



Left to right: Gough Whitlam, John Ducker, Bob Hawke. Ducker, formerly a senior official of the FIA, is Member of the ALP Legislative Council, President of the ALP in NSW, and asst. secretary of the Labor Council of NSW. Hawke is Federal ALP President and Federal ACTU President. Dual roles show interpenetration of ALP, trade-union bureaucracies.

## Vote Labor! Oust Whitlam!

# ALP chiefs promise "better" bosses' rule

On May 18 Australians go to the polls in an election precipitated by the small change of parliamentary chicanery, fought over programmes and policies which on neither side have any substantial connection with the aspirations of the masses of Australian workers, and in short, a charade tangential to the course of the class struggle. There are times when the dissolution of a bourgeois parliament represents an organic development of a crisis in the bourgeois regime, or is a direct product of the class struggle, such as the recent elections in Britain. The double dissolution announced in Canberra on April 11 has more to do with the "normal" manoeuvres of ambitious politicians.

No qualitative defeat for the working masses will result from the election of the Liberals, although they will undoubtedly reverse some mild reforms, and no great leap forward or substantial reforms will flow from a Labor victory. The class struggle is not fought out decisively in the artificial atmosphere of Parliament House; the intermittent teapot squall of parliamentary debate is only its pale reflection. For the proletarian vanguard, the significance of the current elections lies in the forum it provides for revolutionary propaganda, and in the opportunities for combatting the illusions retained by the masses of workers in the bourgeois-democratic framework and their reformist misleaders.

Because workers look to the Australian Labor Party (ALP) for leadership, and because it is the historically-

evolved mass political party of the class, the SL calls for a vote for Labor in the May 18 elections. The ALP remaining in office is a pre-condition for exposing in practice, as the class struggle intensifies, the dead-end of the current ALP leadership's reformism. But in order to avoid building the authority of the class traitors who now control the ALP, and in order to counterpose clearly before the class the path of revolution, we demand the ouster of Whitlam and the Labor bureaucrats and their replacement by a revolutionary leadership, and a Labor government pledged to expropriate the capitalist class.

The respective machinations of Whitlam and the Liberal-Country Party Opposition -- the appointment of DLP Senator Gair as ambassador to Ireland and its aftermath -- are of scant importance, either in themselves or symptomatically. The Liberals, in forcing the election, are attempting to get back into power before competing ambitions blow their shaky alliance completely apart. The disunity, lack of coherent policies and stupid blunders of Snedden and his friends have proved an embarrassment even to that section of the bourgeoisie totally opposed to Labor.

The issues presented to the public as key by the two contenders -- inflation and (to use the bourgeois euphemism) "industrial unrest" -- reflect key aspects of the current level of class struggle. But the LP-CP and ALP are only competing with each other to prove to the ruling class who is best suited to administer the capitalist state. While Snedden makes demagogic appeals to the petty-bourgeoisie, wildly accusing the Labor government of encouraging strikes, refusing to chain the unions, coddling the unemployed, consorting with the deformed workers states in foreign policy, lusting after power for Canberra over the States, and similar outrages to capitalist or petty-bourgeois conservative shibboleths, Whitlam seeks above all to portray his government as the most "responsible" servant of the bourgeoisie, capable of restraining the workers by backing token concessions, opposing strikes, promoting capitalist industrial development, fighting for greater "productivity" in industry (i.e., a higher rate of exploitation), and excising some of the more glaring warts from the face of capitalism to prevent it from appearing too ugly to too many.

The "new", "trendy" Liberal Party, which so offends fossils like Senator Hannan, has sought to mask its hostility to labour with sweet talk for the unions and a sudden, not very convincing concern for the rights of women and oppressed minorities. Opposition shadow Minister for Labor, Malcolm Fraser, has spoken of maintaining and even expanding social services, guaranteeing full employment, and even encouraging union membership. But at the same time he calls for upholding the "right" to refuse union membership -- the "right" to scab, an open union-busting device. As for maintaining social services, Liberal Chipp made no bones about the purpose of unemployment benefits in his eyes, when he delivered a policy statement which called for "restructuring" unemployment relief rates.

"... Mr. Chipp said 'restructured' meant 'cut'. He could not say exactly over what range the cut would occur but gave the example of a young apprentice who would re-

Continued on page seven

Continued on page four

## Defend the militants! Down with the Junta!

# CHILE no popular front but a proletarian revolution

One focus for this year's official May Day parade is the international defence of the workers movement in Chile against the vicious repression which has continued since the generals of the Chilean armed forces overthrew the government of Salvador Allende on September 9, 1973. The Sydney May Day Committee, under the strong influence of the Stalinist, pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), had invited Beatriz Allende, Allende's daughter, to visit Australia in conjunction with May Day. It now appears that she will not be able to come, though Sergio Insonza, former Minister of Justice in the *Unidad Popular* (UP) government may replace her.

It is highly appropriate for May Day, the symbol of proletarian internationalism, to take up the urgent defence of the Chilean working class. But for the SPA, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), and their "left-wing" friends in the trade union bureaucracy, the Beatriz Allende visit was intended as a publicity exercise for the servile and disastrous class collaboration represented by the UP before its demise.

The coup in Chile and the repression of the Junta were a major defeat for what was the best organised and most conscious proletariat in Latin America. Nothing could be more stupid than to regard this disaster as some sort of temporary detour on the "Chilean road to socialism" -- the proletariat does not easily recover its strength when its organisations are outlawed, thousands of its best militants murdered and its living standards drastically slashed. The responsibility for this disaster rests with US imperialism, the Chilean bourgeoisie and with the reformist leadership of the workers movement which lulled the masses by proclaiming confidence in the "democratic" military, the "progressive" bourgeoisie, and the "peaceful road" to revolution.

The Sydney May Day Committee and the SPA call for a fight "for the restoration of democratic rights and a democratic government" (SPA, April

1974), and one of the major slogans for May Day is "For the Restoration of Democracy in Chile". This is really nothing but a plea for the return to a UP government and the disastrous policies that laid the way open for the military coup.

The UP was not a workers government but a popular front which included the bourgeois Radical Party and Left Christian Democrats whose participation guaranteed that the UP would not go beyond the bounds of capitalism.

An authentic workers government would have taken immediate measures to crush the class enemy by arming the working class, expropriating the bourgeoisie and destroying its armed forces. In contrast, the Allende regime basing itself on the Stalinist and Social Democratic formula of the peaceful "transition to socialism" and "the parliamentary road" agreed to respect the bourgeois constitution and to leave the army intact.

The role of the Allende regime, like the role of all popular fronts was to prevent the independent mobilisation of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. The authority of the established political leadership of the Chilean proletariat -- the reformist Socialist Party (SP) and Communist Party (CP) -- was used to bind the workers to this reformist coalition. The Allende government opposed strikes and factory occupations, used the military to harass the peasant movement and refused to arm the workers against the military, proclaiming instead the loyalty of the military to the constitution. The UP thus left the working class disorganised, unprepared and defenceless in the face of the reactionary assault.

## in this issue:

SLL RUNS FROM DEBATE ..... page 2  
EVEN SLANDER SHOULD MAKE SOME SENSE ..... page 3  
METAL TRADES LEADERS SETTLE FOR NOTHING .. page 8

# SLL runs from debate

The following exchange of letters between the Spartacist League and the Socialist Labour League (SLL) exposes the cowardice and dishonesty of the SLL, the Australian representatives of the tendency led by Gerry Healy of the British Workers Revolutionary Party. The refusal of our debate challenge by the SLL, covered with a barrage of fantastic, contradictory lies, illustrates why we call the Healyites: *political bandits*.



SLL National Secretary Jim Mulgrew "observing" demonstration against Chilean repression. Mulgrew denounced the protest. (photo: ASP)

## debate challenge:

Sydney.

22 January, 1974.

To the Political Committee,  
Socialist Labour League:

With the aim of developing a more open conflict between the Spartacist League and the Socialist Labour League, which can only aid the political clarification necessary for the progress of the workers' movement, we have on a number of occasions issued verbal invitations to your organisation to debate us publicly.

While spokesmen for the SLL have refused such invitations they have suggested we make them in writing, and outside your 17 December 1973 meeting Jim Mulgrew, your National Secretary, said you would accept a written invitation.

We therefore propose that public debates be held in both Melbourne and Sydney in the last half of February. We propose that the debates be chaired by people independent of both organisations; that at the debates each organisation have half an hour's presentation time; that there be an hour for discussion from the floor; and that each organisation have a quarter of an hour's summary time.

We ask you to accept this proposal or make whatever alternative proposal you prefer, and to suggest particular dates and chairmen suitable to you.

Bill Logan  
Chairman  
Spartacist League.

## Mulgrew's "answer":

22nd February, 1974.

Bill Logan,  
Chairman Spartacist League A & NZ,  
SYDNEY

Dear Comrade,

I would like to correct immediately the completely groundless suggestion that I, as national

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secretary or in any other capacity, accepted an invitation from any of your members for organized discussions. The truth, as you well know, is that outside the meeting mentioned and all other meetings, my replies to your members' jeering invitations were quite different.

I have on all occasions painstakingly pointed out that such invitations from opposing political groupings should be made in writing direct to our Central Committee, which is nationally, our highest governing body.

To state, as you do, that I or any member of our movement would act contrary to this is a deliberate lie. Our movement does not operate in such a cavalier and undisciplined manner.

After the first such invitation by one of your members over a year ago at a large public meeting I explained this procedure then. Your members stated that they understood this and would follow the verbal invitation up in writing. This same discussion has taken place on every encounter since then. There are dozens of witnesses who could support this.

