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Wik, Mabo and Black self-determination!

Many thousands marched throughout Australia on September 21. The Sydney rally was called off but still many hundreds attended. On the whole those who attended were middle class people, lefties, some Black people-. There is genuine concern over the Wik. Partly it is a reaction to the Howard Government and the racism which has fertilised the fascist movement led by Pauline Hanson, Partly is a belief that Black people deserve justice. It is indeed comfortable for the not so radical middle class that the Wik and Mabo decisions were decisions of the Supreme Court. Hence those middle class people can be seen to be backing the Black people with the rule of law on their side. For others this is just the current expression of their desire for Black self-determination. Whilst their desires are genuine they do not see the limits of the legal framework. Nor that it is the legal framework which is currently dictating the Black struggle. These activists use Wik and Mabo as a banner even though they desire more.

It is not surprising that the speakers sought were entirely respectable and even right wing. Phillip Adams, writer for The Australian, fully identifies with capitalism. We suspect the same is true for actor Bryan Brown. The organisers of the rally are liberalised stalinists. Win Childs, an organiser for the rally, told Politics in the Pub of whom she represents that she had lobbied Kim Beazley. Kim Beazley according to her was more concerned with the multinationals 'was too scared of an election to push the issue and "didn't mention the aboriginal people even once. Nevertheless (according to her) it is our job to pressure the Labor Party to change its mind! Some people never learn. In particular, some stalinists never learn. When workers and militant activists show their disgust in Labor these people redirect them back often and usually in alliance with respectable bourgeois people. The popular front is alive and well. Its success is partly due to no or weak opposition from the radical left.

The attacks on common law rights must be fought but Communist Left totally opposes the subordination of Black or any struggle to bourgeois legality.

The Mabo decision was a decision of the Supreme Court based on common Law. Bourgeois law has a small problem with the expropriation of the Black people. It was previously solved by declaring that

they didn't exist, terra nullus. The Mabo decision was a breakthrough in that it declared the reactionary decree to be dead. Black people were now recognised as occupying territory. The Mabo decision is named after the Meriam leader who initiated the court action — Eddie Mabo. The Meriam people who live on what's known as Murray Island had an excellent case for ownership under common law. Their land was clearly defined. They always had exclusive possession as the land has never been occupied by white Australians. Understandable most mainland Koories and Murris don't define their tribal boundaries according to common law.

On the whole, they cannot claim or prove exclusive possession. Although the abolishing of Terra Nullus is a breakthrough, the gains from Mabo apply to very few Black people.

The Wik people went to the Supreme Court also. The Court declared that Native Title and pastoral leases could co-exist. This means that even though Wik people have formal legal title pastoralists could carry on, virtually unhindered. Of course what does this title mean in practice? Black people need land so they can have some means of existence, either by utilising the land in the traditional way or operating a station running sheep or cattle. The ruling of the Court effectively deprives them of either option.

Nevertheless, this ruling has created a major panic amongst rural Australia. Pastoralists have traditionally been racist. This racism has been fuelled by, initially Howard but more recently Hanson. The racist right have had a field day creating scare stories and mobilising pastoralists for racist action. Anti-wik paranoia has been a major mobiliser for the extreme right in rural areas. Many farmers no doubt actually believe that their utilisation of the land is threatened. Much of the land claimed is not under the control of small struggling family farmers but multinationals who are the real enemy of the small farmer. Racism has been a very effective weapon in assisting the multinationals keep on side the very small farmers whom they are displacing.

Revolutionary communists support the right of self-determination for the Black people. For Leninists this means right to form either one or more separate nations. Communist Left considers that the material basis for a nation exists. Whether or not they take up that right should be determined by Black proletarians. Our message in offering this right respect their nationality as equals. Not every Black person will want to or be able to join this separate nation (or nations). Other demands must be raised for Black people who choose to live in the cities.

But the key question is the right to an economy. The decision of the Supreme Court Common Law Division did not allow the Wik people the right to an economy or control of the economy. Revolutionary communists therefore reject the Supreme Court as any focus for Black land rights. In fact thanks to that decision, any attempt by Black proletarians to take control could be considered "contempt of court and they would be subject to massive fines or jailing.

