

Australasian

**Spartacist**

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**Defeat Askin's  
union-smashing  
offensive!**

VOTE LABOR!

OUST HILLS, WHITLAM AND  
THE LABOR BUREAUCRACY!

FIGHT FOR A REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP!

The issues of the current state election competition demonstrate more clearly the correctness of the revolutionary policy of critical support for the Australian Labor Party than did either the federal election of December 1972 or the Victorian election of last May.

The ALP campaigned for federal office on the basis of policy which fully and quite explicitly tied it to capitalism. Its "radicalism" was directed solely to winning the votes of the wavering petty bourgeoisie, around matters like the environment and the arts. The Victorian campaign was of the same kind.

The Labor Party and the Working Class

In the past however the ALP pretended to go beyond capitalism and at least it led the class in struggle for real reforms which, though completely limited within the framework of the existing state, actually marked important gains for the proletariat. On the basis of the illusions created by this past the ALP has since tried to give up, indeed to prevent, the leadership of any struggle by the working class at all, no matter how limited. Nevertheless history has tied the working class closely to the ALP and these ties will not easily be broken, despite the profound contradiction which the ALP embodies between the betraying bureaucratic leadership and the fundamentally anti-capitalist working class base. The cords which bind the class and the ALP are not only the profoundly important memories of past struggles but also the institutional links between the trade unions -- the industrial organisations of the class -- and the ALP, links which, while they occasionally seem capable of fracturing, will never be allowed to so long as the bureaucrats want to see the ALP as a serious electoral contender. The fact that there are some differences of interest between the ALP bureau-

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**Ecology and housing****Engels' view and Munday's**

DEFEND THE BUILDERS LABOURERS FEDERATION!

NOT CLASSLESS GREEN BANS BUT PROLETARIAN STRUGGLE!

Green Bans imposed by the Builders Labourers Federation to stop destruction of park areas and old buildings are holding up about \$3,000 million worth of construction in the Sydney area. Parts of the bourgeoisie are, not suprisingly, rather concerned, and the demagogic confrontationism of Askin's anti-union policies arises out of that sort of concern.

The NSW Branch of the BLF is the shop window of the Communist Party of Australia's trade union work. Thus we see the CPA standing only one candidate in the NSW elections -- Joe Owen's, recent replacement for Jack Munday as secretary of the BLF. And the main campaign slogan -- "Support Green Bans".

Ecology is fashionable and sentimentalism traditional in the bourgeoisie, so the Builders Labourers have allies in the very best places. Media personality, Jack Munday, having arranged his replacement by a bureaucrat of identical politics, managed a fine

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display of anti-bureaucratism by stepping down from the secretaryship of the state BLF to go back to the worksite (remaining merely state treasurer, member of the state executive and delegate to the union's Federal Council). He is quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald of 7 November as saying that he will now immerse himself in "the most important question of the day -- the area of ecology."

The "ecology crisis" sounds new and exciting. Frederick Engels, however, was writing about it a century ago in 1873, in his articles on The Housing Question. Citing Liebig's writings on the chemistry of agriculture (he said (and every development in ecological science since has confirmed it) that the problem of pollution can be solved only with the abolition of towns -- which are necessary organs of capitalist society (and also of the bureaucratically deformed workers states). "The abolition of the antithesis between town and country is no more and no less utopian than the abolition of the antithesis between capitalists and wage earners," said Engels. "The modern big city, however, will be abolished only by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production..." The problem is just too big to be solved by a few Green Bans, Jack Munday. The ecology problem is the capitalism problem, and it is utopian to believe that the former can be solved without a solution to the latter. No doubt Munday thinks the abolition of towns impossible, and perhaps also the abolition of capitalism. Certainly he is one of the Philistines Engels attacked in his articles, a person who thinks socialism is realisable "only in the distant future, a future which for all practical purposes is quite out of sight. Thus for the present one has to have recourse to mere social patchwork..." Such Philistines, in Engels' day and in ours, want to pressure the capitalists into making their profits by what Engels contemptuously called "supplying each worker with a little house of his own." (In this policy incidentally, the CPA shows its respect for that fine institution of bourgeois society, the family -- and its disrespect for any real women's liberation.)

Green Bans for the Bourgeoisie

Rather than solving the problem of the environment the BLF's Green Bans merely perform a useful function for the bourgeoisie which its antideluvian state government is incapable of, policing those capitalists whose individual avarice causes them to make the grossest incursions into the prevailing collective bourgeois image of a "nice" city. Thus Jack Munday is quoted in Pete Thomas's book, Taming the Concrete Jungle, as saying "We would prefer the state government to enact legislation to make our action unnecessary. They could follow the kind of legislation that they have in France, for example."