This distortion is directly in line with your further suggestion of an 'independent' chairman and further reveals the middle class nature and political bankruptcy of your organization. What sort of 'independent' arbiter do you propose in this 'debate', a reformist, Stalinist or could it be a centrist?

This is the very same kind of suggestion your co-thinkers in the US made in 1966 when you accused the British Socialist Labour League (now the Workers Revolutionary Party) of 'scabbing' and 'misappropriation of funds'. On that occasion 'documented proof' was to be supplied to representatives of 'bona-fide' workers' organisations.

On that occasion you were prepared to run to our political enemies, the Stalinists, reformists and centrists. Of course such documentation never surfaced and in fact never existed simply because the accusations were a figment of your co-thinkers imagination.

You follow this up today by proposing a debate in which our enemies would be involved as arbiters.

Your organization is an agent of the Robertson Spartacist group in the United States. The International Committee opened up fraternal discussions with this group in the early 1960s. The British section in particular, worked consistently to develop political clarity with this group for several years, eventually succeeding in bringing a delegation to the Third Congress of the IC in 1966.

It was at this congress that Robertson broke irrevocably and for all time with the Trotskyist movement. He refused absolutely to accept the discipline and authority of the Congress and instead took those of his group in the US whom he could rely on personally to stand in complete political opposition to the IC.

Since that time Robertson and his followers have worked hand in hand with the Pabloites of the 'Unified Secretariat' in the use of gossip, slander and lies against our movement internationally. You have joined Pablo, Deutcher [sic], Lambert and a gamut of other centrists in declaring that the Fourth International is dead.

Your group in Australia has been set up and maintained by Robertson and Co. for the primary purpose of working against the SLL in Australia through the use of slander and distortions.

Your group supported the British Pabloites in their lying provocation around the Tate affair and blocked with the Stalinists against our movement in the US. You and your cronies were the instigators and perpetrators of the completely distorted 'Mansell Affair'.

You hawked this lie around to our enemies without once making it public or putting a word about it in print. The sole purpose of this and other such practices is to discredit our movement and provide the Stalinists and right wing with lies to use against us.

The Spartacist League is a collection of frenzied and disoriented middle class radicals who carry out the wishes of Robertson and friends in the US. Their sole reason for existence is their hostility to the forces of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

It is the height of cynical hypocrisy to suggest that we enter into debate with your group eight years after your unprincipled and irrevocable break with us at the 1966 World Congress of our movement.

The SLL is the Australian section of the ICFI and as such has nothing but the deepest respect for the lessons of the unblemished history of our movement. We have no intentions whatsoever of ignoring this history and those lessons by entering into your unprincipled proposals.

Listen Spartacists! Not debates with 'squeezed lemons' in the vacuous confines of the left, but vigilant, uncompromising respect for principled struggle within the working class to construct a revolutionary movement to lead the working class to power this is our aim.

Yours fraternally,

Jim Mulgrew,  
National Secretary,  
Socialist Labour League.

## ... and the facts:

Sydney.

April 10, 1974.

Jim Mulgrew,  
National Secretary,  
Socialist Labour League,  
Sydney.

Dear Comrade,

We find your 22 February response to our 22 January written challenge to a public debate entirely inadequate. Your refusal is an act of political cowardice so blatant that you have been forced to introduce in your letter a number of extraneous issues -- primarily unsubstantiated, a-political slanders and lies. You have taken a position so sectarian that it condemns your own co-thinkers overseas as renegades, and stands in contradiction to the actual behaviour of the SLL.

In order to set the record straight we will discuss briefly the points raised in your letter.

1. The claim that you did not indicate that a written challenge to a public debate (the only "organised discussion" ever proposed) would be accepted is simply a lie. Moreover, your attempted rationalisation of this lie cannot be taken seriously. You claim that you could not consider an oral challenge made to you as SLL National Secretary, an officer who is, one presumes, a representative of your Central Committee. The SL does not care about the SLL's arcane organisational practices, which apparently require its Central Committee to be polled for a decision on every debate challenge, but the fact is you found it possible to reject a written challenge addressed to the Political Committee of the SLL. You are only evading the question. You have repeatedly dodged any commitment to a public debate when challenged orally. You have done so in order to attempt to justify your unprincipled policy of physically excluding from your public meetings any members of the SL or supporters of SL politics.

2. You seem to feel that the proposal for an independent chairman for the suggested debate -- that is, one that is not under the discipline of either organisation -- is an important political question. You say that such a proposal reveals the "middle class nature and political bankruptcy" of the SL. In this you denounce not only the SL, but also your own co-thinkers of the Workers League (WL) in the United States.

Your comrade, Tim Wohlforth (National Secretary of the WL), was in your eyes guilty of the "height of cynical hypocrisy" when (after refusing SLUS proposals for a debate for eight years) he challenged the Spartacist League of the U.S. (SLUS) to a debate which finally took place in Los Angeles, California on 17 May 1973. The challenge first appeared in the 2 April 1973 *Bulletin* (newspaper of the Workers League):

"Will Spartacist appear openly before the working class public in freewheeling debate over basic strategy? We are waiting to hear. No reasonable proposal will be turned down."

(In fact, Wohlforth stalled for over a month, withdrawing the proposal once and then under pressure retracting his withdrawal.) Wohlforth managed to "ignore the history and lessons of the ICFI" by "entering into" such an "unprincipled

Continued on page four

## Forum — Melbourne

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM  
IN THE UNITED STATES

speaker:

Joel Salinger

(SLANZ Central Committee member)

Tuesday, May 7

1:00 pm

Function Room 1  
Union Building  
LaTrobe University

## SLL "big lie" flops

# Even slander should make some sense

There exists a current within the international workers movement represented in Australia by the Socialist Labour League (SLL), calling itself Trotskyist and creating an incessant din with pompous declarations of its unique claim to the mantle of Bolshevism. Serious militants should carefully examine the substance behind the image, measuring the revolutionary pretensions of all political currents with the gauge of scientific Marxism, testing competing programmes against the objective needs and tasks of the working class.

An important test of the revolutionary fibre of an organisation is its attitude toward political struggle. An organisation firmly grounded in scientific Marxist theory and programme, far from fearing an open political clash with its opponents, must seek out and promote such confrontations for the purpose of clarifying before the working class the issues it faces in the class struggle; and in order to help break the political chains which bind the working class to the



Tim Wohlforth of the Workers League, US co-thinkers of the SLL, excluding supporters of the SLUS from a public WL forum in Cleveland, Ohio on December 13, 1973. (photo: WV)

agents of its class enemy. Only through political struggle can the most class conscious workers be won to the programme of revolutionary Marxism, and become welded into a combat vanguard party capable of realising that programme by leading the proletariat in the successful conquest of state power.

In the 21 March 1974 issue of *Workers News*, organ of the SLL, appears an article under the title "A Gun for Hire" which purports to reply to an attack on the SLL in the March 1974 *Australasian Spartacist*. We had documented the political exclusions of members and supporters of the SL from supposedly public meetings of the SLL, explaining how such methods are characteristic of the "International Committee" (IC), led by Gerry Healy of the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), and why the SLL is forced to resort to these methods to avoid political exposure.

True to form, the SLL's "response" consists of blatant lies and slander so vile that it demands a vigorous reply. Yet not a single one of the political charges made against the SLL in our original article was even mentioned! A group which is forced to resort to slander, exclusion and violence in order to protect itself from political criticism is not a revolutionary organisation. The SLL's response to our attack only confirms what we said. Rejecting a Trotskyist programme in practice, the SLL attempts to usurp Trotsky's authority and that of the Bolshevik revolution. Rejecting principle for cheap organisational chicanery, the SLL replicates in miniature what Trotsky called the bureaucratic ultimatism of the "Third Period" Stalinists. Our political charges against the SLL unanswered, we will deal with Mulgrew's wretched, wholesale, falsehoods, which mimic the campaign of vilification directed at Trotsky and the Fourth International by Stalin, point by point.

1. "The SLL has not excluded other political tendencies. We have excluded the Spartacist League and only the Spartacist League." (*Workers News*)

We said in the original article:

"The Spartacist League is not the only political 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."

Unlike the SLL, the SL does not make charges unless they can be backed up with facts. Mulgrew did not mention this incident in his response; thus the SLL has not denied its accuracy. Stalin once remarked that "paper will take anything that is written on it". Mulgrew is content to ignore the facts and to issue a blanket denial. But Stalin had the whole apparatus of Soviet state

power at his disposal to help perpetrate his lies. The SLL's pathetic attempts to imitate him are doomed to failure.

Moreover, the exclusion of many political tendencies from public meetings is standard practice for the SLL's co-thinkers in the U.S., the Workers League (WL). Tim Wohlforth, leader of the WL, defends these acts. Where does the SLL stand on the behaviour of their fraternal American group? Evidently, they feel it is quite proper.

2. "This policy was adopted after the Spartacist League had attended a public meeting in January 1973 and attempted to disrupt it." (*Workers News*)

Here is a report of that same meeting, not from the SL, but from a political enemy of the SL, the Communist League, some of whose members were in attendance:

"The report of the meeting in Labour Press said that members from a number of revisionist groupings acted throughout to cause maximum provocation. In fact the meeting was quite orderly. If by maximum provocation the SLL means a few questions about the more confused aspects of its politics, then one can only conclude that they have so far deviated from Marxism that they cannot stand up to any criticism." (*Militant*, 8 March 1973)

Our original article gave a detailed account of the SL's intervention at that meeting. There were in addition quite a few witnesses to this meeting who can testify to the accuracy of our account.

