

Australasian SPARTACIST



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Class militancy meets recession threat —

AMWU leaders veer left to limit struggle

On March 1, employers in the metal industry made their second offer in response to the new log of claims lodged by the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union (AMWU) and other metal trades unions. Union negotiators have rejected this offer, which is certain to be rejected as well by metal workers in stop-work meetings to be held on March 4 across Australia. The union officials are threatening weekly 24-hour strikes on a plant-by-plant basis beginning next week.

On February 14, the main employer groups in the metal industry produced an offer which amounted to an outright rejection of the metal unions' log of claims, first presented to the employers last December. The metal union negotiators' recommendation that this first offer be turned down was accepted near unanimously by mass meetings of metal workers across the country on February 27. But the "guerilla" strategy of the union officials is a clear indication that they will not wage a systematic fight for the demands.

Together, the metal unions represent over 400,000 workers covered by the Metal Industry Award. Because of the role of the metal industry in the Australian economy and the number of awards affected by it, this award plays an important role in determining the conditions of the whole working class. ~~ALMOST 100 awards are linked directly to its outcome, with most others subject to indirect flow-ons.~~

The metal workers' struggle is taking place against a background of an upcoming economic recession, and growing general class militancy. The unions' claims marked a new militancy on the part of the bureaucrats of all the metal industry unions and of the labour bureaucracy as a whole, but particularly those of the largest union in the metal industry, the AMWU, with its reputation for militant unionism.

METAL UNIONS' MILITANT LOG OF CLAIMS

The metal unions' demands include: a \$30 across the board wage rise; the quarterly cost-of-living indexation scheme; a 35-hour week; an extra week's annual leave with full holiday loading; employer-paid health insurance; paid maternity leave; English lessons for migrants on company time; a "shop stewards' charter"; the deletion of stand-down clauses; and a number of others ranging from sick-leave portability to pay-slip deduction listings.

The AMWU, particularly, is pushing the "shop stewards' charter" (merely a consistent extension of union recognition and basic union rights) and the 35-hour week. On the initiative of the AMWU's Victorian State branch run by leading Communist Party of Australia (CPA) members John Halfpenny and Laurie Carmichael, the AMWU Commonwealth Council has also announced its opposition to a closed award (which would ban strikes for over-award benefits). Such an agreement was a prominent feature of the previous award, concluded in September, 1972.

The Metal Trades Industry Association's (MTIA) new 1 March proposal offers weekly pay rises of \$11 for non-tradesmen and \$12 for tradesmen, and agrees to the union claim for an extra week's leave. This represents only a marginal improvement over their last offer of \$8 a week and a modified version of the extra week's paid leave. Employers assert the \$12 constitutes a 15% to 17% increase over current industry base rates. But with average over-award rates on the order of \$20 in NSW (*Tribune*, 22-28 January 1974), a \$12 rise

represents only a 12% - 13% increase over average actual wages. Inflation is currently running at an annual rate of 15% so this is actually a cut in real wages.

In the new offer employers have backed off from their demand for an air-tight closed award, but have come up with a more insidious proposal for a conditional closed award, agreeing to exceptions "where an anomaly or inequity within an individual factory is found to exist." (*The Australian* 2 March 1974). So far the union leaders have shown no sign of opposition to this "conditional" no-strike pledge.

Laurie Short, right-wing national secretary of the Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA) was quoted as indication that if the new offer had been \$12 across the board rather than just for tradesmen, it would have been acceptable (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 1974). According to *The Australian* (2 March 1974) the "left" bureaucrats have (anonymously) let it be known that they will settle for \$15, which confirms an ominous warning that appeared after the first employers' offer:

"On the \$8 offered by MTIA, a leading left-wing union official commented that 'it is not enough by half.'" (*Financial Review* 22 February 1974).

The workers' \$30 a week has already been bargained away. The bureaucrats never intended to fight for it at all.

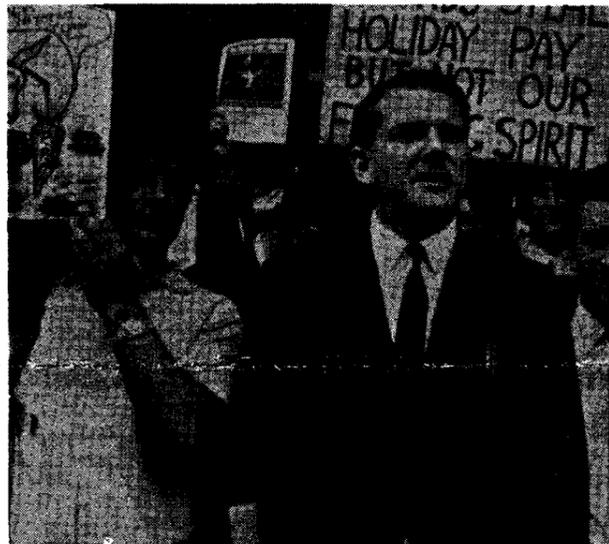
Moreover the new offer rejects outright most of the union claims, all of which are important and necessary. It makes no mention of the quar-

terly cost-of-living escalator which only a week ago union officials were maintaining was a central demand. Now we are told:

"Metal union leaders had earlier stated that no agreement could be reached unless the employers offered quarterly cost-of-living adjustments. But now it appears that the union's pressure has been eased on this aspect." (*The Australian*, 1 March 1974)

The current union leaders' sell-out of the claims under current conditions is as bad as the last award was; and they are not prepared to make the slightest effort to do better.

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Laurie Carmichael during 1972 Ford strike

International conference held

An interim Conference, centered on the European work and perspectives of Revolutionary Marxists, took place this January in Germany. Comrades from or in seven countries participated.

The programmatic basis for the interim Conference was drawn from a political agreement on the basis for undertaking common work in Germany by the Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists and the Spartacist League/US. This document, setting forth eight specific points, is as follows:

"DECLARATION OF POLITICAL BASIS FOR COMMON WORK IN GERMANY

"I. The Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists (OBL) will undertake political work in Germany in common with the Spartacist League/US on the basis of programmatic agreement with the 1966 'Declaration of Principles' of the SL/US, subsequently adopted also by the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand. Fundamental to this Declaration of Principles are the decisions of the Communist International during the period of its first four Congresses and the 'Transitional Program', adopted by the 1938 Founding Conference of the Fourth International.

"II. In particular the following points are singled out for special emphasis or amplification in connection with our common work:

"1) Recognition of the necessity of the rebirth of the Fourth International, destroyed by Pabloist revisionism. Rejection of the claims of all ostensibly Trotskyist international groupings to represent programmatically the continuity of, or to be the Fourth International.

"2) Unconditional defense of the degenerated or deformed workers states against capitalist imper-

alism must be coupled with recognition of the necessity for political revolution against the bureaucracies of all these states, from Moscow and East Berlin to Belgrade, Hanoi, Havana and Peking.

"3) Rejection of the ultra-left position that the Social Democratic parties are bourgeois parties through and through. Recognition of the dual character of reformist workers parties, such as Social Democratic parties generally, as being simultaneously bourgeois and workers parties or, in Lenin's terms, 'bourgeois workers parties'.

"4) Recognition that the Trotskyist tactic of entrism flows from the historic task of revolutionists facing massive Social Democratic, Labour or Stalinist parties is, under ripe conditions, to split such parties into their essentially bourgeois and proletarian elements. This task is vital to the creation of mass revolutionary proletarian parties and thereby of advancing on the road to the proletarian revolution itself.

"5) Rejection of the longtime Pabloist conception of entrism ('*sui generis*') to pressure reformist, revisionist or nationalist bureaucracies so that a left section is supposed to be assisted in becoming the 'unconscious agent' of an allegedly automatic process of permanent revolution, i.e., the denial of the centrality of the proletariat and the substitution for its programmatically-based revolutionary party in the struggle for socialism. Rejection of the ultra-left, and often petty-bourgeois radical, Pabloist complement which rejects the tactic of entrism as such.

"6) Recognition of the validity of the tactic of revolutionary regroupment. This is a tactic which is particularly applicable as a means for furthering political differentiation and clarification through a process of splits and fusions among ostensibly revolutionary groups when conditions have produced turmoil on the left. 'To set the

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AMWU leaders veer left

The bosses "offers" have tried to blackmail workers into accepting a lower settlement with implied threats of plant closures and lay-offs. In response the unions must demand that the employers open their books for inspection by committees of workers. If the employers refuse to operate the plants at a lower profit they must be nationalised immediately under workers control. But in fact, profits from most metal firms are at record high levels.

The metal unions' log of claims represents a modest, indeed in several respects, inadequate minimum. Union leaders are promoting illusions about the course which the struggle must take, leaving the working class totally unprepared for any defence of living standards under recession conditions. The labour bureaucracy is fulfilling its essential role in the schemes of the Whitlam government to salvage capitalists' profits at the expense of the living standards of the workers, without a direct confrontation with the workers' organisations.

Australia is currently moving towards a recession under the impact of the current international economic crisis. Recessions in Australia's major trading partners, especially Japan, would mean a substantial reduction in the market for raw materials, one of the chief sources of profit for Australian capital. The increased level of international competition on the world market also presses against Australian capital, which is relatively less productive than much overseas industry and therefore not in a good competitive position. Domestic producers (including the multi-nationals) have depended historically on tariff walls to subsidise their profits on the domestic market. In addition, Australia's relative removal from the "energy crisis" (on which the current international economic downturn is blamed by bourgeois publicists) has resulted in a continuing re-valuation of the Australian dollar; favouring imports and making Australian exports more expensive on overseas markets.

