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PARTISAN!

The Monthly Partyist Magazine



The Setka Circus p3

Popular Fronts and the Left p7

Alliance of Sahel States p13

Letters p22



Introducing...

PARTISAN!

This issue:

- [3] The Setka Circus: get the gangsters out off CFMEU and the building industry for unions sake**
- [5] On Muslim election campaign groups**
- [7] Popular Fronts and the Left**
- [8] Unmasking Monsters**
- [9] J.D. Vance as Trump's Vice-Presidential pick a win for Neoreactionaries**
- [11] UniMelb Divestment Campaign**
- [11] The TU4P Disaster**
- [13] FEATURE: Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso form "Alliance of Sahel States"**
- [18] Fragments on Pessimism**
- [19] Remember the "patience" in "hurried patience"**
- [21] Palestine solidarity suppressed at State Library Victoria**
- [22] Letters**
- [23] On Left Internationalism**
- [25] Reviews**

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Submissions

Partisan accepts and encourages unsolicited submissions from left-wing radicals and militants of all backgrounds. Articles range from 800-1,000 words, essays run at a max 2,000. Word count is looser for letters, reports, etc, but we would encourage you to keep them concise.

Please proof-read etc prior to submitting. Our staff will also sub-edit as necessary. We publish monthly, so aim to submit before the 25th of the month at the absolute latest (15th-20th is ideal). Simultaneous submissions accepted on a case-by-case basis.

We are primarily interested in topics such as Marxist political economy, political strategy/tactics, engagement with Communists pasts and futures, critiques of Liberalism/Capitalism/etc, interviews, and features. Please include your name, a summary of the article, and any other relevant information (such as photos/images plus sourcing) in an email (see publishing contact).

Introducing: Partisan Magazine

Partisan Editors

The Revolutionary Communist Organisation's (RCO) second General Conference took place in Brisbane on the weekend of the 6th to the 7th of July. At this Conference, delegates convened to debate the organisation's outlook, strategic orientation, and structural reforms to be implemented in the coming year. The political maturation of the RCO was epitomised in its official recognition of the need to cohere a new mass communist party that will uphold the mantle of leading the working class on this continent in the struggle towards proletarian revolution. That is to say, we have officially adopted a partyist outlook.

The first step towards this was the resolution adopted by the General Conference calling for a Refoundation Congress of the Communist Party in Australia:

There is no possible road to a socialist society without the organisation of a mass communist workers party and the elevation of this party to political power. In the absence of such a party, the primary task of all communists is to create one.

There currently exists no organisation in Australia that through size, influence, or providence can claim to be the legitimate party of the socialist workers movement. No organisation of this kind has existed since the dissolution of the Communist Party of Australia in 1991.

That as such, the Revolutionary Communist Organisation calls for a Refoundation Congress of the Communist Party in Australia. That all communists, revolutionary socialists, internationalists, and socialist workers will be invited to such a congress, which will adopt a program, organisational rules, and elect a Central Committee.

That until such a time that this congress is possible, the RCO will campaign in all spheres of the socialist and working class movement for such a party, and on the need for such a Refoundation Congress.

Clarification on the RCO's outlook and what we think that of a mass communist party in Australia should be, was provided when Conference voted, with amendments, to adopt our new program: *A Draft Program for a Communist Party in Australia: Program of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation.*

To reflect our historical partyist task, Conference voted to rename our central publication facing towards the socialist movement, *Direct Action*, to the *Partisan*.

This article marks the first edition of *Partisan*. Additionally, the name change also reflects the next major step in the professionalisation of our publication, as we establish for it an identity and a consistent form. We fully intend on developing *Partisan* into a respected platform on the left for critical discourse on events and issues most pertinent to the 21st century far-left.

Partisan Magazine has been months in the making. It won't be like the average sect paper: we aim to build a publication that can act as a platform for open polemic amongst the organized Left. We don't believe in liquidating into every social movement that springs up, nor do we believe in taking command of activists. We believe staunchly in the necessity of the Party. We are committed to Communist Unity, and reject sectarianism on the basis that it aims to split the movement, to diffuse Communists, and to wreck efforts at reconstructing a Communist Party.

With this new magazine, we invite people of all backgrounds from across the organized Left to give their perspectives on news and events, culture, society, politics, and more.

The Setka Circus: get the gangsters out of the building industry for unions sake

Marcus Strom

The latest revelations of organised crime in the CFMEU show that royal commissions, police, union bosses, the crime commission and the construction giants have all been unable to keep gangsters out of the building industry. Republished with permission from the author.

After a \$50 million royal commission and much hand-wringing, nothing seems to have changed.

Revelations in Nine newspapers and on 60 Minutes – which followed the sudden resignation of colourful CFMEU boss John Setka – that figures associated with organised crime in NSW and Victoria regularly still deal with the union to gain access to the industry are an indictment on people the labour movement who have turned a blind eye to this.

But the people really laughing all the way to the bank are the big construction firms, who earn billions with full knowledge of how the game works. What the crooks rake in through subcontracting is small beer in comparison.

Those on the left who point out the great pay deals the CFMEU gets for its members use that to excuse their shrugs, their blind eyes or even to justify their methods. However, they forget that Jimmy Hoffa got great results for American truck drivers when he ran the Teamsters Union – and he was a fully-owned subsidiary of the Mob.

My father and my grandfather were both communists, and they told me that if you're going to be a militant at work, you need to be cleaner than clean. That working-class lesson seems to have been lost.

If the only result of the latest sad tale is the CFMEU is split up and the building division kicked out of the ALP, that's a neat fix for the Prime Minister, whose factional opponents on the left of the Labor Party rely on CFMEU votes at party conferences and for parliamentary pre-selections.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of the country's hardest working people on building sites across Australia are going to be thrown to



[Photo: CFMEU Construction & General NSW]

the dogs.

Lendlease, Multiplex and the rest of them all know how it works on the ground. Some of them, directly or via subcontractors, enter sweetheart deals with the union to pay union dues.

The quid pro quo

In return, the CFMEU ensures projects aren't delayed. That means safety can be compromised. Just last year, a crane at the Fish Market project in Sydney collapsed at a Multiplex site. It's lucky no one was killed.

It's no surprise that the labour-hire firm is the way criminal elements try to gain access to the lucrative building industry, where cash jobs and other forms allow money to be laundered, and you don't need a character reference or any particular skills. All you need to run a labour hire

It of the CFMEU and the building



firm all is a phone, an ABN – and contacts. No big capital outlays – maybe some debt to get some scaffolding gear.

The icing on top is if you land one of the handful of labour hire enterprise agreements with the CFMEU that gives you prime access to major building sites in Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane.

Another sad aspect of the whole subcontracting farce is the down-skilling in the building industry. The medium-sized contractors that are the life-blood of skills and experience find it hard to compete with the cheap subcontractors below.

The result can mean shoddy building work, and a housing stock that is sub-par. We've all seen the outcome at places like the developments at Mascot.

The big companies know all this. A senior Lendlease manager once told me that only two or three companies in Australia know how to run big infrastructure and building projects. Their profits aren't in jeopardy. They are raking in billions, knowing exactly how the building game works.

Royal Commissions

In the early 1990s, at the time of the Gyles Royal Commission into Productivity in the Building Industry in NSW, newspaper columnist Paddy McGuinness recounted a maxim long held in the building industry: it was either dominated by organised crime or communists.

One of the last communists to run the building unions in Australia was Stan Sharkey, who died just last month. At his funeral, a former CFMEU leader, John Sutton, told everyone there what he thought of the current crop of union leaders in comparison to people like Stan Sharkey.

Sutton told the funeral: "Stan was a mindful militant. He was dead against arrogant, hubristic, bully-boy trade unionism. I saw him give some fierce dressing-downs to officials who thought they had the power and were lording it over employers or workers. Stan understood the power belonged to the workers and was not to be used for the ego or back pocket of some rooster who was too big for his boots.

"He was critical of those who indulged in reckless, bully-boy behaviour. And critical of those who found the weasel words to insist that all was well. Stan had no time for apologists; if something was wrong, it had to be dealt with."

The royal commissions, the police, the bosses, and the crime commission have all shown they can't control organised crime in the building industry. Only a union with principles and integrity backed by its militant working-class members can do that.

Australia's building workers deserve a union that rediscovers its heritage to fight for the future of the working class. That means unionists chucking gangsters out of the building industry.

On Muslim election campaign groups

Michael Ruhl

There has been much hand-wringing in political circles regarding the planned formation of two electoral groups aimed at influencing the vote of Muslim-Australians at next year's federal election. These electoral bodies are not and do not claim to be political parties, but rather as campaign groups that aim to mobilise voters in seats with high Muslim populations. Both groups are petty-bourgeois formations feeding off the disillusionment of Muslim-Australians, including those of a working-class background. The groups call for voters to support specific listed candidates according to their individual support for Palestine, rather than the line of their party. As such, their focus is on threatening seats held by Labor MPs in an attempt to pressure the party into taking a more Palestine-sympathetic stance.

The first of these new movements to form was The Muslim Vote, which was announced shortly following Fatima Payman's departure from the ALP. The Muslim Vote plans to rally around candidates in at least three safe seats in Sydney, as well as educate voters on their local candidates' stances on Palestine. The group's outlook says it is one guided by the ethical and moral framework of Islam, requiring followers to "act with integrity, justice, and compassion and drives our efforts to create a more equitable society".

A second group, Muslim Votes Matter, similarly aims to educate voters on the stances of their local candidates relevant to the Muslim community, focusing most pertinently on the policy response of the Australian government towards Israel's war on Gaza. Notably, they have bolder ambitions, planning to target all Senate seats, and over 20 lower house seats where they deem Muslims have the deciding vote.

For Muslim voters, more than perhaps any other demographic, the issue of Australia's forgiving attitude to Israel has become pertinent with Israel's renewed assault on Gaza, and justifiably so. However, this division appears to simply be the final push for many working-class Muslims to abandon Labor for good.

Of course, such formations should be denounced by communists for what they are: attempts to cohere political careers for individual middle-class Muslims. Aside from being irrational, we also oppose religious bodies in politics for their nature in dividing the working class by giving a religious-identitarian political orientation rather than one of social class to layers of the proletariat.

The reaction to these new formations on the part of the ALP has been knee-jerk calls to keep religion out of politics amidst accusations of "undermining social cohesion". Of course, any pundits paying attention would know that the orientalist hysteria the ALP is trying to invoke surrounding Muslim community organising in politics is completely and utterly hypocritical. It is no secret that conservative Christian politics have considerable sway on Labor. Social policy in the party has been strongly influenced by its own conservative elements, and their discourse on Israel is generally one that echoes the neurotic crusader-narrative of Christian Zionists.

