

# May Day Greetings

This day of international workers solidarity, is a time to reflect on the struggles of the working class around the world. Bombarded as we are by the parochial and biased mass media it's easy to forget that our struggle is one struggle with workers everywhere. Our victories and our defeats contribute to the balance in the world, to the strength and weakness of the international working class in its life struggle with capital.

But in the world of 1993 we have not seen many victories over the last five years, but we have seen enormous upheavals which have changed the face of the world and it is in this new world that we take up our fights.

Everywhere we see a vacuum of working class leadership.

Whilst capitalism has launched vicious attacks on every part of the world it has not been able to make any gains for itself. The economic crisis deepens in country after country; the political crisis of capitalist parties plunges to abysmal depths and every country is racked by social crisis which reflect those we have thought of as the province of the third world.

Only the building of a working class leadership can resolve these crisis for once and for all, and that is a task that we must take with the utmost seriousness. The future of the world is in our hands.

## **The World Economy**

The world is racked with debt. No country is free from uncontrollable growth in debt. The banks accumulate vast amounts of capital but more and more is written off as bad debt. Seemingly insoluble

problems are gripping not only the third world but the former Stalinist bloc and the capitalist heartlands. Rivalry between the USA, Europe and Japan prevents the successful conclusion of trade negotiations and forces the rest of the world into huge crisis as their traditional trading abilities disappear.

Even the opening of markets in the ex-USSR and Eastern Europe can not provide the opportunity to revitalise the world economy since the burden of debt now strangles all.

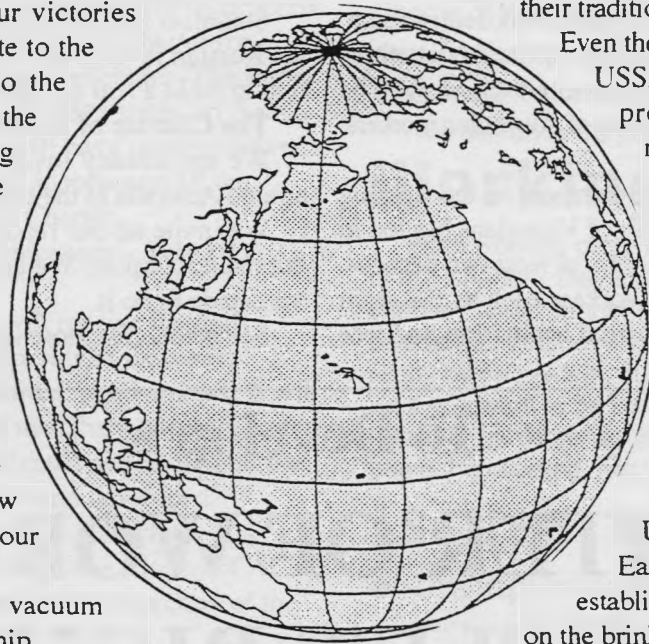
## **The World Politic**

From the tragic slaughter in Bosnia Hertzegovina to the ludicrous decimation of corrupt Italian governments, we see the political crisis everywhere. The ex Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe are unable to establish secure governments and are on the brink of civil war. Events in South

Africa place it too on the brink of civil war. In the USA Clinton was elected to redirect funds into the domestic economy only to break his election promises and disallusion his electorate the moment he had secured his place in the White House.

## **The World Society**

Millions around the world face unemployment, able bodied men and women who want to make a contribution to the world society are prevented because capital cannot buy their labour. Agricultural producers facing crippling debt, destroy cattle and plough crops back into the soil because they are unable to sell them to people who are starving but too poor to buy them. Medical science achieves undreamt of techniques while millions die of malnutrition, and Cholera and TB continue to threaten whole populations.



At the very time when social services are most needed they are decimated or handed over to the private sector where they are stripped for their assets or run only to make profits.

**Australia**

All of these crises are reflected in Australia. Despite the grasping at tiny straws to claim that the economy is about to recover our debt burdens increase, unemployment grows and society as we know it is under threat.

The federal victory of the Labor Government showed a maturity of the Australian electorate in rejecting the right wing agenda of Hewson, but in his first few weeks Keating has already made it clear he will betray the very workers who fought to keep him in office. His agreement to allow Conrad Black to increase his holding in Fairfax is evidence of his continued fawning to capital and his disregard for the quality of our information services. His dedication to labour market deregulation is proof that his attempts to improve the Australian economic crisis will be through attacks on the conditions of Australian workers.

**Victoria**

Attacks by the Kennett government on the working conditions and social services of Victorians has led to resistance unseen in this state for at least two decades. Rights previously won by workers such as the eight hour day, independent industrial arbitration and free

and quality state education and health are wiped away with brutal disregard for the effects on our community. Homelessness, poverty, beggars on the street are becoming part of the Victorian landscape.

The strength of the resistance is limited and diffused by the inability of the traditional leaders of the working class to take bold leadership and develop a vision of a new society.

**Build a Left Alternative**

Communist Intervention is dedicated to building a broad left movement which will challenge the stranglehold of the ALP political parties and trade union officials. This will only be successful if we are able to link up with other left groupings and individuals and fight to develop a socialist program.