3. "In at least one case the activities of this anti-communist group [the SL] have caused us to be denied the use of facilities for meetings." (*Workers News*)

What "activities"? When? Where? The SLL has never bothered to inform anyone (including the SL) about this "incident". Why is the SLL unable to name the time and place? In any event, we categorically deny that the SL has ever caused any such action. If the SLL has been denied use of facilities, it is undoubtedly because of its undemocratic exclusionism, and that is the responsibility solely of the SLL.

4. "Since its establishment [the SL] has systematically used allegations of 'gangsterism' and 'bashings' against the SLL, allegations which have never been published openly despite frequent challenges to do so." (*Workers News*)

We state categorically that the SL has never received a single challenge from the SLL, verbal or written, to publish anything, save one mention of the so-called Mansell affair (for which see the exchange of letters published in this issue). See the March 1974 *Australasian Spartacist* for several unsolicited, very openly published accusations of gangsterism by the IC which we know to be true, and which can if necessary be backed up with signed written statements and other documentary evidence. What allegations is the SLL talking about?

5. We reported the well-documented incident in which Ernest Tate, British supporter of the Pabloist United Secretariat (USec), was beaten by members of the British SLL (now WRP) while selling literature outside a meeting of the SLL in London in 1966. *Workers News* gives its own version of the Healyites' rebuttal:

"The truth is that Tate was not prevented from selling at that meeting but was asked to clear the doorway. Upon his refusal a scuffle broke out between Tate and a steward. Immediately he saw the incident, national secretary of the SLL, Gerry Healy, took steps to ensure that it stopped.

"The Spartacist League knows that this is the truth and that accusations made by Tate to the contrary were withdrawn on the threat of libel action."

What are the facts?

Tate's original letter protesting the attack, together with the other details of the case were published in the January-February 1967 *Spartacist* (publication of the Spartacist League of the U.S. (SLUS), republished by the SLANZ in *Healyism a la carte*, available for 50¢.) At the time of the attack, Tate was selling a pamphlet published by the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) entitled, *Healy "Reconstructs" the Fourth International*, which had aroused Healy's ire because it exposed the unprincipled expulsion of the Spartacist tendency from the 1966 Congress of the IC on a transparent organisational pretext. (The revisionist SWP had its own reasons for publishing this pamphlet -- it took great pleasure in using Healy's bureaucratic manoeuvre to discredit all

anti-Pabloist forces.) Healy had threatened salesmen of this pamphlet publicly in the SLL's newspaper:

"We shall not hesitate to deal appropriately with the handful of United Secretariat agents who hawk it around the cynical fake-left in England." (*Newsletter* [later to become *Workers Press*], 20 August 1966)

As we stated in the March 1974 issue, Tate was attacked by members of the SLL and severely beaten. The "scuffle" was described by Tate:

"I was ... set upon and physically assaulted by six or seven Socialist Labour League supporters. My literature was knocked from my hands -- I was punched and thrown to the ground, my glasses were smashed, and as I lay on the ground I was kicked repeatedly in the groin and stomach.

"After the attack I had to attend the casualty department of Middlesex Hospital and I was forced to stay in bed for the greater part of the next day." (quoted in *Spartacist*, January-February 1967)

The *Workers News* version gives the impression that Healy deplored the attack. But first, we know of Healy's not-so-veiled public threat in print to "deal with" those such as Tate.

Secondly, it is worth citing the enlightening contribution made by Healy's American agent, Wohlforth. In the 13 February 1967 *Bulletin*, Wohlforth refers to the beating of a member of the sectarian Socialist Labor Party (de Leonist) by a union militant while distributing a leaflet, expressing his wholehearted support for this violation of workers democracy, calling the victim of the attack a "socialist scab". He then develops his argument: "Tate and his political allies represent political scabs of the worst sort." Wohlforth refrains from putting in print the only possible conclusion to this syllogism -- Tate deserved what he got. But why go to the trouble of explaining why a politically motivated beating of Tate was correct if in fact no such assault took place? The Healyites can't keep their story straight: Healy "deplores" the attack, Wohlforth defends it.

*Workers News* lies outright in two further respects:

- (1) Tate himself never withdrew anything, nor did the USec; (2) Healy did not threaten libel action -- he instituted proceedings in the bourgeois courts! He went to the class enemy in order to try to prevent Tate from protesting his assault! Healy did succeed in intimidating two papers which

Continued on page six

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## Elections . . .

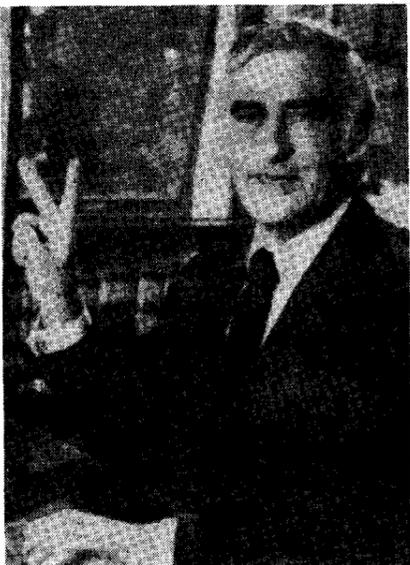
ceive more from the \$26 unemployment benefit than by taking work."! (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 April 1974)

Naturally, for these reactionaries it would be too "inflationary" to give the apprentices a living wage!

Whitlam, *et al.* have responded in two ways: indignantly proclaiming their loyalty to capitalism on the one hand, and attempting to posture as defenders of the workers on the other. While Whitlam attempts to make the most out of the few imperceptible reforms actually implemented, stressing education, social welfare, government health insurance, etc. (all areas in which very little has actually been done, thanks to the timidity of Whitlam and the utter futility of attempting to lead any major reform through the parliamentary labyrinth), and rails against the wicked, foreign "multi-nationals", he quotes as his authority (on democracy!) arch-Liberal Sir Robert Menzies (*The Australian*, 17 April 1974)!

Meanwhile, Minister for Labor Cameron has been busy at his usual pastime of trying to scare the bourgeoisie into supporting Labor by raising the spectre of class struggle. After Snedden, in his haste to show the bosses how tough he would be, called for a "voluntary" wage freeze (with the threat of penalties if the "volunteers" do not come through!), Cameron queried, "How will he stop workers from striking to prevent the erosion of wages by price increases, except by re-introducing automatic wage adjustments, as advocated by the present government in the recent national wage case?" (quoted in *The Australian*, 20 April 1974). Cameron is referring to his proposal for quarterly adjustments based not on total wages but on the minimum wage, guaranteeing that the wages of most workers will fall behind price rises. In other words, Cameron is suggesting to the bosses that he is cleverer than Snedden; it is not necessary to use a club, with its uncomfortable risks when you can trick your victim out of his money instead. Warning that the LP-CP plan would lead to "industrial unrest", the "even-handed" Cameron was quick to prove his own loyalty to the bosses by admonishing a group of metal trades workers who staged a demonstration over the national wage case at the Melbourne offices of the Arbitration Commission (*Financial Review*, 16 April 1974).

It is important to understand how the election is regarded by the two principal classes in society, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, in the context of the prevailing relation of class forces. In this correlation of forces the consciousness of the working class enters as an ob-



Billy Mackie Snedden, leader of the bosses' Liberal Party.

jective factor in determining both the attitude of its enemies and the activity of the proletarian vanguard, the minority of class-conscious workers.

The most important facts dominating the current situation are: (1) The overwhelming, if grudging and passive, support in the working class for the ALP's reformist leaders which cannot see a way to circumvent the frustrating impotence of parliamentary and trade-union reformism, and largely harbours illusions in the efficacy of Whitlam/Hawke's methods. This false consciousness conflicts with rising militancy which occasionally runs up against the ambitions of the petty-bourgeois ALP parliamentarians, as the working class faces uncontrolled, accelerating inflation which eats away at real wages and compels a running battle to maintain their standard of living; (2) A significant section of the bourgeoisie, which as a whole is experiencing a temporary economic upsurge, clearly supports the ALP in the election, convinced that the Liberals are

Responsibility for election comment in this issue is taken by M. Hotschilt, 212 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, Sydney, NSW.

for the present too discredited and too muddled to govern the capitalist system effectively.

In short, a temporary economic recovery from the 1971-72 slump has had a moderating effect on the development of social tensions. Partly for this reason, the outcome on May 18 looks to be close, and will be determined by a swing of less than 2% of the vote.

The viewpoint of the pro-Labor, pro-Whitlam capitalists is most frankly expressed by *The Australian* in an editorial on 20 April 1974. Exhibiting a high level of bourgeois class consciousness, they describe Whitlam's programme with devastating accuracy:

"In fact, the Whitlam Government has not been a truly socialist party since it took office ... the Labor Party framed policies which gelled with the Australian electorate's desire for change, but which stayed strictly within the concepts of basically-conservative Australian political thought ... the Whitlam Government, progressive though it may be, is basically a petit-bourgeois operation, functioning within the concept of a free enterprise economy."