The Catholic right has even long held outright control over the ALP-affiliated Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA); the retail workers' union notorious for being in bed with the bosses of one of the largest and most precarious industries in this country. Their leadership has never been afraid to throw their weight around on social issues and holds considerable sway within Labor. Contrasted with groups like Muslim Votes, who, whilst organising an undeniably socially conservative layer, are focused primarily on the necessary cause of Palestine, and secondarily on vague platitudes such as constructing "a more equitable society". Clearly a much less serious threat to secularism than the ALP itself. It can therefore easily be stated that Laborites do not genuinely fear "religious influence in politics", rather, that they are simply lashing out at a fraction of their base that is not towing the line.

In fact, one could even say that the current mobilisation of Muslim voters largely feeds off the general disillusionment of the Australian working class with the Labor Party. Labor won



Muslim Votes Matter

[Photo: Logo of the “Muslim Votes Matter” group]

the last election for the first time with a decrease in their primary vote, gaining only 32.58% of the vote. Polling since then has mostly indicated their share of the vote will sink by a further 2-3% in 2025, without necessarily causing them to lose on 2PP. This indicates a broad dissatisfaction with Labor across their former working-class base and can easily be confirmed by any interaction with the working class. Regardless of ethnic or religious background, a common sentiment exists of a Labor that has “abandoned its working-class roots”. Without getting into whether Labor ever was anything that could be called a “workers’ party” (a topic for another time), it is clear that Labor has done less for workers over time and has increasingly less real connection to its own working-class base, no less does this include working-class Muslims.

It is also possible, that the aforementioned campaign groups may simply be the beginning of an accelerating abandonment of Labor by the working-class in general. This may have already begun to occur, with the formation of the localist party Western Sydney Community (WSC) by reactionary Independent MP Dai Le. A large, deeply working-class Labor stronghold, western Sydney has increasingly found itself abandoned by the ALP, who do not hesitate to turn their

noses up at who were once some of their most reliable supporters. Different in form to the educational bodies like Muslim Votes, WSC is a political party that aims to win seats in the Labor heartlands of western Sydney for itself. Western Sydney Community is undeniably a party of the local petty-bourgeoisie and are no allies of the working-class. However, it feeds off very real working-class disillusionment. It is difficult to tell how successful the party will be at the next election, though given Dai Le’s local popularity and the fact that WSC already controls ten out of thirteen seats in Fairfield City Council, it would not be surprising if they manage to hasten Labor’s long-term decline in support.

Popular Fronts and the Left

Brunhilda Olding

Leftwing pundits the world over have applauded the victory of the New French Popular Front in the recent French elections, who won a plurality of seats in French parliament (7,039,429 or 25.80% of the votes). The task of communists now is a sober analysis of these results, the programme that unified this popular front, and the legacy and tactics of Popular Fronts.

Popular Fronts evolved following the victory of the NSDAP (the Nazis) in the 1933 German elections. The electoral results served as a wake-up call to the Comintern leadership whose 'Third Period' had developed the theory of Social Fascism. Popular Fronts called for as broad a coalition as possible to fight fascism, and would have two very distinct tactical phases. In Spain and France, they evolved to be dominated by social democratic and 'centre left' parties, though in Spain's case the geopolitical realities of the Civil War pushed the PCE to hegemony. It is important to note that even in this case the struggle was never pushed into transforming into a class conflict. In Eastern Europe they emerged as the Soviet Red Army pushed west, with such stellar examples as the National Democratic Block in Romania, or the Democratic Block in East Germany. These in practise served as the fig leaf of bourgeois democracies that the post-war People's Democracies relied on to maintain legitimacy. On a practical level this legacy of Popular Fronts does not influence the discussion on the French electoral results. When analysing Popular Fronts as an electoral tactic, or the general position of socialists we find that they are a fundamentally reactive tactic. They rely on fighting to defend the bourgeois order.

United Fronts on a practical level in the west derives from the Trotskyist tradition, as outlined by the 4th Congress of the Comintern: *'The united front tactic is simply an initiative whereby the communists propose to join with all workers belonging to other parties and groups and all unaligned workers in a common struggle to defend the immediate, basic interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie'*. The crucial difference between the two is that Popular Fronts are open to the bourgeois if they stand against fascism. What then is the programme of France's newest Popular Front (NFP)?

For a force that has seen so much of the left crowing about the importance of left unity, and how working together we can defeat the fascists and create a new world, the programme is severely lacking. Perhaps the most revolutionary demands are within the section 'Towards the 6th Republic', these proto-demands for a democratic republic are to be honoured as a step in the right direction. But they are just steps. As Marx outlined, the fight for socialism is the battle for democracy, and yet when we analyse these demands we them lacking once again. Let us compare the demands of the RCO's programme and the demands presented by this Popular Front.

'For the creation of an assembly of popular representatives! For the abolition of the Senate, and the creation of a single-chamber National Assembly with proportional representation, annual elections, and MPs' salaries set at the level of a skilled worker. Lowering of the voting age to 15.' (The Road to Workers' Power, Section 3).

These are the minimum demands of the RCO, the absolute least that the working class will accept.

Compared to the demands raised by the NFP:

- Abolish the monarchical president in the practice of institutions:
- Establish proportional representation
- to Revitalise the parliament
- the Repeal of 49.3
- Defend effective decentralisation by strengthening the local democracy in the unity of the Republic.
- Implement the citizen referendum initiative (RIC) and strengthen the referendum'

While if implemented these would be massive steps forward, as demands raised they are fundamentally reformist at best, and in practical terms the demands of rightist radical liberals. The task of Communists is stand unerringly against this deviation. Yet it is no surprise that the Communist Party of France (PCF) has entered this coalition. The Eurocommunist deviancy was long held its roots in Paris, though of course their influence spread across the world, most notably in the Australian context to the Communist Party of Australia, which was dissolved in 1991 on dubious grounds by the Eurocommunists.

The other demands raised throughout the programme of the NFP are primarily for a defence and minor expansion of the French welfare state. Nothing of particular note, until one reaches their foreign policy section, where the growing crisis over Fran afrrique has resulted in rhetoric towards at least warming relations with the region, this alongside the demands raised on relations with Israel namely the stopping of the arms trade and the recognition of Palestine as a state. Perhaps this represents the development of a serious anti-imperialist tendency within the French left, but a more cynical viewpoint points towards the NFP's electoral decision to try and win over Muslim, and migrant voters with policies simply beyond being 'we are not the literal fascists, or fascist enablers.'

The exact form that the new French government will take has not been clarified at the time of writing, though the most recent news points towards a minority government focused on locking out the RN. If the NFP does enter into bourgeois government, they make perhaps the greatest mistake any socialist force can make. Nonetheless we will see how this turns out, and as the age old saying goes c'est la vie.

Unmasking Monsters

Owen Hsi

I am currently on holiday in Greece (as of writing) and had the opportunity to see a public talk on the situation in Gaza. Despite the sweltering heatwave, roughly 100 people turned out to a well-organized public event in the old part of the city which featured a presentation, a bar and live music. Dr. Toufic Haddad was the keynote speaker, providing a passionately presented historical background to Gaza Genocide. He was able to hold the crowd in his hands as he explained the pre-history of the conflict, recounting many of the major events in modern Palestinian history.

He talked about the logic of why Israel created conditions of extreme privation in Gaza and the West Bank, the decline of the PLO, and the perfidy of Fatah in enforcing and policing the blockade – leading to a situation wherein Hamas was able to claim moral and political authority in the occupied territories and prosecute the devastating attack of October 7th, catching the IDF with its pants down and

sparking an extremely vicious prolonged military counteroffensive with the deaths of many thousands of civilians. In concluding his well-polished speech that he has delivered in multiple countries, it is Haddad's opinion that it is our role in the international solidarity movement to 'unmask monsters'. That we should seek to expose and undermine the nexuses of power in the international network that provides hardware, ammunition and logistical support to Israeli militarism to stop the war and build a lasting social movement.

While he is able to provide a sublime exposition of the modern history of the conflict, where Haddad was weak was his inability to provide an alternative to Arab nationalism and the military tactics of Hamas. Unfortunately, like many others, he sees Hamas as one of the only forces opposing the Zionism of Netanyahu and the IDF and has pragmatically decided to support them. When questioned about the possibility of finding an internationalist political solution rather than a nationalist military program to end the occupation, Haddad responded:

"That it is a 'colonial mentality' to believe it is incumbent on the Palestinians to pose an alternative, that actually alternatives have already been tried with the Oslo accords, the non-violence of the great march of return, civil disobedience campaigns et cetera, that the conditions in Palestine have ultimately led to a situation where it is a 'rational choice' to take up arms and use coercive force, and that and 'that it is obvious that leftists support Palestinian national self-determination and the right to use arms for it'."

His inability to see an alternative besides countering nationalism with nationalism, and military force with guerilla warfare leads him down a major blind alley. His unwillingness to condemn the reactionary tactics of Hamas, which have provided the spurious justification for the Israeli counteroffensive and given a mandate for the corrupt Netanyahu government to stay in power, have only reinforced the divisions between the Arabic and Israeli working class, creating a siege mentality and pushing the Israeli working class into the arms of Zionism.

Rather than signing on to the nationalist program of religious fundamentalists, it is a necessary task for the socialist movement to counter-pose the rank nationalism of Hamas with the program of socialist internationalism and unify the Middle Eastern working class across national divisions to end the war.

J.D. Vance as Trump's Vice-Presidential pick a win for Neoreactionaries

Michael Ruhl

Earlier this month, Donald Trump announced his pick for Vice-President in the coming election. J. D. Vance, native of Middletown, Ohio, was chosen. Vance came to prominence in U.S. political discourse with the 2016 publication of his life memoir, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. A recollection of his upbringing, the book details the dysfunctional environment of his rural white working-class family and community in rural Appalachia. It also acts as a prescription for his personal views on the causes of entrenched poverty, namely the tired Darwinist trope of culturally sanctioned helplessness, as well as an acknowledgement of the economic backwardness of the hill country. Released as the 2016 election was in full swing, his book was held up in both liberal and conservative circles as an explanation for Trump's high level of support among rural, white layers of America's working-class. The success of this publication shot Vance to national prominence, which he rode, with substantial help, to election in the U.S. Senate in 2022.

