



For workers' revolution in southern Africa

Smash Portuguese imperialism

The overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal by a military coup has focused attention upon the national liberation struggles in the Portuguese African colonies of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. The coup itself was in large part precipitated by the Portuguese regime's inability to suppress the colonial nationalist movements. The solution offered by General (now President) Spínola is a proposal (under the guise of "self-determination") for a Lusitano-African commonwealth, similar to the post-World War II French Union, as a form of pseudo-independence.

This solution has been repudiated by the main guerrilla groups, and recently the talks between the PAIGC (African Independence Party of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde) and the interim government, which were seen as setting the guidelines for talks with the other nationalist groups, broke down. In Mozambique the nationalist forces have undertaken a generalised offensive, and in both Mozambique and Angola a major strike wave continues.

The various protest groups, like the African Freedom Movement in Melbourne and the Southern Africa Liberation Centre in Sydney, have sought to use the publicity surrounding these events to help build the demonstrations on South Africa Freedom Day on June 26. In keeping with the liberal, bourgeois, nationalistic and social-democratic proclivities of their main activists these committees have adopted a quite uncritical, idolatrous attitude towards the southern African guerrilla movements. While calling for the independence of the Portuguese colonies and for the military victory of the nationalist guerrillas, the Spartacist League sees that it is the duty of revolutionaries to struggle politically against the petty-bourgeois leaderships of the independence movements, and for the proletarian revolution, smashing capitalist property relations, necessary to bring the independence struggle to successful completion.

Of the guerrilla movements in the three colonies the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, the smallest and least significant of the territories, has been the most successful. In 1973, the nation-



Gold mine workers in South Africa. The South African proletariat has strategic importance for revolution throughout the region. (photo: Workers Press)

alists, with control of most of the population and three quarters of the area outside the cities declared independence. At this stage independence for Guinea-Bissau is probably inevitable.

Of much greater importance is Mozambique. The Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) has made dramatic military gains during the last 18 months. Previously confined to a narrow area in the northern provinces, it has extended its activity south to the key port of Beira and the

roads leading west to Rhodesia. The threat to white-dominated Rhodesia's main outlet to the sea has prompted the covert intervention of Rhodesian mercenary army units against FRELIMO in the Tete province.

FRELIMO is clearly the only viable African political force in Mozambique at this point. But the nationalists are far from having complete hegemony. Pandemonium broke out among striking dockworkers when the Portuguese colonial minister

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Builders' Labourers' Federation deregistered Bureaucrats' squabbles threaten building workers

On Friday, June 21, the Builders' Labourers' Federation (BLF) was deregistered by the full bench of the Australian Industrial Court in Melbourne. The decision is the latest result of a sustained attack by the Master Builders' Association (MBA) on the NSW branch of the union which began in October 1973. While the state branches retain their registration within their states, the court's decision opens the way for the deregistration of the NSW Branch, and the NSW MBA has already begun the process. W. Glover, an MBA industrial officer announced that:

"Once the federation was deregistered as a State union, the association would 'refuse to deal with its officials', but would protect builders' labourers on the job and would deal with them through their job delegates." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 June 1974)

In addition to this declared intention to smash the union and set up a scab branch, the MBA has taken provocative actions, organising armed guards at some construction sites and informing the building trades unions that they had orders to "shoot on sight" any "trespassers". The MBA is clearly out for blood.

The MBA, hand in glove with the NSW Liberal Government, is determined to smash the NSW BLF because of its militant actions (especially over the last four years). The extension of "green bans" to over \$3000 million worth of construction in 1973 was the last straw for the MBA, which in October saw its chance to move in for the kill when the leadership of the NSW BLF (primarily Munday, Owens, and Pringle -- a "left" social democrat) imposed a green ban to preserve the historical virginity of the Rocks area in Sydney. This move was resented by the bulk of the trade-union bureaucracy (including the Melbourne-based BLF General Secretary Gallagher and Clancy of the Building Workers' Industrial Union (BWIU)).

The building industry, covered by 11 separate unions and a confusing welter of state and federal awards, is nevertheless dominated by the BWIU (with about 45,000 members nationwide, covering primarily carpenters and bricklayers) and the BLF (with a national membership of about 35,000). The BWIU is dominated by the respectably reformist, pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia (SPA): BWIU Federal Secretary Pat Clancy is also President of the SPA, and the NSW BWIU leadership, headed by State Secretary Tom

McDonald, are predominantly SPA members. The Victorian and Federal BLF is run by Norm Gallagher, vice-chairman of the virulently nationalist Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA-ML), while its NSW branch stands under the green banner of Jack Munday, newly elected National President of the ex-Stalinist, reformist Communist Party of Australia (CPA), with CPA member Joe Owens as BLF State Secretary.

It is not only a crime but a devastating commentary on the pretensions of each of these three different self-proclaimed "revolutionary" organisations that, for no reason other than the reformist blind alleys they have led building workers into, the BLF is in real danger of a decisive defeat which would weaken the entire working class.

The danger does not stem directly from the deregistration itself, the effects of which can be defeated by a united trade-union defence against any attempt by the bosses to use it. At this point the trade-union bureaucracy as a whole has an interest in maintaining that defence both to prevent the use of deregistration against themselves, and to guard their image as militants. So the declarations of (future) support by the BWIU, the Building Trades Group of unions (BTG) in NSW, and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) are not entirely empty.

On the other hand, Gallagher's cheerful

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editorial notes

Revolutionaries and ALP funds

Spartacist critical support to Labor in elections is a tool to fight reformism in the working class. Despite the ALP's role as the major roadblock to the Australian revolution, we seek to stand with the working class which supports it as the best existing expression of class unity.

Critical support involves the use of every possible opportunity to expose the disastrous leadership and policies of the ALP. It does not merely mean a vote for ALP candidates, but also support for granting funds by trade unions and student bodies to Labor electoral campaigns.

Spartacist supporters at LaTrobe University (Melbourne) missed a useful opportunity in the debate around the question of spending \$2000 in support of the recent electoral campaign. They saw the need to fight Labor's treacherous leadership, but failed to use the most effective weapon: a vote for such use of funds, together with a fight for an amendment to have the finance spent on *critical* support based on a class-struggle program. Whether or not such an amendment passes, the Spartacist League supports donations by student bodies and trade unions to ALP election campaigns.

There are, of course, forms of "critical support" which do not take up a struggle against the leadership of the ALP. The Spartacists correctly opposed such a motion at LaTrobe, moved by supporters of the Socialist Workers Action Group/Revolutionary Communists, based on a program not qualitatively to the left of that of the current leadership of the Labor Party, a program which certainly failed to go beyond the bounds of capitalism. ■

Cringing CPA bars critics

The Communist Party Queen's Birthday weekend 24th Congress started with an "open session" open, that is, to the bourgeois press and everyone else (including representatives of both halves of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International", the Socialist Workers League and the Communist League) except the Spartacist League and the Socialist Labour League. The CPA knows how it wants to be reported, and it knows who it can trust to report the way it likes. Among the guards protecting the Congress from the fearsome SL and SLL was one CPA member who claimed proudly to be a law enforcement officer for a commonwealth service, and admitted to having the power to make arrests. Nice bloke to have around as a bouncer!

The SLL was quite correct, but not, perhaps, entirely consistent to protest loudly about its exclusion from the "open" session. Problem is that the SLL itself is not without responsibility for the current disease of exclusionism in the Australian left. They have consistently excluded the Spartacist League from their own "public" forums and classes since January 1973. The protests of hypocrites have a slightly pathetic ring.