The Australian bourgeoisie is responding to the gloomy profit forecasts by cutting back investment (*Financial Review*, 14 December 1973) -- openly preparing to bring about unemployment in order to protect their now record profits. It is not clear how bad the recession will be; but increases in unemployment are likely to be substantial. Women workers and youth will be the first to go. Meanwhile, price inflation will continue, speeded on by the cutbacks in production planned in advance and controlled by mono-

polies such as BHP to maximise profits over the short term. Inflation is endemic to a decaying capitalism.

The political response of the ruling class cannot be the same today as it was in the recession of 1971 when the Liberal-Country Party government attempted to bolster profits with a direct attack on the trade unions (penal powers and the "Lynch laws"). The combativity of the Australian proletariat effectively prevented these measures from being implemented. Subsequently strikes increased as workers sought to maintain their real wages in the face of inflation which rose to an annual rate of 14% in 1973.

The present Labor government was elected in November 1972 largely on the basis of its promises to an aroused working class to govern in the interests of the labour movement, campaigning against the penal powers and Lynch laws. At the same time, reformist Whitlam held out to the bourgeoisie the promise to keep the working class in check through the authority of the union and Australian Labor Party (ALP) bureaucracy, since workers had proven too conscious and organised for the bourgeoisie to risk a direct confrontation.

BUREAUCRATS BACK PRICES FRAUD

The prices and incomes referendum represented a move by the Whitlam regime to show his bourgeois masters his willingness to control wages, which had become necessary because many workers saw the election of the ALP as an opportunity to fight successfully for higher wages and better conditions. For example, in the oil and power industries, a campaign of strikes and bans for the 35-hour week began, which Whitlam/Cameron pretended to support but did not ing to aid. In the referendum the ruling class on the whole supported a "Yes-Yes" vote (even the conservative *Sydney Morning Herald*). The trade union bureaucracy had recently compromised itself more than ever by the atrocious sell-out in the last national wage case, and its role in the NSW 35-hour week campaign and the Broadmeadows Ford strike. In breaking with Whitlam to support a "Yes" to price control, "No" to wage control vote, these labour lieutenants of capital warned the ruling class that they could not ram a direct wage freeze down the throats of their membership. At the same time they hoped to safeguard their usefulness to the bourgeoisie by promising to hold down wage demands if the prices referendum was successful. Cameron's argument in support of their position is highly revealing. Frankly admitting that price controls could not really work "without detrimental effects on the rate of growth and capital accumulation [that is, the profit system]," he went on:

"...by discouraging price increases we automatically discourage employers from granting

increases in wages and salaries, since they cannot easily pass them on as prices...a prices policy is an incomes policy." (emphasis added) (*Financial Review*, 18 October 1973)

Nothing could be clearer: Hawke/Cameron intend to use fake "price control" to justify before the workers a promise to the bosses to hold down wages.

The anxiety of union bureaucrats in the metal industry to regain the support of the rank and file stems from discontent over the last Metal Industry Award. The 1972 agreement allowed for only a \$6 a week rise spread over nine months, and included an agreement not to press for further over-award increases. The disastrous consequences of this settlement, made with essentially no campaign at all, stand out against the background of already soaring prices. This open sell-out produced a split in the bureaucracy. Independent fake-lefts like Heffernan and Brown of the AMWU eventually blocked with right-wingers like ex-Grouper Short of the FIA to create a majority on the joint metal unions negotiating committee in favour of accepting the offer. Because the CPA bureaucrats had made no preparation whatsoever for a serious campaign, which would have required an informed rank and file and an exposure of the right wing, Carmichael and Halfpenny were caught with their left cover down and isolated from the rest of the labour bureaucracy. Halfpenny's response? While rejecting the closed agreement, he recommended acceptance! According to the *Tribune*, 19-25 September 1972:

"AMWU leaders in Victoria [the CPA's AMWU stronghold] were in fact opposed to acceptance, but felt that, in the circumstances created by the right wing actions [!], they could not now recommend an all-out struggle to the workers..."

Instead, Halfpenny proposed an amendment to the motion to return to work which read in part:

"While accepting that the campaign around the metal industry claims has achieved substantial improvement in award wages and conditions [!], this meeting rejects any attempt by the employers to use a consent award to restrict the rights of metal workers to pursue claims for over-award payments and improved job conditions on individual employers at any time. This meeting expressed concern that little effort was made to develop an industry-wide campaign..." (emphasis added)

It was a little late to "express concern", and a significant number of workers did not agree that the paltry settlement represented a "substantial improvement". Stop-work meetings in mid-September

International conference held

base against the top' is the essence of this tactic as it is for other Leninist-Trotskyist tactics as well, such as the united front and entrism.

"7) Recognition of the need to struggle for a class opposition to all popular fronts, from Allende's *Unidad Popular* to the *Union de la Gauche* in France. No electoral support to any of the parties of popular fronts. Projection instead, where there is no mass revolutionary proletarian pole, of a policy of 'conditional opposition' to the reformist and revisionist parties in such a popular front, i.e., to raise the demand that such parties break from their coalition with bourgeois elements as a condition for critical support to them by class-conscious militants.

"8) Acceptance of the Bolshevik-Leninist conception of democratic centralism: full freedom of internal discussion, full unity in action. Rejection of 'freedom of criticism' outside the party as a perversion of Leninist democratic centralism and a throwback to the pre-First World War Second International.

"III. Since the above points constitute a relatively advanced level of programmatic agreement, we recognize our responsibility to struggle actively for the constitution as soon as possible of a democratic-centralist international Spartacist tendency, based on an elaborated common programmatic outlook among several national sections. At present, this necessarily entails the fullest possible consultation regarding this development."

Agreed to by the Political Bureau of the SL/US on 10 September 1973; and ratified by the Plenum of the OBL on 8 December 1973.

Edited for publication by the International Department of the SL/US on 14 February 1974.

Following discussion this Declaration in draft form was endorsed by the interim Conference unanimously with one abstention.

A companion document was also endorsed (unanimously). Its political provisions note:

"[Our] aim...is the constitution of a fighting propaganda group resolutely based on 'the historic tasks which flow from [the objective] situation irrespective as to whether or not the workers are today ripe for this. Our tasks don't depend on the mentality of the workers. The task is to develop the mentality of the workers' (Trotsky). Any programmatic adaptation or capitulation to the present consciousness of the masses in the name of 'tactics' must be rejected.

"The work of communists in trade unions must aim at the construction of a class struggle group with a membership defined by participation in the group and by agreement with the program of the group; a program which is an application of the Transitional Program to the concrete trade union situation and which aims at posing the class struggle group as an alternative revolutionary leadership of the union.

"The goal of the united front tactic is to implant the revolutionary program in the masses. Hence the decisive element of the action of revolutionists within the united front is the struggle for the revolutionary program in opposition to that of reformists or centrists. Without the struggle for the revolutionary program, any reference to the united front as a means to achieve 'the broadest possible unity of the class' is simply an adaptation to pre-World War I Kautskyist revisionism."

Preparation for the interim Conference included the production of a substantial first issue of the German edition of *Spartacist*. It contains the following material:

"Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International" (1963 Tendency Resolution in the SWP); "Contribution to the International Committee Conference" (1966 Spartacist Remarks in London); Material on the German IKD and Spartacus-BL (1972 Spartacist

Letter and 1973 Conference Greetings); "To the International Organizing Committee supported by the French OCI" (1973 Spartacist Letter); "Reformist Appetite versus Guerrilla-Oriented Centrism" (reprint of 1973 leftist factional material on the struggle within the United Secretariat); "Turn the Guns Around!" (OBL statement on the October 1973 war in the Near East).

The work of the interim Conference notably included endorsement of the publication, by Berlin supporters, of the periodical *Kommunistische Korrespondenz*, the first issue of which is in preparation.

The interim Conference concluded, upon a high note of determination for the furtherance of our common international work, with the singing of "The Internationale."

--statement by the International Department of the SL/US, 16 February 1974.

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voted to reject the offer in Dandenong, Victoria, where Halfpenny's cowardly amendment was repudiated, and also in Newcastle, NSW.

Halfpenny's reliance on piece-meal over-award gains to make up for the award sell-out meant abandoning weaker and less organised workers, thereby weakening the union as a whole. An industry-wide struggle remains an absolute necessity now to establish a decent starting point for all union members. Without an adequate cost-of-living escalator those less well off are condemned by reliance on over-award gains to declining real wages at least until the next award.

In practice, closed awards have been safely ignored by many workers who have had them over the past two years. For example, under a closed award, days lost due to strikes tripled among Pilbara miners (*Financial Review*, 3 December 1973). AMWU workers have followed suit wherever possible. But in a period of relative high unemployment such agreements will be honoured by the bureaucrats, so it is important to reject them now.

The spontaneous outburst of militancy in the Broadmeadows Ford strike last July and August sent shock waves through the union bureaucracy. Vehicle Builders union leaders, always among the most docile, outdid themselves grovelling before the bourgeoisie. As a result the Vehicle Building Employees Federation (VBEF) officials lost any remnants of authority they had, and in order to control the strike "militant" Laurie Carmichael was called in. But even Carmichael was caught off guard in attempting to force Ford workers back to work for a totally inadequate company offer, leaving him completely exposed for the labour faker he is and incurring the wrath of the largely migrant process workers. Said Carmichael:

"I made a mistake. The workers taught me a lesson. We had a plan, but we did not listen sufficiently to the workers and change that plan in accordance with your wishes." (*Tribune*, 31 July-6 August 1973).

Carmichael and Halfpenny have not forgotten that lesson. Thus the difference between the AMWU's stance during the 1972 award negotiations and their rhetoric surrounding the current log of claims.