After finishing high school, Vance had a stint in the Marine Corps during which he was sent to Iraq for six months in late 2005 as a combat correspondent. He then studied at Ohio State University, before undertaking postgraduate studies at Yale Law School. Vance's move into conservative elite circles began during his Ivy-League studies, during which he worked for GOP state senator Bob Schuler. During this time Vance heard venture capitalist Peter Thiel give a speech during which he insinuated that "smart people" should be working in the tech industry rather than studying at elite institutions. Vance then emailed Thiel and was invited to visit to visit his home in California. After two years of practising law, Vance left for San Francisco in 2016 to become a technology industry venture

capitalist. During his time in Silicon Valley Vance worked as a principal at Thiel's firm, Mithril Capital, eventually even becoming COO of Thiel's "family office". Thiel would quickly become one of his most vital supporters and ideological influences, even being the stated cause of his conversion to Catholicism in 2019.

Thiel and Vance are both friends and influenced by blogger, former programmer, Curtis Yarvin; founder of a young bourgeoisie intellectual movement known as neoreactionism, or Dark Enlightenment. His works describe U.S. democracy as being a "failed experiment", and that a technocratic, absolute monarchy headed by a "startup guy" (sic) and supported by an aristocracy formed from former tech and business bosses is needed in its place. The goal of this is to take control of society away from networks he describes as "Cathedrals", consisting of media, academia, and government institutions. These institutions would be removed through a program referred to by Yarvin as "RAGE": Retire All Government Employees. The order proposed by Yarvin, would supposedly transcend class and unite the U.S. under one C.E.O. (Yarvin has used this term for this head-of-state). Thiel agrees with the neoreactionary views of his friend, once writing "I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible". Vance himself has also echoed Yarvin's signature idea of "RAGE" when asked by a podcast host about removing liberals from government institutions by responding: "... we need like a de-Baathification program, a de-woke-ification program".

Vance has been falsely portrayed by some as a "pro-worker" economic populist. He is indeed out of line on current GOP policy with regards to trade unions. Opposed to the current model of workplace bargaining, he has supported



[Photo: Republican VP candidate JD Vance giving a speech]

proposals put forward by groups such as American Compass calling for workers' councils and sectoral bargaining. Of course, Vance is, as a reactionary member of the bourgeoisie, no friend of the workers' movement. In keeping with the GOP line, however, he has continuously declined to support the Protecting the Right to Organise Act (PRO Act), a proposed federal law that in its current form will legalise labour unions encouraging solidarity strikes. It will also outlaw bosses from holding mandatory meetings to discourage employees from union organising. Taking together Vance's positions on the matter of labour, it is clear that he holds a view of aiming to bring the ascendant union movement in the U.S. to heel by binding workers to stronghanded agreements reached by said unrepresentative "workers' councils".

These proposals are anti-democratic and class collaborationist proposal precisely because they seek to rob workers of their ability to represent themselves through collective bargaining by designating state-approved official workers' representatives. This is a vital aspect of fascism's class collaborationist attempts to neuter independent workers' organising and political participation and is simply a mirror of earlier institutions such as the Nazi Party's German Labour Front which replaced outlawed independent trade unions, and fascist Italy's state-run "trade unions".

Vance's initial run in the Republican primary for the Ohio U.S. Senate race gained attention for the unusual amount of support received by

Peter Thiel. \$15 million in total donations were made by Thiel to a super PAC (Political Action Committee, a tax-exempt pool of funds that donates to political campaigns) that supported Vance's run, the largest total amount of funds ever given to boost a single Senate candidate. Vance went on to win the primary and then the Senate race. Later, in 2024 Vance would run to be endorsed by Trump (who, in 2016 Vance referred to as "America's Hitler". Vance later apologised) as his vice-presidential pick. Vance's run for Trump's VP pick received substantial backing from rightist Silicon Valley billionaires including Elon Musk and David Sacks, with their support declared within hours of Vance officially announcing his run. The news of Trump selected Vance was therefore predictably, warmly welcomed by figures such as Musk, as well as the many followers of (mostly online) neoreactionary ideology. A newly formed pro-Trump America PAC backed by tech bosses in Musk's social circle is likely to receive support from Musk himself, as revealed in the New York Times. The Super PAC will act as a conduit for funds that could propel the Trump-Vance ticket to victory in November, a win as well for the vociferously right-wing bosses of Silicon Valley.

UniMelb divestment campaign

Blake T

On a miserable Wednesday morning, comrades marched in solidarity with students facing persecution for their involvement in University divestment campaigns. We were forced into action because of the University of Melbourne's bread-breaking with war criminals. Whilst they profit from genocide, students are dragged away from their studies and hauled into kangaroo courts.

The crime of allying with those who gleefully massacre Palestinians is seemingly lesser than the crime of peacefully protesting. Although the fact a liberal institution would side with a profitable genocide over the will of its students and basic morality is hardly surprising.

The outcome for this persecution remains to be seen. Any severe punishment to the students risks stirring up further agitation. Investigations into the University's potentially illegal surveillance of students has begun. And, whilst media may not care 200,000 killed Palestinians. They do care about the 21 students attending the University.

In my mind, the most important revelation to come from this is that of the criticality of unions to the student movement. I was involved within the movement shortly after the encampment began and stayed involved until after the sit in at Mahmoud's hall. After this, I've participated in various other forms of opposition to Australia's support of genocide, such as disrupting the Victorian budget hearing, picketing weapons manufacturers, leafleting and disrupting Jerry Seinfeld's comedy show in Melbourne. I'm bringing this up not to brag or show off but instead give credence to my next statement.

The movement for Palestinian liberation would not have gotten nearly as far as it has without the support and comradeship from Unionists. When police threatened us at the University, it was the Unionists for Palestine (U4P) that showed up in force to aid us, when we picket, it is the unionists that stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of police brutality, and when students faced persecution it was the Teachers Union and Student Union that showed up in force to support them. This is, of course, not a diminishment of the work that groups other than Unionists have accomplished, community support has been critical and other

organisations have put in work that cannot be thanked enough.

We do not yet know the outcome of the persecution but we do know that this movement has been given air by unions and the community. It is the mass movement of working class people that hold the keys to power and there exists not a single person who is to be cowed or deterred by this persecution. We need to be organised, we need militant unions and socialists fighting together, a workers intifada is building and we have a world to win.

The U4P Disaster

Telcontar

Many words could be used to describe the "mass meeting" of Melbourne's Trade Unionists for Palestine (TU4P) on July 16th, few of them nice. The most accurate term would be a clash. This was a clash on several levels, another entry in that nearly thirty year long slap-fight between Solidarity and Socialist Alternative. In another sense this was a clash between two personality-based factions who have split to the point that politics becomes a fig leaf for mutual dislike. Yet on a deeper level it reveals a clash between a pair of fundamentally contradictory positions towards union actions and building a mass movement. Neither are inherently wrong, rather they lack a broader strategic orientation.

The initial motion to dissolve the Coordinating Committee if you ask the authors was pushed forward following an increase in the centralisation of power around said committee, by a clique aligned with Socialist Alternative, and holding a fundamentally activist approach to organising. Of course, those opposing the motion would fire back calling them coalitionists trying to tail the ALP, and in bed with the union officials trying to take down a rank-and-file movement.

The attacks against this motion revealed the political makeup of the body around the Coordinating Committee. One unable to see beyond the narrow activist milieu. It is an inevitability that outside the highest periods of class struggle that workers will work with their officials in unions. The blanket rejection of

working with them despite what some would claim is not Ultra-Leftist, rather it is a blatant sign of left opportunism. Some writers have called this an intra-union and extra-union split, and this is in some ways correct, even more so following the naked example of stacking that dominated Tuesday's meeting.

Yet this meeting would not have exploded to the extent that it did if not for the build of tension over the past few months. Perhaps the best point to start with this build up is the appointment of a Retail and Fast Food Workers Union (RAFFWU) member to the Coordinating Committee, without being elected by a RAFFWU body. This blanket branch stacking could perhaps be considered the penultimate manoeuvre towards centralising power in TU4P around the Coordinating Committee. While the RAFFWU delegate would later resign because of this branch stacking, her self-admitted social cowardice meant that she didn't openly explain the reasons for her resignation, instead allowing for a narrative arguing that she resigned due to being pressured. As a close personal friend of this individual, the only reason she resigned was to uphold her deeply held views around the importance of democratic accountability. Nonetheless, she was branch stacked, allowing for the further consolidation of power around the coordinating committee. This branch stacking allowed for U4P to swing further into a radical position of anti-Laborism for the sake of being anti-Laborist. This tension only grew with Victorian Trades Hall cancelling a booking held by Unionists for Palestine following the raising of the discussion of "Cops out of Trades Hall" as a demand within the CC. This only added further fuel to the fire of anti-Laborism.

The debate over relationships to the Labor Party (ALP), and the trade union movement as a concept, while primarily framed as an ideological debate, under the vague tatters of a strategic debate, was fundamentally pointless. Without the existence of a mass communist party any attempts to build up a serious base within or without the ALP is entirely pointless. The tailing tactics demonstrated by groups like Solidarity who will defend Labor more than actual Labor members will not win anyone over to socialism, however nor will blatantly tarring every single member of the ALP as a traitor and murderer, as is undertaken by groups such as Socialist Alternative. The Partyist line is fundamentally to agitate and organise for the formation of a genuine mass movement. 70% of the Australian population supports a ceasefire in Gaza, yet the protests are only shrinking.

While Senator Fatima Payman's resignation should be heralded as a major step forward, rather than helping to build internal contradictions within the Labor Party, it creates the image of a mass exodus, but a mass exodus to where?

Without a mass communist party any decline in ALP membership will simply empower the fetish of the activist left, or perhaps a select few sects, but it will not accelerate or increase the class struggle. It will simply wither away and die.

This seems to be the fate awaiting Unionists for Palestine, following the final motion of the evening. The vote to adopt a strategy of pushing for Cops out of Trades Hall was the most controversial vote of the evening. The debate became a proxy for the split between Free Palestine Melbourne, and Free Palestine Coalition Naarm. Free Palestine Melbourne had stated outright that they would not support Unionists for Palestine if the motion was passed, as they do not want the fight for a free Palestine to become a fight against the police. Free Palestine Coalition Naarm, on the other hand, had a possibly more correct stance in opposing the cops and viewing it as a fundamental part of the struggle for democratic rights. The question of if this was the right decision once again comes down to tactical and strategic concerns, or in this case the total lack of any organised body able to develop said strategic or tactical vision. Any campaign for "Cops out of Trades Hall" would require a much larger mass movement than is available towards Unionists for Palestine. Especially since a major part of U4P's contingent comes from the Australian Midwifery and Nursing Federation, one of the unions with the closest ties to the police movement. As such this crusade launched without the support of Free Palestine Melbourne, and after many of the attendees to the meeting had walked out in protest due to the shocking conduct demonstrated by many of the members there.