The SLL's belief that the CPA is sufficiently exposed by little more than a continu-

ing stream of accusations of "Stalinism" is rendered a trifle ludicrous by their own material. The *Workers News* article (20 June 1974), entitled "Stalinist Congress: Class line drawn" says that "The Congress ... marked a further sharp turn to the right. Jack Munday, who believes the Soviet Union is state capitalist and therefore no better than the imperialist countries, was elected National President." Yet the CPA is still held to be an agent of the Moscow bureaucracy! It is time for even the SLL to face reality on this question and come to the conclusion that the CPA has achieved, *in independence from Moscow, a form of reformism which is capable of being grosser than even Stalinism.* ■

... and so does SWL/SYA

In recent months the Socialist Workers League/Socialist Youth Alliance have been trying to fight against their own unjustified bureaucratic expulsion from the Young Labor Association (YLA). Now they use the same methods against YLA members (and also the Spartacist League) as have been used against them, showing the fundamental unity between the left-bureaucratic reformists of the SWL/SYA and the right-bureaucratic reformists of the YLA.

That the Spartacist League was allowed a token "press representative" at the Queen's Birthday weekend conference of the SYA in Melbourne did not prevent a correspondent of the wretched bourgeois *Nation Review* (21-26 June 1974) from taking a good point allowed to him by the SYA:

"You would expect after getting a leaflet inviting you to the trotskyite orientated Socialist Youth Alliance's 5th conference 'Public Rally', that the words 'public rally' would mean just that. Instead, when I turned up last Saturday ten minutes before the advertised starting time of 8 pm, I found the door blocked by four men vetting the wouldbe audience.

"About 20 people were demanding entry. Half were from the Spartacist League, an extreme hardline trotskyite group which disagrees with the SYA party line of 'entrism'."

The other group he noted as excluded was the Victorian YLA.

Well ... perhaps there weren't quite ten Spartacists hammering at the door, and perhaps the rodent from the *Nation Review* got the Spartacist position on entrism wrong (we're certainly not against entrism in principle -- see the article on the labour parties in this issue) but the SYA has certainly managed to irk one of the liberals it's always trying to cosy up to.

The SLL managed to add to the hypocrisy exposed above on the CPA conference by complaining in the same article that outside the SYA conference they were called, *inter alia*, "provocateurs". Certainly an outrageous slander, we agree, to suggest without evidence that a tendency in the workers movement consists of police agents! But the SLL is not in a very good position from which to complain. In their *Workers News* of 21 March 1974 they brazenly called the SL provocateurs. (See *ASp* no 8) ■

CL, CPA reject united front against racist Act

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) can now share some of the Communist League's (CL) credit for undermining attempts to build a united front campaign against the Queensland Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders' Act 1971. In their efforts to fight the Spartacist League both tendencies have displayed an amazing mixture of sectarianism and opportunist do-goodism by demanding that supporters of the campaign must not only agree to oppose the Act, which denies basic democratic rights to the blacks who fall under its jurisdiction, but also agree in Melbourne with the "principle" of "self-determination for blacks", and in Sydney "black control over black affairs" (whatever they are).

At a meeting called in Melbourne on May 13, ostensibly to establish an organising committee around the slogan "Smash the Act", the CL argued that adherence to the "principle" of "self-determination for blacks" was implicit in the anti-Act campaign. The Spartacist League explained that this could have disastrous consequences as self-determination applies to nations and is inapplicable to the situation of Aborigines. To their sectarian concept of a united front for broad programmatic principles, we counterposed the Leninist conception of the united front, in which groups with *different* pro-

grams can agree to fight for a *specific* aim. The CL showed how terribly serious they are about their claimed objective of smashing the Act by refusing to work with the Spartacist League on any basis other than the totally unacceptable one of self-determination for blacks.

Members of the Communist League claimed that things would be different in Sydney as they wanted a real united front, but when Denis Freney of the CPA argued at a 19 June Sydney meeting that "black control over black affairs" must be a "principle" of the "united front against the Act", he was fully supported by the CL and a motion was passed basing the committee on that principle. Again the Spartacist League expressed its desire to participate in a campaign against the Act, and its opposition to being excluded from the united front by the imposition of an impossible utopian classless programmatic condition.

The Spartacist League opposes the racist legislation, and although we cannot be part of a committee organised on this basis, we will participate in demonstrations and other activities it organises against the Act. The CL-CPA's exclusions from their fake united fronts -- in fact rotten blocs for propaganda -- are attempts to impose their policies bureaucratically on other groups, rather than to fight politically. ■

CL backs idiot terrorism, criminal massacre

Implicit in the Communist League's (CL) lauding of the Symbionese Liberation Army's (SLA) "heroic ... attempts to smash capitalism" and ability to evade the repression of the US state apparatus (*Militant* 3 June 1974) is the notion that without a revolutionary party the mobilised working class, using the same methods, will smash the bourgeois state with ease. However, the SLA's demise at the hands of brutal storm-trooper Los Angeles police dramatically shows how misplaced their optimism was.

Actually the SLA is/was not a left political organisation but a cultist grouping using semi-political rhetoric to justify irrational outbursts of violence. Nothing was achieved by the SLA other than the waste of the lives of its victims and of its members.

Despite the SLA's unsavory character the Spartacist League stood for defence of their bourgeois democratic rights (including trial by jury) against police violence, but were it a left political organisation it would have been necessary to defend them unconditionally against the state, whilst opposing the strategy of terrorism.

Individual terrorism is incapable of generating fundamental social changes, as at best it leads the masses into passivity -- substituting a heroic liberator for the revolutionary mobilisation of workers and other exploited layers.

The CL has on occasion given a blanket endorsement to terrorism:

"the principle approach of Marxists in Australia is to defend and justify the actions of oppressed people everywhere in their struggles to overthrow imperialism ... therefore, we say that there are no 'innocents' who are the victims of 'terrorism'. If one represents, or is a beneficiary of, or believes oneself to be a beneficiary of, a system that oppresses a nation or a class -- be they Israeli athletes, Protestant Ulstermen or French Algerian colons -- then they are just as much a part of that oppression as the police, the courts, or the capitalists themselves." (*Militant* 13 October 1972)

Consistency is not, however, a virtue of the CL and in a later *Militant* (22 January 1973) they printed without comment an interview attacking Black September and terrorism in general. But now the CL has swung back again, and in their 3 June *Militant* they justify the killing of the high school students at Maalot by stating that they were "up and coming Zionists".

No doubt their Israeli comrades, Matzpen-Marxist, who are predominantly young people, will be pleased to know that the CL, by endorsing indiscriminate and racist killings, has ruled that they are legitimate targets for terrorists.

Despite the senselessness of the Palestinian terrorists their indiscriminate raid at Maalot pales before the orgy of violence perpetrated by the Zionist state against the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in "retribution".

If the CL had the courage of its convictions then in Australia they would be killing racist workers, trade union bureaucrats, bourgeois politicians and their sons and daughters. Their enthusiasm for terror, however, only extends to that outside their own province where it cannot get them into too much trouble. ■

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Rightist Takeover Looms in Ceylon

by Edmund Samarakody

Special Report from Ceylon

COLOMBO, May 2—A sharp change has taken place in the political situation here. The rightist forces led by the older and more conservative bourgeois party (United National Party) have now begun to mobilise with the perspective of ending the coalition government [of Mrs. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party, along with the reformist LSSP and CP] and smashing the working-class movement and the left. In the context of the coalitionist and reformist politics of the working-class leaders, it means that the working class and the left parties face an unprecedentedly grave situation, unless these forces are able to speedily reorient themselves, forge a new revolutionary leadership and march forward for the revolutionary conquest of power. The alternatives of proletarian revolution or the triumph of counterrevolution are sharply and urgently posed on the Ceylon scene today.

The LSSP [Lanka Sama Samaja Party] betrayers and their Stalinist friends have so well practised class collaboration through the coalition government during the last four years—weakening seriously the working class and politically disorienting it—that the forces of capitalist reaction have gathered strength and are already taking the first steps (in the perspective of a confrontation to end the coalition and smash the working class and the left) towards the realisation of their new solution: a naked capitalist dictatorship.