LOG OF CLAIMS MUST GO FURTHER

The new AMWU log of claims is designed and presented to appear militant without fundamentally challenging the bosses. An outstanding example is the careful call for quarterly cost-of-living adjustments. In the form backed by Cameron in the national wage case, the quarterly adjustment will be a percentage of the minimum wage, and the absolute sum calculated that way will be added as a flat amount to total wages. But the minimum wage is now about half the average weekly wage. Thus, a 10% increase in prices would lead to an "automatic" wage increase of only 5%. A relatively frank bourgeois economist, Alan Hall, says quite plainly in an article for *Financial Review* (19 February 1974) that it is a device to "fight" inflation by cutting the real wages of the vast bulk of workers, who earn more than minimum wage.

While half a cost-of-living escalator is better than nothing, it is hardly adequate, and is being used to deceive the workers. The log of claims should include a full cost-of-living clause, demanding at least monthly adjustments on actual wages, based on an index kept by the unions.

With the threat of a recession, the 35-hour week assumes a great importance. If it were to be achieved for the Metal Industry Award, it would quickly embrace most workers. But as presented by the labour bureaucracy, beginning with Hawke, the 35-hour week becomes simply an additional wage boost for the same hours. Workers already average four hours per week overtime. A shorter work week is just a fraud unless there is no reduction in pay for the shorter week and overtime is purely voluntary. And unless weekly wages are adequate, many workers will have to do overtime even if it is formally voluntary. With a recession likely, the demand for a shorter working week becomes urgent to avoid large-scale unemployment. The metal award must guarantee the right to work by sharing the available work with a sliding scale of hours.

If the award campaign is to meet the needs of workers it must go beyond the bounds of negotiations with the employers, attacking the arbitration system and the anti-strike sanctions which are still on the books, in spite of Whitlam's promises. The metal unions' campaign must include a demand for the repeal of the Lynch laws and the dismantling of the entire arbitration and conciliation system which is used to forestall industrial action, to dissipate the workers' struggles in the employer-dominated arbitration courts, and to bind the trade unions as closely as possible to the bourgeois state.

The next issue of AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST will contain articles on the Red Federation of New Zealand, Maoism in Victoria, and the Communist League of Australia.

Without exception, the trade union leaders are committed to working within the framework of capitalism. Purely trade-union struggle, as in periods of relative class peace, completely accepts the framework of capitalism, taking advantage of temporary favourable labour market conditions to pressure equally temporary concessions from the capitalists. When conditions change, they are incapable of defending whatever gains may have been made, much less of extending them. In order to maintain their privileges, the bureaucrats will bargain away the needs of the metal workers at the first opportunity.

Halfpenny, Carmichael, and with them the CPA stand entirely within this perspective. Halfpenny makes no bones about his reformism in a recent interview for the *National Times*. He responded to the question, "How can socialism be achieved in Australia?":

"That of course is an extremely difficult question... The methods I'd suggest are not known at this time and it is a bit difficult to predict them [!]. It will need to come as a result of some sort of revolutionary process, but then it shouldn't be assumed that it will be done by armed force or some sort of violence. It may be possible through the parliamentary system to bring about a revolutionary transformation in society." (*National Times*, 1 December 1973).

What may seem odd is that Halfpenny's CPA still wants to call itself Leninist. The CPA represents a degeneration of Stalinism into something resembling a classical social-democratic formation, with the ambition to become Australia's mass reformist party. But it is frustrated because for the present the ALP has that job tightly nailed down.

A group which lays claim to being an alternative to the assorted reformists in the AMWU's official leadership is the Socialist Labour League (SLL) with their "Metal Trades Caucus". The SLL, attached to Healy's International Committee of the Fourth International, has made its main slogan for the award campaign, "a united campaign for the full log of claims." The SLL's paper, *Workers News* (14 February 1974) proclaims, "... the fight for a united campaign for the log of claims has at its very centre the struggle for a new leadership."

There are two things wrong with the way this correct slogan is used by the SLL. First, the "united campaign" is left abstract and deliberately vague. Secondly, the log of claims as it stands has a number of shortcomings. *Workers News* does not mention these shortcomings and so gives the log as it stands essentially uncritical support.

The struggle for this log of claims is no more a sufficient basis for a revolutionary leadership in the metal unions than any other set of militant trade-union demands. A truly revolutionary leadership must be based on a full programme of class struggle linking the immediate needs of the workers to the tasks of socialist revolution. In addition to the log, the SLL can add only the defence of basic trade-union rights and a call to pressure the Labor government to nationalise industry.

Introducing:

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

Australasian Spartacist first appeared in mimeographed form in July 1973. The current issue, the first monthly tabloid, represents a significant step forward in the development of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand. With this transformation, our ability to struggle for the creation of a revolutionary vanguard nucleus welded together on a strong programmatic basis will be qualitatively extended. In *Australasian Spartacist* No. 1, we outlined our orientation:

"The left -- in Australia and internationally -- is degenerated, fragmented and isolated, but it includes many elements trying to find the revolutionary path. It is the job of the Spartacist League to work for the political and theoretical polarisation of the ostensibly revolutionary groupings and for the crystallisation of all anti-revisionist Marxist elements on the Leninist-Trotskyist programme of building the revolutionary vanguard of the working class.

"Such Leninist regroupment is NOT achieved through the 'unity of the left' which is merely a strategy of worshipping the lowest common denominator in order to further the cause of unprincipled dodging of political issues. Only with the most trenchant mutual criticism of competing theories and programmes tested in the class struggle, only in the process of splits and fusions, can regroupment be on the sound basis of Leninism."

Australasian Spartacist is above all a propaganda organ, whose function is not simply to comment on, or fulminate against the evils of capi-

A clear idea of what the Healyites regard as a "full socialist programme" can be found in the "programme to meet the crisis" published in *Workers News* #9 (24 January 1974). Not only is the sliding scale of wages and hours missing, but there is no mention of the needs of migrants, women workers or young workers -- not even equal pay is mentioned. The SLL reduces the transitional programme to the defence of trade union rights plus a totally abstract campaign to demand that Whitlam expropriate the bourgeoisie.

The disorientation of the SLL resembles the sectarian opportunism of "third period" Stalinism. Like the Comintern in the 1929-1933 period, the Healyites embrace a totally un-Marxist theory of the impending "final crisis" of capitalism. They are similarly unable to see the contradictory role of the labour lieutenants of capital, the union bureaucracy. Attempting to justify their own version of the opportunist "united front below" to defend the trade unions and the "basic rights of the working class" by calling on workers to join the SLL, they are sometimes led into ridiculous assertions bordering on hysteria. Thus:

"So what Halfpenny wants is not to overthrow Australian capitalism, but to defend it in its death agony [quite true]. He wants the working class to be thrown into chains, its organisations smashed up, its leaders and militants brutally murdered." (*Workers News*, 7 February 1974)

Halfpenny, like any reasonable reformist, is of course not interested in being shot by the fascists. The SLL has missed the whole point of his role, ending up with a position that borders on the theory of "social fascism". Like Stalinism of the "third period" variety, the SLL's inverted reformism will eventually set itself right. An anticipation of such a flip-flop can be seen in their uncritical support of the full log of claims and their capitulation to backwardness in the working class concerning special oppression.

The Spartacist League works for the creation of a revolutionary alternative leadership in the trade unions through the construction of caucuses within the unions based firmly on the full transitional programme, the only programme adequate to the objective tasks facing the proletariat in the epoch of imperialist decay. The application of that programme to the metal workers' award fight would include the following essential points, in addition to the original log:

A co-ordinated nationwide strike for the full log of claims! No closed awards -- unconditional right to strike at any time! Fight the special oppression of women and youth -- equal pay for apprentices and women; free 24-hour child-care! Repeal all anti-strike laws -- down with the arbitration system! Full citizenship rights for all migrants and no discrimination in immigration! A sliding scale of hours and full cost-of-living escalator! Open the books! Expropriate the metal industry and all basic industry under workers control! Against protectionism -- not tariffs but strikes against layoffs! For Labor government support to all workers' struggles to implement these measures! Oust Whitlam -- for a Labor Party with a revolutionary leadership! For a workers government based on workers councils!

talism, but to present a clear programmatic answer and to expose all those that seek to confuse and mislead the working class. *Australasian Spartacist* is not a "mass paper", and to claim such would be nothing more than a sterile pretension.

Like Lenin and Trotsky we understand that the vanguard party can only be built "from the top down", by first winning the most conscious elements to its programmatic banner, and that the influence and authority of the party (and its press) is a function of the growth of its organisation and its cadres.

The developing inter-imperialist rivalries, the threat of a major recession, and the concomitant danger of a catastrophic third imperialist world war only serve to underline the crisis of proletarian leadership. Our programme is that of the Fourth International (FI), founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky. Today the FI is shattered and dispersed, its name usurped by various pretenders with revisionist politics who reject its programme, but the Transitional Programme retains its validity and we struggle on that basis. Without the construction of a genuine international revolutionary leadership capable of leading the world proletariat in the overthrow of imperialism, mankind faces untold suffering. *Australasian Spartacist* is intended as a weapon in the struggle to build the Leninist vanguard party and in so doing create the conditions for the victorious proletarian revolution.

Forward to Bolshevik Parties in Australia and New Zealand! Forward to the Rebirth of the Fourth International!

United Secretariat splits in Australia

Two roads to betrayal... Part 1: SWL

In the last half-dozen years a number of organisations claiming to be Trotskyist have emerged in Australia. Coalescing largely out of the anti-war and student movements, a number of groupings were drawn to a vaguely understood Trotskyism as an alternative to the moribund and divided Stalinist movement, and the particularly right-wing social-democracy of the Australian Labor Party (ALP). They inevitably gravitated toward the different international blocs claiming to represent the Fourth International.

Two or three loose, personal groupings eventually congealed into the Socialist Workers League (SWL). The Socialist Review (SR) group was founded in May 1970 around the leading personalities of Roger Barnes, John and Jim Percy and Ian McDougall who identified themselves early on with the Pabloist "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec). (The SR group overlapped with the broader Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) established soon after.) A third grouping around John McCarthy in Brisbane was won somewhat later to the views of one section of the United Secretariat.