So the issue of Green Bans is an ideal one around which to build a popular front, an alliance with elements of the bourgeoisie. It is the CPA's partially fulfilled appetite for such an alliance which makes them so eager to keep the methods of struggle as "reasonable" as possible. Joe Owens was quoted by the Sydney Morning Herald of 25 October as saying "The name of the game is tactics...What the meeting tomorrow must decide to do is work to attract as many people from as many different walks of life as possible to our cause of environment protection and defence of the city area..." Hence the eagerness to gain the patronage of university professors and Nobel Prizewinners, hence also the BLF's alliance with the Residents Action Groups. Some of their members may be workers but they are organised as residents and under a totally petty-bourgeois programme. As chairman of the Coalition of RAGs, Joan Bielski, was quoted as saying by the Sydney Morning Herald of 5 November, "We are not asking for a new era -- just a nice tomorrow."

The BLF and the RAGs are concerned to maintain a supply of cheap accommodation. It is of course useful for BL's to demand that the ex-residents of buildings they demolish are adequately and cheaply housed, but the question of solving the housing crisis in general under capitalism is a different matter. This also is not a new problem. In the same articles Engels talks of urbanisation resulting in "workers' dwellings becoming rare and expensive and often unobtainable, for in these circumstances the building industry, which is offered a much better field for speculation by more expensive dwelling houses, builds workers' dwellings only by way of exception." But, says Engels, it is by no means an evil which burdens the working class alone. "It is largely with just such sufferings as these which the working class endures in common with other classes, and in particular the petty bourgeoisie, that petty-bourgeois socialism...prefers to occupy itself." The CPA's popular frontism, its petty-bourgeois socialism, is based on the perception of an identity of interests between workers and the middle classes, an identity of interests which will disappear as soon as the struggle turns towards more strategically important issues.

The programme of Green Bans in the BLF is just a way of channelling into harmless, if spectacular, paths the militancy of a volatile and untamed layer of the working

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## ECOLOGY AND HOUSING (continued from page two)

class which has in the past been poorly organised and has thus not been weighed down by the trade union bureaucracy. It is the role of revolutionaries in the working class to criticise such programmes and the misleaderships responsible for them. Only in the course of this struggle can the proletariat achieve class consciousness.

The BLs Right to Make Their Own Decisions

However, the Spartacist League stands irreconcilably opposed to any interference in union business by the state or the police. The labour movement must defend the right of the BLF to reach and to act upon its own decisions and to remove scabs who break their misguided Green Bans. Other unions, however much their members are inconvenienced, must respect that right. The attempts of Pat Clancy, leader of the Building Workers Industrial Union and of the Moscow-line Socialist Party of Australia and John Ducker, right-wing leader of the NSW Labour Council, to smash the Green Bans on the Rocks development scheme, were wholly illegitimate. Likewise the threat of Norm Gallagher, Federal Secretary of the BLF and a Vice-Chairman of the Peking-line Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) to dissolve the NSW branch, a threat which carried with it the implication of setting up a new scab branch. Whatever the deficiencies of the Green Bans, however reactionary the bureaucrats who lead the NSW branch, it is the organisation of the NSW BLs. These policies and misleaders cannot usefully be defeated by bureaucratic manipulation, but only by politically winning the NSW BLs away from them -- but we can be sure that Clancy, Ducker and Gallagher won't try to fight politically.

The BLF leaders' foolish attitude that they can solve society's problems on their own, with a few bourgeois and petty-bourgeois friends, gives labour bureaucrats with bases in other unions a marvellous opportunity to sell out the misguided but real struggle of the BLs. If the BLF is convinced that their policies are really in the interests of the working class, they must be prepared to argue them at meetings of all construction workers.

To the fake militancy of the BLF leadership revolutionaries must counterpose a programme of class struggle which starts at the needs of the working class today and goes right through to proletarian revolution. Efficient organisation of workers' self defence -- proved so conclusively to be necessary in the building industry and so obviously increasingly necessary in the class as a whole -- must be a priority. We must demand an end to unemployment which is periodically very high among BLs. We must call for shorter hours so as to spread the available work around. We must fight for automatic increases in wages with increases in living costs, and we must demand that the capitalists open their books, to let us see what the developers are really making in profits. We must demand the expropriation of industry under workers' control, with the BLF starting with the struggle for the nationalisation of the building industry.