The UNP and its allies in the parliamentary opposition—the Federal Party (Tamil bourgeois), Tamil Congress (Tamil bourgeois), Ceylon Workers Congress (Thondaman) and some independent rightist parliamentarians—stepped up their opposition to the coalition government with the deepening of the crisis of the economy and the worsening of the situation of the masses. Since the beginning of the year these rightist parties, backed by the "Dawasa" and "Sun" group of newspapers, have been campaigning for civil disobedience as a protest against the acts



Ceylon premier
S. Bandaranaike
meeting with
Chou En-lai.

and omissions of the government that have produced the increasing misery of the masses: increase of food prices, increase of the price of kerosene and petrol, increase in bus and train fares, increase in the prices of all commodities produced by government-owned factories and enterprises, etc. These parties have also demanded that the government go to the polls at the end of the fifth year (next year), as against the gov-

ernment's decision to prolong the life of parliament for seven years.

Pursuing these aims the rightist forces led by the UNP announced at the beginning of April that they would hold 150 public meetings on April 21. The government's reaction to this was to ban all these meetings. And when the UNP leader, Jayawardena, indicated that they would defy the ban, the government imposed a twenty-four hour curfew for April 21 and also sealed the printing press of the "Dawasa" and "Sun" group of newspapers.

There was speculation whether in this context the government would allow May Day meetings. There was however only a partial ban of meetings on May Day. Only one trade-union meeting of the UNP was permitted. But the UNP and its allies broke this ban and held several meetings; the police did not interfere. The LSSP forces were the largest in the coalition's May Day demonstration.

The government's explanation for its actions in relation to the campaigning of the rightists is that fascist forces have raised their head and were planning to organise violence for the overthrow of the coalition government. Prime Minister Bandaranaike has used this theme to call upon the masses to come to the support of the government. Her claim was that the rightist forces are against the government because they have been adversely affected by the government's "progressive measures": land ceilings, house ceilings, income ceilings and severe taxation imposed on the capitalists.

All pro-government trade-union leaders have issued statements raising the spectre of "fascist offensive," expressing readiness to take to the streets with arms in hand to fight these forces. In this regard it is the LSSP that is most vociferous on the need to mobilise the working-class forces to meet this threat from the rightists. It is reported that the LSSP Political Bureau has taken a decision to "form workers militias."

The threat from the rightist forces that have begun to mobilise is indeed real. But there is no "fascist" movement today. Revolution-

ary Marxists are only too familiar with the cries of "fascism" raised by the Stalinists and other reformists to keep the masses chained to the chariot wheels of the so-called progressive bourgeoisie. Of course the ground is fertile for the growth of a fascist movement, and the further evolution of the present rightist opposition movement could well lead to the formation of such currents. In any event, the need and

perspective of the capitalist class is for a naked capitalist dictatorship.

But why has the capitalist class decided to have an end of coalition? Is there a real threat to capitalist rule in the immediate period ahead? Have there been mass mobilisations around an anti-capitalist orientation?

Unlike the cases of Indonesia and Chile, there has not been during this four-year coalition regime anything resembling mass mobilisations. And while working-class strikes, including strikes in important branches of the economy, have occurred, they have not led to any sort of confrontation with the capitalist class and the government.

However, the very success of the

outset, empty of content even in the sphere of small concessions. The working class was cheated. While striking direct blows at the workers' living standards, the coalition government dangled before them the so-called anti-capitalist measures—"income ceilings," "land ceilings"—which were only measures in the interest of capitalist development.

Thus it is now a question of settling the accounts between the forces of capitalism and the forces of the working class and toilers.

While the LSSP and CP leaders are shouting empty slogans of smashing "the fascists and reactionary forces and of ending capitalism under the leadership of the working class," they are lining up



Tampo of Ceylon section, "United Secretariat"

coalition government in maintaining class peace (both through coalition politics and even more through the use of and show of strength of the armed forces) has cracked the base of the coalition regime. Bandaranaike's politics—a "rightful place" for Buddhism, dethroning the English language and enthroning Sinhalese as the only state language [to the exclusion of Tamil, the language of Ceylon's oppressed Indian-derived minority], and the LSSP and CP promises of "socialism"—are of no avail in keeping the working class and the masses loyally in the camp of the coalition; on the contrary, the masses have now broken with the coalition government by reason of the systematic blow struck against their living standards, the hopelessness of their present state and their possible fate from the further continuation of the government. The capitalist class can well see that the coalition has outlived its usefulness.

The capitalist class (including the "national bourgeoisie" that was backing this government) can clearly see that the LSSP and CP leaders can no longer control the working class. The working class has come to the end of its tether. The pro-coalition trade-union leaders were compelled, however hypocritically, to take decisions to launch a general strike to compel the government to grant their wage demands. And although the government reacted to these mobilisations by granting a wage increase, the workers have already expressed their disappointment in that regard. Big class battles are in the offing. But the capitalist class and the government have reached the limit of any concessions on the wage front. It is thus that the organised working class is a terrible roadblock to capitalist class rule.

The other side of the picture is that the working class needs, from a different direction, to end the coalition. In fact what the working-class leaders in the coalition government got from this alliance was, from the

behind the bourgeois leader, Mrs. Bandaranaike, who has made it abundantly clear that she looks to the armed force of the bourgeois state to resist the forces of capitalist reaction! The LSSP and CP leaders have already raised their familiar and treacherous slogans: "unity of the progressive forces," "Anti-Fascist Peoples Front," etc.

While most of the "left" groups have echoed the LSSP and the Stalinists, Tampoe [head of the LSSP(R), Ceylon section of the "United Secretariat"] has not even made mention of the real threat from the forces of capitalist reaction. He has implicitly taken a position of unconcern whether it is the coalition or the UNP-led forces that will control state power. Tampoe's remedy is "rebuilding the left movement!"

It is only the Revolutionary Workers Party that has undertaken a Marxist analysis of the present development. Understanding the danger of the mobilisation of the rightist forces for the smashing of the working class and the left parties, we have explained how the coalition government, with the active assistance of the LSSP and CP, helped the growth of capitalist reaction and are still continuing to do so. We have explained that the struggle against the forces of capitalist reaction cannot be undertaken by a capitalist coalition government; such a struggle can end in the defeat of the reactionary forces only on the condition that it is an anti-capitalist struggle under the leadership of the working class, a struggle that will mobilise all the forces of the working class and the toilers on the basis of an anti-capitalist program. There cannot be any question of political support to the coalition government. Concretely, we have called for the independent organisation of the working class to counter the growing forces of capitalist reaction, and have insisted on the imperative need to break from the coalition government. ■

... labour parties

debate over orientation to the BLP were those of affiliation and critical support. Both were applications of the turn represented by development of the united front, the turn which prompted Lenin's polemics against the ultra-lefts, to root the Communist Parties in the masses and to set the base of the reformist parties against the top. The SWL *et al.* use the same



Jack Lang of the NSW Lang Labor Party

misrepresentation of the labour parties to justify opportunism in applying both tactics.

The writings of Lenin and Trotsky against ultralefts who held back on principle from giving critical electoral support to the labour parties are also used by the revisionists to justify making it a matter of principle to give them critical support, and as a cover for emptying their "criticisms" of any revolutionary content.