The idea of socialism has been distorted to many by Stalinism. And the collapse of Stalinism is evidence to many that socialism will not work.

Stalinism was the betrayal of the socialist ideals of the Russian revolution and its collapse leaves the way free to build a real socialist alternative.

**The Charter of Working Peoples Rights**

We are already involved with growing numbers around Australia in the building of Charter Movement.

We invite all our readers to join in this ambitious but realisable plan. We are convinced, we can do it if we decide to do it.

See below, for more info phone Lynn 481 1785

**To Develop a  
CHARTER OF WORKING  
PEOPLE'S RIGHTS  
we have called a  
PUBLIC MEETING**

Sunday 16th May 1993

2.00 pm

Richmond Secondary College  
The Boulevard (Off Bridge Road)  
Richmond

## Proposed Plan of Action

The process of developing the charter will bring together a broad left grouping and assist the building of a broad left opposition to current political trends.

- **Public Meeting, May 16th**  
The meeting will discuss and identify issues to be included in the Charter. It will then set up working parties to develop policy on identified issues for inclusion in the Charter. It will also nominate delegates to a National Co-ordinating Committee.
- **Working Parties** will develop policy statements for inclusion in Charter to be submitted to Co-ordinating Committee by 25th June.
- **The Co-ordinating Committee** will incorporate all submitted policies into draft Charter for presentation at a national conference. The same process is being set up in other states, so the Co-ordinating Committee will have representatives from each state and will incorporate all the proposals into the draft Charter.
- **National two day Conference - July 10 & 11 in Melbourne**  
Conference delegates will receive the draft Charter and all the proposals as they were submitted to the co-ordinating committee. It will discuss the sections of the Charter and a Charter.
- **Signatures** will be collected nationally and the Charter Movement built and developed.
- **ACTU Congress Lobby & Charter Presentation** We will organise a lobby of ACTU Congress and hand each delegate a copy of the Charter.
- **Fringe Congress** - We will hold a fringe Congress during the period of ACTU Congress and organise sessions around each of the the Charter sections. We will also hold a further national meeting to decide on future action.
- **From then** it's a matter of continuing to build and develop the Charter. We can set up workplace groups, community groups and move for sections of the Charter to be adopted by unions and committees etc. We can organise activities to show the broad support the Charter has and the accumulation of signatures will continue.

## Why a Charter?

Many, many workers and unemployed people are sick to death of having to pay for the crisis of capitalism. It's time to organise our opposition and have our many voices heard as one. The victory of the federal Labor Government in the last elections showed the opposition of Australians to right wing monetarist agendas, but already, it's clear that the Labor Government is not prepared to honour it's obligation to its voters but to continue to make us pay for capitalism's problems.

Our voice will only be heard by enough people if we speak as one. And then, like a snowball as we grow our voice will boom out louder and louder.

To do this we are proposing the developing of a Charter of Working People's Rights. And around the development of this Charter we expect to see the development of a broad left movement.

We can do it. It's just a matter of **doing**.

## Working Parties

Each working party will work to develop a section of the Charter - they can work in any way they choose; ie call further meetings, involve other people etc. but they must have policy statement ready by Friday 25th June..

If you want to be part of a working party, or have ideas for particular sections of the Charter and can't make the meeting, just let us know.

## Issues of Concern

- **Unemployment** How can we help solve unemployment? By introducing a sliding scale of hours? By extending the public sector to provide more jobs? By raising a special tax to create more jobs? The working party will draft a policy.
- **Working conditions** How can we fight the de-regulation of the labour market? Have the penal laws repealed? Win back the conditions we have lost? Ensure that worker's real interests are represented in the trade union leaderships.
- **Education** All Australians must have the right to a quality and free education. The occupied schools in Victoria need support at all levels, are they the schools of the future?
- **Health** Hospital beds close while waiting lists get longer. Cuts to health budgets sees the loss of Community Health Centres.
- **There are many more issues, come on May 16 and help us identify them and include them in the charter.**

## Richmond Secondary College - Needs Our Support

The occupation at Richmond Secondary has become a feature of Melbourne's political life. The strength and determination of those who have kept the occupation going is an inspiration.

When the vicious announcement came from the Kennett government that 55 schools would close a number of school communities decided they would not accept this as a fate and occupied their schools. Three are still holding on, Northlands, Fitzroy Secondary College and Richmond Secondary College.

These schools have become a symbol of resistance to all Victorians. Stephen Jolly from Richmond said;

'The students, parents and activists have drawn a line in the sand. They have said no to the modern day vikings, Kennett and Hayward, who want to rob and pillage Richmond and other working class areas of the right to a recent state education.

'The struggle has moved beyond just the fight to maintain co-education in Richmond and has become a symbol of the fight to defend state education everywhere. To many rank and file unionists it has become a symbol of the fight against the Liberals. One worker said to us, 'if my union leadership had as much

guts as you lot my fellow workers would be a lot better off.'

Jolly said that even the mass media had given the occupation grudging respect.

The occupation is now heading for 150 days but faces some serious battles.

As we go to press the campaign is due to appear in the Equal Opportunity Commission. They are claiming sexual discrimination against their male students who have no other state school to go to in Richmond.