Communist Left believes it is not just the right but the duty of Black proletarians to take on and expropriate multinational land owners. In 1967 a massive struggle by the Gurrindji people took on the might of British multinational Vesties owners of the Wave Hill station which was the size of Belgium. They took over land which they claimed as their own and established their own cattle station. The Gurrindji people worked as stockmen. They were backed by the trade union movement, most notably the Darwin Branch of the Waterside Workers Federation which is now part of the Maritime Union of Australia. Of course any localised struggle can only be a limited victory unless it is

generalised. The Gurrindgi people did not have the programme to fight the system consistently (despite their exemplary militancy). They were linked to stalinists like Frank Hardy, who despite some serious work in gaining support had faith in the system through their “minimum programme’. But the point is not to reject direct action, but to see that it is linked to a revolutionary programme. The Gurrindgi struggle points the way forward — not the supreme court lobbying for common Law rights.

Of course the current attack by Howard known as the Ten Point Plan is thoroughly and utterly racist. For some liberals and reformists black rights is reduced to Common Law. Well for John Howard Blacks are not even worthy of that! But the problem is that in their zeal to oppose Howard and the turn to racism in Australia, many have either forgotten or failed to recognise how minimal a gain Common Law rights is, and tied Black people to a legal straight jacket.

Communist Left says

Workers and black proletarian direct action to expropriate large pastoral stations!

Self determination for Black people in Australia.

Black Deaths in Custody

Communist Left remembers and honours the names of John Pat, Lloyd Boney, Eddie Murray and all those who have been killed by the racist Australian state. We remember not merely because these were decent people who died before their time under unfortunate circumstances. we remember because they are victims of a racist war which is still going on. We believe the whole list of Black people, whose deaths in custody have been documented, is only the tip of the iceberg. we would understand anyone wanting to commit suicide to escape the racist ‘justice” system metered out to proletarians and especially Black people. However we believe that most of the deaths have been murder by the hands of racist cops. Incidentally we consider those who out of despair kill themselves to be murdered also. This system of exploitation and oppression is responsible for their deaths. The response from the respectable, liberal left and black bureaucrats as to call for a Royal commission. This Commission has been held and has been exposed as a fraud. A series of minimal improvements were suggested. But no police officer has been charged. Meanwhile the death rate of those in custody both Black and white is increasing. In a leaflet handed out at the public opening April 1988 Communist Left warned that such a Commission would cover police racism and have no answers apart from perhaps replacing one lot of cops with another. It is the whole system which is racism. Communist Left remembers John Pat (and others in the context of support workers mobilisations against the racist Australian state.

On September 27 there was the usual march and rally against the murder of John Pat (and others) from Town Hall Sydney to Redfern. This year the rally was poorly attended—a disgrace to the left in this country. A serious fight against racism is not patronisingly ‘accepting Black culture” but fighting the state when it attacks Black people

The death of Princess Diana

The death of Princess Diana Spencer has brought tears to the eyes of millions of people throughout the World. More people lined the streets of London than for any other occasion since the victory of

the “allies” (imperialists) in World War 2. A song in her honour by Elton John has sold out many times Princess Di easily attracts sympathy among those who do not have an anti-imperialist consciousness. Her death at age 36 was both premature and tragic. She was promoted as a caring and attractive princess who cared for victims of aids leprosy and homeless and with the abolition of land mines. This concern, though real should be seen in the context of her massive fortune and luxurious lifestyle. Revolutionary communists do not mourn. Irrespective of Lady Di’s personal virtues, the point is who Lady di represented throughout her life. Princess Diana acted as a PR person for imperialism giving it a glamorous image. It is no accident that the republican debate is curtailed during and immediately after her visits. Princess Di as is well known was formerly married to Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne. Despite her divorce, she still represented the “royal family”. This family is monstrously rich. Its riches stem from the superexploitation of workers throughout the world. Her ex mother-in-law Mrs. Windsor who is known as “Queen Elizabeth the Second” is a multibillionaire. She is the richest woman and one of the richest people. More than that she is head of the British state and plays a politically reactionary role facilitating imperialist exploitation by British imperialism throughout their dominions.

Many regard the monarchy as a bit of a joke, perhaps an expensive joke, or perhaps a bit of an anachronism which adds a bit of colour. Make no mistake, these people still have significant emergency powers. And if there was a political emergency the Queen would act swiftly as head of the armed forces in Australia and Britain to “maintain stability” i.e. capitalism. So woe betide any reformist government who plans to introduce socialism by parliamentary legislation! The Queen (or King) could issue a proclamation and order the Army to take over.

Communist Left supports the abolition of this institution in Britain and Australia. A republic achieved now would be a step forward. However we doubt that a republic will be achieved before the overthrow of capitalism

On the Cairns Waterfront and in the Hunter Valley coal fields Unions fight to survive!