In earlier issues of *Asp* we analysed the SWL's (and the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) 's) exaggeration of the meaning of Liberal-CP coalition victory as compared with an ALP victory. Another example of the pandering to the parliamentary illusions of the working class, also shared by the Healyites and the Pabloists, is the argument that support for a revolutionary program is necessary merely as a means to keep the Liberals out of office:

"If the ALP leadership presented a clear alternative to the Liberals and really led the working people and their allies in their various struggles, Labor would be returned and the Liberals would never get elected again." (*Direct Action*, Special Election Supplement [1972])

Likewise, the SAL argues that "New Zealand workers are correct in voting according to the belief that a Labour government is preferable to a National government." (*SESNZ*, p 53) And no clearer expression of this idea can be found than the following amazing example from *Labor Challenge*, the paper of the SWL-SAL's fraternal section in Canada (the League for Socialist Action):

"The real issue in this election is what class will hold the reins of political power in Ottawa and what class interests will be defended and advanced by the next government ... Only the NDP [New Democratic Party, a right-wing social-democratic party] stands for the interests of the working people." (quoted in *Direct Action*, 9 November 1972)

Only the NDP! If only the extremely crass, petty-bourgeois reformists who head the NDP "stand for the interests of working people", then why does the LSA bother to exist? Answer: the NDP reformists need a left cover. Here is the real content of the SWL's "critical support", which their Canadian co-thinkers express with startling baldness.

The election of such reformist labour

governments in reality is a step forward only to the extent that it aids the exposure of the reformists before the masses. Support for them by the workers in many cases represents only reinforced illusions in the parliamentary reformism of these parties. Their exposure, far from being automatic, requires a revolutionary party to draw the lessons and provide an alternative. While the SWL calls for critical support for the ALP in order to pressure its leadership to the left, for Leninists the aim of critical support has always been to undermine support for the reformists, and recognise that the reformists will let themselves be pushed to the left only to maintain control of the masses when there is an upsurge.

Entrism is a tactic which serves the same general purpose as critical support, but from within rather than from without. It is therefore applicable in a more limited range of situations. But the considerations of principle are the same.

The tactic of entrism was never really tested by the CPGB, whose application for affiliation was turned down by the BLP in 1920. An example of bolshevik entries into mass reformist or centrist parties was that of the Trotskyist movement in the 1930s, isolated from the masses by the precipitous decline of the Comintern into reformist betrayal (but retaining in the eyes of the majority of workers the authority of the Bolshevik Revolution) and by vicious persecution by Stalinists and fascists alike. The general crisis forced many reformist fakers in the mass workers parties to move left, even mouthing "revolutionary" slogans, in order to maintain control as the rank and file were increasingly thrown into struggle against the bourgeois order. Under these conditions, the Trotskyists in several countries entered leftward-turning social-democratic and centrist formations.

Of particular interest are Trotsky's discussions of how the Independent Labour Party (ILP) should orient toward the BLP if the ILP were to pursue a revolutionary policy. In an article written in 1935, he posed the question as follows:

"At this time the question whether to function inside the Labour Party or outside it is not a principled question, but a question of actual possibilities. In any case, without a strong faction in the trade unions, and consequently, in the Labour Party itself, the ILP is doomed to impotence even today...." (Trotsky, *Writings, 1935-1936*, p 66) (emphasis in original)

The connection between trade-union work and work within the BLP stemmed, as it does in the labour parties today, from their historical and organisational ties to the unions. In an interview later the same year, Trotsky strongly emphasised the absolute necessity of revolutionary work in the trade unions, if a successful entry in the BLP was even to be conceivable.

"For the time may come when, in order to reach the masses, it must enter the Labour Party, and it must have tracks laid for the occasion. Only the experience that comes from such [trade-union] fractional work can inform the ILP if and when it must enter the Labour Party. But for all its activity an absolutely clear program is the first condition. A small axe can fell a large tree only if it is sharp enough." (Trotsky, *Writings, 1935-1936*, p 71)

Leaving aside the state of the "axe" possessed by the SWL-SAL, which more resembles a piece of foam rubber, it is worth looking at what they say and do, as opposed to Trotsky.

The most damning fact is that while they sometimes talk of the necessity of working in the trade unions, the SWL-SAL actually undertake no work in this crucial arena. (It is understood that revolutionary trade union work entails more than having a few silent members of trade unions or abstract propaganda from the outside.) They confine their activities exclusively to the La-

bor Party branches, where the petty-bourgeois membership has its base, ignoring entirely the organisations on which the working-class character of the labour parties is based. Thus they accept the present consciousness and level of organisation in the working class, and the social-democratic myth that the place for politics is the parliamentary labour parties and not the unions.

Instead of a tactic rigidly limited in time span for the purpose of polarising the most class-conscious elements away from the reformists, the SWL-SAL transform entrism into an absolute historical necessity. The correct insight that revolutionaries must have an orientation towards the mass organisations of the class is transformed into an immutable rule in favour of work inside the labour parties. Other groups are judged by the absolute rule of work within the labour parties:

"The electoral support given the Labour Party by the SUP [Socialist Unity Party -- NZ pro-Moscow Stalinist party] is deceptive. The SUP sees itself as something separate, and distinct from the Labour Party." (*SESNZ*, p 56)

Naturally, the SAL would not be caught dead being distinct from the Labour Party reformists. And the SWL counterposes work inside the ALP in principle to work outside, unable to conceive of a time when entry would not be applicable:

"Thus both the CPA and the Healyites have this in common, a sectarian attempt to project themselves as an alternative leadership

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... building workers

reaction to the deregistration -- "Tremendous, at last they have cut the chains of arbitration from us" (quoted in the *Australian*, 22 June 1974) -- is simply cheap bluster. In fact, the NSW MBA have committed themselves to an all-out attack on the union, and Gallagher and Owens, by proclaiming scabbing "impossible" (when only about 60% of builders' labourers in metropolitan NSW are unionised), are not helping to mobilise against what might easily become a serious confrontation between the union and the bourgeois state.

A particular necessity in the current situation, to answer the threat represented by the MBA's armed guards, is the organisation of armed workers' defence squads. Workers must be prepared to defend themselves and the union if and when the employers decide to attack, at the same time making it clear that it is the employers who are responsible for the initiation of any violence.

The real danger is that the reformist appetites of the trade-union bureaucracy will in the future lead to a betrayal of the BLF, whose deregistration puts it at the mercy of that bureaucracy. And more importantly, these reformists -- including the current BLF leadership -- are organically incapable of defending the BLF when the favourable conditions produced by the construction boom vanish.

The present campaign by the NSW MBA began in earnest with the deregistration application of October 19 and was clearly timed to coincide with the attempt to smash the Rocks ban. When a subcontractor (with the backing of the Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, Askin and the MBA) tried to use scab labour on a Playfair St demolition job in mid-October, the BLs occupied the site and declared a statewide strike. Askin, looking for a state election issue at the time, sent in the cops, and the bourgeois press echoed the MBA's anti-labour cries of "mob violence" attributed to the BLs. In fact the only violence was the result of police intervention.

In response to a request by Munday for aid against the scabbing ALP right-winger John Ducker had the State Labor Council officially dissociate itself from the BLs. Clancy echoed Ducker, charging that the BLF was aiding the employers. On November 2, the BLs' strike became a lockout when the MBA refused to accept a union decision to return to work.

Gallagher characteristically reacted in alarm to the deregistration threat. According to *Tribune* (3 November 1971), when deregistration was threatened during a NSW BLF strike right back in 1971, Gallagher sought to induce the branch to call off the strike to avoid deregistration. Gallagher's latest campaign against his bureaucratic rivals in NSW began the day after the MBA's application for deregistration and on November 16, the day after the end of the lockout, he said:

"The council has already stated that the green bans will be reviewed and any decision it makes will be binding on the NSW branch. If the branch rejects this decision it will put itself outside the protection of the federation." (quoted in *The Australian*, 17 November 1973)

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of the working class from outside the Labor Party rather than inside." (*Direct Action*, 13 October 1972)

The SAL and the SWL are compelled by the logic of their perspective to offer quite pathetic displays of loyalty to the labour parties. After its proscription from the NZLP the SAL pleaded that it was completely incorrect to call the SAL a "political party", that the SAL was an organisation of Labour Party members "which unconditionally supports the Labour Party as the political arm of the labour movement" (*SESNZ*, p 18). And for its part, the SWL proposed that all voting members of the ALP "should pledge simply that they are not supporters of any political party other than the ALP" (*Direct Action*, 28 June 1973). (According to these criteria, the SWL would exclude workers who are members of the CPA and other groups from their "all-inclusive" party!)