Those moving toward Trotskyism needed to break from a reformist social-democratic background if they were to realise the impulse toward revolutionary Marxism. Looking to organisations like the USec or (in the case of Workers Action and others) Gerry Healy's "International Committee" for guidance, these people could only be disoriented and misled. The betrayal of Trotskyism by these self-styled "internationals" has drawn the groups attracted to them, including many subjectively revolutionary and talented individuals, into the morass of revisionism.

Those who were drawn into the USec have been faced with an open split since August, 1972, which produced the Communist League (CL). This split was a direct consequence of ongoing factional division within the USec internationally, demonstrating clearly the political confusion and opportunism of this bloc masquerading as an international party. The split in Australia provides us with a measure of the disorientation which has resulted from this deception. Whether or not the USec finally consummates an open split, its pretense has been shattered.

The complete break in the continuity of Trotskyism in Australia facilitated the USec and the International Committee in this role. Prior to the 1970s, the last authentic organised Australian Trotskyism was the Workers Party formed in the 1930s, which succumbed in the aftermath of WWII, infected by the two important revisionist currents to develop within the Fourth International (FI)--Schachtmanism (which rejected the military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism) and Pabloism. The effect was the virtual dissolution of any significant organised claimant to the mantle of Trotsky for years at a time. What occurred in Australia was not unique, but simply an extreme case of the destruction of the Fourth International by Pabloist revisionism culminating in the 1953 split.

THE ORIGINS OF PABLOISM

The FI emerging from WWII faced severe objective difficulties (not the least, the physical liquidation of much of the Trotskyist cadre, including Trotsky and most of the leaders of the European sections). It also confronted a series of events which were totally unexpected: the resurgence of Stalinist parties as the mass reformist parties and their treacherous role in several Western European countries; and the overthrow of capitalism in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and China by non-proletarian forces. The outcome of the war as a whole did not correspond to the projections made by Trotsky before his assassination, and in the case of these deformed revolutions were without historical precedent. Most sections of the FI came through the war numerically weak, isolated from the working class, generally inexperienced and theoretically ill-equipped.

Under these conditions there arose on the one hand a temptation to give in to impatience and to abandon the revolutionary party in order to seek ersatz success by attachment to some force other than the proletariat; and on the other, a tendency to uphold a sterile orthodoxy in order to resist this temptation. Along these lines the FI split in 1953.

Giving expression to the revisionist impulse was Michel Pablo, a leading member of the FI. He developed an impressionistic "theory" that the Stalinist parties would under the pressure of objective developments be forced to play a revolutionary role, and that for example Tito might "head a regroupment of revolutionary forces independent of capitalism and the Kremlin." In explaining the Eastern European and Chinese revolu-

tions Pablo developed a consistent revisionist methodology. In a 1951 document, "Where Are We Going?", he wrote:

"The relation of forces on the international chess-board is now evolving to the disadvantage of imperialism..."

"The objective process is in the final analysis the sole determining factor, overriding all obstacles of a subjective order."

"The Communist Parties retain the possibility in certain circumstances of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation."

This perspective rendered irrelevant the vanguard party, the embodiment of the subjective factor, and the whole Trotskyist programme based on the fundamental reality that the outcome of the crisis of the capitalist order hinges on the crisis of proletarian leadership. Pablo began to implement his theories through his policy of "entrism *sui generis*," i.e., the programmatic and organisational liquidation of the Trotskyist sections into Stalinist or Social-Democratic parties, leading to splits in several national sections when this disastrous course was resisted--particularly by the SWP, led by James P. Cannon, the majority of the French Parti Communiste Internationaliste, and the Lawrence-Healy group in Britain.

Pabloism triumphed in the International as a result of the failure of these anti-Pabloist forces to carry out a systematic international struggle against it. The issues involved remained unclarified internationally, paving the way for the SWP's eventual capitulation, capped by the "reunification" with Pabloism organisationally in 1963.

The rightward motion of the SWP was opposed by the Revolutionary Tendency (RT), a minority which the SWP leaders were forced to expel in 1963 to avoid internal criticism of the capitulation to Pabloism represented by the reunification. The RT had originated in 1961 in opposition to the Party majority's adoption of uncritical support of Castro in the Cuban revolution. So eager were the SWP majority leaders to embrace Mandel that the RT was expelled despite the fact that the RT had never broken discipline. The RT, later to develop into the Spartacist League of the U.S., took a clear position opposed to the reunification.

WHAT IS PABLOISM?

Pabloism, like any other revisionism, has a logic of its own because it is developed as a response to material and ideological pressures on the vanguard of the proletariat to abandon its world-historic aims. Nevertheless, for the same reason it leads continuously to new zig-zags, as it responds impressionistically to every variation in the "objective relation of forces" it worships. Pabloism in its original form was an unstable, petty-bourgeois ideology, a crackpot centrism with no significant social base. But like all varieties of centrism, when the opportunity arises or appetites grow too large, it becomes transformed into the theoretical cover for reformist betrayal, as in the cases of the Ceylonese Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the U.S. The nature of the force substituted for the working class, and way in which the political liquidation of the vanguard is carried out, has varied in the history of Pabloism depending on the particular circumstances which determine the profitable areas in which to sell out or capitulate.

But there is an underlying consistency in the way in which this opportunism is theoretically rationalised and generalised. Those elements of revisionist method peculiar to Pabloism are retained by the USec, and constitute its theoretical heritage.

At the roots of Pabloism is a denial of the leading revolutionary role of the proletariat and the consequent rejection of the need for the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party of the working class. It is not essential to Pabloism that in every case organisational liquidation is actually carried out. In many situations (such as that of the SWP in the early 60's) there was nothing to liquidate into, in the strict organisational sense. The key to Pablo's "entrism *sui generis*" was not the organisational dissolution but the explicit or *de facto* abandonment of the struggle for the Trotskyist programme, instead seeking the role of a left pressure on the Stalinist party bureaucracies or some other petty-bourgeois layer. When you abandon the fight for the programme of the revolutionary party, you are liquidating the party in the most fundamental sense.

This programmatic liquidation is justified by Pabloists with an undialectical, empiricist objectivism. On the one hand it invents trans-historical categories (such as the SWP and SWL's favor-

ite "ever-deepening process of radicalisation" or the Mandelite USec majority's "new mass vanguard" and theory of "neo-capitalism", redefining fundamental Marxist concepts of the working class and the imperialist epoch). On the other hand it must falsify and distort Leninist theory in order to hide under its authority. For this reason Pabloists show (as we shall see) a consistent inability to critically examine their political past, which would expose their opportunist vacillations.

Like all forms of opportunism, Pabloism is incompatible with real internationalism. When in 1963 the SWP rejoined Mandel, Frank, and Maitan (European leaders of the FI who had all sided with Pablo in 1953) to form the USec, there was a real political basis for the "reunification" owing to the degeneration of the SWP in the interim. This degeneration had led it to adopt the fundamentally Pabloist position that in the Cuban revolution a petty-bourgeois guerilla movement had created a healthy workers state without the direct intervention of the working class and without a vanguard party: and that such guerilla warfare was the path to socialist revolution throughout the "third world". But because opportunism means tailing different "opportunities" in different countries shaped by local conditions, this unity was essentially false and would inevitably develop huge cracks. Moreover, in order to unify on the basis of the SWP's capitulation to Pabloism, the SWP and Mandel simply ignored the preceding decade of separation. Cannon conveniently "forgot" what he said about Pabloism in 1953:

"We are finished and done with Pablo and Pabloism forever, not only here but on the international field... We are at war with this new revisionism."

"The essence of Pabloist revisionism is the overthrow of that part of Trotskyism which is today its most vital part--the conception of the crisis of mankind as the crisis of the leadership of the labor movement summed up in the question of the party." (J. P. Cannon, *Speeches to the Party*, p. 181)

The SWP is still trying to cover up the 1953 split, claiming that the SWP "never said that [Pabloism] was a theoretical revision of Trotskyism..."! (Les Evans, "Toward a History of the Fourth International, Part I, published in 1973, p. 11) The USec was from birth not an international but a federated rotten bloc, as the current faction fight has proven, haunted as it is by the issues of the 1953 split.

THE ORIGINS OF THE SWL

Trotskyism in Australia suffered more so than many other sections of the Fourth International from the weakness and disorientation infesting it after World War II, resulting in a complete break in continuity. The consolidation of a group sympathetic to the USec in 1966-69 was therefore not in any real sense a development out of the preceding Trotskyist movement. Rather the new ostensible Trotskyists had been won to the end-product of the degenerated "Trotskyism" represented by the USec. The initial core based in Sydney set up a loose organisation at first called S.C.R.E.W. ("Society for the Cultivation of Rebellion Everywhere") and later known as Resistance.

It was an amalgam of New Leftism, counter-culturalism, and anarchism, and a small quantity of diluted USec politics. The Origglass group maintained an indirect influence (They had remained loyal to Michel Pablo after his expulsion from the USec when his participation in Ben Bella's Algerian regime eventually made him unpalatable to the other Pabloists). The principal leaders of Resistance, Bob Gould and the Percy brothers considered themselves Trotskyists and eventually set up, as a supposedly Bolshevik organisation in Resistance, the International Marxist League. Resistance played an important part in some of the early anti-war Moratoriums in Sydney, apart from which its main activity was the advocacy of a vague leftism whose purpose was to engage students in struggle "against the system". In addition Resistance reprinted material from the USec and came more and more to identify with its politics, which gave the best theoretical rationale for the mindless activism and student power politics of Resistance.

