" and for closer ties with Communist Parties such as the Italian, Spanish, Japanese and French. He attacked the CPA pandering to fads. He was backed by Bernie Taft and the Victorian branch of the party. Australia's Eurocommunists had begun to raise their head. The fight against them was bitter and disorienting. And this helped the SPA. Aarons won the 1974 Congress but the CPA was an unstable disoriented party. The continuing economic crisis saw the collapse of CPA radicalism.

The collapse of the Whitlam Government saw the CPA fall in behind Labor as an "extraparliamentary" appendage building movements like Citizens for Democracy. The collapse of the building industry and manufacturing industries (such as shipbuilding) saw the CPA abandon union militancy. Instead it developed plans to save Australian capitalism, such as Australia Uprooted. Union bureaucrats began to find the CPA a more comfortable niche than the SPA

The crisis of stalinism saw the CPA re-establish itself as part of the World Communist Movement. In Europe, Eurocommunist parties developed a strong mass support on the basis of their liberalised programme. The CPA could gain from this although it was still tainted with a bit of leftism, too much for the hard-core Euro's such as Bernie Taft. The SPA appeared more principled as it at least formally raised the need for a Leninist party.

The third Indo-China war also brought the CPA closer to mainstream stalinism. The CPA had close ties with the Vietnamese stalinist VWP. When Vietnam invaded Kampuchea, the SPA of course uncritically hailed Vietnam. The CPA were more equivocal. They feared that if invasion was legitimised, stalinist states such as Roumania and Yugoslavia could fear invasion from Moscow. However, this only tempered the degree of support the CPA gave Vietnam. Stalinists were effectively polarised between those who supported Beijing (and ally Pol Pot) and those who supported Moscow (and ally Vietnam). When China invaded Vietnam this polarisation intensified. In Australia, 1979 saw the rise of fascist nationalism albeit in a small but militant way. Both SPA and CPA were happy to unite in the Movement Against Fascism and Racism which acknowledged its theoretical framework as based on that of the Stalinist Dimitrov.

The CPA returning to the stalinist fold led to a strong trend towards unity between the stalinists. A joint declaration of unity was signed between the two parties which pleased old timers, and of course the Taft faction. But the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan(Dec. 1979) showed how fragile the unity was. SPA was in unity with the invasion and the CPA opposed it.

The Soviet invasion created a cold war situation. There was an anticommunist political climate throughout Australia and the West. In 1980 the Olympics occurred in Moscow. There was strong political pressure from Fraser on the Olympic Committee not to participate. Australia participated, though America did not. But many athletes succumbed to pressure and didnt go. Whilst the left won, in the fact that the boycott failed, there was still massive pressure. Bill Hayden, then Labor leader was also party to the pressure.

There were indeed militant mass movements fighting the Fraser Government (or at least its policies). The CPA was well and truly entrenched. The SPA was more on the sidelines. One of the largest in terms of numbers participating was the movement against uranium. This was a divided movement. Divisions reflected those who wanted broad common denominator movement (Uranium Moratorium) as opposed to militant actions by a minority. There was also a wing who argued for an

orientation to the working class. These were analogous to similar divisions which occurred over Vietnam just five years before.

The CPA was flexible, accommodating everyone, including militant greens, pacifists and liberals (Australian Democrats). It supported broad action and advanced action. Some of its unionists did enforce uranium bans. The SPA had problems. Their mentor, the Soviet Union, both mined uranium and possessed nuclear weapons. This gave it ideological problems finding a principled position. Of course it could point to multinational control of uranium. But most of the movement, which had a strong antitechnological bent, opposed uranium outright by any government, capitalist or socialist. So the SPA was relatively isolated. Some of the members felt the isolation and divisions began to ferment. Some of their unionists did actually participate in black bans against uranium. The SPA were more principled than the CPA and others. At least there was the attempt to act within a principled framework.

The next issue which indeed frustrated CPA/SPA unity was the rise of the independent trade union in Poland Solidarnosc. This union was militant, had a massive base and raised legitimate demands for improvements on the trade union level. It also had the support of the majority of the Polish working class. Certain leaders, notably Walesa, had faith in capitalism. The bureaucrats only answer to this movement was brute force: socialist state repression. Of course they made serious noises against bourgeois ideology and influence of imperialism and the west. They did acknowledge some mistakes. But they couldn't explain how their party, the Polish United Workers Party, supposedly the proletarian vanguard in a socialist country, lost the faith of almost the entire working class. The CPA was in solidarity with Solidarnosc. But it wanted to reconcile this movement with the bureaucracy instead of smash the bureaucracy — political revolution, it was the issue of Poland which finally broke down this fragile stalinist unity.

With the intensification of the economic crisis in the late seventies and eighties saw the demise of any militant pretensions of the trade union bureaucracy. There was a campaign for a thirty five hour week. This demand was inadequate as a solution to unemployment. And the campaign was inadequate. But some minor gains were made. Often 35 hours was achieved in exchange for productivity deals. However with the collapse of shipbuilding, car manufacturing, white goods, and to a certain extent the building industry bureaucrats were looking for solutions. Many minimalist programmes were published initially with the support of the SPA. The logic these minimal programmes was the treacherous Prices and Incomes Accord. Minimum programmes need a bourgeois government to carry them out. Hawke and Hayden would only listen to the bureaucrats if they could promise industrial stability. Hence they were forced to agree to curtail their even limited militancy and modest wage claims.

The SPA correctly and with a degree of principle opposed the Accord. But the SPA bureaucrats supported it. The SPA expelled the bureaucrats. And so the Association for Communist Unity was formed as an alliance between the bureaucrats and the less principled and opportunist peace activists. W J Brown and P Clancy led this new party. The divisions were long standing. Those who were part of Socialist Unity groups in the early seventies joined ACU.

Concluded next issue of RED

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