After World War II, the Fourth International was in a weakened state and disoriented by unanticipated developments, and became subject to revisionist disease, of which Michel Pablo was the chief purveyor. The central component of his attack on the Trotskyist program was a new conception of entrism, for which he coined the phrase, "entrism *sui generis* [of its own kind]". Abandoning the perspective of short-term entry to split politically flawed working-class organisations on a hard programmatic basis as a tactic for building the Leninist vanguard party, Pablo postulated a deep entry for indefinite periods whose purposes would be to influence and pressure the leadership of these organisations to the left. This policy, which entailed not only org-

This clear threat to set up a scab branch in NSW was repulsed by Munday, and Gallagher had to find other means to pursue it.

Gallagher made a pretence of militant opposition to the deregistration hearing by refusing to comply with the MBA's attempt to call him as a witness against the union. But when it suits him he has no qualms about going to the bourgeois state for assistance, as shown by his next steps. First, as an excuse for his attempts to wreck the NSW branch he began an investigation into charges of financial corruption in the NSW branch made by a branch member, Joe Ferguson. Then, long before the charges could be substantiated, in a letter dated 6 February 1974, Gallagher and the Federal Management Committee (FMC) told the MBA "As from 12 noon this day all right of entries of the officials of the New South Wales Branch have been withdrawn from the Federation until further notice." Fortunately, the NSW BLF have been able to impose recognition of right of entry; to remove it would effectively destroy the branch. Then, at a 27 February FMC meeting in Sydney, a resolution was passed which included the following:

"4. In the event of the NSW Branch not agreeing to have their books audited, the General Secretary be instructed to seek a Court Order compelling the NSW Branch to carry out the rules of the union."
(undated leaflet, entitled "Protect workers' money", authorised by Gallagher)

Gallagher's rhetoric about "armed revolution" against the bourgeois state, which he enjoys spouting in interviews with the bourgeois press (see *National Times*, 10-15 December 1973) counts for nothing when his bureaucratic appetites require him -- in effect -- to threaten to call in the cops. It is also a sign of Gallagher's total lack of support among the rank and file of the NSW branch that he must find such allies as Martin and the state apparatus.

But whatever the truth of the charges, no amount of corruption is worth destroying the union in NSW, or removing its officials over the heads of the membership -- and in no case can Gallagher's despicable appeal to the class enemy be justified. Revolutionaries must defend the NSW branch against Gallagher's attempt at bureaucratic suppression. (Having been rejected by the Equity Court on March 1 on a technicality, the allegations remain unsettled.)

The labour lieutenants of capital in trade-union officialdom comprise a definite layer within the workers movement whose task is to police the workers when the class struggle exceeds certain limits. But there are variations and shadings within this layer which sometimes makes one class traitor appear more committed to the interests of the proletariat than his colleagues.

The inter-bureaucratic divisions in the building trades are differences only of degree. In this epoch of capitalist decay, long-term, stable reforms within capitalism cannot be won. Attempting to hold together the rotten fabric of capitalism with patchwork, reformists habitually substitute appeals to the bourgeois state for the class struggle. They can at best represent only the fragmentary interests of sections of the working class which, limited to the framework of capitalism, are inevitably pitted against one another.

Gallagher's actions are those of a bureau-

cratic liquidation but the cessation of the struggle for the Trotskyist program, flowed from Pablo's conception of a changed balance of forces, a product of his empiricist objectivism, which looked to the super-historical force of The Revolution to implacably carry the world forward to socialism, interpreting each new development as the motor force of this "inevitable transformation."

The opposition of those forces in the International who resisted Pabloism, led by the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), was incomplete and flawed, and initially, the SWP leadership merely argued that the "tactic" of Pabloist liquidation did not apply in the US. Although when they split abruptly in 1953, SWP leader James P Cannon denounced Pablo and Pabloism, the SWP never confronted the arch-Pabloist entry into the BLP of its ally in that split, the Healy group in Britain, who stayed in for 10 unproductive years. These flaws foreshadowed the qualitative degeneration of the SWP in the early 1960s.

This is the tradition that both the SWL and the SAL have adopted, as they were modelled on the SWP after its decline into servile reformism. The characteristic Pabloite objectivism underpins and reinforces the work of the two groups. The "current radicalisation", an ever-deepening remorseless process, and the development of the "mass anti-capitalist movements" (like the anti-war, women's, and blacks' movements which are now neither particularly massive nor particularly anti-capitalist) become substitutes for the struggle to build a revolutionary leadership. Thus, according to the SWL, the ALP was revived as a mass party by the "mass protest movements"

crat who feels threatened by the boat-rocking of the NSW Branch and by rivals for power like Munday. In an implicit pact with the central labour bureaucracy to keep the lid on rank-and-file militancy, Gallagher was elected to the ACTU executive at the 1973 ACTU Congress, replacing Clancy. In order to hide his real role, Gallagher relies heavily on the Maoist variety of reformism to provide a left cover for his conservative unionism. For the parliamentarist reformism of Clancy, Munday or ACTU President Bob Hawke, the CPA(ML) substitutes social-chauvinism -- reformism based on virulent nationalism. Gallagher's allegiance to the bureaucratic caste in the Chinese workers state is a convenient way of sounding revolutionary while in practice opposing revolution. Clancy's fealty to Moscow serves precisely the same function for him.

The feud between the NSW BLF bureaucrats and those of the BWIU and BTG in part reflects the different layers in the proletariat the memberships of the unions generally comprise. The building tradesmen merge into the skilled labour aristocracy, while the semi or unskilled builders' labourers, including much casual labour and offering less stable employment, have included many migrants, but also partial outcasts and marginal elements merging into the lumpen proletariat.

In the NSW BLF, the then-Stalinists of the CPA gained office only in the early 1960s by campaigning as militants against right-wing anti-communists who had presided over a long period of decline. In maintaining their position the new bureaucrats had to espouse a militancy which brought confrontations with the state, something intolerable to the Labor Council hierarchy, both left and right.

Because of their isolation from the rest of the trade-union bureaucracy, the CPA's BLF officials have needed a form of reformism which could maintain their militant image to the ranks



• Norm Gallagher



• Pat Clancy

and at the same time find them protection in high places. The green bans fit the bill, and Munday carefully led the BLF into an ongoing alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie for rational capitalist town-planning. So far, this reformist ruse has met with success from Munday's point of view. But his own prominence (and resulting pull within the bureaucracy) was achieved by sacrificing the political independence of the builders' labourers, and by erecting obstacles between BLs and other unionists and dissipating BLF militancy in either minor reform struggles or useless, utopian environmental campaigns whose net effect is harmful. In short, by paving the

and the Labor victory is a by-product of the youth radicalisation (nothing to do with the class struggle!). The Pabloist conclusion is that the labour parties ought to reflect this inherently revolutionary process. The various demands of the movements that the SWL-SAL are tailing are brought together under the label of a "socialist Program", and the labour parties are warned that failure to adopt this reformist program will jeopardise the chances of electoral success. Likewise the NZLP bureaucrats are solemnly warned that the purge of SAL supporters endangers Labour's electoral prospects (*SESNZ*, pp 14-15). This is Pabloism in the service of parliamentarist reformism.