The economic upturn, decisively limited by the gathering world economic crisis, is real but temporary. The *Financial Review* (5 April 1974) reports that "New capital expenditure in the six months to December was 16.3% higher for all industries -- the first time in 18 months that this figure has shown an increase. The increase was due to a resumption of spending in manufacturing industry." Before the double dissolution, capitalists projected an increase of 23% in capital spending in the first half of the new financial year, with 33% projected for the mining industry (*The Australian*, 23 April 1974). Since then, the possibility of a Liberal government has caused capitalists to hold back on these investments, apparently in hopes of a Liberal government reduction in interest rates (*Financial Review*, 24 April 1974). Record profits are announced regularly by the vast majority of firms, posting profit rises of 16%, 30% or even higher. Unemployment is down to 1.41%, and vacancies in the major cities exceed unemployed by ratios such as 1.5 to 1 (Sydney) and 1.75 to 1 (Melbourne), (*Financial Review*, 8 April 1974).

### BOSSES NERVOUS AS STRIKE WAVE MOUNTS

All is not so rosy for the bosses, however. One source of high profits was the high world prices of raw materials Australia exports, most of which are projected to decline this year. Moreover business publications such as *Syntec* are predicting declining profit increases due to what they term "excessive wage push". (*Financial Review*, 5 April 1974). A serious recession in Japan would pull the rug from under the booming mining industry. The balance of trade has turned negative, a development welcomed by the *Financial Review* and promoted by Whitlam as a means to counteract inflation. But it can do so only by allowing more competitive foreign goods to vie for the Australian market with domestic producers, inevitably driving down the profit rate. The inflation which might otherwise be tolerable to the bourgeoisie is running up against the pressures of the world market. When the burden of inflation becomes decisive, the capitalists will unite in the effort to make the working class pay by cracking down on the unions. *This is a job which can be undertaken by either a Liberal or a Labor government.* The current division in the ruling class concerns only the tactical question of what can best hold back the workers in the meantime -- the open repression of the Liberals, or Whitlam's cosmetic "reforms". The nervousness of the bourgeoisie is summarised in a statement attributed to a stockbroker in the *Financial Review* (24 April 1974): "The situation is that industry is riding for a frightful fall in profits and a frightful rise in costs."

Australian workers still overwhelmingly back Whitlam's ALP at the polls, and together with Hawke and the ACTU bureaucracy, he has been largely successful in heading off and containing working-class dissatisfaction. But the election in 1972 of a government which workers regarded as representing their interests spurred rising industrial militancy which has now developed into a significant strike wave, as workers instinctively seek to take what they have been denied for so long. Revolutionists must seek to exploit this conflict which drives the impatient workers in actual struggle up against the "respectable" reformists who hope to cling to power by appeasing the bourgeoisie. Strikes have also been fueled by the temporarily favourable conditions for forcing trade-union concessions out of the employers. While limited to trade union demands, and largely an attempt to keep up with inflation, the class militancy is deep-going and sometimes extends beyond the wages struggle to important reforms that Cameron would rather bury in the Arbitration Court. A series of recent strikes, have revealed determination and self-reliance. The NSW power workers have been striking intermittently for a 35 hour week since early 1973.

After suffering a setback last October, the power workers have now renewed their strike in the face of virulent slander by the bourgeois press. The oil tank drivers of the Transport Workers Union in Sydney have shown an exemplary solidarity against an attempt by the petrol companies to force scab deliveries to Shell Oil customers while Shell drivers were on strike. Postal workers have embarked on a campaign for a 35 hour week, but their leaders have caved in to pressure from Postmaster General Bowen to call off strike action that might "embarrass" the Labor government in the elections. The coal miners have resisted pressure to accept a \$20 wage rise in their award campaign and have won a \$25 rise.

The trade-union bureaucracy has responded to the upsurge with a show of militancy, which has sometimes forced them to clash with the Federal Labor government (as with the NSW power workers, who have refused to buckle under and are continuing industrial action in support of their claims, disregarding Labor government pleas to back off for the elections). But their function is typified by the carefully stage-managed sell-out of the Metal Industry award settlement in early April. Whitlam is depending on the labour bureaucracy to keep workers in line.

The pro-capitalist behaviour of the Whitlamite ALP should come as no surprise. Although the current ALP programme opposes the use of the armed forces against striking workers, Whitlam and co. are entirely within the tradition of Chifley and Scullin, Labor Prime Ministers who used the military to smash strikes. The ALP programme is designed partly to appeal to the rank and file of the labour movement with Whitlam/Cameron seeking to pose as champions of the unions by decrying the penal powers. The ALP programme does talk of the "socialisation objective", but its definition is hedged in by so many qualifications that it is rendered meaningless, and it has remained a dead letter. As *The Australian's* editorial quoted above notes,

"It [the Whitlam government] has not nationalised anything, and it has announced no positive plans to nationalise anything ... Mr. Whitlam's appeals last year for the co-operation of leading Australian businessmen was no flim-flam; he really wants their help."

The undue significance attached to the so-called "socialist objective" by more "orthodox" left social-democrats like the Socialist Workers League (SWL) merely reflects their own social-democratic interpretation of that objective. Nevertheless, a large number of the most militant workers are kept bound to reformists like Whitlam by this perfunctory nod in the direction of class consciousness. Deceptive as it may be, it is essential to the ALP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

## Debate . . .

proposal". Under the agreement negotiated for that debate, it was up to Wohlforth to pick the "enemy" of the WL who would act as "arbiter" by chairing the meeting. Was it a "reformist, Stalinist, or could it be a centrist?" No -- it was an *apolitical, liberal graduate student* at UCLA (the upper middle-class university where the WL insisted on holding the debate). The SLUS had proposed several long-time working-class militants with a reputation for honesty, such as Arne Swaback, as possible chairmen, but was seriously interested in exposing Wohlforth's revisionism and accepted his proposals so as not to give him an excuse to back out again.

3. You claim that it is unprincipled to propose to settle allegations of serious breaches in proletarian political morality, such as bashings or crossing the class line, by means of an open hearing before the working class conducted by a non-partisan body or representatives of workers organisations. Must we remind you of the Dewey Commission -- headed by the American pragmatist, liberal supporter of "democratic" imperialism, John Dewey -- formed on the initiative of Trotsky and his American supporters to refute the slanders of the Moscow Trials? The Comintern (certainly Trotsky's enemy) was *challenged by Trotsky* to sit on this commission. They refused -- and Trotsky's harsh denunciations of their "cynical hypocrisy" apply with equal force to the political cowards of the Healyite International Committee (IC):

"As soon as it arrived in Mexico, the sub-commission invited the Communist Party, the trade unions and all the workers' organisations of the country to take part in the investigation ... The so-called communists and the official "friends" of the Soviet Union replied with demonstrative refusals whose haughty tone tried to substitute for their cowardice. Just as Stalin can bring to court only those accused from whom he has first extracted all the confessions he wants, so the friends of the GPU speak only when they are sure they will not be contradicted." (Trotsky, *Writings*, 1937-38, p 63).

in that it symbolises the ALP's historic roots in the class struggle.

The essential reason for the Spartacist League's critical support to the ALP is not the minimal reforms in its programme, but the fact that (though run by the labour bureaucracy) it is the historically-evolved party which expresses the political activity of the workers as a class, firmly tied to their mass organisations, the trade unions. Yet given its leadership and programme, it functions not as a party representing the interests of the workers, but as a bourgeois party, the instrument of agents of the bourgeoisie within the labour movement. Critical support -- supporting the workers' party against the open parties of the class enemy, the Liberals and the Country Party -- is a tactic to help set the aspirations of the working masses against the treachery of its petty-bourgeois leadership. The ALP is a contradictory phenomenon. It is the duty of revolutionists to sharpen that contradiction in order to resolve the ALP into its two class components, with the ultimate aim of winning the majority of workers to the support of a mass revolutionary vanguard party. Therefore we link the call for a Labor vote to the need to oust Whitlam and his ilk, and for a Labor Party pledged not to parliamentary reform but to the expropriation of the capitalist class.

The contradiction in the Labor Party must be suppressed by the reformists, through its bureaucratic structure and the effective stifling of internal democracy. The real function of the clause in the ALP rules banning "associations" with other political parties is to prevent disension rising from below from finding political expression and threatening to throw off the entrenched officials. Rank-and-file workers cannot effectively direct their own party through the bureaucratic maze of the ALP, which allows the trade-union officials to integrate the ALP into their role as labour lieutenants of capital. Democracy in the ALP and democracy in the unions are thoroughly interlinked questions, and a struggle against the ALP reformists must be based on the struggle for a revolutionary leadership in the trade unions.

The application of the tactic of critical support to the Labor Party in the elections, in the absence of a struggle to build an alternative revolutionary leadership in the trade unions, is a capitulation to the present consciousness and level of organisation of the working class, and to the social-democratic myth that "politics" should be dealt with only by the parliamentary wing of the ALP. Both in the trade unions and in the Labor Party the struggle to build an alternative revolutionary leadership must be based upon the transitional programme.

Nor was this the only occasion on which such investigative bodies were advocated by the "middle class" and "politically bankrupt" Trotsky. Regarding an apparently political murder of an Italian leftist in exile, Trotsky wrote in 1935 in an article entitled, "A Case for a Labor Jury":

"The duty of workers' organisations, without any regard for political banners lies in one thing: in shedding the greatest light possible on this case, and thereby, insofar as it is possible, to prevent the repetition of gunplay in revolutionary circles.