As a result of a trip to Australia in 1969 by leading SWPer Barry Sheppard, it was decided that John Percy would visit the U.S. On his return, the Percys began a fight within Resistance, attempting to model their work on the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), youth front of the SWP. The fight was muddled by the general lack of political clarity in the organisation and by the penchant of both sides to rely on cliquist manoeuvring. The Percys fought for a harder youth organisation,

while Gould refused to do anything that would offend anarchist and life-stylist elements in the group or would disturb his own central role in this unorganised and apolitical milieu as the master-manoeuvrer. Gould rationalised his position with the argument that a party nucleus should be created before a YSA-type youth group was launched; but his words are rendered rather hollow by the fact that this nucleus has yet to transcend the walls of his bookshop. A later rationalisation articulated after the split was that he supported the European majority in the USec against the SWP line of the Percys but he never did anything to build that perspective either. The Percys eventually won the majority and being generally more serious than Gould, essentially did what they said they would. In July 1970 the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) emerged as a youth-vanguardist, reformist organisation on the YSA model. The SYA simply took over as a whole the reformist politics of the SWP.

What was to become the "adult group" associated with the SYA--and the organisation which in fact built the SYA--had emerged from Resistance earlier with the publication in May 1970 of the first issue of *Socialist Review* (SR). Heralding a "major regroupment of supporters of the Fourth International", the group had this to say about their origins:

"In Australia, the Fourth International has had a long history in the labour movement seeking, often with limited numbers and against considerable adversity, to attempt a socialist clarification of issues as they developed, and to play what part it could in the struggle against capitalism. In 1965, there was a division in the Fourth International. By a very small majority, the Australian section declared its support for a small group within the International. That group still exists, publishes a journal titled *International*, which puts the view of that minor tendency. The remaining supporters of the Fourth International [Gould and company] continued to work in small groups or as individuals, explaining and developing their views, winning others to their position, and playing their part in all mass activities of the left."

This is a wholly euphemistic description of the liquidation of the struggle for the Leninist vanguard party, and a complete evasion of the question of Pabloism. History begins in 1965! Playing one's part in the struggle against capitalism is equated with Bolshevism: the FI is described as having been represented for several years not as an organisation clearly based on the Trotskyist programme, but a collection of individuals, engaged in various protest movements.

SYA AND YOUTH VANGUARDISM: THE 'NON-PARTY'

John Percy's apparent infatuation with Cannon's *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, which he relied on heavily in a mechanical way against Gould, did not lead to an understanding of the role of a party or its functioning. The SYA was founded on a youth-vanguardist premise, *flowing from the opportunist politics of the USec*, that the youth group comes before the party:

"We are not creating a revolutionary party but an organisation of socialist youth who are developing [!] in a revolutionary socialist direction..." ("The Need for a Socialist Youth Organisation", adopted at SYA founding conference, printed in *Direct Action* #1, Sept. 1970.)

This was "explained" by an article which had appeared earlier in *Socialist Review* (SR #1, May 1970):

"In the present conditions a revolutionary party is not in a position [!] to reach youth directly. Yet youth remain the greatest potential for recruiting to the revolutionary party. In these circumstances an organisation that can relate directly [?!] to revolutionary youth is essential."

The revolutionary party cannot reach revolutionary youth; but "youth" turn out to be central to the revolution:

"...students are caught at the centre of the contradictions of this society which demands continually higher educational standards from its technicians but at the same time demands that this intellectual training be applied only to running the system, not questioning its very nature." (Emphasis added)

Thus petty-bourgeois student alienation replaces the class struggle as the central contradiction of capitalist society. Thus what need for a revolutionary party? A youth group will do! Not only do these real Pabloists see the leading force of the revolution as *some other layer than the proletariat*, they declare consistently enough that a party which addresses itself to any other class is simply irrelevant to the "revolutionary youth". After all, why should revolutionary youth want to build a revolutionary party, when they can have a youth group?

WHO NEEDS SOVIETS? NOT FIDEL ...

The "Statement of Aims" adopted at the SYA founding conference reveals a watering down of even the YSA's low level of reformist politics. The very first point declares: "The SYA stands for socialism with workers control..."! But socialism, is it not, according to comrades Marx and Engels, classless society? This contradiction in terms from a Marxist point of view reveals a fundamental misconception of the goal of the revolution, and leading directly to a fundamental disorientation as to the means to achieve it--the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"The working class will lead the struggle for socialism [why should it, if the "centre of the contradiction" of capitalism is in the universities?] which will be achieved by the direct implementation of such transitional demands as workers control. Workers' control of the factories, and similarly control of the schools by the staff and students, will be fundamental to the new socialist society."

What then becomes of the struggle for state power, soviets, etc.? The workers are backward, but they can safely be forgotten for the time being, because "the SYA, as a socialist youth organisation can participate in this activity ["the worldwide radicalisation of youth beginning with students"]..."!

The statement of aims goes on to give complete uncritical support to Castro (who was shortly to support fully Allende's treacherous popular front in Chile and who has always been closely tied to the Soviet bureaucracy) and the North Vietnamese Stalinists, endorsing the politics of the South Vietnamese popular frontist NLF and ignoring the repeated betrayals of the Vietnamese Stalinists, including the butchery of the important Trotskyist movement in Vietnam. The North Vietnamese and Cuban bureaucracies are explicitly omitted from a statement which calls for

political revolution in deformed workers states. And then the statement goes on to say: "What is clearly at stake in Vietnam is the right of nations to self-determination," when--according to the SYA--there is already a *healthy* workers state in half the country!

These postures, which serve as characteristic examples of the confused reformism of the SYA, stand totally counterposed to Trotskyism, which is the consistent expression of Marxism-Leninism to-day. For Marxists, university students remain essentially a petty-bourgeois layer in society, although frequently the most volatile and heterogeneous. To quote Trotsky:

"First and foremost, you have to understand that students do not constitute a distinct and unified group in society. They fall into various groups, and their political attitude closely corresponds to the one prevailing in these various groups in society. Some students are radical-oriented; but of these, only a very tiny number can be won over to the revolutionary party. The fact is that very often radicalism is a sickness of youth among what are actually petty-bourgeois students....The revolutionary student can only make a contribution if, in the first place, he goes through a rigorous and consistent process of revolutionary self-education, and, in the second place, if he joins the revolutionary workers' movement while he is still a student...." (Trotsky, *Writings, 1932, "On Students and Intellectuals"*, p. 331)

The tail-ending of Stalinism in North Vietnam and Cuba, the rejection of the political revolution in these countries, flows directly from Pabloism, indicating an inability to recognize the qualitative distinction between a healthy revolution and a deformed workers state. Trotskyists see that the overthrow of capitalism in backward countries can only lead to a counter-revolutionary policy internationally unless it is based on organs of workers democracy--and accomplished by the proletariat led by a Trotskyist vanguard party. The SYA defines the war in Vietnam as not a social revolution but a struggle for self-determination. Such a theory *subordinates* the proletariat to the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution, abandoning the theory of permanent revolution. It serves as the excuse for the championing of bourgeois pacifism in the anti-war movement, limiting it to the pacifist slogan, "Out Now" in order to maintain an alliance with social-democrats who aligned with that section of the bourgeoisie which for its own reasons opposed the war. Thus the SYA's anti-war programme was essentially popular frontist. Here the basic documents of the SYA confidently proclaim: "No organisation can co-opt this form of street action [mass mobilizations based on "Out Now"]". Yet that same month an article in *SR* (#2, August 1970) declared:

"The enormously large turnout in Melbourne was due perhaps to two factors. Firstly the influence of the ALP machine led by Cairns in mobilising branches and workers to come to the march...some people never learn, even when something big as the moratorium rolls right over them."

Indeed, the SYA seems not to have noticed that it took only a little pull and a few demagogic "radical" phrases for Cairns to co-opt the unco-optable. Rather than risk being "rolled over", the SYA climbed aboard.

Significantly, the founding documents of the SYA do not mention anywhere--Trotsky, Trotskyism, the Fourth International, the USec, or even the SR group which founded it! The SR group remained or-

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LITERATURE

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Healyite exclusions

What is the SLL afraid of?

One particularly odious example of unprincipled renegacy in the Australian left is the ostensibly Trotskyist Socialist Labour League (SLL) led by Jim Mulgrew. The SLL adheres to the "International Committee of the Fourth International", a bloc formed initially by those organisations within the Fourth International which rejected Pabloism in 1953, but now consisting of little more than the SLL (now called the Workers Revolutionary Party) of Gerry Healy in Britain, and his acolytes in the Workers League of the U.S., led by Tim Wohlforth.

One of the common features of these groups is their sectarian gangsterism, one expression of which is the exclusion of other political tendencies within the workers movement from the public functions of their organisation. In Australia, the SLL has followed a conscious and explicit policy of excluding all members or supporters of the Spartacist League from its advertised public meetings, since a meeting held in Sydney on January 26, 1973 which was attended by two members of the SL (as well as members of the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) and Communist League (CL)). In an article in the 5 February 1973 *Labour Press*, the SLL gives the following account:

"A third revisionist grouping called the Spartacist League was also represented. Its members attempted to disrupt the major speakers at every opportunity and to turn the meeting away from the central issues."

Further on we are told that the SL

"unite with the Pabloists in their hatred of Trotskyism. They attempt to disrupt the work of the Socialist Labour League and the Young Socialists in Australia, while acting as a prop for Stalinism."

Labour Press is lying, regarding both the alleged "disruption" which never took place and the ridiculous political positions attributed to the SL. The SL comrades present remained silent throughout both of the rather boring presentations. It is true that after SLL National Secretary Jim Mulgrew himself interrupted speakers from the floor, and after the SLL speakers had persistently ignored Spartacist criticisms, the two SL comrades made several interjections. This was certainly not to an extent which could be called "disruptive" and the SLL has not of course excluded Mulgrew. The SLL has simply fabricated this tale in an attempt to cover up their inability to confront political criticism.