The objectivism of the SWL-SAL is quite clearly stated: "no number of back-room deals can stop the politicians being thrust aside by the rising current of the new radicalisation" (*Direct Action*, 10 May 1973). No need to fight against the reformists -- the objective radicalisation will take care of them for you!

The ultimate end-product of Pabloism taken to these extremes is outright Menshevism. The description of the labour parties as steps "along the road from bourgeois politics to independent working-class politics on the way to the revolutionary struggle for socialism" (*Direct Action*, 30 June 1972) shows how the SWL-SAL have transformed the development of these reformist parties into a necessary historical stage. Referring to the question of a labour party in the United States, *Direct Action* muses,

"...the labour party is a necessary class

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way for an attack by the employers the Munday leadership has achieved short-term success.

It is significant that Munday, Gallagher and Clancy all claim to support green bans, although Clancy is for a more staid approach than Munday's and Gallagher, from his vantage point on the ACTU executive, thinks some are "unjustified and stupid" (quoted in *The Australian*, 20 October 1973). It is also significant that they have won support from at least three Federal Labor ministers, Cameron, Cass, and Uren (the latter responsible for appointing Munday to the government Cities Commission advisory committee from which he has lately resigned to assume the presidency of the CPA). Although particular projects which immediately affect the safety, comfort and living conditions of workers should be fought, for Marxists, most of Munday's green bans are not supportable. Some, such as those based purely on preservation of "natural beauty" and that at the Rocks based solely on historical nostalgia, are an appeal to utopian anti-technological sentiments. Thus Munday in his election campaign in May came out "against unfettered economic growth". Moreover it is quite utopian for workers to try to take responsibility for protecting the environment under capitalism.

Similarly, victimisation of residents, particularly of oppressed sections of the middle class or workers, should be opposed. But the proletariat has no interest in maintaining the living patterns so dear to the petty-bourgeoisie and fostered by capitalist ideology. In a previous article (*ASP* no 4, 14 November 1973) we drew upon Engels' scorn for the Mundeys of the nineteenth century in *On the Housing Question*. "Such Philistines" we said, "...want to pressure the capitalists into making their profits by what Engels contemptuously called 'supplying each worker with a little house of his own.'" Munday's further conception of a populist alliance of the "community" against the developers rests on a subordination of the working class to middle-class reformism, and through the Resident Action Groups, to a section of the bourgeoisie.

Although Gallagher, Clancy and Munday all make a fetish out of unity, real class unity is in the long run possible only if it is based on the revolutionary interests of the working class as a whole. Clancy and the other Stalinists in the BWIU are interested in unity only so far as it extends their bureaucratic control -- "unity" with their friends like Ducker on the Labor Council.

An industry-wide union is an elementary need of building workers, the absence of which results in artificial divisions on the job site. The construction of an industrial union hinges on the unification of the BWIU and the BLF, the two largest unions covering construction workers. But while all elements of the BWIU and BLF bureaucracy are committed on paper to industrial unionism "in principle", no progress has been made since the Carpenters and Bricklayers merged in 1942. In fact, the policies of both the NSW BLF and the Federal and NSW BWIU leadership have created obstacles to unification and perpetuated the traditional trade divisions which weaken building workers in every conflict with the bosses.

Clancy attacks the BLF leadership for divisiveness in pursuing their green bans, but what he really resents is the builders' labourers' militancy. That is why he and Ducker so often attack the BLs in almost identical terms (as they

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... labour parties

experience for American workers in their political development along the road to independent political action and the revolutionary struggle for socialism." (*Direct Action*, 9 November 1972) (emphasis added)

Trotsky recognised no such metaphysic:

"...I will never assume the responsibility to affirm abstractly and dogmatically that the creation of a labor party would be a 'progressive step' even in the United States, because I do not know under what circumstances, under what guidance, and for what purposes that party would be created." (*Leon Trotsky on the Labor Party in the United States*, Letter from Prinkipo, 19 May 1932, p 7)

What are the conditions and methods of bolshevik work inside such parties? While some conditions may make work within the labour parties essential at some times, it is not a tactic for revolutionary groups to undertake lightly. In order for a small revolutionary organisation to withstand the immense pressure to become absorbed into the soft left-reformist "oppositions" in the labour parties, three preconditions are essential. It must possess a hard core of tested cadre with a clear revolutionary program; it must be able to maintain its continuity by continuing its propaganda as the nucleus of a revolutionary party; and it must have the guidance of an international party, without which the pressure for

opportunist adaptation to a purely national perspective will in the long run inevitably prevail.

The purpose of work within such parties is to polarise them, separating out the most advanced, class-conscious workers from the bourgeois program of the reformists. Certain things flow from this. Such manoeuvres as entrism are only temporary, and it is most dangerous to adopt the perspective of an indefinite stay. No compromise in program is acceptable for the purpose of staying inside, although purely organisational concessions may be necessary.

In order for work within the labour parties to be productive for a revolutionary organisation, it must be able to intersect a real expression of class conflict within these parties. Thus it may well have been pointless to carry out a tactical turn toward work in the ALP during the early 1950s, a period of muted class struggle with a politically inactive working class, having suffered a series of betrayals, and with the re-stabilisation of capitalism during the Korean war boom following the post-WWII crises. But, for example, the time of the Lang Labor Party during the Depression, the immediate postwar period and the late 1960s with the rise of the Socialist Left, could have provided opportunities, with phenomena like Lang and the Socialist Left reflecting significant developments in the class struggle. In New Zealand, an entry into the NZLP could have enabled revolutionaries to expose the role of labour misleaders during important movements of the class in the period of the Waterfront strike in the early 1950s.

For other, programmatically deficient, oppo-

sitions within the labour parties, there is a *necessary programmatic* criterion for critical support or entry. That is, they must offer a program which, whatever its other limitations, on some key question is qualitatively to the left of the ruling bureaucrats. And in any case, the function of participation in or critical support for such formations is not to promote the authority of leaders who can only betray the program they claim to support, but to expose and discredit them.

Such considerations are totally foreign to the Pabloists of the SWL, who maintain a cosy co-existence with George Crawford and Bill Hartley in the Victorian Socialist Left (at the moment, a largely defunct formation).

The Leninist tactical arsenal is designed to enable revolutionaries to propagate their program and win the working class to the banner of international socialist revolution. The utilisation of tactics such as critical support and entry depends on the circumstances and opportunities. The development of the class struggle, the authority and strength of the revolutionaries and the internal dynamics of the mass reformist parties must all be weighed in any tactical decision. Thus the possibility exists of a series of entries into the labour parties each bringing an accretion of forces to the revolutionary organisation, or alternatively even of the revolutionaries winning control of a labour party. But for revolutionaries there are no immutable tactics, only the unwavering struggle against the misleaders of the working class to construct a revolutionary vanguard party. ■

... building workers

did over the Rocks strike). The BWIU leadership have attempted to seal their membership off from the militancy of the BLs by successfully negotiating with the MBA for a *separate agreement* guaranteeing BWIU members five days' work or five days' pay when the BLF goes on strike. Tom McDonald described this as a "major breakthrough", and the *Building Worker* says that the agreement's provisions "impose a serious handicap on building bosses rushing into use of lock-out tactics in future disputes." On the contrary, it will encourage tradesmen to scab when the builders' labourers go on strike. It violates



BLF march in Sydney last October. Joe Owens fourth from left, holding banner.

the most basic principle of the class struggle -- an injury to one is an injury to all.

Clancy is able to use the actions of the NSW BLF leadership to rationalise his treachery, as the BLs make little attempt to mobilise tradesmen on the site in support of strikes when they occur, and are organically incapable of exposing their fellow reformist, Clancy, before the ranks of the tradesmen's unions. In addition, on occasion strikes or bans have been imposed without consulting the other workers on the site, a repudiation of workers democracy which Clancy is able to exploit.