"In our opinion the labor organisations must establish, without any further delay, an authoritative and non-partisan Committee which would go over the entire material...." (Trotsky, *Writings, 1935-36*, p 117) (emphasis added)

The matter you refer to -- Healy's dishonest financial dealings with members of the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP in 1962 -- is relatively unimportant except as an example of the general untrustworthiness of the SLL in Britain (now Workers Revolutionary Party). Healy's dishonesty had a bearing on a far more serious matter -- allegations of SLL violence against Ernest Tate, a representative of the Pabloist United Secretariat, for his distribution of literature at an SLL conference in London in 1966. You could have easily checked the facts in this case by consulting the January-February 1967 *Spartacist* (SLUS). The article "Oust Healy", reprinted in the SLANZ publication, *Revolutionary Communist Bulletin* #4, *Healyism a la Carte*, states:

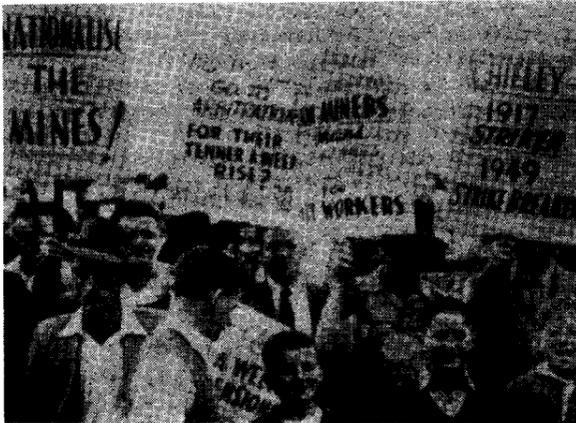
"(Copies of the relevant correspondence and cancelled checks would be available to any bona-fide workers' investigating commission.)"

No request for any investigation was forthcoming from the IC -- because the charges were true. Do you really want the material published? If so, it can be arranged.

To our knowledge neither we nor the SLUS have ever accused the SLL/WRP of "scabbing".

4. The political positions you attribute to us are your own concoctions which you have not been able to document with a single real example. For instance, you charge that we declare "that the

This programme must give a class-struggle answer to the problems faced by workers: to fight the effects of inflation, an unlimited cost-of-living escalator (a sliding scale of wages) and the organisation of committees on prices to expose the bosses as the real source of high prices; and in response to the threat of unemployment, a sliding scale of hours, a flexible shortened work week with no loss in pay to guarantee full employment. Central to the transitional programme is the independence of the trade unions from the bourgeois state. The interpenetration of the trade-union and the ALP bureaucracies -- symbolised by Hawke's dual role as both ALP and ACTU Federal President -- is the means by which the unions in Australia are being increasingly subordinated to the state. That is why they are in-



Demonstration during 1949 coal strike. (photo: *Direct Action*)

capable of fighting to end the arbitration system with which Australian workers have been saddled since before World War I. The resistance of the capitalists to any serious reforms should be answered with the demand for the expropriation of industry under workers control. A revolutionary programme would include the call for the timely formation of some form of workers' councils that could serve as the potential foundation for a real workers state.

The SWL, which has never had a serious orientation toward the trade unions, has developed a distinctive style of capitulation to the social-democracy. In 1972, they made it clear that they hoped to play the role of a left pressure on Whitlam, with their highest aspiration being absorption into a new ALP left-wing more in the traditions of classical social-democracy than the pragmatic technocrats among ALP parliamentarians. They made themselves quite explicit:

Fourth International is dead". Nowhere in any published SL material will this expression be found. Our longstanding position is for the reconstruction of the Fourth International (FI) destroyed as an international organisation embodying the Trotskyist programme by Pabloite revisionism. It is the Spartacist tendency internationally which embodies the programmatic continuity of the FI and which struggles for the rebirth of the FI based on its revolutionary programme. Nor have you been able to document a single case of our alleged "gossip, slander and lies". You refuse a debate precisely because you do not have a leg to stand on.

5. It is simply not true that members of the Spartacist League were the "instigators and perpetrators of the completely distorted Mansell affair". Nor have we "hawked this lie" (what lie?) to anyone. However, since you raise the matter, let us simply say that as far as we know, in a petty dispute over property, on 15 April 1972 some of your comrades beat up Mansell (then a member of the SLL), reportedly breaking a rib or ribs; and Mansell called the cops. We trust you will correct us if these were not the facts, but in the meantime the matter remains sufficiently obscure to us that we have preferred to give you the benefit of the doubt, despite the fact that the incident might be revealing as to your political method.

(On 25 February 1973 Mansell submitted a written application for membership in the Spartacist League which recognised that by calling the cops he had "crossed the class line" and that this "act cannot be justified and is contrary to the revolutionary principles of the Spartacist League". It appears, however, that this self-criticism was dishonest, and Mansell was expelled from the Spartacist League on 10 March 1974 after he threatened to use the bourgeois courts against the SL in another dispute over property.)

6. The history of the SLANZ -- formerly the SLNZ -- is available in published form (RCB #1). The facts have nothing to do with your apparently paranoid notion that the SLANZ was "set up and maintained by Robertson and Co. for the primary purpose of working against the SLL in Australia". Of course, we want to politically destroy the SLL, whose renegacy from Marxism, opportunism and political banditry mark you as

"The ALP campaign can be a focus for all the mass movements to project their demands to a wider audience ... and to pressure the ALP to take up real questions." "A Labor government can and must be forced to take firm action to prevent lay-offs by big corporations ..."

"The ALP must be pressured into adopting this demand [a sliding scale of wages and hours] as part of a programme capable of tackling the real issues."

"Labor must be forced to totally repeal the Lynch Laws and repudiate the Cameron proposals."

"This programme ["class struggle" programme] can only be popularised and pressed upon the ALP tops by mass mobilisation around the key issues, and a continual fight within and without the ALP by socialists." (November 1972 *Direct Action* election supplement) (emphasis added)

Naturally, the SWL's programme for the ALP had to be adapted to the role of a pressure group on Whitlam. Stressing the forces that the SWL thought could bring pressure to bear, the same broadsheet proclaims: "Workers' control? Student/staff control? Women's Liberation? Self-determination for blacks? These are the real issues." In other words, the eclectic programme of the various reformist, petty-bourgeois protest groups that the SWL promotes. The election supplement demands the repeal of the Lynch laws, but says nothing at all about the arbitration system as a whole, neglecting to mention the need for the independence of the trade unions from the bourgeois state.

In the current election campaign, like the previous one, the SWL bases its case for a Labor vote on the necessity to keep the reactionary Liberals out of power. Such a view sees the Whitlam government as a means of advancing the aspirations of workers -- as if Whitlam's parliamentary reformism were capable of doing so. Central to the SWL's propaganda is a profound capitulation to parliamentary cretinism.

This time around, the SWL has begun to throw out even those aspects of formal orthodoxy which it once kept for appearances' sake. Dumping their 1972 talk of "nationalisation of transport, industrial and financial institutions without compensation and under workers control", the SWL instead includes among its so-called "socialist policies" the demand,

"... nationalise under workers control and without compensation all corporations which make excessive profits."! (*Direct Action*, 13 April 1974) (emphasis added)

Continued on page six

an obstacle to the construction of a revolutionary vanguard party in Australia. But you suffer from delusions of grandeur. According to your paranoid logic, our criticism and exposure of the bankrupt politics of Pabloism in Australia, of the reformist, ex-Stalinist CPA and the Maoists, of feminism etc. must be merely a cover to hide our demonic hatred of the SLL.

You apparently believe that it is especially damning that the SLANZ has close fraternal ties with the SLUS. Unlike the IC, the SLANZ believes in real internationalism and not opportunist federations. We are proud of our international ties which are based on the firmest programmatic agreement and commitment to the rebirth of the FI. When the SLNZ was founded in 1968 (three years before the SLL came into existence), it adopted as its basic document the *Statement of Principles* of the SLUS, because its clear and correct Trotskyist stand on a series of fundamental issues showed the way forward to a reconstructed FI. Your attacks on this principled relationship border on anti-communist, nationalist hysteria.

7. You reject debates "in the vacuous confines of the left"? You plan instead "principled struggle within the working class"? Absolute lies! The SLL recently has made quite a big fuss over the refusal of the Communist Club (of the CPA) at Sydney University to accept the SLL's challenge to a debate on Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from the USSR. Perhaps you feel that Sydney University is really a "working-class" milieu? In fact you are cynical liars whose sectarianism is a cover for opportunism, such as your mawkish tears and moans in behalf of the anti-communist, reactionary-utopian Solzhenitsyn, whose exile you equate with that of Trotsky in 1929.

We can only conclude that your response to our letter is a shabby evasion. Our challenge to a public debate stands; your continued refusal to accept it will not pass unnoticed. Class-conscious workers and all those seriously in search of a revolutionary path will know from this that not even the national leadership of the SLL can defend their rotten politics in open debate.

Fraternally,

Bill Logan,  
Chairman, Spartacist League.

[We have yet to receive a response to this letter]

## Elections . . .

So the SWL favours the continuation of "non-excessive" profits! Perhaps they can explain which profits are not "excessive"!

It is not accidental that the central slogans of the SWL and those of the supposedly "anti-revisionist", "anti-Pabloist" Socialist Labour League (SLL) are *identical*: both say, "Keep the Liberals Out, Labor to Power with Socialist Policies". With their sectarian inversion of the SWL's reformist methodology, the SLL mimics the SWL in adapting to parliamentary illusions among the masses -- but the SLL manages to take cretinism to extremes.

For both the SWL and the SLL, the axis of the slogan, "Keep the Liberals Out" is calculated scare-mongering. "Keep the Libs out" has also appeared as the front page headline in *Tribune* (9-15 April 1974) newspaper of the reformist Communist Party of Australia (CPA). The Liberals are a party of bourgeois democracy. While they are capable (as are the ALP ministers) of vicious attacks on the working class they are not about to smash the organised workers movement in the manner of a military or fascist dictatorship. If, indeed, the bourgeoisie were to place such an assault on the agenda, neither a vote for Labor by itself nor any other purely parliamentarist tactic would provide any effective resistance.