The Spartacist League is not the only working-class tendency to be excluded from SLL meetings. At a public forum held in the plumbers union building in Melbourne in August 1973 Peter Conrick, a member of the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA), was excluded because of his defence of the SL's right to attend the meeting. Moreover, on many occasions, beginning with the January 26 meeting, Mulgrew has threatened members of the SL with bashings in a crude attempt at political intimidation. (Most recently, outside a meeting held at the Sydney Trades Hall on December 18, Mulgrew threatened to knock in the teeth of an SL member).

This method of struggle is of course nothing new in the history of the working class: union bureaucrats of all kinds, Stalinists and other reformists have always found it a convenient way to avoid political exposure. Evidently the SLL does not feel confident to defend its politics.

The Healyite IC has internationalised gangsterism and exclusionism. A classic case of Healyite gangsterism was that of Ernie Tate, a supporter of the United Secretariat in Britain which is supported by the Socialist Workers League and the Communist League, who in 1966 was severely beaten while attempting to distribute literature outside a meeting of the SLL. When Tate publicly protested the attack, Healy proceeded to sue both Tate and publishers of his accusations for libel in the bourgeois courts! In the U.S., Tim Wohlforth's Workers League has resorted to physical attacks against members of several other left-wing organisations to keep his "public" meetings safe from real debate. The Workers League has had cops called to stop members of the Spartacist League of the U.S. from picketing their meetings to demand an end to the anti-communist exclusions. The Workers League will condemn in the most indignant terms their own exclusion from meetings of the Communist Party U.S.A. but *habitually* resort to this Stalinist measure themselves. With an equal cynicism the SLL in Australia condemned the SYA and CPA for holding a closed meeting on Chile which was not advertised as public, while excluding members of other groups from their own *public* meetings!

The obverse side of SLL exclusionism, which is a rejection of the principle of workers democracy, is a willingness to rely on the forces of

the bourgeois state -- the cops and the courts against their opponents within the workers movement. The Healyites behave no differently in this respect than left-talking union bureaucrats who run to the courts to oust their bureaucratic rivals. Such actions expose as a complete fraud the pretensions of the SLL to support the independence of the unions from the state. Gangsterism and class-collaboration go hand in hand. *It is poison to the working class and all workers must be alerted to stamp it out!*

It is true that the SLL has a lot to hide. The SLL's and the IC's wild opportunism, defended with gangsterism, condemns them as centrist political bandits. If revolutionaries were to be admitted to SLL meetings, its leaders would not be

MULGREW vs HEALY — WOHLFORTH?

After the 15 February Direct Action Forum, Socialist Labour League (SLL) National Secretary Jim Mulgrew denied that Wohlforth, leader of the American Healyites, has ever said that wage demands are inherently revolutionary. Mulgrew further stated that he did not agree with that view. Here is what Wohlforth actually said:

"But the fact is that the fundamental contradiction within capitalism, suppressed for an entire historical period through wild inflation, is radically transforming the relations between classes ...

"This is why simple trade union demands are so profoundly revolutionary today." (Bulletin, 16 April 1973)

Furthermore, the British SLL agrees with Wohlforth. Peter Jeffries, writing in *Workers Press*, 27 September 1973, criticises James Robertson, National Chairman of the Spartacist League of the United States, because he is supposed

"... to deny that the wages fight today is a political fight with directly revolutionary implications. For him capitalism can still grant concessions, if only to limited sections of the working class. Here is but an expression of his denial of the depth of the capitalist crisis ..."

Jim Mulgrew's attention has clearly not previously been drawn to the International Committee's crisis-mongering economism. It is his responsibility now to take up the struggle against it in his organisation internationally. Perhaps he would find this quotation a useful head-note to his first polemical document:

"On the one hand, bourgeois economists depict this crisis simply as 'unrest', to use the elegant expression of the British. On the other hand, revolutionaries sometimes try to prove that the crisis is absolutely insoluble.

"This is a mistake. There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation. The bourgeoisie are behaving like barefaced plunderers who have lost their heads; they are committing folly after folly, thus aggravating the situation and hastening their doom. All that is true. But nobody can 'prove' that it is absolutely impossible to pacify a minority of the exploited with some petty concessions, and suppress some movement or uprising of some section of the oppressed and exploited." (Lenin, Report on the International Situation to the Second Congress of the Communist International, Collected Works, Volume 31, pages 226-7.)

able to hide the incredible zig-zags and self-contradictions produced as the IC and its sections have crassly pursued first one and then another opportunist appetite. Mulgrew would have to explain to his membership why the SLL is now attempting to cosy up to the Socialist Workers League (SWL) when the IC once denounced the Socialist Workers Party (SWP -- U.S. co-thinker of the SWL) as outside of the workers movement, and Wohlforth once justified the bashings of SWP members by the Maoists of Progressive Labor (*Bulletin*, 25 September 1967). The flip-flops of the IC concerning the Pabloist United Secretariat are too numerous to mention; it is sufficient to note that this is the *second* time that Healy has approached the USec for fraternal discussions. Yet the SLL itself proclaims that "it is only in the bitter struggle against the Pabloites that the Fourth International can be built." (*Workers News*, # 7, 13 December 1973). And at the same time Healy has maintained since 1966 that the Pabloists had been decisively defeated and that the IC was the Fourth International!

If the SLL let revolutionaries into their meetings they would also have to defend the Workers League, whose supporters fought to keep Attica Prison guards (butchers of the 1971 Attica rebellion) in their trade union (the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) (*Workers Vanguard* #14, December 1972), and Wohlforth's line that wage demands are inherently revolutionary. They would have to defend their mystification of dialectical materialism which in actuality distorts and denies the dialectic, and the idealised "Method" of Healy, which serves to cover his opportunism. They would have to defend their tailing of bourgeois Arab nationalism in the Near East, Indian mini-imperialism in Bangla Desh, and Mao in the Cultural Revolution. Healy's monetarist theory of capitalist crises would be exposed as a rejection of Marxism.

The SLL's rejection of workers democracy goes hand in hand with an abstention from a real struggle against revisionism in the working class, anti-revisionist posing to the contrary. This is not accidental; the workers democracy the SLL opposes is a necessary condition for the struggle against the bourgeois ideology of the Hawkes and Whitlams and the reformist revisionism of Carmichael, Freney and the SWL. At bottom the source of the SLL's sectarian exclusionism is the revisionism of the IC itself, which blinds it both to the class nature of the state and to the necessity for political struggle among working class tendencies.

DEFEND WORKERS DEMOCRACY!

Bolsheviks realise that they cannot win the working class to revolutionary consciousness simply by demanding that they be recognised as the revolutionary party. A mass revolutionary party can develop only in a thoroughgoing political battle with the representatives of bourgeois ideology within the proletariat. Without such open political struggle there can be no clarity and no class consciousness.

It is not for nothing that Marxists are concerned with the consciousness of the working class, the only consistently revolutionary class in capitalist society. The primary obstacle to a working class revolution is the hold of reformism, an alien ideology, over the masses of workers -- what is defined in the Transitional Programme, the basic document of the Fourth International at its founding, as the crisis of proletarian leadership. Marxists do not uphold workers democracy as an abstract ideal but as the necessary condition for the struggle for revolutionary leadership. For this reason the Spartacist tendency internationally has a record of consistent defence of workers democracy and of victims of gangsterism within the left -- including the Healyites. For example, when members of the Workers League were attacked for selling their paper at an auto factory in California by members of the Maoist Revolutionary Union, they were physically defended by members of the Spartacist League of the U.S. Partly as a result of the SL's defence, workers in the local union condemned the attacks by an overwhelming vote.

The SLL's intimidation and cowardly exclusions will not succeed, and cannot in the long run save them from Bolshevik criticism. Instead, they only guarantee their further political degeneration. The Spartacist League calls on all political tendencies in the workers movement and all class-conscious workers to defend workers democracy by condemning and protesting the SLL's exclusionism.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

Melbourne feminists ban communists

to do, they had no answer but that they regarded themselves as members of the group and that the only way we could get rid of them was by pushing them out the door."

It is true, of course, that the SL members, in the absence of any effective and correct political activity by the group, pointed out that to correct this a discussion of fundamental perspectives was necessary, and consistently fought for such a discussion; and that SL members claimed membership in WWG (the "Statement" itself describes membership in WWG as "informal") and would not leave unless forced out. It is also true that we argued against the categorical exclusion of males. Every other allegation is *false*. SL members *never* questioned whether it is worthwhile working for reforms but fought against the *limitation* of the struggle to reforms compatible

Two roads to betrayal

organisationally undefined for some time while continuing in practice to run the SYA as what could only be a front group, impelled to deny dishonestly the relation between the two. But for Leninists, it is inherently unprincipled to have on an indefinite basis two co-existing organisations obviously with substantial political agreement and in this case publishing material from the same USec periodicals simply ignoring one another. This politically dishonest policy, ignoring the norms for youth-party relations worked out by the early Comintern, worked to the advantage of the Percys in bureaucratically suppressing debate in the SYA.

The SWL's attitude toward the Labor Party is a logical extension of the same Pabloist method. The document entitled "The Economic Situation and our Perspectives" (adopted by the June 1972 NC Plenum of the SWL; SWL Information Bulletin, No 2 in 1972) outlines a very unequivocal view:

"We give the Labor Party unconditional support as the party of the unions and the working class. That is, we support it against the capitalist parties, irrespective of its leadership... Our attitude to the ALP is similar to our attitude to the unions and the workers states--we support the basic class conquests but retain our right to criticise the leadership. We maintain this attitude of unconditional support as long as the ALP remains for the workers the party of the unions, the alternative to the parties of the bosses." (original emphasis)

For the early Pablo, Stalinism in the deformed workers states could no longer betray; for the SWL, the working-class base of the ALP is an excuse for "critical support" of the programme of the current ALP leadership in power. In both

cases, the contradictory character of the deformed workers states and the mass reformist labour parties is suppressed. Unconditional support of the ALP means that the SWL would, for example, continue to support the ALP at a time when it was leading the working class to the slaughter by backing a new imperialist war.