Unions have been dismissed by many on the left and right as becoming redundant dead or an anachronism. Well if unions are dying they are certainly going down fighting. At least some are. The Wharfies at Cairns, members of the Maritime Union of Australia have just won a victory against the use of scab labour. Communist Left unconditionally defends the right of unions to defend a closed shop. Very simply if you can't enforce a closed shop you can't fight for anything as the scab workers will not be party to any decision. Well some might honour the picket line. But it is not guaranteed. The more non union labour can be used, the easier down wages. Communist Left salutes the Cairns workers for their intransigence and for their victory.

In the Hunter Valley, miners are fighting an even more important battle. Their opponent is Conzinc Riotinto, the notorious multinational. Mr. Reith is a disappointed man. The Howard Government has moved all sorts of reactionary legislation against the union movement. The previous Keating Labor government was not slack in moving anti-union legislation either. But the problem has been that employers have been bullied into not taking advantage of their legal rights. Conzinc Riotinto is however ideologically committed to union smashing. They have threatened union leaders and militants with serious penalties. They have stressed that they are not interested in charging the rank and file. This is deliberate. It is aimed at breaking down the solidarity of the union and isolating

officials. However the strikers remain solid and intransigent. They know that they are fighting for the future of unionism. They have successfully stopped trains from delivering coal.

The officials are confident of victory. They claim that elsewhere Conzinc Riotinto have not met with such solidarity and commitment. This may be so. But such blaze confidence is totally unwarranted. For a start it would be useful if the struggle was generalised. Solidarity is extremely urgent. Generally unions who are under threat and in isolation get smashed. The union bureaucrats CMFEU official leaflet does not mention the need for solidarity. Perhaps they don't want to embarrass their fellow bureaucrats who they know won't give them any. The British Miners strike was defeated despite heroism and militancy. There is no reason why Conzinc riotinto may not have a victory also, Especially as they have the support of the Howard government who hope they take advantage of reactionary legislation.

Even if commitment wins them this battle (and this is possible) the overwhelming trend is against unionism. The fact that unions are fighting for their lives is a product of serious betrayals. Most of them spring from the union movements alliance with the Labor Party in the form of the Prices and Incomes Accord. Even the bureaucrats realise they were in error.

There has been an extensive deunionisation of the Australian workforce. This has been accepted by the bureaucrats. The bureaucrats have defended their base amongst the hard core unionised industries such as mining, seamen and wharfies, metal and iron workers and sections of the public sector. They have accepted deunionisation of some light manufacturing, tourism. This has not guaranteed the main steam unions survival. It has ensured their isolation. Unions attack Macdonalds for opposing unionisation. Yes Macdonalds is one of a number of notorious companies. But Macdonalds pays Award junior rates. These rates have been supported by the bureaucrats. So why should young workers join the union? In supporting cheap labour, be it junior or trainee, unions pave the way for their own demise.

The accord is now dead. This has been officially announced by Kim Beazley who said that the next Labor government would not be party to another one. Yet the previous Accords have done a hell of a lot of damage to the credibility of unions in the eyes of the rank and file. Union leaders have been seen as cooperating with the Government in reducing the level of wages and accepting redundancies. The Accord meant union bureaucrats talked to governments — instead of mobilising the rank and file. As a result there has been a total degeneration in on the job organisation.

So where should communists stand in relation to unions? The Socialist Equality Party rejects them outright. They see unions as tying workers to the state and forcing workers to accept the burden of the capitalist crisis. Yes unions do this. But the recent struggles show that workers see the need for basic organisation for defence. No doubt their line, if they were to argue it in the Hunter coal fields would lead them to isolation and unpopularity. Workers of the CMFEU realise that irrespective of their leaders faults, things could be a lot worse without organisation.

Others on the far left argue for militant democratic fighting unions. This is the slogan of Workers Power (which has branches in Australia and New Zealand) and a New Zealand based breakaway Communist Workers Group. Both have international allies. This approach degrades the need for a revolutionary communist party. Yes some of the militancy on the picket line from the rank and file is heroic. But the problem has been that the rank and file, even the most militant share the

fundamental political framework of their leaders (although they may not like me practical Consequences). Revolutionaries side with workers in struggle. But in doing so we fight for a different political perspective to that shared by most of the rank and file and their bureaucratic leaders

— revolutionary communism Revolutionary communists work in joint committees on the shop floor known as shop committees. However we don't liquidate our programme when standing for trade union leadership. The revisionist left does this when they advocate rank and file committees which effectively unite communists with militants on the sections of programme which both agree with, but avoid fundamental differences of principle which involve the principled differences between communism and syndicalism and/or reformism. The perspective of building a party on the shop floor must not be liquidated. The revolutionary party is the important instrument required if unions are to act consistently in workers interests rather than being part of the state machinery.