The lead article in the 11 April 1974 *Workers News* manages to include an amazing number of absurdities. Among them is the following:

"The class struggle has entered a new and decisive stage. What is at stake here is not a swing of the electoral pendulum but the struggle for power."

It is hard to keep track of all the "decisive stages" and "turning points" the SLL has proclaimed over the past few years. But if it were a question of the struggle for power, one can only conclude that the SLL thinks that the Labor Caucus is capable of carrying out an insurrection and smashing the capitalist state:

"The urgent necessity is to ensure the defeat of the Liberals." "[the SLL demands] that the Labor leadership break completely from its capitalist policies and adopt a full socialist programme to defend the working class and keep the Liberals out for good."

A full socialist programme -- the dictatorship of the proletariat -- in order to keep the Liberals out of power? There could be no more cretinous parliamentarism than this! Like the SWL, the SLL states its desire to pressure the Labor leadership to the left. But does the SLL really believe that Whitlam -- who the SLL has recently exposed as not having carried out "a single socialist policy" -- will ever "break completely from [his] capitalist policies and adopt a full socialist programme"? The SWL is more reasonable -- they only hope to "pressure" Whitlam a *little* to the left.

Two organisations nominally left of the ALP, the CPA and the pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia (SPA), are standing candidates in the elections. The CPA is standing a slate of three in both NSW and South Australia. The national head of the CPA ticket is union

bureaucrat and member of the advisory committee to the Federal government's Cities Commission Jack Munday. In a campaign brochure entitled "Vote Red for a Green Australia", the CPA carries its tailing of the petty-bourgeois, utopian ecology fad to extremes. The programme in the brochure interprets socialism to mean extended bourgeois democracy, including the demand "For a new life style", a bourgeois-pacifist call for "Ending all the nuclear tests and destruction of nuclear weapons" and a shopping list of "greater democratic rights". The closest they come to an attack on bourgeois property rights is a proposal not to *smash* them but to *regulate* them: "Social control of investment to meet people's real needs ...". To Whitlam's outright support for a spruced up capitalism, the CPA counterposes Bernstein's "peaceful evolution into socialism". As Munday's brochure says, "The need is to change capitalism not reform it."(!) In practice, the two policies are identical; but Whitlam is more honest.

The SPA is running its national secretary, and head bureaucrat of the Building Workers Industrial Union, Pat Clancy. Like the CPA, the SPA tries to present itself as truly socialist while the content of their programme, in this case the class-collaborationist "anti-monopoly coalition", remains the same as that of the ALP.

Although the reforms advocated by the CPA and SPA go beyond those pushed by Whitlam, they must be regarded as only quantitatively different. On no essential issue can they be distinguished from the ALP's class collaboration. And, unlike the ALP, they do not represent any significant section of the working class. For revolutionists there is nothing to support in these campaigns. Although the CPA and the SPA are part of the workers movement, a vote for them, while not ruled out in principle under all conditions, is wasted; as far as the interests of the working class are concerned, after a vote for Labor the order of preferences *does not matter*.

The CPA and the SPA at present constitute only a distraction from the main task -- to break the base of the ALP away from its reformist leadership in the ALP, to the support of a revolutionary programme. The accomplishment of this task, creating a mass-based, Leninist vanguard party, will clear the road for the proletarian revolution in Australia.

Vote Labor! Oust Whitlam and the Labor bureaucracy! Fight for a revolutionary leadership!

For a Labor government pledged to the expropriation of the capitalist class!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

## Healyite slanders . . .

had printed the letter, the *Socialist Leader and Peace News*, which issued retractions and paid the costs demanded by Healy.

Regardless of Healy's "intentions", it is an elementary betrayal of Marxist principle to use the bourgeois state against opponents within the workers movement. Furthermore, that the beating was politically motivated is clear to anyone with half a brain -- why would Tate conceivably "provoke" his own hospitalisation? Finally, the SLL has been caught in an open lie in inventing Tate's "retraction".

It is necessary to point out that the hue and cry raised by the USec over the Tate affair certainly resulted in a diversion from the political issue of the USec's centrist revision of Trotskyism. But who is to blame for this diversion? The Healyites' denunciations of Pabloite revisionism are rendered totally ineffective by their hooliganism and unscrupulous dishonesty.

The USec's indignance rings hollow, because their record is tarnished by similar crimes. In view of the SLL's belief that the SL constantly "blocs with Pabloism", it is worth noting that Wohlforth once blocked with the Pabloist SWP to physically expel the SL from a meeting of the SWP's anti-war front group in the U.S. *Workers Action* #10, September 1971).

6. The *Workers News* article mentions the fact that Mulgrew has threatened members of the SL with bashings. According to *Workers News*, the "meaning" of our statement of this fact is that we "would desperately love to create a 'Tate affair' in this country..." In other words, we protest against Mulgrew's threats because ... we want them to be carried out?! This is itself nothing but a veiled threat. *Workers News* does not deny that the threat was made. Signed statements from witnesses attesting to Mulgrew's threat can be obtained if necessary.

7. "But what this frenzied group of middle class degenerates [the SL] cannot and will not explain is why they broke off discussions with the International Committee in 1966." (*Workers News*)

We cannot "explain" something that never happened. The SLUS was *expelled* from the Third Congress of the IC in 1966. For an accurate account of what happened and the SL's attitude towards this unprincipled act see the SLANZ publication, *Healyism a la carte*, which reprints no fewer than six articles from *Spartacist* directly concerning this unnecessary split engineered by Healy, and its implications for the political character of the IC. We also refer the reader to the SWP pamphlet, *Healy "Reconstructs" the Fourth International*, which consists mostly of documents stolen from the SLUS by the SWP following the 1966 split. Finally, the documentary history of the Spartacist tendency in the US from its inception in 1961 as the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP is available in the *Marxist Bulletin* series published by the SLUS. The SLL's fabrications can be easily checked by any serious militant by obtaining the available material from the SLANZ.

8. We concluded the article, "What is the SLL Afraid of?" by saying:

"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."

*Workers News* "interprets":

"The Spartacist League appeals for democracy but then calls for a bloc with the Stalinists of the Communist Party who have spent their whole lives attacking the democratic rights of Trotskyists and who have been responsible for the deaths of whole sections of the Trotskyist movement."

Here is logic truly in the mould of Stalin. We demand that even the Stalinists *defend* the democratic rights of Trotskyists; therefore ... we bloc with them in their own *attacks* on workers democracy? Nonsense! *It is the SLL which has joined the Stalinists* -- which has made a bloc in practice -- by attacking the "democratic rights of Trotskyists"! Political exclusions and intimidation have nothing to do with Trotskyism. As Bolsheviks, the SL will bloc with anyone in the workers movement -- even the SLL! -- for the defence of workers democracy. If the SLL has put itself on the same side as the Stalinists by attacking workers democracy they have only themselves to blame. "The Spartacist League would form a bloc with right wingers such as John Ducker ... in their campaign against the SLL." (*Workers News*). It is the SLL which uses methods which are the historical refuge of right-wing bureaucrats of the Ducker variety. We are "campaigning" against *their* methods -- which are also those of Mulgrew-Wohlforth-Healy. As we said in "What is the SLL Afraid of?": "Gangsterism and class collaboration go hand in hand."

9. "... their [the SL's] only role in the future will be to act as provocateurs ..." (*Workers News*). No serious militant uses the word "provocateur" lightly. To be blunt, it means "police agent." It is the most serious charge that can be levelled at anyone in the workers movement. It is also a standard calumny in the arsenal of Stalinist slanders against Trotskyism. *Workers News* has not a word to say as to the basis of this fantastic and utterly despicable lie. We say to the SLL: PRODUCE YOUR "EVIDENCE" OR PUBLICLY AND UNEQUIVOCALLY RETRACT YOUR STATEMENT! This is the only honest, principled course. We predict that the SLL, which knows nothing of principle and cares nothing for truth, will not follow it.

### C O R R E C T I O N S :

Members of the Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG) have verbally requested a clarification on the relation of Patricia Filar to their organisation. In *Australasian Spartacist* No. 6, we mistakenly reported Filar as a member of the SWAG. In *Australasian Spartacist* No. 7, we published a correction stating that Filar was not a member but a "consistent political supporter" of SWAG. It now appears that while Filar clearly gave some public political support to SWAG, at least until May 1973, after that time she slowly dropped away so that at the time of the expulsion of Spartacist from Women's Liberation General Meetings in Melbourne in September, 1973, she was not associated with SWAG.

We cannot be precise as to the relation between Filar and SWAG. The SWAG has refused to submit a letter for publication putting the relevant information in writing, although we specifically requested them to do so.

Nevertheless, SWAG apparently believes that the point of fact is important. They have denied verbally to members of the SL any responsibility for the actions of Filar at the expulsion meeting and claim to disagree with the expulsion. (No members of SWAG were present at the meeting.) It is certainly laudable that the SWAG has now come to oppose this cowardly and undemocratic political suppression. But the SWAG *cannot evade* their own responsibility for having prepared it. SWAG continues to defend its own cowardly and

bureaucratic expulsion of SL members from the Working Women's Group (WWG) of Melbourne Women's Liberation, which preceded and set the precedent for the later expulsion, motivated on the whole by the *same arguments*. The seeming contradiction between SWAG's two positions is explained by the fact that the SWAG regarded the WWG as "their property", much as the dominant feminists in Melbourne Women's Liberation regard it as a whole as belonging to them. Were SWAG to be dominant in the women's movement, however, their past practice leaves little doubt that they would not hesitate to use the same methods against genuine communists.