For Leninists, critical support for the Labor Party is a tactic which exploits the contradiction between the reformist policies of the leadership and the needs of its working class base. This critical support must counterpose to the parliamentary road the need for a workers state, linking the question of state power to the immediate needs of the working class through the transitional programme. How much the SWL differs from Leninism can be gauged by the slogan expressed in the headline of an article in *Direct Action* during the last elections (*Direct Action* #28, 13 October 1972):

"Education--Abortion--Homosexuals--Pollution--Four burning issues for the Labor Party: Labor must fight for socialist solutions!"

Not only have the questions of working conditions, speed-up, the potential for an incomes policy been ignored; the transitional programme to lead working struggle to revolutionary struggle has simply disappeared.

SYA CALLS FOR ANTI-WAR POPULAR FRONT

The effective reduction of the transitional programme to the old Social-Democratic minimum/maximum kind is a keynote of reformism and central to the politics of the SWL/SYA. In the anti-war movement, the SYA advocated a popular front struggle against the war, openly seeking a bloc with a section of the bourgeoisie:

"The united front coalition [i.e., the single-issue peace movement] will first of all be a coalition of left-wing forces [?] but will also include from time to time forces such as the Australia Party, who come to agree with the central demand of the cam-

aign. It is not the role of the Left to exclude these forces..."

Especially when the slogan of the "united front" and its activities have been chosen in order to entice them! Why? "...their weight adds enormously to the possibilities for building really large actions." (from the anti-war paper adopted by the Second National Conference of the SYA).

In order to excuse this political alliance with bourgeois defeatism, the SYA developed the original view that impotent peace crawls are "proletarian methods of struggle"! To quote again:

"Mass street demonstrations have shown themselves to be the best way of drawing the working class into action on the war issue. In the past, whenever the working class has been stirred into action, it has expressed itself in the streets. The Moratorium mass actions therefore present to the workers a traditional method of demonstrating their grievances."

It is not likely that the SYA was simply ignorant of the existence of strikes. But to urge strike action against the war would certainly have offended their bourgeois allies, and perhaps cut down a little on the possibilities for "really large actions". But then again, it would have been immensely more effective in bringing the social power of the working class to bear in defence of the Vietnamese revolution. The peace crawls, devoid of any social power, were necessarily only a parliamentary pressure tactic, which, with the help of the SYA, kept the anti-war movement tightly bound to the bourgeoisie.

In every other arena of their activity, the SWL/SYA have played the same role. Their utter capitulation to feminism, justified with the incredible assertion that its purely bourgeois-democratic demands are "inherently revolutionary" in and of themselves, accompanied an enormous effort devoted to limiting the struggle for women's liberation to low-level reforms, and maintaining it as a bloc between women of all classes. The SYA pushes the absurd and demagogic, as well as totally non-Leninist, call for a black political party in Australia, uncritically tailing black militants as Bobbi Sykes. The original SYA "transitional programme" for labour (just another constituency to the SYA) (in *Direct Action* #6, May 1971) does not mention a sliding scale of wages and hours, nationalisation of industry (with or without compensation), or the need for a workers government; but apparently feels it is more important to call for free rock festivals.

In the second half of 1971, for no particular reason, the SR group decided to transform itself into a party and "go public". At a January, 1972 "founding conference" the SWL was formed. The process of consolidating the SWL led to the exodus of two layers of cadre who could not be assimilated into the framework of SWP politics. Following a fight at the January conference, Roger Barnes, a founding member of the SR group, resigned in March, along with his personal supporters. The political differences were neither significant nor clear, and the dispute had the character of a fight between two cliques which had always existed within SR. Most followers of Barnes have since dropped out of politics altogether. Later, Ian McDougall left and also Jill Jolliffe and Rod Quinn, all demoralised with the bureaucratism of the Percy regime. But elements such as Barnes and McDougall also represented more thorough-going indigenous social-democratic outlooks than the Percys, and were organically hostile to any centralist discipline.

The Percys' bureaucratism was real. We quote from the SWL Founding Conference minutes:

"Amendment 5 Ian M Include the following as a new section 9 under Article VIII/Discipline in the document DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS LEAGUE: 'Minorities, while duty bound to carry out majority decisions, have an incontestable right to form factions or tendencies.' ... VOTING ... AMENDMENT 5 LOST 14 for, 24 against, 6 abstentions"

Jim Percy spoke against the motion and the SWL took its stand against factional democracy. Its constitution was left with no provision for internal democracy whatever.

More importantly, the January conference was attended by members of *Labor Action*, a group which supported the adventurist opportunism of the International Marxist Group, British section of the USec. The "fusion" of these two groups confronted both with the current split in the USec, which dated from the 1969 USec World Congress. The SWP's rightward motion had brought it into conflict with the European-based majority over their support of guerillaism in Latin America.

The SWL, having absorbed the end-product of the SWP's reformist decay, could only follow its lead. The SWL is destined to play out the role of a left social-democratic reformism which can be easily absorbed by a new ALP "Left". Its organisational independence, which is precious to it as an "orthodox" talisman and an instrument for pursuing its own appetites, is a mere formality; politically the SWL will remain within the framework of social democracy.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SIX

with capitalism. We never "forced" any discussion on the group, speaking only when recognised and obeying the rules of the meeting at all times. In plain truth, often no one else had anything to say. Activity was not "reduced to zero" because of the SL but because the group had been led into a dead-end by SWAG's mindless activism. This is proven by the fact that for two months after our expulsion, the WWG lapsed into almost complete inactivity. SL members never stated that they "disagreed completely with the entire basis on which the group had been formed..." The only explicit basis of the group was the focus on working women--with which we explicitly agreed. We did "have an answer" to why we remained in the group which was perfectly obvious: we were interested in winning members of the WWG to our perspective, on the basis of which the group's activity could usefully proceed.

The "Statement" goes on to claim that "the group had in fact been based" on points including male-exclusionism, "support for the existing WL movement" (i.e., for its current feminist politics), and a commitment to fight only for "immediate reforms". None of these points had been agreed to by the WWG--they cannot even be found in the earlier unadopted SWAG document. Moreover it is useful to note that male exclusionism has not been regarded as an absolute principle in the women's movement even by such a hard feminist as CPA member Zelda D'Aprano (see her document, "Woman Is Moving: A History of the Womens Liberation Movement in Melbourne", June 1973).

After having forced a formal "political basis" on the WWG solely for the purpose of politically defining its membership so as to exclude the SL to suppress the discussion of SL views, the signatories of the leaflet are cynical and hypocritical enough to proclaim: "We want to make it very clear that their expulsion was not because of their political views."! It is not very convincing; the rest of their own leaflet stands in contradiction. It is all right to have political views, as long as you don't fight for them!

Among the signatories to this tissue of lies, hypocrisy and political cowardice were Filar, Stone, and Lee-Ack of the SWAG, Bon Hull, and Helen Anderson of the Communist League (which sometimes tries to pretend that it is Trotskyist).

BOURGEOIS MEN IN, COMMUNISTS OUT

In the course of defending themselves against this exclusion at a General Meeting of WL, on April 15, SL members were challenged to hold their own meeting and invited to use the Women's Centre in Melbourne for that purpose. Subsequently the use of the Centre was denied on the grounds that the meeting was advertised as open to men. In the same month the Women's Centre was hosting a lecture series by a male bourgeois economist--one Peter Riach, a lecturer at Monash University

(whose lectures began on 20 March and ran into April). This incident concisely illustrates the role of male exclusionism and its political bias.

In late September, an organised drive was begun to expel the SL from the General Meetings as well. A special meeting for this purpose, the 30 September General Meeting, was held in which the rest of the agenda was suspended. The two SL members present were totally unprepared for this unprovoked attack. A number of charges were made, none of them specific, and for the most part simply repeating the slanders used to justify the WWG expulsion. In addition we were charged with "bringing politics into WL" [!] and with having "male politics" (which, of course, no one could define). Bon Hull, who led the attack, even opposed giving SL members present a right of reply, but was overruled by the meeting. The chair, CPA member Cathy Gleeson, subsequently permitted SL members to speak only once each in their defence. The expulsion motion itself was moved by Patricia Filar of SWAG.

WHO ARE THE DISRUPTERS?

Other CPA members have since made clear their support in principle for political exclusion in the women's movement, such bureaucratic methods following easily from the CPA's Stalinist heritage. At the 29 December General Meeting of Sydney Women's Liberation, the following motion was put by women of the Spartacist League: "We affirm that the Women's Liberation Movement should not exclude any tendency or individual standing for the liberation of women." CPA members such as Joyce Stephens stated that they disagreed with the motion, and the opposition of the CPA at that meeting led to the dismissal of the motion without a vote. Other left-wing groups have displayed their lack of principle in other ways. The CL and SWAG have sponsored or endorsed political expulsions; the reformist SYA has demonstrated its willingness to do so by its slander of the SL (the utterly false charge of "disruption" originated in a report in *Direct Action* #38 (March 29, 1973)). Yet when SYA members, in spite of their enthusiastic espousal of feminism, are attacked for their attempts to gain support in the women's movement by organisational means, they write pious declarations opposing such exclusions (See the one published in the August 1972 issue of *Mejane*).

FIGHT EXCLUSIONISM!