It is an extremely important fact that the successful regeneration of the BLF nationally, which in 1960 was down to 12,000 members and in serious debt and is today relatively prosperous with 35,000 members, was based on a boom in the construction industry that created shortages of both skilled and unskilled labour. The employers recognise the inevitability of militancy in these conditions and look forward to a time when unemployment will give them a weapon against the unions, especially the BLF. An article in an *Australian* supplement on the building industry (18 February 1974) reports,

"Employers attribute the high level of industrial unrest to overfull [!] employment under which building employees can pick and choose where and when they will work. "But they foresee a slump in the building industry this year brought about by high interest rates on home loans. This more than anything will take industrial unrest off the boil, they say."

With this open threat, the need for a class-struggle leadership to replace Gallagher-Clancy-Munday is urgent. But there is at present no real alternative for workers within the building unions. The organised opposition to Gallagher in the Victorian branch consists of the Rank and

File Committee for Builders' Labourers, based originally around ex-Maoist Danny Purcell but now including supporters of the CPA in the Victorian branch. Claiming simply to be "honest workers", they present a program which does not exceed the reforms backed by left-wing bureaucrats generally. The fact that Gallagher opposes even some of these mild reforms (such as monthly stopwork meetings) and resorts to wild slander against the Committee (linking oppositionist John Dielenberg to the National Civic Council, denouncing the Committee as "splitters", etc.) only shows the depth of Gallagher's servility.

An example of the Committee's program is their call (in their broadsheet, *On Site*) for a 35 hour week, which argues merely that "this is in line with ACTU policy and can be obtained due to increased productivity brought about by mechanisation and new labour-saving techniques." But unless the call for a shorter work week is tied to the fight against unemployment, it degenerates into job-trusting in the face of redundancies due to automation. In their motivation for the demand for full pay during lay-offs they say, "building workers should not be penalised due to industrial problems outside the industry." Thus the Committee accepts the existing atomisation of the working class, with no program to unite it. Furthermore, there is no trace in *On Site* of opposition to Gallagher's reactionary nationalism. The Rank and File Committee, if they gain office, will at best give his betrayals a more militant face.

The Communist League (CL), one half of the divided, pseudo-Trotskyist "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" in Australia, has supporters in the NSW BLF, and purports to be a left-wing pole in the union. But the CL's inability to go beyond enthusing over militancy leads to an abdication of political struggle against the current misleaders. The result is that they tail the reformists, adapting their program to this end. The CL uses syndicalist arguments against union amalgamation. In reference to the AMWU they say

"The particular form of amalgamation under the complete hegemony of reformist leaders has presented a neat, cohesive, organisational handle for the employers' courts and Governments to grip the working class and hold it under check in a general sense." (*Militant*, 4 February 1974)

Counterposing to amalgamation what amounts to a united front from below, the CL calls for site committees on all jobs in the building industry representing all workers on the job. By thus assuming in advance the domination of the bureaucrats in an amalgamated building union, the CL misses the opportunity to expose the reformist misleaders of both the BLF and the BWIU.

The CL's supporters in the BLF cannot play a revolutionary role because they abandon the transitional program, refusing to link the day-to-day economic struggle to the need for *proletarian revolution*. According to the *Militant*, (15 April 1974):

"Only the uprooting of the capitalist system of production for profit and its replacement by a planned socialist economy will solve the problems of the working class....Only by struggling for *socialist policies* through the *independent organisation of the class* can it achieve this goal. That is why it is necessary to intervene in the day-to-day struggles with a perspective which goes be-

yond the immediate demands and raises demands around the theme of struggle of workers' control." (emphasis in original)

The CL equates socialism with workers' control, in order to avoid raising a program that goes beyond workers control, and counts on rank-and-file organisational forms to miraculously generate revolutionary consciousness. Because of its opportunist syndicalism the CL can only serve as a left pressure on more militant alternative bureaucrats like the Rank and File Committee in Victoria or reformists like Munday.

An effective opposition to Gallagher-Clancy-Munday and their left tails can only take the form of caucuses in the BLF and BWIU which oppose them on the basis of the transitional program -- the only program based on the objective necessity for the proletariat to overthrow the capitalist system, and connecting the immediate problems workers face with that task. In the building trades, that program can answer the recession threat as well as the instability which plagues the industry by supporting not only job permanency, but union hire and industrial action against layoffs. Instead of accepting unemployment, it must demand a sliding scale of hours to eliminate redundancies. The CL calls for workers' control of prices, a concept as utopian and reformist as Munday's idea that workers can control the environment under capitalism. Prices can be controlled only in a collectivised economy. To advocate it is an idiot capitulation to syndicalist glorification of rank-and-file organisation. But a revolutionary leadership would organise committees on prices to expose the real sources of price increases -- the capitalists' drive for profits -- and fight for a real cost-of-living escalator to safeguard workers' living standards against inflation.

A revolutionary caucus would propose concrete steps toward building-union amalgamation in order to expose the bureaucrats who give lip-service to industrial unionism. The caucus must not be satisfied with negotiations between officials, but must demand safeguards for union democracy and the autonomy of militant branches, while using every means to achieve unity in practice on the job site.

Munday and his followers talk about workers' control in terms of deciding what will be built where. But no rational decisions can be made on these questions without a centralised plan -- that is, unless workers have state power. Munday finds this illusory rhetoric useful as a left cover for his reformism, because in reality it cannot be implemented. But workers' control of job conditions, of hiring and of the actual process of construction can be both an effective defence of workers' immediate interests and an answer to the bosses' attempt to use their bourgeois property rights to hold society to ransom. A part of workers' control is the demand that the construction firms open their books to inspection by workers' committees whenever protests of poverty are used to refuse workers' demands.

Workers' control poses the question of capitalist property relations, but is incapable of resolving it. A revolutionary caucus would raise the call for the expropriation of the construction firms under workers control, and to put an end to the system of production for profit, the expropriation of the capitalist class as a whole and the establishment of a real workers government to rationally plan production in the interests of society. ■

... Africa

tried to end the trouble with a 46% wage rise (to \$3.60 a day) and the promise that "your brothers are coming to govern you". The 3000 strikers refused to return to work, obviously unconvinced that promises of a black government would solve their problems (*New York Times*, 23 May 1974).

The 200,000 Portuguese settlers in Mozambique are an obstacle to any settlement which promises independence to the 8 million blacks. Already various groups of rightist settlers have been formed similar to the Algerian *pieds noirs*' OAS (Secret Army Organisation). No doubt they could count on the sympathy of some officers for a breakaway white-dominated regime. But the key to the situation in Mozambique is South Africa; without its military support a settler regime would soon fall.

South Africa already has 2000 troops in Mozambique (mainly around the Cabora Bassa dam which is being built with South African capital) and has, since 1965, been part of a secret defence agreement with Portugal and Rhodesia to protect southern Africa "against nationalist and communist subversion" (Eduardo Mondlane, *Struggle for Mozambique*). There are also NATO contingency plans to intervene in southern Africa to defend the present regimes under the guise of protecting the sea lanes. South Africa also has an interest in continuing the flow of contract labourers (100,000 to 150,000 annually, mostly from Mozambique) for low-paid and dangerous work in its mines. South African intervention to preserve white rule in southern Mozambique is a clear possibility.

Angola is by far the richest of the colonies. The small enclave of Cabinda to the north of Angola has valuable oil fields and iron ore, diamonds and coffee are lucrative and growing industries in Angola itself. But it is in Angola that the nationalist guerrillas' struggle has been least successful. The largest group is the Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), but the Front for the National Liberation of Angola (FNLA) has had a base of support among the Bakongo tribe of the northern provinces. Armed struggle was initiated in 1961, but from the beginning the struggle in Angola has been characterised by bitter and sometimes bloody inter-cine rivalry among the nationalists.