While nothing is set in stone in regard to the future of Unionists for Palestine, it has, for all intents and purposes, split.

Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso fo

Eliza M

In June 2024, the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) was formed. During the first conference of the AES Burkina Faso's President Ibrahim Traore stated, "Africa is a continent that has suffered due to imperialists. These imperialists have but one cliché in their head, Africa is an empire of slaves, that's how they view Africa. For them, Africans belong to them, our land belongs to them. They've never been able to change their ways."

On 6th of July 2024, the leaders of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso announced the formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) as a confederation. The immediate political context for this event has been described as a long-running series of Islamist insurgencies that led to a series of coups led by generals frustrated by the lack of victory. There is a much deeper context which must be addressed in the following intertwined contradictions.

Pastoralists vs Agriculturalists

At the base of political economy in the Sahel are two modes of production as old as the family and older than class society. Pastoralism is a mode of production involving the herding of livestock to disparate pastures based on rainfall patterns. Across the Sahel, 20 million people rely on this mode of production. They include societies where all individuals are always nomadic with no fixed abode and communities that have a home village where the young, the old and their carers reside. The livestock is kept for sustenance with the surplus enabling trade and commerce. Agricultural societies on the other hand, are sedentary in the form of villages that usually grow crops alongside livestock ranching. Both these modes of production require land and water which is at the basis of the contradiction.

There are certain advantages inherent in sedentary agriculture that lead to dissonance between the modes. Surplus produce sold can be used to reinvest in capital expenditure on farms which can revolutionise the means of production. Within the Sahel, the replacement



[Photo: Burkinabe military leader Ibrahim Traore]

of the hand hoe with the ox driven plough, the improvement of land and other such innovations have increased harvests and fostered population growth amongst agriculturalists. Short of vaccinating the herd, pastoralism lacks options for capital reinvestment beyond buying more livestock and hence productivity increases are rare. More farmers demand more land and water turned over to farming which conflicts with the needs of the pastoralists.

Ethnic and religious identities in the Sahel tend to map on to Pastoralism and Agriculturalism. Within the Sahel, groups such as Tuaregs and Fulani tend to be Pastoralists while the Dogon tend to be sedentary agriculturalists. Pastoralists tend to be Muslim whereas agriculturalists tend to be a mix of Christian, Muslim or followers of traditional indigenous religious practices. These factors shape the form of the conflict between pastoralists and agriculturalists. An example within Mali is the conflict between the Fulani and Dogon peoples.

Form “Alliance of Sahel States”



Traditional Leaders vs Peasants

The ownership and control of the land is a question of concern for pastoralists and agriculturists who will be collectively referred to as the peasants. Historically the land was controlled and owned by ethnic based traditional leadership in association with the clergy. Under this regime, relations between pastoralists and agriculturists are not always antagonistic. Pastoralists can provide a valuable source of manure, meat and milk to agricultural villages in return for grazing, water and food. The relations have often been characterised by negotiation, mediation and commerce through which the traditional leadership and clergy play a role. Both agriculturists and pastoralists have a united class interest as peasants against traditional feudal leaders. Both groups have an investment in land reform carried out at the expense of traditional leaders whether they be secular chiefs or Islamic clergy.

Such conflict can be triggered by traditional leaders' poor governance and inability to control intergroup conflict. This conflict takes place at

the local level of village raids, murders and reprisal attacks, but can also bleed into organised insurgencies. This was seen when some traditional Fulani leaders in Mali were supporting the Tuareg rebels and not protecting Fulani pastoralists from attacks by armed Dogon agriculturalist groups. This led to Fulani pastoralists turning against their traditional leadership and aligning with Islamists affiliated with Al Qaida in the Maghreb. Pastoralist groups have also broken from their traditional leadership in places and aligned with Islamist and ethnic militia groups. Some of these groups have adopted progressive measures to win the support of the peasantry such as land reform and abolishing rents. The groups have increased the intensity of pastoralist vs agriculturalist conflict in addition to implementing extreme sectarianism and social conservatism in the case of the Islamists.

Bourgeoisie vs Peasants

The main avenue through which peasants in the Sahel struggle with the bourgeoisie is through the struggle with the bourgeois state. The Bourgeois state was founded in the form of a French invasion and subjugation of the overwhelmingly peasant society with the cooperation of some sections of the traditional leadership. Within the agrarian-dominated regions, the pre-invasion structure was partially kept intact however the extensive lands mostly used by the pastoralists were brought into State control. The colonial state undertook a program of expanding agricultural land at the expense of pastoralism which the neocolonial states continued after independence. Not only did this reduce the total land and water rights that could be utilised by the pastoralists it destroyed corridors of pasture used by the pastoralists to move the herds further entrenching the conflict between the peasants.

French interests, later joined by American and then also Chinese and Russian companies are engaging in an ongoing process of oil drilling, cash cropping and mining of gold and uranium to this day. These interests competed with the peasantry for land and water. To extract the resources, the French colonial authorities and

later the neocolonial governments needed to secure the frontiers that were disproportionately inhabited by pastoralists. This led to the beginning of government oppression of the pastoralists and the resulting insurgency.

The French and later Western bourgeois intellectuals also brought ideas of Malthusianism and imperialist environmentalism to the Sahel. Based on racist pseudoscience and a lack of understanding of ecology they considered pre-colonial society, especially the peasants, as irresponsible stewards of natural resources who could not be trusted to preserve water, wildlife, forests and soils. Based on the incorrect demographic writings of Malthus, they also believed that the growing population of the Sahel could not be supported by the current carrying capacity of the land and hence the colonial state would have to strictly control the utilisation of natural resources by the peasantry. This resulted in a proliferation of forestry and water authorities which consisted of militias tasked with preventing the peasants from using land locked up in preserves. State foresters prevented pastoralists from using branches of trees as protective corrals or livestock feed which was among a host of indignities fostered upon the peasants. This regime continued in the neo-colonies after they declared independence in the 1950s and 60s. Unsurprisingly, state foresters are the first targets of the Islamist insurgencies.

Bourgeois discourses around environmentalism have focused on the visceral effects of climate change and desertification on the conflicts among the peasants of the Sahel. While the effects of these put massive pressure on the people of the Sahel it is a secondary factor compared to the pairing of the clash of the modes of production with capitalist exploitation and state formation. This can be proven by the fact that the political economy of the conflict remains even in the years of plentiful rainfall. Through this, the Western bourgeoisie and their national compatriots in the Sahel mystify the primary social causes of this conflict.

As the areas frequented by the pastoralists tended to be on the edge of the zones of control of the colony agriculturalists are also generally concentrated closer to towns and cities. In contrast, pastoralists tend to be found in the

more remote areas close to the Sahara desert, within vast forests and borderlands. Geographically agriculturalists are at an advantage when accessing urban markets, and services and influencing state policy around issues such as land distribution and anti-insurgency. As a result Pastoralists face the brunt of the attack on the peasantry by the bourgeois.

Bourgeois vs Working class

There is a rapidly growing urban proletariat and rural working class within the nations of the Sahel. In some cases, the bourgeois are even hiring workers to drive livestock in a manner similar to the pastoralists. Most of the working class, especially women, are employed in the informal sector, largely working for a multitude of petit bourgeoisie enterprises. Within rural areas, armed local capitalists and mercenaries such as the Wagner Company profit from the work of mining and other extractive industries.

Industrial militancy throughout the Sahel is on the rise. In Niger, the union membership has been rapidly increasing and the national union federation threatened a general strike before the coup. Since the coup militancy has continued as the Juntas of the Sahel stand with capitalists against the working class. Workers of the British company Endeavour Mining in Burkina Faso began industrial action in January which judges banned. In early June, Aguibou Bouare who is the trade union secretary general of the National Union of Banks, Insurance Companies, Financial Institutions and Business of Mali was arrested on charges of malpractice within the union. The union then took an extended strike pressing for his release.

In terms of the working-class movement in the streets, the relationship with the Juntas has been mixed. While working-class people participated in the anti-French and US military protests, however some movements of working-class people have been directly antagonistic to the Juntas. Protests against inflation and blackouts have been met with political repression and the jailing of organisers.

Nationalism vs Imperialism

When the French granted the nations of the Sahel formal independence, it maintained its imperial control through neo-colonialism. The French state continued to train and exert much

influence on the armed forces, police and intelligence services in countries such as Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso. Major economic resources such as uranium mines remained in the hands of French companies. It collaborated with reactionary generals to carry out coups and assassinations against political leaders opposed to this policy. Most countries in the region still use the CFA French Franc which the French directly controlled till 1978. To this day, France forces all CFA Franc users to deposit 50% of their foreign currency reserves in the French Central Bank in an act of naked exploitation preventing the development of these economies.

The ideological background of the nationalisms present in the Sahel are Pan-Africanism, African Nationalism and African Socialism. These ideologies were formed in a united opposition to European colonialism. Post-independence they represented non-aligned tendencies that aimed to overcome neo-colonialism. It was in part a project of modernity aiming for the development and unification of the post-colonial states in Africa. They were also projects of state formation begun by the colonisers. It also harkened back to a past traditional African society, allegedly free of class society. These projects failed due to both a campaign by the former colonial powers and an internal failure to achieve their program and a strengthening of the neo-colonial state. These ideologies continue today as a form of nationalism in various African countries and the diaspora.

The Islamist insurgency and government anti-insurgency have taken a great toll on the peasants of the Sahel. The French and American forces assisted these neocolonial states including the deployment of their respective troops. This allowed the continued extraction of imperial profits by safeguarding the uranium, gold and oil industries. Despite the atrocities and human rights abuses committed by the counterinsurgency aligned with imperialism they met an impasse and were unable to bring the wars to a conclusion. Mass movements emerged in urban areas such as the leftist Pan-Africanist M62 movement in Niger calling for the expulsion of US and French troops, and the ending of French neo-colonial control of the economies. These movements took the form of militant protest and civil disobedience including surrounding a French

barracks. Dissatisfaction with the war effort and continued poverty laid the subjective conditions for political strife. The weakness of the United States and French-led counterinsurgency alongside increased economic and political relations with Russia and China laid the objective conditions for the coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

The new military governments responded to popular demands by expelling the French and American forces in 2024. Instead, cooperation with the Russian armed forces and the Wagner private military company increased. In some cases, gold mining concessions were granted to the Wagner group in exchange for counterinsurgency. In responding to allegations of being pro-Russian, Mali's Foreign minister, Abdoulaye Diop, was quoted as saying, "We will no longer justify our choice of partner. Russia is here on demand by Mali and responds efficiently to our strategic needs." The Malian army and Russian mercenaries in the Wagner group face allegations of human rights abuses by the Western press and human rights organisations. This includes mass summary execution, rape and pillaging which United Nations human rights experts have called to be investigated.