Unless the principle of open political debate within the women's movement is upheld its continued impotence and the continued political and ideological stranglehold of the bourgeoisie are assured. The Spartacist League expects its politics to be attacked, and asks no one to endorse its positions who does not agree with them. But we call on all those within the women's movement who support the right of open political debate among those who espouse the goal of women's liberation to join in the defence of that principle and to demand the repudiation of the actions of the Melbourne Women's Liberation General Meeting.

Melbourne feminists ban communists

All members and supporters of the Spartacist League have been banned from General Meetings of the Melbourne Women's Liberation Movement on political grounds. The expulsion at the 30 September meeting, prepared secretly in advance and bureaucratically forced through by feminist members and supporters of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG), followed a period of political discussion and struggle in Melbourne women's liberation initiated by members of the SL, against what had come to be the dominant policies within the movement. So blatant was this political suppression that its instigators were forced to create a screen of lies and insinuations concerning the politics of the SL and the actions of its members to justify it.

The women's liberation movement as it has existed in recent years has remained limited both in its ideology and its social base to the petty-bourgeoisie. The movement has its origins in the broad political current of the New Left which emerged from the radicalisation of important sections of the petty-bourgeoisie and intelligentsia in the late 1950's and the 1960's. Women's liberation applied to women many of the false doctrines developed by the New Left, originally, at least in part, a response to the political vacuum created by the widely discredited and ossified Stalinism of the CPA. In particular, the notions that the more oppressed are necessarily more revolutionary, that each oppressed group in society should struggle alone for its own liberation, that all organisation, conscious political struggle and leadership is necessarily bureaucratic, undemocratic and elitist (notions all characterised by a radical version of democratic bourgeois ideology, rejection of class analysis, and lack of political seriousness that have always typified the radical petty-bourgeoisie) were taken over by the movement for women's liberation when it emerged as a reaction against the usually very real male chauvinism of both the New Left and the Stalinists. As the feminist movement began to grow significantly the left's male chauvinism was simply inverted, and fake revolutionaries of all varieties began to tail it uncritically.

The central idea of the movement was expressed in the widespread statement: "We are oppressed as women. It is as women, that we are, therefore, organising." Feminist ideology, in spite of occasional verbal deference to a working-class orientation, holds that the fundamental division in society is not a class division but a sexual one.

FEMINISTS -- PRISONERS OF BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY

Women in the movement saw the roots of their oppression in the male chauvinist psychology and ideology of capitalist society, and in their own conditioning by that society. This attitude was expressed most militantly in "zap-actions", demonstrations, and so on, directed at exposing male chauvinist ideology before the general public. But it has found its inevitable end in irrelevant utopianism and crass reformism--idealistic communes and "new" ways of raising children on the one hand, and lobbying bourgeois politicians for parliamentary reforms on the other. The origins of the movement and its predominant ideology not only militated against a class basis for the struggle against women's oppression, but also discouraged the effort to achieve political clarity; thus one woman produced a leaflet denouncing theory in general (on theoretical grounds!). The movement adopted a kind of "pure", "participatory" democracy and opposed hard political struggle in principle.

The real male chauvinism of virtually every existing political organisation led to a denunciation of politics and political parties in general. However, in so doing the movement ensured that it would remain dominated by a form of bourgeois ideology, including bourgeois conceptions of political action, such as single-issue reformism and general class collaboration, thereby *in fact* promoting a very definite and very dangerous political line. In addition, the subjectivist, anti-theoretical thrust of the movement, typified by the small "consciousness-raising" discussion groups left little room for political debate and eventually helped justify political suppression within the movement. Male exclusionism worked in the same direction. In practice bourgeois women were admitted--and on occasion bourgeois men--while communists (men and women) were finally excluded. Any revolutionary criticism became "male politics" simply by virtue of the fact that it opposed the categorical exclusion of males and fought for a proletarian programme as opposed to unity with bourgeois women.

Thus the women's liberation movement has never developed a clear understanding of the source of women's oppression, the nuclear family, nor developed a coherent strategy and programme

to fight for its replacement. Like every vital question before the women's movement, this question cannot for feminists ever be finally resolved; it is something which is always set aside for the indefinite future and cannot even be *discussed*, because it would "frighten new women away". Thus the movement remains dominated by a programme of the bourgeoisie, and is *limited* to the struggle for reforms entirely within the framework of capitalism. This standard feminist argument is an admission of political bankruptcy. Rejecting theoretical clarity, they can only continue to tell women what the vast majority know already--that they are oppressed.

The SL's intervention and activity in the women's movement is directed first at fighting for the only strategy and programme which can seriously advance the fight against the oppression of women--the class struggle and proletarian revolution. While the special oppression of women affects all women in class society, it is the capitalist ruling class which upholds and needs to perpetuate this oppression, which is rooted in class society. Communists see that the psychology of men and women is developed from, and used to perpetuate, the real material oppression suffered by women, as a semi-chattel attached to the most fundamental organ of private property--the family. From this institution flows the vulnerability of proletarian women in the labour market and the discrimination against all women in all spheres of life. The family breeds in women all the paroch-



Melbourne International Women's Day, March 1973. Report of meeting in *Direct Action* slanderously accused SL of "siezing microphone" and "disrupting". *Direct Action* refused to print SL letter in response. (photo -- Sandy Turnbull)

ialness, the dependence, the "self-sacrificing qualities" needed to produce obedient domestic slaves dedicated to raising future generations of wage-slaves for capitalism. Therefore a communist programme for women's liberation must be aimed at laying the material basis for the replacement of the nuclear family by making this "women's work" a collective *social* responsibility--e.g., state-provided child support, including free 24-hour child care centres, free laundry services, socialisation of household duties and free quality education with stipend. Such measures can free women to become integrated into the direct productive life of society as equals in a classless society. But these measures capitalist society is incapable of providing for the masses of women. It is equally important that such a programme is directed against the material oppression of working women as part of a programme of united working class struggle, including a sliding scale of wages and hours, equal pay for equal work, the extension of protective legislation to all workers, the expropriation of industry under workers control.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Only the proletariat has both the material interests and the social power to overthrow capitalism and lay the basis for the development of classless society. It is essential that the fight against women's oppression become an important and organic part of the programme of a class-conscious proletariat. Therefore, unlike other women claiming to be socialists, such as members of the CPA, SWAG, the Communist League (CL) and reformist Socialist Workers League/Socialist Youth Alliance (SWL/SYA), members of the SL do not claim to be "women first" but communists, who recognise that in order to take and hold state power, the working class must in the first place be able to win to it the support of all non-proletarian strata oppressed by capitalism; and secondly, must be able to present a united face to the bourgeoisie, overcoming sexual divisions within the class which impede the class struggle. For this reason the working class must support the fight against the oppression of *all* women. Reforms eliminating sex-

ual discrimination in bourgeois society, if instituted, can help to show that hidden beneath the oppression of women generally is a class bias, and will clear the way for a struggle against the *class* oppression and super-exploitation of working class women. In order to overcome the political and cultural backwardness which the bourgeoisie instills in working class women through the family, and to overcome the influence of male chauvinism among male workers, a revolutionary party (which can tolerate no distinctions between its male and female members) would aim to build a section for work among women which could draw the masses of proletarian women into the struggle against capitalism. This is the perspective which the women's liberation movement must adopt if it is to escape from the political control of the bourgeoisie and make real progress toward the liberation of women.

SWAG FEMINISTS SUPPRESS BOLSHEVIK CRITICISM

The Melbourne feminists--fake lefts included--quickly revealed their inability to answer the Spartacists who fought for this perspective, by moving toward the political exclusion of the SL, disregarding in the process their own supposedly super-democratic organisational principles. The move towards exclusionism began in the Working Women's Group (WWG) of Melbourne. This group was initiated in mid-1972 by members of SWAG, and its activities were effectively controlled by them. Members of the SL, regarding the ostensible working-class orientation of the group as an important development, took part in WWG meetings, arguing that without a clear understanding of perspectives based on a thoroughgoing discussion of the nature of women's oppression, the activity of the group would be politically flawed and ineffective. This fundamental discussion never took place. Although a tentative programme had been produced in 1972 by members of SWAG and embodying its politics, this document was never adopted by the WWG, but rather they were content to get their specific politics in through the back door, without any attempt to fight for them openly. Needless to say the reformist, syndicalist feminism pushed by SWAG was the *de facto* programme of the group, but it never formally adopted any political basis other than the focus on working women.

By April, 1973, the WWG had effectively lapsed into inactivity and confusion, due to the lack of clarity and perspectives of the group under the leadership of people like SWAG member Janey Stone and Bon Hull. The alternative offered by SL members in the group posed a political challenge to the leadership which they could not answer. Instead, they resorted to the imposition as the "political basis" of the group of a document newly written by SWAG, forcing it through in a single meeting without prior discussion, and expelling SL members--who proclaimed their intention to remain in the group and struggle against this political line--on the grounds that SL members disagreed with it. The document was presented by SWAG members and supporters Janey Stone, Tess Lee-Ack, and Patricia Filar at a meeting of WWG on April 3.

It was only three months after the expulsion that the SWAG gathered the courage to produce a leaflet "explaining" the expulsion by falsifying the political positions of the SL and by attempting to blame the SL for the inactivity and confusion which resulted from *their* leadership.

The key paragraph of this leaflet (undated--entitled, "Statement from the Working Women's Group--an explanation of why the Spartacists were asked to leave") says:

"At each meeting they [the SL] have attempted to turn the discussion to basic principles, such as whether the WL movement should be open to men, or whether it is worth working for reforms etc. They were so far successful that we have discussed their politics at *every* meeting, with the result that attendance has dwindled and activity has been reduced to zero. The Spartacists repeatedly stated that they disagreed completely with the entire basis on which the group had been formed and with everything we were doing. On being asked why they didn't form a group of their own, or at least let us get on with what we wanted

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