The Party is also a reflection of consciousness. A revolutionary communist party reflects the need to oppose the wages system, as opposed to the desire to improve wages under capitalism. Those who confine struggle to improving wages and conditions under capitalism adapt to the existing consciousness of workers which is often racist and sexist and respects the systems laws. Of course there are serious contradictions within workers consciousness which must be resolved. But these cannot be avoided and evaded by organising "rank and file groups around limited demands. Even caucuses which support key political demands are liquidationist as they do not recruit workers to the revolutionary party.

The Socialist Equality Party argues that unions cannot be captured by the revolutionary party. They don't say why not! The strikes in Cairns and in the Hunter show the relevance of unions to the rank and file. Communist Left wishes the Hunter unionists all the best. We also urge solidarity both in the form of money and physical support. We suggest that workers realise that despite the militancy and the heroics unionists are fighting a rearguard action. A basic challenge to the reformist framework is required.

Bougainville the war still goes on

Once again we draw readers attention to the war going on on the island of Bougainville. Bougainville is considered illegally part of Papua New Guinea. In reality it was only included as part of New Guinea due to imperialist treaties imposed on the local people. The Bougainville people are ethnically Solomon Islanders. Communist Left supports their right to either independence or joining the Solomon Islands. We think that Bougainville has the capacity to be a pretty wealthy nation in its own right. Its population is larger than many small nations in the Caribbean, its land mass larger and it is wealthy both in farming and minerals. The choice of what country they should be part of should be made by the Bougainville people themselves.

Australia is to a large extent responsible for this war. When Australia took over the territory from Germany it did not consider the interests of the people. Australian governments helped British multinational Conzinc Riotinto expropriate by force the land they wanted for their mine. Troops, tanks and landmines were moved in to facilitate this. Initially there was to be no compensation for the local people. It was only after Australian unionists acted that they got a pittance — no compensation for the the loss of farming and fishing due to the copper mine.

In September 1975 Bougainville declared itself independent from Australia. This happened one week before PNG was allowed independence. But the Bougainville declaration was ruled illegal by Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. There have been sporadic conflicts ever since. Full scale war was declared in early 1990. The death toll has been immense. an estimated one hundred thousand Bougainville people have been killed either directly through the fighting or through the blockade due to lack of medicines (etc). Although the war is officially an internal law and order issue within PNG, Australia has played a key role in supervising the war, providing mortars made in StMarys Sydney and enforcing the blockade.

It is extremely important that Australian workers act. some workers indeed have. Workers on the picket line in Illawarra district fighting Conzinc Riotinto attacking their unions have donated to the Bougainville people. The unionists knew that both they and the people of Bougainville have a common enemy Conzinc Riotinto. This was pointed out by the CMFEU leadership to workers on the picket line in the Hunter Valley dispute. Although political conclusions were not drawn, workers were at least made aware of the situation. For Communist Left Bougainville is important not just for moral or humanitarian reasons. We are oponents of the Australian state, and there fore we must call for its defeat when it oppresses another country either directly or in the case of Bougainville, indirectly. Bougainville is Australias hidden imperialist war.

Chinese “communists” great leap to capitalism

The Chinese Communist Party has just concluded its fifteenth congress. This Congress has announced the most sweeping changes since the Chinese revolution. The Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese state are virtually identical, decisions will have a massive impact on Chinese society as a whole.

These decisions as extracted from the opening speech of Jiang Zemin have been summarised as follows

- Open the door to massive privatisation of state firms by encouraging shareholding systems, mergers and bankruptcies.
- Redefine the ant position of public ownership in terms of strategic businesses, major industries and controlling stakes, as opposed to a strictly quantitatively definition
- Reorganise or reduce the number of specialised economic departments to prevent the government meddling in business.
- Enshrine in the Communist Party constitution Deng Xiaoping’s theory of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics.
- Continue development of a market economy.
- Expand democratic elections from villages to some urban areas.
- Strengthen rule of law and independence of legislature.
- Establish a system for prosecuting judiciary officials who misjudge cases.

- Reduce China's armed forces by 500,000 in the next three years.

Basically Jiang Zemin wants to plunge headfirst into capitalism. These reforms were prompted by multinationals complaining that they weren't getting sufficient return for their investments. Well workers were not getting sufficient return for their labour. The Chinese bureaucracy has been happy to appease the bosses. The masses receive peanuts.