The occupation has the support of a wide number of unions and a Trades Hall motion has supported workbans to protect the electricity, water and phones. The VSTA voted in February to strike immediately if the occupation was raided by the police and for teachers to go to the school picket immediately.

It is important that the occupied schools receive mass of support. In the Age on 22nd April a notice to auction five former schools was placed by estate agents, Debenham Tewson International. The properties were advertised as 'Suitable for Residential Subdivision/Development'.

This is a blatant handing over of state resources, which were once used to provide a quality education to the children of this state, to speculators who have no interest in anything but in bleeding our society dry to make a quick buck for themselves.



The occupation at Richmond Secondary College - heading for 150 days

# Urban Left

As we organise to fight the Kennett government we need to learn the lessons of how to have most impact on the development of the trade union campaign. **Bill Deller** analyses the role of the ultra left at a Victorian Trades Hall delegates meeting.

The enormous success of the mass rallies and stop works called by the Victorian Trades Hall since the election of the Kennett government is affirmation of the underlying strength of conviction of working class people of Victoria. It showed that they want to fight against Kennett and his onslaught of legislative and budgetary attacks.

This is despite the obvious attempts at diffusion from the ACTU. We saw this in their success in down-playing the 30 November National Day of Action to a series of minor protests stunts, in calling off the power strike of 9th December, and in isolating into individual industries and/or unions the continuing action through November and December.

Early in the year, it was obvious that the March 1st day of action, planned since November, could be undermined and weakened by the ACTU and sections of the bureaucracy in Victoria.

The February 4th delegates meeting at Dallas Brooks Hall called to discuss support for the March 1st rally, was an opportunity to expose this weakness before the delegates, and commit the Trades Hall leadership to a more militant program.

Instead, the meeting provided the occasion for an out-pouring of right-wing venom, which received enthusiastic support from the assembled delegates, and left very little room to strengthen the official resolution.

This meeting, exposed the phenomenon of the so-called extreme-left providing cover and protection to the trade union bureaucracy.

Representatives and supporters of both the Socialist Labour League and Workers Revolution dominated opposition to Trades Hall Council recommendations for March 1st thus limiting the ability to introduce real debate about the campaign.

The Socialist Labour League (SLL) argued that the bureaucracy were the real enemy of both the delegates and the working class. They pressed the point at such length and in such an insulting manner that almost the entire meeting rose in hostility against them and supported the platform's efforts to silence them.

They were supported in a bizarre relationship by the Workers Revolution contribution which called for an indefinite general strike and daily mass meetings as the



**John Halfpenny: ultra-left ramblings prevent any real discussion or ability to move the trade union campaign against Kennett to the left.**

only way of defeating the Kennett legislation, and again defied the chair until called to order with enthusiastic support from the mass of delegates. By managing to arouse such universal hostility among delegates at the meeting, they made it impossible for any criticism of the treachery of the trade union leadership to be presented. Both the SLL and Workers Revolution would deny furiously any support for the bureaucracy, but they provide the very cover that they regularly and persistently accuse all other left-wing groups of providing.

This was demonstrated in the position of the usually anti-bureaucratic International Socialist Organisation. In the face of such absurd and extremist tirades, they defended sections of the trade union leadership. Their own resolution was centred on a call for two general strikes instead of one, February 18th being the date for an earlier general strike.

Under these circumstances, the official resolution, which left room for unions to call two-hour stopworks if any at all, and set the scene for winding the action down, was carried with only one amendment. This was the amendment which committed the VTHC to calling an immediate state-wide general strike in the event of penal powers being invoked at some future time.

The Trades Hall motion needed to be strengthened,

it needed to call for an all out twenty-four hour stopwork for March 1st. If the SLL, WRG or ISO had proposed this they would have found a great deal of support and it might well have been carried. Even if it had been lost it would have constituted a real development in the level of debate and strategy planning. It would have shown Trades Hall that there are a great many workers who want to take stronger action than they are being asked to take.

Instead, these ultra-left groupings put up demands which were so unrealistic in the circumstances that they served only to bolster the right-wing and strengthen the leadership of Halfpenny.

Now more than ever, it is urgent for communist and socialist trade unionists to come together to develop a program. To this end, the development of the Charter of Working People's Rights would be highly desirable. (See p5)

The object would not be to transform the ACTU, or to take control of its agenda, but to develop a platform around which serious work could be done in the trade unions, and a new pole of attraction built, against the right-wing, and their total domination of the agenda in the trade union movement.

# marxism classes for beginners

## Do You Know

- Where ideas come from
- Why capital makes profits from workers
- Why there are always contradictions
- What is surplus value
- What causes history to move forward

Maybe you should come along!

For more information contact Communist Intervention PO Box  
1137 Collingwood 3066  
Or phone Lynn 4811785 or Andy 4197225

## 3 sets of 3

Classes will be held every Thursday at Richmond Secondary College, Broadway, Richmond at 7.30pm.

### Economics

Thursday May 6 - May 13 and May 20.

### Philosophy

May 27 - June 3 - June 10

### History

June 17 - June 24 - July 2