The new military Juntas have a degree of support from urban working people but still rely heavily on local capitalists and traditional leaders. The compliance with the popular demand of expelling the French and pausing uranium exports to France is progressive however more conservative sectors of the Juntas bases have led to increased reaction. An example is the family code proclaimed by Burkina Faso's parliament with the blessing of the Junta. The code erodes the rights of women, legalises child marriage lists and criminalises homosexuality with imprisonment. Reactionary nationalists erroneously point to homosexuality and feminism being a ploy by imperialists to control the country and not the progressive outcome of changes to the family form with modern industry and popular struggle.

Islamism vs Imperialism

The Islamist organisations of the Sahel have had to make concessions to win the support of sections of the peasants, especially the pastoralists. This has included fighting against the neo-colonial states' rule and authority in

certain peripheral areas of the Sahel. They are fighting aspects of imperialism to do with the imposition of a bourgeois neo-colonial state that nationalist forces are enabling. The Islamists have fought against the armed forces of the Sahel states when in alliance with France and the US. The Islamists have also fought against the various Juntas forces which are currently allied with Russia which the majority of RCO members regard as a semi-peripheral imperialist power.

Nationalism vs Islamism

The Pan-Africanist nationalisms of the Sahel and Islamism are both positions of partial opposition to imperialism and neo-colonialism. While nationalism takes a modernist road, Islamism is in large a reaction against this modernism behind imperialism and its neo-colonialist state. Many of the Islamist movements in the Sahel have their origins in certain dissident tendencies formally within the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) during its successful war of independence against France culminating in 1962. Despite the victory, some members were dissatisfied with the governing FLN inability to finish the anti-colonial revolution and their secularism. This movement combined with Algerian mujahideen returning from fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan to create a strong Islamist movement. The Islamists won the first round of the legislative in 1992 which was followed by a military coup by generals to preserve secular nationalism against the popular will. The civil war that ensued was lost by the Islamists however their cadres and arms sparked the Islamist conflict to the south in the Sahel. Islamism is a bourgeois reaction against the failures of bourgeois secular nationalism.

The Islamists stand in opposition to liberal ideology. While this can result in acquiescing to the peasant's progressive demands against the neo-colonial state it also results in a stark rejection of progressive causes associated by the Islamists with Western thought. Women's and Queer liberation are violently rejected. Fundamentally in defending the rights of Pastoralists, the Islamists are fighting for a mode of production that is dying and hence is standing against progress as opposed to the development of agriculture and later the abolishment of the division of town and country.

Communism vs Imperialism

At the basis of the conflicts in the Sahel is the conflict between the pastoralist and the agrarian modes of production. The proletariat is different from all other classes in that the destruction of class societies and the abolition of unevenness of development are its interests. The abolition of the difference between country and town is core to the communist programme. The Islamists and Nationalists can sometimes support progressive demands but will not carry out the agrarian revolution to its conclusion and will at times oppose this.

Their strongest heritage of proletarian revolution in the region is the movement around Marxist soldier, Thomas Sankara, in Burkina Faso who took power in an officer-led coup in 1983. The French economic interests were nationalised and there was the project of rapid industrialisation, improvement of agriculture and extension of public services. At the same time, Thomas Sankara fought for the unity of African states against the colonial powers albeit in a manner more akin to bourgeoisie anti-imperialism rather than proletarian internationalism. In 1987 he was assassinated in a French-backed military coup.

The active Communists in the region are mostly from the Sankarist tradition. While so far there seems to be a tailing of the pro-junta nationalism, it remains to be seen if this will continue. It is of great importance to understand the relationship of these Sankarists to the workers' militancy and the mass protests against inflation. Developing a correct position on the political economy of the Islamist insurgencies will also be vital in the struggle for organising the rural workers and waging a united struggle in cities and rural areas against capitalism.

"Slavery continues to impose itself on us. Our predecessors taught us one thing: a slave who cannot assume his own revolt does not deserve to be pitied. We do not feel sorry for ourselves, we do not ask anyone to feel sorry for us. The people of Burkina Faso have decided to fight, to fight against terrorism, in order to relaunch their development." -Ibrahim Traore, 2023

Fragments on Pessimism



RM

"The difference between Marx's time and ours is not in the essential problem of society, its self-contradictory form of value between wages and capital, but rather in the social and political conflicts, which no longer take the form primarily, as in Marx's time, of the "class struggle" between workers and capitalists. "Class" has become a passive, objective category, rather than an active, subjective one, as it had been in Marx's day and in the time of historical Marxism. What Marxists once meant by "class consciousness" is no more."

- Chris Cutrone *"Class consciousness (from a Marxist perspective) today"* (2011)

"The willingness to express pessimism is not necessarily the best measure of it. Only at their height could the Greeks write great tragedies; in their decadence they could at best produce the pleasant farces of the New Comedy."

- Richard Rubin *"Four types of Ambiguity"* (2009)

"An age-old bourgeois mechanism with which the eighteenth century enlightenment thinkers were quite familiar operates once again, but unchanged: the suffering caused by a negative situation—this time by obstructed reality—becomes rage leveled at the person who expresses it."

- Adorno *"Resignation"* (1969)

[Photo: Trotsky speaking to the Danish Social Democratic student group in Copenhagen, 1932]

"Now, millions of proletarians of all tongues fall upon the field of dishonor, of fratricide, lacerating themselves while the song of the slave is on their lips. This, too, we are not spared. We are like the Jews that Moses led through the desert. But we are not lost, and we will be victorious if we have not unlearned how to learn."

- Luxemburg *"Junius Pamphlet"* (1915)

"It seems as if the new century, this gigantic newcomer, were bent at the very moment of its appearance to drive the optimist into absolute pessimism and civic nirvana."

- Death to Utopia! Death to faith! Death to love! Death to hope! thunders the twentieth century in salvos of fire and in the rumbling of guns.

- Surrender, you pathetic dreamer. Here I am, your long awaited twentieth century, your 'future.'

- No, replies the unhumbled optimist: You, you are only the present."

- Trotsky *"On Optimism and Pessimism"* (1901)

Remember the “patience” in “hurried patience”

Anthony Furia

Hurried Patience. There is no shortcut to workers' power. The road to a communist party is necessarily a long one, and one we must march patiently. This is the essence of Hurried Patience - a strategic plank of our newly adopted program, ratified and applauded at Congress less than a month ago. It is a crucial aspect of our strategic orientation, and one that we would do well to keep firmly in mind over the coming years - particularly this one. What does Hurried Patience look like in practice, currently, at this moment? It looks like understanding our limits and capabilities. It looks like refining and limiting our tasks. It looks like ensuring our strategic road in the immediate future is clear, and unburdened by tactical follies or aspirations that we have neither the resources nor the time to pursue.

Is this the current trajectory of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation (RCO)? It can be, but it is by no means guaranteed. Also at our national conference, we ratified several motions outlining tasks for the long-term - tasks to take place over multiple conferences, multiple central committees, multiple years of growth and refinement. These tasks include the building of several affiliated mass organisations; Reds!, Liberation, The Communist Womens Front, an Anti-Imperialist Solidarity front, United 4 Ecosocialism, and potential groupings such as Anti-Fascist Leagues and Anti-Repression Committees. These tasks (by no means a comprehensive account) compose an abundance of responsibilities and aspirations. An abundance which makes the danger of conflating long term and immediate aspirations all the more real.

There are some in the organisation, both today and in our short history, who have experienced bouts of a frantic frustration - a desire to do it all faced with the crushingly limited capacities of a small, new, inexperienced organisation. These comrades are by no means fools! They certainly mean well - they believe in our task so

wholeheartedly they wish to achieve it as quickly as possible. Rather, the problem with these bouts of manic desire is the potential damage, and detriment, they can do to the organisation - despite their positive intentions. We must focus on our primary tasks, on the immediate points of tactical concern, with one eye always on the strategic future. This is precisely the purpose of motions such as *Motion #E05 – All-Socialist Mass Organisations*, which establishes RCO support for several mass organisational projects into the future. Such motions from our conference maintain our long term vision and strategic orientation, and by no means lock us into a strict path! Were we to find these models unacceptable or impossible in the future, we can, and will, change our tactical approach as suited to our ultimate orientation - the refoundation of the communist party.

Thus I do believe such motions are a positive aspect of the organisation - revealing a longer term tactical thinking and a deep rooted, healthy sense of ambition. Yet we must not let this ambition confuse us. We must not let it make us slaves of a thousand projects, a million tasks and goals, which simply remain unachievable to any satisfactory extent with our current capacities.

The critical component here is that, by affirming our commitment to longer term projects, longer term tasks, at the conference, we by no means explicitly established the pace of work on these projects. We do not need to rush ahead madly, attempting to do anything and everything in order to create from thin air mass organisations with dedicated cadres distinct from the RCO. Indeed, the work we do on these mass organisations and longer term projects necessarily takes a backseat in our organising efforts. We work steadily, patiently, on these goals where possible and advantageous, and where it doesn't detract from our primary (and pressing) immediate efforts. This article is thus

primarily a word of caution. We have not yet set our path in the wrong direction, on an uncorrectable trajectory, but we have not yet refined it appropriately - not yet ensured that our strategic goals are pursued and prioritised in the most necessary sense. This we must do.

Thus I do believe such motions are a positive aspect of the organisation - revealing a longer term tactical thinking and a deep rooted, healthy sense of ambition. Yet we must not let this ambition confuse us. We must not let it make us slaves of a thousand projects, a million tasks and goals, which simply remain unachievable to any satisfactory extent with our current capacities.

So what, precisely, are our immediate tasks? Thankfully, these have also been helpfully provided by our conference. In summary, we seek in the immediate term (over the next 12 months);

- The professionalisation of our membership and cell structures,
- Continued engagement in Palestinian struggle in varying forms of work,
- The development and deepening of education on all levels of the organisation,
- Engagement with and within Victorian Socialists,
- And, perhaps most critically, the serious strengthening, in every aspect, of The Partisan as a professional organisational publication read as widely as possible within the socialist movement

These are the tasks we cannot delay on. These are essential aspects of our organisation, and each accompanies many other smaller tasks and steps - many of which have been laid out through our 2024 conference (although for the sake of brevity are not listed here). In sharpening our attention and focus, we can redirect the restlessness of comrades - the eagerness and frenetic frustration - into directly productive activity. Activity that is both achievable and of critical importance to the immediate future of our organisation.

Our congress was a success - absolutely - and now is the time for action. Now is the time to prove the words we so strongly approved of carry weight, and throw ourselves fully - patiently, determinedly, and with fiery passion - into our work, into our immediate tasks.