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*Australasian Spartacist* No. 7, in the article "Maoist dead-end in Victoria", incorrectly stated the Footscray-Sunshine branch of the WSA as having arrived at a syndicalist position. The correct branch was Broadmeadows.

\* \* \* \* \*

The article "Protest Victorian YLA expulsions", in *Australasian Spartacist* No. 7, inaccurately reproduced one sentence from Comrade Naughten's letter. The letter actually read: "... it is patently undemocratic to exclude anyone from the YLA simply on the grounds that their political opinions coincide with those of another organisation in the workers' movement." The phrase, "in the workers' movement", was inadvertently omitted in production.

## ... Chile

It is an elementary duty of class solidarity to defend the victims of the counter-revolution and to demand the immediate release of all the Chilean political prisoners. The Spartacist League (SL), together with its co-thinkers overseas, initiated a campaign in defence of two imprisoned leaders of *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR)*, Bautista Van Schöwen and Alejandro Romero. The SL saw the defence of these two men as particularly pressing because of the danger of their immediate execution. Further, the MIR militants have received little attention in the various international defence campaigns which have focused on such people as Luis Corvalan, the CP leader, and members of the UP Government, and have attempted to rely on liberal bourgeois public opinion rather than mobilising international proletarian solidarity. While Corvalan and the others must be defended, to focus on them exclusively is to leave the MIR and others to the left of the UP to their fate.

As reported in *Australasian Spartacist* No. 7, demonstrations were held in Melbourne and Sydney around the slogans "Free Van Schöwen and Romero", "Free all victims of the reactionary Junta's repression". Demonstrations and meetings have also been held in the US (in New York, Ann Arbor, Madison, Los Angeles and San Francisco) and in Vienna, Austria.

In Sydney, a public meeting was held on 1 April at the Trades Hall to demand the release of Romero, Van Schöwen, Luis Vitale (a prominent supporter of the United Secretariat) and all Chilean political prisoners. The meeting was organised by the SL and the Communist League (CL), and was attended by members of the two organisations, members of the Socialist Workers League (SWL) and a number of independents.

John McCarthy (spokesman for the CL) and Dave Holmes (spokesman for the SWL) used the opportunity of this public meeting organised by the SL to attack it with considerable vigour for failing to organise anything concrete on the question of Chile! In fact, as Spartacist speakers pointed out, the SL has done more than any of its ostensibly Trotskyist opponents on this question. Furthermore, when for rhetorical purposes Dave Holmes called for a campaign (initiated by the SWL's American co-thinkers) to defend nine leading Chilean leftists, the SL promised full support for such a defence campaign.

But when we contacted Holmes subsequent to the meeting he had to say the SWL had no defence plans "at this stage".

The SL speaker at the meeting said that the task of revolutionaries is to draw the lessons of the Chilean coup, to fight to break the proletariat from all reformist and class collaborationist illusions and to build a revolutionary vanguard party committed not to a re-run, on an even more disastrous scale, of the popular front, but to a workers revolution.

While campaigning vigorously for solidarity with the Chilean political prisoners, the SL regards their defence in light of the need for relentless political struggle against the existing centrist and reformist currents in the Chilean left, in order to achieve the political differentiation necessary to construct a genuine Bolshevik party to lead the Chilean workers to victory.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

## Metal trades award...

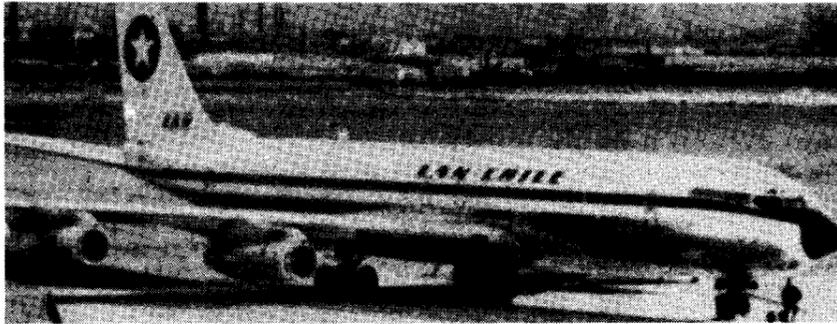
While calling for support to the full log of claims and no closed award, they advanced the demand for an automatic cost of living escalator based on *total wages* and a 35 hour week *linked to a sliding scale of hours* to combat unemployment. This was key to the struggle since the threat of a recession in the near future is real and it is necessary to fight inflation with wage rises that are tied to rises in the cost of living. A continuing national strike run by shop floor committees was advocated to achieve these goals. At the Redfern Oval meeting on April 3, a supporter of the SL put forward a resolution formulating these demands and the necessity to struggle for the needs of migrant and women workers (which the speaker pointed out meant raising demands such as the teaching of English in the employers time and bilingual union publications, and free 24 hour child care centres and the socialisation of household duties).

In *Australasian Spartacist* No 6 we warned of a sellout in the metal trades campaign. So long as the leadership of the metal trades unions remains in the hands of treacherous reformist bureaucrats, the metal workers will face further betrayals. The Spartacist League does not intend to stand idly by but is working for the creation of an alternative revolutionary leadership in the trade unions through the construction of caucuses based on the full transitional programme, the only programme adequate to the objective tasks facing the working class today.

The SL speaker stressed that the preservation of the lives of the MIR and other militants was important because it is from the ranks of such formations that many of the members of a Chilean Bolshevik party will have to be won. This is all the more urgent in that the Junta's rule, increasingly isolated, is not stable in any sense and the potential exists for another outbreak in the not too distant future.

Before the coup the MIR had failed the test of Bolshevism when it gave critical support to the UP government. Since the coup the MIR has made a sharp right turn calling for a new popular front of which it would be part. This contrasts vividly with Lenin's policy in 1917 towards Kerensky, the Allende of the Russian Revolution:

LAN Chile jet at Sydney Airport, stalled by Transport Workers Union black ban. The ban forced Junta to meet unions' conditions for union "fact-finding" trip. (photo: *The Amalgamated News*)



"Our tactics: no trust in and no support of the new government; Kerensky is especially suspect; arming of the proletariat is the only guarantee; ... no rapprochement with other parties." (V.I. Lenin, "Telegram to the Bolsheviks leaving for Russia", 6 March 1917; *Collected Works*, XXIII, p 292)

The Chilean events have provided a test of ostensible revolutionary organisations internationally. In a resolution passed unanimously by the international body looked to by both the CL and the SWL, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, (Usec) in December 1971, the UP is characterised as a popular front coalition towards which revolutionaries can give no support whatsoever, including electoral:

"Revolutionary Marxists can, in certain situations vote for a labor candidate but not for a candidate of a front that includes petty bourgeois and bourgeois parties." (*Socialist Review*, May 1972)

But in the period immediately after the coup, Robin Blackburn, a leading member of the International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of the Usec, claimed in an article reprinted in the Communist League's paper, *Militant*, (26 October 1973) that the UP did not have a "classical 'popular front' programme".

### CONFUSED REVISIONISTS BACK POPULAR FRONT

This hopeless centrist confusion is reflected in the policies of the Usec elsewhere and would have disastrous consequences if it had any significant following in the working class. The (now ex-) Ligue Communiste, then the Usec's French section, in early 1973 gave electoral support to the Union of the Left, a classical popular front which included the Communist Party, the Socialist Party and the bourgeois Radicals, in the French parliamentary elections.

It is no wonder that the Communist League in Australia, which together with the ex-Ligue Communiste and the IMG supports the majority wing of the faction-ridden Usec, was reduced at the forum to attacking the SL's "sectarianism", dishing out tales of horror and calling for a broad-based solidarity campaign involving all "progressive people" in Australia, while having nothing to say about the way forward for the Chilean masses.

The Chilean proletariat attempting to learn the lessons of the Allende debacle will find no answer in the Mandel, Krivine, McCarthy swamp. Nor will they learn anything from the minority wing of the Usec headed by the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and supported by the SWL. These reformists while posing as more orthodox than their majority comrades were also not above capitulating to Allende: witness the following from *Intercontinental Press*, 5 October 1970:

"It would be a crime to whitewash the UP. But failing to recognise the positive elements in it, condemning it in toto out of some sectarian dogmatism would mean suicidal isolation."

It was precisely Allende's popular front government which represented a suicidal course for the proletariat -- implacable opposition to it from the beginning was the only way forward!

On March 23, a delegation of officials from four Australian unions left for Chile on a "fact-finding" mission which planned to locate and contact political prisoners held by the regime. The Junta predictably did not like the idea. After agreeing to the trip, no doubt wishing to give the impression they had nothing to hide, the Junta reneged when the unions involved laid down conditions which would assure at least a minimum of freedom for the delegation while in Chile. In a

commendable act of proletarian solidarity, members of the Transport Workers Union at Sydney Airport placed a black ban on LAN Chile which immobilised one of the airline's jets. This militant action forced the Junta to meet the conditions.