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DEFEAT ASKIN'S UNION-SMASHING OFFENSIVE (continued from page one)

crats and the trade union bureaucrats (who are more closely in daily touch with the class) must not be allowed to hide their more fundamental unity of interest and their general agreement on tactics in their shared function of misdirecting the political energies of the working class. This unity is shown best in the dual role of Bob Hawke, president of both the ALP and Australian Council of Trade Unions, and also in the facility with which trade union bureaucrats transfer to the parliamentary arena.

Just as we defend the trade unions, so we defend the party of the proletariat against the direct representatives of the bourgeoisie, despite that party's reactionary programme and leadership. While on the one hand the firmness with which it holds to the Labor Party keeps the working class from advancing to revolutionary struggle, on the other hand it also has a positive side as being a recognition of the necessity for the class to unite in an organisation it sees as its own. The tactic of critical support for the Labor Party is not justified on the basis of any formal programme the party puts forward at a particular election. Recently the ALP's programmes have had nothing in common with the day-to-day interest of the working class under capitalism, let alone with socialism or revolution. But it is necessary to stand with the mass base of the party and against the misleadership, to set the base against the top and against the programme of the top. Because it is the job of revolutionaries to smash the hold of the misleadership over the working class we must never allow our distaste for the reactionary politics of that misleadership to become a barrier to our political access to the class which is so firmly wedded to the Labor Party. Cutting through the organis-

DEFEAT ASKIN'S UNION-SMASHING OFFENSIVE (continued from page three)

ational barrier with the tactic of critical support is essentially a special kind of united front aimed at fighting against the social democracy. It is thus, fundamentally different from the fake "critical" support of the Socialist Labour League or Socialist Workers League who merely try to pressure the ALP to the left. The Spartacist League will have nothing of pressure. A revolutionary programme and leadership must be count-erposed to the bureaucrats. The bureaucracy must be smashed.

#### Militant Reformism May Arise Again

In situations of intensified class struggle, we can see the possibility of the ALP being forced to once more adopt a militant reformist posture in order to head off revolutionary struggle. In a limited way this is what is happening in the present New South Wales election campaign.

Askin's Liberal-Country Party government's declared intention of introducing what the Sydney Morning Herald called "drastic anti-strike legislation" empowering the government, in Sir Robert Askin's words, "to do all things necessary to maintain essential supplies of commodities and essential services and to maintain law and order in the community. These [laws] will make adequate provision for protection of life and property where these are menaced, either in the event of industrial disputes or otherwise." The powers envisaged include the power to jail union representatives and strikers wherever the government decides to declare an emergency, and to allow the arbitrary ordering around of anyone in order to achieve the operation, control, supply or distribution of any service the government is from time to time to deem essential. These proposals, demagogically calculated to win the votes of the middle class clearly attack the very ability of the working class to organise and fight for its interests and must be opposed resolutely (as must the proposal of the Askin ministry to set up an "ombudsman", a state official with power to tamper in union affairs in the interests of "individual rights").

Union rights have become the central issue of the election. The right-wing Hills ALP has attacked the proposals and counterposed to them a proposal to repeal the penal clauses in the existing trade union legislation. In this real if limited reform the ALP programme must be supported, albeit with no illusions as to the motives of the ALP, no false belief that if in power Hills would really abstain from using the armed force of the state against strikers (similar laws have been enacted by the ALP itself) and no capitulation to it as a sufficient reform even in the limited area of relations between the state and unions. The slogan must be: NO STATE INTERFERENCE IN THE UNIONS.

Not only the ALP bureaucrats but also the more direct representatives of the bourgeoisie who write the editorials of the Sydney Morning Herald see the danger in Askin's proposal causing, rather than preventing, industrial turmoil. Some of them are probably as scared as the Federal Minister of Labour, Clyde Cameron, that "A vote for the Askin government...is a vote for bloodshed and anarchy." But the labour bureaucrats are more intensely aware of the very real danger to bourgeois "law and order" which would be posed by a government throwing down the gauntlet to the labour movement as Askin proposes to do. They want to prevent the struggle that could (and must be made to) develop against Askin's proposals. But if it is to occur they want to be in a position to mislead that struggle, to limit, constrict, and pacify it. Thus, while it remains merely a matter of electoral politics they can be verbally militant -- obtaining credit while it's cheap, to spend later when and if the real struggle begins.

But the wretched motives of the labour bureaucrats notwithstanding, they are for once putting up some sort of a limited opposition to the armed force of the State being used against strikers, and thus they clarify their role as misleaders who are unfortunately within the working class movement. They must be smashed, but this can only be done by politically discrediting them in the eyes of their working class followers, by setting the base against the top.

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