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Demand the release of all political prisoners!

As Russia continues to wage an imperialist war against Ukraine, Communists of all stripes have fallen under the boot of state repression (both in Russia and Ukraine). Oppose the Moscow and Kyiv gangsters, demand the release of all political prisoners!

Russian Marxist Boris Kagarlitsky was imprisoned by the Russian state under phony "anti-terrorism" charges in 2023. As of February 2024, he has been sentenced to five years in a prison colony (Meduza).

Ukrainian Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotyuk was arrested by the Ukrainian Security Service on April 25th 2024. As of writing, he is being held in Nikolaev in deplorable conditions. He is being falsely charged with being a Russian state operative and a propagandist for Moscow's imperialist invasion. If found guilty, he faces a life sentence (WSWS).

Many more communists, trade unionists, and anti-war protesters are being incarcerated arbitrarily by the Russian and Ukrainian governments. We must support them all, and demand their immediate release.

Palestine solidarity suppressed at State Library Victoria

Michael Ruhl

In March 2024, the State Library of Victoria (SLV) deferred a free annual writing bootcamp for teenagers the Library was due to hold. Four of the six writers contracted by the library to host the workshop have been publicly active in promoting Palestinian solidarity, and this has been recognised as the impetus for their termination by staff at the Library. More than 100 State Library staff signed a letter to SLV chief executive Paul Duldig protesting the bureaucrats' censorship whilst stating that management's heel-turn had damaged the reputation of the library. The Sydney Morning Herald claims to have been informed by an SLV staff member who was personally informed by Duldig that one writer's social media posts on Gaza were the impetus for postponement. The library maintains that the cancellation of the event was not due to the political views of the authors, but rather due to a reassessment of "child and cultural safety" protocols. A rather disingenuous line to hold, as later investigations would prove.

Internal emails later received via a Freedom of Information request showed that the SLV had in fact surveyed the guest writers' social media for content related to the Gaza Genocide before cancelling their programs and contracts. The initial investigation that appeared to cause the library to reconsider the participation of its other guests was that of award-winning Lebanese-Turkish poet and novelist Omar Sakr.

Released records have shown that an SLV staff member described Sakr as being "of Muslim heritage" and therefore "might need some additional risk management". Sakr has long spoken out in solidarity with Palestine; however, it has not yet been confirmed what exactly he said or wrote that caused the library to cancel his participation. Library board member and former Labor MP Maxine McKew had even



[Photo: Arab-Australian poet Omar Sakr]

singled out Sakr in a request for a "clear read" of all his social media posts following the Hamas-led attack on Israel on the 7th of October 2023.

Following this, this month it has emerged that SLV has prohibited wearing items that indicate "support or promote a particular political viewpoint." This specifically included items containing the Palestinian flag or watermelon. However, the library later clarified that this does not include the Aboriginal flag and the LGBTQ+ flag. The inconsistency in not allowing for a show of solidarity for a specific oppressed nation whilst allowing it for other groups is completely inconsistent and cannot therefore be in any way considered an 'apolitical' act.

Furthermore, as a repository of knowledge, it is completely disingenuous for the SLV to achieve its stated task of being an "apolitical" institution. Naturally, as a location focussed on writing and information storage, radical political discussion will occur in and in spaces surrounding libraries. To suppress this is nothing short of the bureaucratic bosses perpetuating their own views, whilst futilely attempting to snuff out that of the staff and writers that make up those institutions.

Letters

Twilight for the UoN camp?

After two months of doing not much at all, the UoN encampment has finally reached its absolute limit. With barely more than 5 people at the camp at any given time (I say 'camp', but currently it is a single tent and a few 'decoy' tents) outside of scheduled events, it is safe to say now that the encampments strategy (tactic?) has been a failure. It was adopted spontaneously by activists riding a bandwagon. The UoN encampment should pack it up and regroup. Newcastle activists are a shameful joke. In what other city are the majority of activists either rapists, rape defenders, or rape defender defenders? Newcastle communists have a long and tough road in front of them.

Campers seem to have agreed to a 'deal' with administration to pack their camp up in exchange for limited forms of 'disclosure', but divestment from the military industrial complex is not on the table. Three months of sitting around doing nothing, all for nothing?

DAN P, Newcastle

Busting Colesworths no path to easing cost of living

The Queensland Greens have announced their policy platform for the Queensland State elections. Along with the usual mix of progressive liberal social reforms, one demand struck me as worth commenting upon. In alignment with the national Greens party, and in alliance with some in the agrarian-conservative National Party, the QLD Greens are calling for the Coles and Woolworths supermarkets to be broken up, limiting market share to 20% per region, and selling excess stores to 3rd parties.

While many progressives may be inclined to support this "trust-busting" effort as a means to reduce grocery prices, communists should ardently oppose such a move. The development of consumer retail monopolies is a progressive development in the growth of the capitalist economy. These firms benefit from immense economies of scale and monopsonist buying power that allows them a competitive edge. To break them up would limit these productivity gains, and encourage the formation of inefficient, smaller capitalist firms. The working class will find it far easier to organise for better wages against a duopoly of massive firms. It will find the struggle against many small grocery stores far more difficult.

Of course, the monopsonists at Coles and Woolworths are driving up living costs with their price gauging. Workers can and should address this. However, the solution is not to be found in the dreams of the petit-bourgeois trust-busters. It is found in nationalisation and consumer-worker cooperatives.

EDITH FISCHER, Brisbane

Write us a letter!

Writing us a letter is easy, and is a good alternative to writing a full article or essay. Letters are submitted like normal articles are, through our email, but aren't held to the same strict standards.

A letter could be any kind of statement or observation, in 500ish words or less. The shorter the better. In a letter, you should give your opinion or statement on something, then finish off with your name and city (any name works - many of our writers use pseudonyms).

In particular, we encourage letters written as a reply to other articles. Of course, you are also free to write a full article in reply to another article, but sometimes it may be better to simply write a letter in. Letters may also be replies to other letters, and of course, an article can also be a reply to a letter.

We aim to build a lively letters section as part of our overall goal to establish Partisan as a platform of open debate and polemic between and amongst the organised Left.

Letters should be sent to partisanmagazine@proton.me and contain the subject "Letter: [heading]". The content of your letter can be sent within the body of the email as opposed to a document attached to the email.



[Photo: Australian socialist John Percy in the National office of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), 2001]

On Left Internationalism

Anthony Furia

Within this article, I hope to provide a brief overview of the flaws and logical leaps of a certain trend within Australian socialist grouplets - a sectarian internationalism.

However, Left internationalism is best understood in relation to its opposite - the thing it so often defines itself entirely against - Right opportunist internationalism. As such, we will begin with an extremely basic overview of the latter, before launching into an exploration of the former.

In its most basic form, Right internationalism pledges itself to "Actually Existing Socialism", "socialist experiments", and a "critical" support for certain state actors seen as anti-imperialist under a tricontinentalist framework. These states can range from Russia, Syria, and Iran to Venezuela and Cuba, and anywhere in between. For rightists in first world countries, "support" mostly means the writing of lengthy pamphlets and discussion groups attended by a ratio of one spotty university student to every three over 70 year old "anti-imperialists". Although this may appear similar to "Stalinism" (whatever that may mean), it goes far beyond standard Stalinist sects. Those of a confessionally Trotskyist variety are also often guilty of perpetuating a right internationalism, although their focus and reasoning may differ somewhat.

Support for x or y country, whether it is phrased in terms of defending the gains of a previous revolution, defending an "existing socialism", or

actively supporting a state against the ultra-imperialist West (such as siding with Russia in their endless war against Ukraine, or defending the Syrian regime from overthrow), is, ultimately, a tactical tool. It distinguishes groups, sects, and individuals from others they otherwise have an exceeding amount in common with, and cements an artificial line across which work simply cannot be done, and merging is an impossibility. A right internationalist cannot cooperate, in the long

term, with what it deems (sometimes rightfully!) as social imperialist sects. They cannot organise within the same group, or fight under the same name. To them, this is a line that, were it to be crossed, would be a betrayal of their principles of the international proletariat.

Defined by their explicit opposition to this right internationalist trend are the left

"No less free of opportunist sin, those belonging to such a trend do half of the work of right internationalists for them! In condemning anyone who wavers in their condemnation of an extensive list of states (from China to Iran), left opportunists enforce the line drawn by right opportunists - simply from the other side."

internationalists. No less free of opportunist sin, those belonging to such a trend do half of the work of right internationalists for them! In condemning anyone who wavers in their condemnation of an extensive list of states (from China to Iran), left opportunists enforce the line drawn by right opportunists - simply from the other side. By decrying right opportunists, or anyone who disagrees with their specific tactical decisions in relation to each state, as "scabbing on the international working class" (a ridiculous notion used either by those who have never even seen a job application, let alone a picket line, or those so thoroughly mired in trade union consciousness

they're unable to think of an alternative), left opportunists thus justify their own isolation from the broader movement. Why, how could one possibly work with such scabs, such low lifes, such traitors of internationalism and the international revolution? Unfortunately for left internationalists, two issues lie at the heart of this tidy little explanation of the necessary basis of unity.

The first is, very simply, that we must work with supposed "scabs". In both workplace struggles and within the socialist movement, one will no doubt encounter countless opportunists of endless varieties. We cannot purify ourselves of such elements through enforcing a strict theoretical unity. We must, by necessity, work with and cooperate with such elements - defeating them through argument, debate, and, in the case of both a strike or any periodic upheaval, through the test of direct struggle, practical action. In engaging openly with these ideas we perceive as opportunist, or betraying internationalism, we defeat them within our organisations and campaigns - whilst cooperating with them towards our ultimate aims.

The second is directly correlated to these ultimate aims. In all frankness, under any serious investigation, the catastrophised "betrayal" of those who differ in their analysis of certain states is simply not that serious. It is far from the worst form of opportunism possible, and far from anything that would bar, on any practical level, the existence of both left and right internationalism within the same organisation. Ultimately, our primary task, our primary duty to the international working class (the defeat of the enemy at home), is something both such factions thoroughly agree with. Indeed, for the most part they largely agree on their analysis of the road to the victory of the proletariat and the defeat of our national bourgeoisie. When, in practice, the question of "support" to x or y country is such a superficially theoretical one, it rarely even matters in the actual, substantial tactical sense. And, when it does, such as in the case of protests over the Syrian civil war, it is the responsibility of the organisation - containing both these left and right internationalists - to debate, criticise, and formulate a response in line with their strategic orientation (in our case, the refoundation of the communist party).