The Socialist Labour League (SLL) -- the Australian section of the bogus "International Committee of the Fourth International" -- had flaunted its sterile sectarianism by refusing either to join in a united front public meeting to defend the MIR militants or to support the demonstration at Sydney Airport. Then, in the 28 March 1974 *Workers News*, the SLL deepened its disgraceful refusal to defend the Chilean workers movement with the contemptible and ridiculous

claim that the union delegation was an attempt to provide favourable publicity for the Junta! The SLL incorrectly reported that the SL did not claim to support the delegation's trip. Let us make our position clear: while we opposed the reformism of the union bureaucrats who made up the delegation, we unambiguously supported the trip as a concrete act of aid to working-class victims of repression. Even though the reformism of the union officials undoubtedly limited its effectiveness, the delegation's visit could only help, if minimally, to alleviate the plight of some political prisoners and to expose some of the Junta's crimes to the light of day. Reformists such as Jim Baird (CPA member on the delegation as an official of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union) are about as interested in supporting the Junta as his Chilean co-thinkers being tortured in the Junta's gaols. But above all, in case you have forgotten, comrades of the SLL, the delegation's trip was *forced* on the Junta by the Transport Workers' black ban. One can only assume that the SLL would have *opposed* the black ban and denounced the workers' exemplary act of class solidarity as fascist publicity!

The Chilean proletariat has not been crushed by its defeat. The revolution has a rare second chance in Chile. The vital ingredient for success is a resolute, Bolshevik vanguard party steered in the struggle against the reformist betrayers. Such a party, crystallised in a sharp political struggle to win subjectively revolutionary cadres from the existing revisionist currents, can stand at the head of a victorious Chilean working class, spearheading the socialist revolution throughout South America and the world.

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# Confused ranks betrayed by bureaucrats

## Metal trades leaders settle for nothing

After four months of negotiations between the Metal Trades Federation of unions (MTF) and the Metal Trades Industry Association (MTIA) and other employer organisations, the bureaucratic reformist leadership of the MTF has led the unions into what is clearly a *defeat*. The settlement provides for a \$15 pay increase, and one week extra annual leave with a 17½% annual leave loading.

The gross capitulation of the MTF leadership becomes even clearer when the \$15 wage rise is compared to \$25 won by the miners, the \$22.50 offer now before the waterside workers, and the reported \$30 offer made by General Motors-Holden to the Vehicle Building Employees Federation (led by one of the most servile, right-wing union bureaucracies in Australia, and *without even a strike!*). In a leaflet distributed to the mass meetings held to legitimise the settlement in Sydney on April 3, the Spartacist League urged its rejection since:

"1. With price rises now running over 15% -- as much as 20% for food -- the defence of workers' living standards is urgent. \$15 does not come close to meeting the rise in prices even in the period since the last award was negotiated. Its acceptance will mean *not* a wage gain but a cut in purchasing power, an outright defeat.

"2. This new concession by the employers has been made even though there has been almost no industrial action by the metal unions. Clearly, a much higher gain could be won if the Metal unions were to make a real fight.

"3. *The rest of the log of claims has been ignored.* In fact it has been *abandoned without a fight* by the union leadership. No settlement should be adopted which simply ignores the legitimate demands of the metal workers embodied in the original log of claims."

In the current inflationary situation, even when possible over-award gains in the next few months are taken into account, the majority of metal workers will, by next year, be even worse off than they were before this \$15 raise.

### "GUERRILLA" STRIKES: A STRATEGY TO LOSE

Throughout March the MTF leadership adopted a strategy designed to dissipate militancy, and to mobilise the more backward elements against the militants, who were made to appear responsible for the futility of the bureaucrats' methods of struggle. Stopwork meetings on March 4 overwhelmingly rejected the employers offer of \$11 or \$12 and an extra weeks holiday. After a series of conferences held in mid-March between the unions and the employers held under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Coldham of the Arbitration Commission, a full meeting of representatives from all the metal trades unions agreed *unanimously* that they "would be prepared to recommend acceptance of an increase of \$18." (*Amalgamated News*, March 1973) This recommendation was taken to the mass meetings held on March 19, where it was carried, though there was significant opposition especially in Victoria which wanted to retain the full log of claims. Coldham a few days later produced a "compromise" proposal of \$15 linked to a closed award. The unions temporised but when it became clear that the employers would accept this proposal the MTF negotiating committee voted 14 to 8 to recommend acceptance to the membership. Stopwork meetings were held on April 3 to vote on this recommendation which was carried nationally by a narrow majority with NSW overwhelmingly for and Victoria overwhelmingly against.

We reprint below the resolution put to the April 3 Redfern Oval meeting by supporters of the Spartacist League. Because the meeting was bureaucratically rigged, the resolution never reached a vote.

- \* That the employers current offer of \$15 be rejected.
- \* That the full log of claims must be met.
- \* That any form of closed agreement be rejected.
- \* That there be no compromise on the needs of women and migrant workers.
- \* That any settlement must include provision for automatic monthly cost-of-living escalator based on total wages and for a 35 hour week linked to a sliding scale of hours to combat unemployment.
- \* That there be a continuing national industry-wide strike run by elected shop-floor committees in support of these claims.

The circumstances of the final vote were indicative of the way in which the whole campaign was waged. The union bureaucrats, after some confusion about just what way the vote had gone, finally managed to compute the vote down to the last man, though at most meetings no count whatever was taken! Information was kept from the membership (at the April 3 meeting at Redfern Oval, Charlie Brown, who is the NSW secretary of the MTF even tried to claim he did not know what was happening in Victoria), the mass meetings were bureaucratically controlled with motions and amendments from the floor being ignored or ruled out of order.

### SHORT CHANGE FROM HALFPENNY

While the main exponents of the undemocratic procedures (and vicious red baiting) were "right" wing officials, the verbal opposition of the "left" bureaucrats varied in inverse proportion to the danger of their having to take concrete actions to implement a real struggle. While right wing elements organised buses for supporters of an immediate settlement at the last stopwork meetings in NSW, the "lefts" confined themselves to papering up their left cover towards the end of the campaign. Moreover, it is "left" bureaucrats like Halfpenny and Carmichael who have been among the foremost advocates of the strategy of holding 24 hour stoppages and "guerilla strikes", the policy by which the whole bureaucracy sought to dissipate militancy.

The agreement finally worked out on April 9 includes a clause that amounts to a qualified closed agreement. Though the statement produced jointly by the employers and the unions includes a proviso by the unions that they cannot give "undertakings not to continue to press for economic justice", it declares that the settlement is in satisfaction for future claims. While the phrasing appears ambiguous, a spokesman of one employer group quite emphatically declared that:

"The settlement of this dispute is based on an acknowledgement by all union officials that the increase of \$15 is in satisfaction for claims which would have been made against individual employers over the next 12 months." (*Australian Financial Review*, April 10 1974)

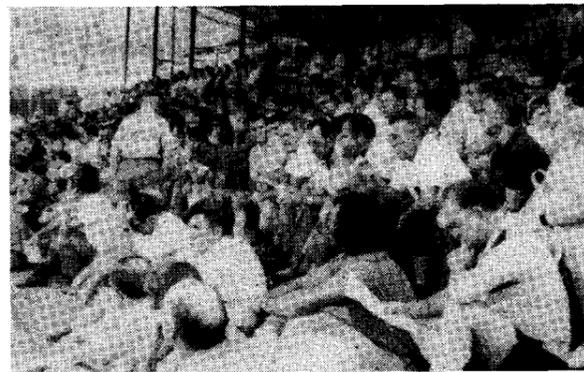
Whatever the ambiguities of the wording, this settlement will be used by the employers to resist further wage demands and to force the union officials to police their ranks. Furthermore it will be difficult to substitute over-award payments for the inadequate national settlement since the struggle for such over-award improvements is confined to individual, isolated shop-floor struggles.

The Communist Party (CPA) sought to posture as militants, in particular highlighting the greater militancy in Victoria, where CPAer John Halfpenny is state secretary. Though the CPA blustered a lot, it was reported (including by fellow AMWU official, Charlie Brown) that Halfpenny actually initiated the \$18 proposal, and he certainly never publicly opposed it, in fact mov-

ing the recommendation that this figure be accepted at a Melbourne mass meeting. In a leaflet distributed in Sydney the CPA gently chastised the negotiating committee for adopting the \$18 figure but tried to cover for Halfpenny by suggesting that \$18 was the minimum:

"It is regrettable that this has already been done. The workers, faced with a "fait accompli" have no alternative [!] but to endorse the Negotiating Committee's action, but should decide now that \$18 is the minimum by which a settlement of the money matter can be effected."

The CPA sought to divert attention from its craven capitulation by focusing on the question of the closed award (their line being: it is fine to sell out today as long as we can make a pretence of being prepared to fight some other time). The CPA's other prominent "militant", Assistant Federal Secretary, Laurie Carmichael announced that the \$15 and the extra week leave were "substantial" gains, and even tried to give out that the paltry campaign had achieved the "highest level of struggle ever reached in the metal trade" (*Tribune*, 16-22 April 1974). No matter how much the CPA may blame the "rights", it is clear that the difference between them and the CPA is only a division of labour with the fake



Metal unions mass meeting at Wentworth Park, Sydney, March 20. (photo: ASp)

militancy of Halfpenny and the like disguising the more blatant subservience of Short, Brown, Caesar, et al.

The intervention of the fake Trotskyist Socialist Labour League (SLL) was characterised by a cretinist faith that somewhere there was a "growing movement for an all out fight" (*Workers News*, March 14, 1974) and an economist fixation with the full log of claims. The SLL claimed that the fight for the \$30 was the key, though in fact flat wage rises will not combat the threat of inflation or unemployment. The SLL has become so mesmerised by the final "crisis" that it abandons the transitional programme and grovels before the present reformist consciousness of the working class.

The only consistently revolutionary intervention in the campaign was made by supporters of the Spartacist League working in the metal trades.

Continued on page seven

## SPANISH



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