One of the main results of this headlong plunge is — mass unemployment. Today there are millions unemployed in China. In terms of rate of unemployment compared to western countries China fares well. There is though no adequate security system so those who can't be supported by family or beg, starve. If these measures are "successful" the number unemployed will expand to over one hundred million! The Chinese Communist Party is therefore keen on introducing a social security system. How much unemployed in China will receive remains to be seen. After all workers wages are a bare minimum so will there be an incentive to work if there is any dole at all? The fact is that workers in China, employed or unemployed can expect hardship. Jiang Zemin admits this but pretends that this is merely temporary. "With the deepening of enterprise reforms, technological progress and readjustment of the economic structure, it would be hard to avoid the flow of personnel and layoff". Indeed it would! And that is why these reforms shouldn't happen. Mr. LI, a delegate has reassured delegates "„rapid development of nonpublic sectors and joint stock partnership businesses on the other hand will undoubtedly offer more job opportunities". Maybe they will offer some. But in no way will they offer jobs for all. Mass unemployment is the way of the future in China — until the political revolution.

Capitalism throughout the world means austerity and misery. China will not only be no different. It will be worse. These "reforms" have been forced by the fact that international capital has the Chinese bureaucracy on rations.

The Peoples Republic of China was established as a bureaucratically deformed workers and peasants state transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat dictatorship. Within the bureaucracy peasant privileges were maintained. These have facilitated the restoration of capitalism. The peasantry is the most nationalistic of classes. China was therefore more nationalist than the USSR and allies.

Imperialists have used national antagonism to facilitate divisions between what were the post capitalist states. This led to war in Indo-China and conflicts which almost led to war between USSR and China. With the aid of its reactionary parasitic bureaucracy the US imperialists cemented an alliance to destroy the USSR and the post capitalist block. This succeeded. Now in China the reactionary bureaucracy is facilitating the reintroduction of capitalism.

Jiang's speech talked about "more democracy". This will only mean more rights for the rich to ripoff the poor. Workers have no interest in these reactionary measures. Their only interest is in smashing the bureaucracy

How to fight Hanson. For a workers united front not a popular front.

The ISO resurrects treacherous popular front Anti Nazi League.

It is hardly any comfort that the popular support for Pauline Hanson's One Nation is down from twelve to eight and a half percent

This is due to a number of factors such as the novelty factor wearing off, political inexperience leading to faction fights and divisions. Some have probably been turned off by the exposure of her links with fascism. However eight and a half percent is still a significant proportion of the population. And this statistic does not tell us where precisely her support is. In inner Sydney her support would be negligible, But on the Darling Downs it would be overwhelming. In Gatton between Ipswich and Toowoomba there was a rally of 1,500 which is as large as the population of this small Queensland country town. It would also be strong in Elizabeth on the outskirts of Adelaide where workers were previously employed in the whitegoods and automobile industries before they collapsed. Australians Against Further Immigration have targeted this with its racist propaganda about Asians taking jobs. For desperate people who face a life of unemployment and poverty Asians make a convenient scapegoat.

Should we fight Hanson? Jenny Munro, Black activist defending the Redfern Block says she is a diversion. She has no fear for the 'bitch from Ipswich'. Howard she points out is initiating the major attacks at the moment. And she argues that if we all united to fight those then this unity will easily overcome the threat of One Nation. Whilst agreeing with the need to fight every racist attack, we think her views are very wrong.

Pauline Hanson is a fascist. Even if she were to deny it personally, she is backed by a whole series of organisations which blatantly are. Australia has traditionally been a racist country. It was formed as a privileged outpost of British imperialism. These privileges were and are at the expense of Black and coloured people within Australia and also Asia and the Pacific. There is a basic Australian racism which is part of all political ideologies in this country especially reformism. In fact reformism has traditionally been more racist, more actively pro-White and of course racist. They compete with reformism to show chauvinist workers that they are the best supporters of white Australia. Indeed they are. But as well they also have a reactionary historic mission— to smash the organised working class. Fascism has traditionally been the last line of defence for the ruling class. Its success is due to a failed leadership of the working class — a leadership which refuses to take power. Fascism bases itself on the chauvinist sections of the working class (labour aristocracy) and the petty bourgeoisie. It speaks the language of revolution. It goes beyond normal parliamentary lobbying and organise for direct action. In fact they will smash parliamentary democracy. Fascists will attack their scapegoats (gays Jews Blacks etc.) and they may attack the odd bourgeois politician who gets in the way. Who they attack will depend on circumstances. But the target for their direct action is primarily the class conscious and organised section of the working class.