Thus this internationalism - the internationalism of the "left" - is a superficial internationalism. It is a sectarian internationalism, providing the perfect cover to disavow, rebuke, and expel those who disagree with what is ultimately a singular ideological point with tactical, not strategic, implications. Communists have long understood that the greatest enemy is at home. This is the absolutely fundamental strategic point for those in the "first world" - first and foremost, our duty to the international is the defeat of Australian capital. The question of whether or not states ranging from China to Cuba are capitalist, are "murderous dictatorships", does not concern our immediate strategic priority. It does not inform it. To rebuke otherwise revolutionary Marxists for their specific theoretical belief with regards to even a single state actor is needless, futile, and stupidly sectarian.

Of course, as I hope I have made clear, the answer isn't, as some may expect, critical support for these state actors. Rather it is the appropriate placing of these tactical questions where they belong - under a broader, strategic programmatic unity. Do we support Cuba against a hypothetical US invasion? Certainly! Do we believe currently that it is a dictatorship of the proletariat? I do not, but it is a debate for The Partisan, for internal organisational discussion, not an all-encompassing, exclusionary point of unity.

Ultimately, we are revolutionaries, we are communists, we are internationalists. We know our primary duty to the international working class, and by unifying in our pursuit of it, we do far more for the international working class than a thousand panels on supporting the Cuban revolution, or a million pamphlets denouncing the murderous tyranny of the People's Republic of China. These debates are important, but they are debates that should be strengthening a mass democratic culture - not ones that act as the definitive points of exclusive difference between organisations. The more we march towards a mass party, the sooner our obligations to the international working class can be realised.

“Gaza Mon Amour”: A wry romantic-comedy set in occupied Palestine

Owen Hsi

Issa, a 60-year-old fisherman in Gaza has been quietly infatuated with Siham, a widowed seamstress who works at the market close to his stall. One day, while fishing, he accidentally retrieves an ancient statue of Apollo in his nets, setting off a panoply of events for the ageing fisherman and giving the shy and reserved man the confidence to talk to his crush.

Not content with being a simple cut and dry romantic comedy, the Nasser brothers have added a dash of Neo-Realism by showing the reality of life in Gaza: the difficulty of living under occupation in the world's largest open air prison; with depictions of its poverty, vast youth unemployment, power outages etc.

Noteworthy is the fact that they decided to take a different road to almost all other Palestinian films as it hardly features the Israeli Occupying Force, instead reserving the majority of its ire for the Gazan Palestinian Civil Authority – the Hamas authority policing Gaza. They are shown to be unreasonable, and significantly, in almost every scene they feature in, they are shown eating – giving a picture of an unjust and well-fed body of armed men policing an impoverished population – gendarmes of inequality.

The caustic portrayal of the venality of the institutions Hamas created demolishes the myth of a progressive left nationalism as a counterweight to the Israeli occupying forces:

“For many, nationalism becomes almost the enemy of imperialism. There is a certain logic to this. Such a perspective sees imperialism causing a nationalist backlash in the country being adversely affected by an imperialist power. Nationalism, therefore, fights against imperialism. This has led to concepts of progressive nationalism and regressive nationalism. It is a debate that is hardly going to be resolved easily. The point that needs to be

borne in mind is that without nationalist symbolism, without the ideological manipulation of populations to serve capitalist advances, then imperialism as we recognise it from the nineteenth century could not have developed. The antithesis of nationalism is not imperialism. It is internationalism.” (William Briggs, *China, the USA and Capitalism's Last Crusade*, 2021).

An interesting aside to the review, is that the film is actually based on a true story. A quote taken from the director's statement at the European Film Awards explains:

“Gaza Mon Amour is a sweet dramatic comedy inspired by a true story that took place in Gaza in 2014. When a fisherman found a Greek statue of Apollo in the sea, Hamas confiscated it immediately and started looking for a buyer, hoping to make enough money to settle the country's financial troubles. No one knows what happened to the statue. Some say it was sold and then destroyed in an air strike. It was really quite saddening to realise that our government did not know what to do with this statue, other than burying it in some cellar.”

Tragic to think, that the statue is forever lost, and more disturbing is to think of how much human life has been lost in Gaza. A recent comment in the prestigious medical journal *the Lancet* declared:

“...It is not implausible to estimate that up to 186 000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza. Using the 2022 Gaza Strip population estimate of 2 375 259, this would translate to 7.9% of the total population in the Gaza Strip.”

And furthermore how much of Gaza has been destroyed since the film was made with the wholesale destruction of entire neighbourhoods in Northern Gaza, as they are bombed and bulldozed by the IDF.

The film is well cast with Salim Daw and Hiam Abbas in the leading roles, and overall, the film is exceedingly well done. Wry and understated, there are obvious comparisons with the film making of Aki Kaurismäki in the Nasser Brothers cinematic approach. This is only their second feature film, but it astounds in its maturity and ability to create a multilayered plot with competing narrative threads. Impressive for the fact its not overwhelmingly bleak and is balanced out with small moments of levity. This sophisticated film shows that love and moments of comedy are still able to flourish even under the most oppressive circumstances, it is well worth watching.



Above: Gaza Mon Amour (2020) film poster
Below: Still from Gaza Mon Amour (2020)



"In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign – this would make every sectarian a master strategist; no, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself independently in the internal as well as the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat. This rule applies just as much to the war period as to the period of peace."

Leon Trotsky, 'Learn to Think', 1938

"Pseudo-activity is generally the attempt to rescue enclaves of immediacy in the midst of a thoroughly mediated and rigidified society. Such attempts are rationalized by saying that the small change is one step in the long path toward the transformation of the whole. The disastrous model of pseudo-activity is the "do-it-yourself" [Mach es seiher]: activities that do what has long been done better by the means of industrial production only in order to inspire in the unfree individuals, paralyzed in their spontaneity, the assurance that everything depends on them."

Theodor Adorno, 'Resignation', 1969

"For nearly 40 years we have raised to prominence the idea of the class struggle as the immediate driving force of history, and particularly the class struggle between bourgeois and the proletariat as the great lever of the modern social revolution; ... At the founding of the International, we expressly formulated the battle cry: The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself!"

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, 'Strategy and Tactics of the Class Struggle', 1879

Scenes from the Climate Era

Brunhilda Olding



[Photo: Stage production of 'Scenes from the Climate Era' at the Belvoir theatre]

The new play “Scenes from the Climate Era” by David Finnigan is a fascinating insight into the left-liberal mindset on the growing horror of the Climate Crisis. The performance by Saint Micheal’s Grammar School was masterful as per tradition, the current 10-12 cohort holding a strong acting current. The performance of Lizzie Cassidy, Jim Harris, and others deserves outstanding notes, and the novelty of a Brechtian style performance utilising the advances in theatrical technology of the 21st century was a novel development, the works of the sound team despite brief glitches deserve a round of applause. Yet what is more interesting about this play is the political and philosophical insight it provides into the current crop of bourgeois liberal understanding around responses to the Climate Crisis and an insight into the weakness of the Whig capitalist view of history that so dominates their historiography. The two core theses of the play are firstly that we live are living in the ‘Climate Era’ much as there was the Renaissance, or Medieval Era so too there will be a Climate Era, secondly that the mechanism of relating to the Climate is the arc of Denial, Acceptance, Grief, and finally Hope.

This arc is reiterated several times through the play, an initial position of rejecting the scientific consensus on Climate Change, accepting it’s happening and trying to take some actions against it, conceptualising that there is no hope, that the planet is doomed no matter what, and finally hope that something can happen. This concept requires an honest intellectual engagement, from a principled Communist position. I hope to provide part of that engagement throughout this review. However, the titular concept provides a much more interesting engagement with the liberal bourgeois understanding of both the objective crisis that is striking the climate, and the broader understanding of historiography from the capitalist ‘left’. The elucidation of the theory by a Climate scientist portrayed by Max Miller argues that since this generation was born in the midst of the climate crisis, and so too will it die with it being unsolved, it is more accurate to refer to it as the Climate Era. The statement that ends this segment is that the end of the climate era will be when waves crash on beaches again, arguing that since at least a metre of sea rise is locked in all the beaches on the planet will be drowned. To temporarily play into the authors arena of academic expertise of

history, this is a fundamentally capitalist approach to history. The Climate Era if it is remembered will be remembered as the bridge between the dying days of the capitalist epoch, and the rising dawn of the socialist revolution. The lack of historical materialism stunts Finnigan's ability to accurately provide insight into this shifting epoch. In the words of Mark Fischer 'It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism' this is stunningly displayed in the conclusion of the piece. As an actor portrays blackouts in a Melbourne with 50+ degrees Celsius days, there is no attempt to portray a new social order, merely the blanket assumption that we will continue to march forwards under the liberal capitalist bourgeois order. An assumption that the readers of this magazine would probably reject. This assertion ties into the earlier stated secondary thrust of the play. The arc of denial, acceptance, grief, and finally hope. In some ways perhaps a stirring idea, hope springs eternal mankind will rise to the challenges that face us and emerge triumphant. Yet what does this hope look like? It is the fetishisation of the act of protest, viewing wild adventurism as the height of political action that can be taken on Climate Change. One of the penultimate monologues is from a protester at COP26 ranting about how for a split second it seemed like they were about to make a successful final push, and then the protest ends, and they all disperse. That more than anything else reveals the dead-end nature of capitalist protest politics. If the marchers in

February 1917 had simply dispersed the Tsar would never have fallen, in Mai 1968 under the falsified leadership of the PCF the marchers did disperse, transforming an opportunity to strike a thundering blow into the heart of capitalism into nothing more than another shibboleth for the decaying remains of the New Left. This ultimately stems from the capitalist relation to politics and reveals a clear message to Communists. A crucial strategy lies in the power of 'good news socialism', the ability to transform the struggle *against* capitalism, into the struggle *for* socialism. A march against something may draw people in initially but as a long-term project it cannot really rally people, but a march for something can have a snowball effect drawing in more and more to a single banner. Mike McNair's article in the Weekly Worker 'Communist Unity and it's Refuseniks' (WW1475) outlines a strong position on this issue.

Ultimately the working class have a world to win, and they must struggle to win it. For all of Finnigan's political faults the message running through his play does point towards this image even if in the most wishy-washy liberal way. Nonetheless it is inevitable that Justice will thunder condemnation, and a better world will be born from the ashes of the old. To return to the play itself, while the short run time limits from reaching a mass audience, the performance deserves applause. If a performance does pop up near the reader it is a worthwhile way to spend the evening.



[Photo: RCO comrades on the march with their big red banner]

UoN Student Workers

We support solidarity and collaboration, sustainability, and a society by and of the working class. We support workers of all kinds as they struggle in and out of the workplace.

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(instagram)



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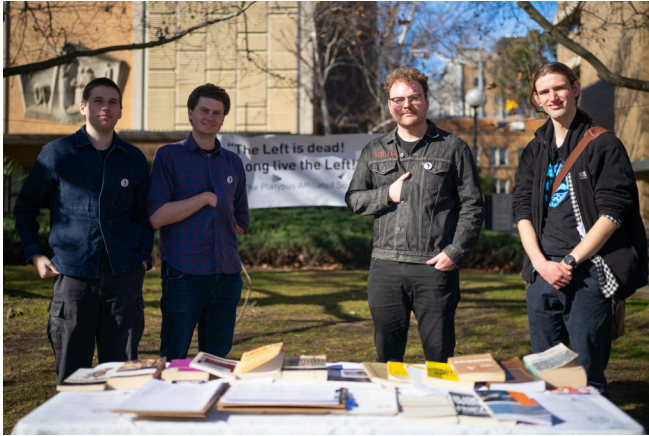
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University of Melbourne Semester 2 Orientation Week

Photos by the *Platypus Affiliated Society (Melbourne chapter)*



“Platypus was set up as an attack on thought-taboos. From the start, we’ve rejected the usual Left culture, which preaches the struggle against the common enemy and focuses all of its energy on demonizing this or that Right-wing clique. In quite the opposite way, we have chosen instead to elucidate the conservative character of our time, and the obvious weakness of the Left, perhaps even its total disappearance, not as a question of bodies on the ground, but as the logical by-product of the Left’s ideological murkiness, as an utter lack of clarity about the world we live in, and moreover as an all-pervasive stigmatization of debate and critique. In the past it may have seemed as if philosophers had hitherto only interpreted the world, but today it seems that people seeking to change the world have stopped interpreting it.”

Excerpt from: *Introducing Platypus*, 2009

The Platypus Affiliated Society, established in December 2006, organizes reading groups, public fora, research and journalism focused on problems and tasks inherited from the “Old” (1920s-30s), “New” (1960s-70s) and post-political (1980s-90s) Left for the possibilities of emancipatory politics today.

Evolution of “Direct Action” (2023-2024) to Partisan

Over 15 issues, Direct Action evolved from a collection of selected readings and recommended texts to a monthly magazine of communist and Marxist ideas. Below is the evolution of our magazine, shown through the subtle changes in the cover pages. Running continuously for over a year, we are proud of the word we and comrades have put into this maturing publication.

-The Partisan editing team (formerly the Direct Action editing team)

ISSUE 1 VOICE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS

DIRECT ACTION

The Knife at Your Throat


by Phil A. Neel, published first in The Brooklyn Rail

Simple through any needled and tales of creeping horror will press up from beneath the touchscreen: prices rising undead from the depths of the globe called globalisation, psychosocials travelling to ash, marauders emerging from the suburban forests to syphon black gold from bonholes drilled into gas tanks. The nightmare of inflation is back. As with any horror story, there must be a monster. What, exactly is the cause of rising prices? The political message is often as clear here as in the little boom-humour Biden stickers popping up on gas pumps across the country. Pundits track their favoured monster to its bone-stream lair, brandishing torches. When the monster is unveiled, there is not really a surprise: high wages, free-flowing stimulus checks, too much money spent on social programs—all different ways of saying too much money in the hands of those who were born to have less. New spending must be curtailed, the minor wave of youthful interest in unionisation drawn back, all of that too-much money out there syphoned back into the familiar too-less hands. The Fed, which harboured such monsters, must now take responsibility by finally raising the state of the interest rate like Paul Volcker, piston saint of brutal technocrats and brutish beatings.

“The Left” takes aim at a different monster, but a monster nonetheless. Inflation isn’t induced by high wages, but by price-gouging corporations.

ISSUE 2 VOICE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS

DIRECT ACTION



Another Day in Paradise!

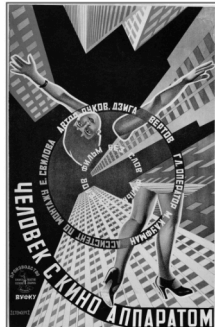
Abortion Access, a Luxury Jets, and Leaked State Secrets
Luke Pickering

Gunsshots in Khartoum
Joshua Craze

Fictitious Capital and the Transition out of Capitalism
Loren Goldner

ISSUE 3 VOICE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS

DIRECT ACTION



Womanhood... and other misfortunes

Silvia Federici
on the work of Sexuality

Michael Roberts
on the Next Recession

Christine Delphy
on Domestic Modes of Production

ISSUE 4 VOICE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS

DIRECT ACTION



All Going Up but the Wages


Anthony Furia
History and Class Consciousness

Jamie Merchant
Economic Consequences of Neo-Keynesianism

DIRECT ACTION!

A Monthly Communist Magazine Sep '23 #5

All That is Solid Melts into Air...




Contents

- Editorial: All that is Holy is Profaned
- Strategies of Desail
- Lenin in England
- In Defence of the Theory of the Labour Aristocracy
- Costly Propositions
- British Anarchism succumbs to War Fever
- Feminism, Intersectionality and Marxism
- News and More...

DIRECT ACTION!

A Monthly Communist Magazine Oct '23 #6

CONTINUITY AND RUPTURE



Contents

- Editorial: Dialectics of Desperation (p.g. 1)
- Notes on the war (p.g. 2)
- “There are only two alternatives...” (p.g. 8)
- National road to disaster (p.g. 14)
- Michael Harrington and His Afterlife (p.g. 21)
- Sixteen Point Platform and Program (p.g. 26)
- Strikes and Workers Control (p.g. 40)
- News and Events (p.g. 47)

DIRECT ACTION!

A Monthly Communist Magazine Nov '23 #7

**You can't censor
liberation!****Contents**

- Editorial (p.g. 1)
- RCO Statement on Palestine (p.g. 2)
- Oppression breeds Resistance (p.g. 3)
- George Habash on Morality and the Palestinian Revolution: "Our Code of Morals is Our Revolution" (p.g. 9)
- Socialism, Ireland, the Permanent Revolution, and the Provo campaign (p.g. 12)
- Hope amidst the Horror (p.g. 17)
- Horror begets Horror (p.g. 19)
- Race, Class, and the Zionist state (p.g. 25)
- News and Events (p.g. 32)

DIRECT ACTION!

A Monthly Communist Magazine Dec. 2023 #8

**ISRAELI TERROR
SPARES NO ONE**

Sixteen thousand dead and counting in the Gaza strip, 1.5M displaced in Israeli terror campaign.



Above: Rescue attempts after Occupation forces bomb Al-Buray in Central Gaza, November 2nd 2023.

DIRECT ACTION!

A Monthly Communist Magazine Jan '24 #9

New Year, New Struggles

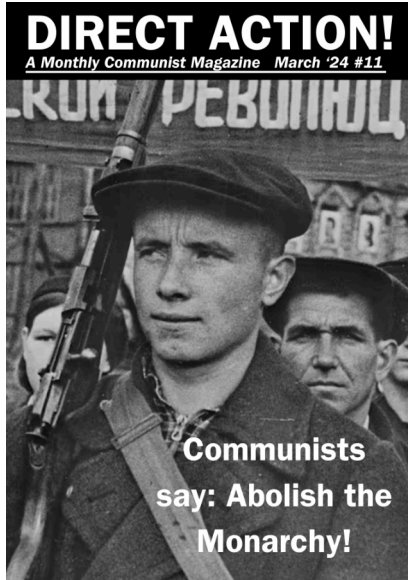
The new year brings with it new struggles, and new opportunities. The Communist and Workers movements in Australia and abroad are in dire straits - and with no time to waste, we must pull together to build a workers party in the fight for Socialism.

DIRECT ACTION!

A Monthly Communist Magazine Feb '24 #10

Free the Land!***DIRECT ACTION!***

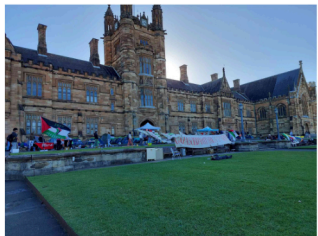
A Monthly Communist Magazine March '24 #11

**Communists
say: Abolish the
Monarchy!****DIRECT ACTION**

April '24 #12

**Women hold up half
the sky!**

A Monthly Communist Magazine May '24 #13

The Student Intifada

(Photo: Samira)

Student encampment at the University of Sydney (USydney)

Take the campus, Fight for democratic control, Resist the police and administration. For maximum unity of students and workers.

Occupations established in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide to come. Perth and Newcastle next?

Student protesters hold strong in the US in face of police and reactionary thugs on campus.

**CAMPUS OCCUPATIONS
SWEEP THE US**

From the 17th of April, a series of pro-Palestinian university demonstrations have taken place at universities opposing the continued support of their governments and universities towards weapons manufacturers and Israel amidst its occupation of the Gaza Strip. (Goldstein, 2024). The demonstrations have occurred in western countries supporting Israel, and have demanded that their respective universities divest from Israel and companies enabling the conflict. (continued on page 19)

Are you a student protester? Tell us your story: directactionmagazine@proton.me

A Monthly Communist Magazine June '24 #14

**A long way to the
finish line**

(Photo: Ross J.)

Workers and students resist Zionist violence against encampments in Melbourne.

Are you a student protester? Tell us your story: directactionmagazine@proton.me

This issue contains a special section focused on the encampments taking place across the country.

End of semester poses a threat to encampments - will they survive the semester break? Is there a future for the student movement?

No shortcuts!

For over a month, student protesters across the world set up encampments on their campuses. Many occupied buildings on campus. Many more were unfortunately beaten into submission by thugs of the state. Across Australia, many encampments have begun to founder. Rank sectarianism once again rears its ugly head.

As we pass the crest and head into the low end of activity for these encampments, we must remember that even as the encampments die out, our task continues. Communists must commit to the long term goal of regrouping, regrouping not just communists, but also all sections of the working class, to build up the historic Workers Party.

We cannot count on miracles, or spontaneous outbursts of discontent, to carry us all the way to this goal. There are no shortcuts to Communism. We must put in the hard work of agitating, educating, organizing, and regrouping.

RCO Congress Special Edition

Direct Action!

A magazine of Communist ideas

July '24 #15



INSIDE: RCO comrades condemn ANU's expulsion of student activist Beatrice Tucker ➤ A reflection on the student movement and what it means for Communists and the Left ➤ Whither Activism? ➤ RCO's Congress and what it means for the RCO and Direct Action ➤ and more

DIRECT ACTION**DIRECT ACTION**



[Photo: Comrades from the RCO meet with comrades from the University of Melbourne chapter of the Platypus Affiliated Society]