In Australia today, fascists have been promoted by Howard's promotion of racism and his campaign against "political correctness". It has also been promoted by the failings of Labor.

Fascists are not economic rationalist. Very much to the contrary! They stand for a strong state and therefore a strong public sector. On the Federal and state level Labor has been identified with hard-line economic rationalist policies. In New South Wales at the moment the Carr government is trying, despite mass opposition within and without Labor to denationalise the power industry. Joe Riordan ALP right-winger, organiser of the Electrical Trades Union told a meeting organised by Politics in the Pub that many were supporting Hanson not out of racism but out of anger at Labor's sellouts. Labor has abandoned support for protection, White Australia and a strong public sector and this One Nation a chance to recruit from Labor heartland.

People in places like Ipswich, parts of the Hunter Valley, Elizabeth, the Western suburbs of Melbourne are desolate. They want a way out of the deepening economic crisis which only offers desperation, hunger and homelessness.

It is clear that Labour offers nothing but hardship. So the threat of fascism poses a very serious challenge to the far left. If we offer the same old reformism in a more radical form we will be seen as part of the problem also. The fight against Hanson requires a political programme which is committed to fight for political power. A serious problem the left faces is one of class composition. The largest most visible organisations (except the Socialist Equality Party) are student based. Political organisations start weak. But there has been a conscious orientation to students and the petty bourgeoisie by both the International Socialist Organisation and the Democratic Socialist Party who are organising anti-Hanson demos.

More serious is the perspective of the groups. They do not propose the mobilisation for workers defence. They want unity of all anti-fascists which is a clear liquidation of the interests of the working class. In the spirit of class collaboration the International Socialist Organisation are promoting the front created in the seventies by their British sister organisation Socialist Workers Party known as the Anti Nazi League (ANL). In the seventies the Nazi groups National Front and British Movement were growing forces in British politics. They terrorised the Black and Asian parts of London such as the East End and Brixton.

The ANL was a cross class alliance of all those who wanted to fight the Nazis — a popular front. Those Trotskyists in alliance (notably the USec section 1MG) united with all sort of respectable people including Labour Party leaders, the British Liberals, clergy, pop stars and actors. The conditions of the unity amounted to selling out. The ANL may have been against the Nazis but it was silent on the more respectable forms of racism. Many Black people were victims of racist immigration controls — the respectable racism of the capitalist state. The ANL had no position on these vital questions lest the alliance would fall apart. Yet the fascists used respectable racism as a means of winning support. They used the common bourgeois belief that immigration should be limited to show that they could do the job better than the system. To be silent on the question is not only treacherous in relating to those victims of state racism, it is suicide in the struggle against fascist racism.

The Anti Nazi League may have been “against the Nazis”. But their opposition did not include fighting them. Neal Kinnock, then Labour Party leader described the ANL as “the alternative to street fighting”. Indeed he was right. At the end of 1978 the ANL organised a carnival with the usual speeches and rock groups. Meanwhile several miles away, the Nazis mobilised and ran rampage through East London. They were opposed by (apart from the local Asian/Black community) only by the far left notably Spartacist League, Workers Power, Revolutionary Communist Group and Revolutionary Communist Tendency. The organisers of the carnival refused to mobilise against the immediate Nazi threat.

This treacherous refusal should not be put down to bureaucratic inertia. The organisers were well aware that if they were committed to street fighting then the alliance would have broken down. They preferred the respectable might of numbers than building a front which would actually fight the Nazis! Leaders of SWP and 1MG were very well aware of what was at stake. The 1MG (USec) had

a coherent belief that mass mobilisations were the answer. These mobilisation mean the selling out of class principle.

As well as selling out on practical questions. Popular fronts (such as the ANL) give sections of the middle class the message that the working class is weak and refuses to act decisively in its own interests. It also exposes them as subordinated to bourgeois legality and no threat. This fact enhances the authority of fascism irrespective of the numbers mobilised.

In Australia today sections of the left, unable to fight for principle, hanker for such a front as a way out of their isolation. It is also the political method which has permeated the radical left ever since the Vietnam Moratorium. ISO are using the AntiNazi League as a feather in their cap, showing that they can build an effective mass movement. Communist Left will continue to expose the treachery of these popular fronts. It is indeed important activists learn from the experiences of the British ANL — and reject their method outright.

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