The problems of the Angolan nationalists are compounded by the fact that much heavier investment of foreign capital and a higher percentage of Portuguese settlers (500,000 out of a total population of 6 million) mean more determined resistance to independence under black rule. This and the military weakness of the MPLA/FNLA reinforce the possibility of some form of dependent relationship with Portugal.

The history and political perspectives of the MPLA, PAIGC and FRELIMO are all similar. All three began by organising intellectuals and workers in the urban centres. Later experiences of bloody defeats at the hands of the Portuguese authorities led to decisions to retreat to the countryside and organise the peasantry, with varying degrees of success.

Under the influence of Maoist/Castroist myths, many radicals in the West believe that the more leftward-leaning African nationalist movements are building a movement for socialist revolution based on the peasantry. The African-Australian Association in its newsletter published at Monash University, *African Guerrilla* (issue no 9, 11 June 1974), takes exception to the 3 June 1974 *Campus Spartacist* which describes the petty-bourgeois nationalist movements as aiming to set up their own capitalist states, claiming that "To accuse the liberation movements of being capitalist and neo-colonialist is a product of sheer ignorance." In similar fashion *Red Ink* (20 June 1974), the LaTrobe University newsletter of the Socialist Workers Action Group (SWAG) declares that the MPLA and FRELIMO will not accept independence unless it is accompanied by complete liberation of national production (!), and aim to end exploitation of man by

man, and that the armed struggle symbolises the "dual revolution", the national and social revolutions. Along with the vicarious terrorists of the Communist League, SWAG suggests that simply to take up the gun somehow purifies the struggle and renders irrelevant any consideration of the class basis, or political program of the guerrillas.

Aside from the fact that FRELIMO and the MPLA do not even claim to be socialist (the PAIGC does), the peasantry as a class are not capable of leading a movement for socialist revolution. Amilcar Cabral, the founding leader of the PAIGC, who despite his nationalist/reformist politics also had a good deal of honesty, openly admitted that "the peasantry is not a revolutionary force". It is culturally backward, steeped in tribalism and its aspirations are those of petty-bourgeois small commodity producers everywhere: to own their own property and be rid of outside control.

The peasantry, particularly one ground down by the harsh conditions of Portuguese rule, can be mobilised for a revolutionary struggle against the colonial rule; but the struggle can set the stage for a further advance to socialism only if it is led by the working class and culminates in the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The retreat to the peasantry has also had an effect on the politics of the "national liberation movements", namely leading to the contention that "all social strata" will carry out the revolution (Cabral) or that class antagonisms will not exist.

Africa has already had a considerable experience of an ideology which denies the existence of class antagonisms, in the form of the theory of "African socialism" popularised by such figures as Senghor (Senegal), Toure (Guinea), Nkrumah (Ghana) and Nyerere (Tanzania). "African socialism" essentially maintains that "the African social system is communistic" and does not display "antagonisms of class against class" (Kwame Nkrumah, "The Old and the New: Law in Africa", 1962).

The most common use of this "theory" is in the realm of the relations between the newly independent bourgeois nationalist governments and the working class. Nyerere's book, *Ujamaa -- The Basis for African Socialism*, warns trade-union leaders to seek no more than their "fair share", implying, like Fanon, that workers are privileged compared to the starving peasantry. In 1964 Nyerere put teeth in this warning by dissolving the Tanganyikan Federation of Labour.

Toure, Nkrumah and Nyerere were more radical (verbally) than the leaders of the MPLA, PAIGC or FRELIMO today. The most FRELIMO and the MPLA have asserted in the field of social policy is a vague commitment to end exploitation of man by man (enough apparently to send SWAG into raptures). According to Dos Santos, a leader of FRELIMO, it "is a front because it groups together all the social groups or social classes with the aim of eliminating the [foreign] oppressor" (*South African Communist*, 4th Quarter 1973).

STALINIST "TWO-STAGE" THEORY MEANS BETRAYAL

While the "African socialists" deny the existence of classes in Africa and omit to mention a second stage revolution even in the unspecified future, the Stalinists call for unity of all classes against imperialism, and merely add to their reformism the fake cover of a later second stage. In practice there is little difference. *African Guerrilla* solidarises with this counter-revolutionary tradition:

"The struggle against capitalism is firstly a struggle for independence from foreign control. In Australia this struggle is directed against US military bases and foreign owners of Australia's resources."

Revolutionaries must place no faith in the reformist social-democratic and Stalinist (including Maoist and Castroist) theories of two-stage revolution. Once in power the petty-bourgeois nationalists of MPLA, FRELIMO and PAIGC will behave no differently from their predecessors and mentors in Conakry, Lusaka and Dar-es-Salaam. They will not hesitate to smash the unions, jail Marxist revolutionaries and fatten their purses with the spoils of the bureaucracy. Only through a relentless fight to build Trotskyist parties committed to the proletarian program of permanent revolution can this be reversed. Africa is not exempt from the laws of Marxism-Leninism and the class struggle.

As in Russia in 1917 the proletariat of these countries is not large, but it occupies a strategic position. In Mozambique and Angola it is 5 to 10 percent of the economically active population and does have some history of militant struggle, confirmed by the strike wave in Lourenco Marques. A victorious proletarian revolution in backward regions such as the Portuguese African colonies must spread internationally or else degenerate and perish. The proximity to the very large industrial/mining/transport

proletariat in the Zambian/Zaire copper belt and in South Africa, suggests that the main importance of a revolutionary struggle in Mozambique and Angola would be as a staging area for the struggle in South Africa. In Mozambique there is a sizable number of ex-South African miners who together with those who continue to work in South Africa could provide the links of proletarian internationalism. The vast scope and social power of the black proletariat of South Africa clearly demonstrate the vanguard role they will play in the African revolution, and the strategic importance of the South African proletariat. The



FRELIMO leaders Eduardo Mondlane (left), and Samora Machel in 1968.

struggle is fundamentally international and a key demand must be for a Socialist Federation of Southern Africa as a part of a United States of Africa.

It is also essential that the struggle in the economically backward countries be linked up on the basis of proletarian internationalism with the struggle in the advanced imperialist centres. The Angolan, Mozambican and Guinean nationalists have made no attempt to fuse their struggles with those of the underground socialist oppositionists in Portugal itself. Yet today key decisions about the future of the Portuguese African territories are being made in Lisbon where the Communist and Socialist Parties in Portugal have rushed to embrace the "democratic" generals and are bent upon repeating the tragic folly of their Chilean counterparts. Already the Junta has begun moving against the working class and left groups, preparing press censorship and arresting the editor of one radical paper. No nation that oppresses another can be free, furthermore, the loss of the colonies will disorganise and weaken Portuguese capitalism and greatly aid the metropolitan working class, so the call for immediate independence is important for the Portuguese and European working class.

African Guerrilla resorts to the worst sort of narrow nationalist, liberal arguments to justify its political support to the leadership of the guerrilla movements. It claims that *Campus Spartacist* is a

"typical example of White middle class students deciding what is best for the African people. As Australians we must decide whether or not to support the course the African people have taken ... If we don't support the African people's decision, we shut up. If and when African parties whose policies are acceptable to the 'Fourth International' emerge we can decide whether to support them or not."

In other words, if they think the African masses are being led into a terrible defeat they intend to hold their peace! A peculiar idea of loyalty. Their arguments are simply a way of apologising for the present guerrilla leadership. The Spartacist League makes its decisions as proletarian internationalists who understand that the only solution to the crisis of humanity is international proletarian revolution, and that this requires the conscious intervention of a Leninist vanguard which does not grovel before the bourgeois concept of "internal affairs".

In the backward countries it is only the proletariat supported by the peasantry that can solve the tasks of national liberation and agrarian revolution. Together with the working class of neighbouring South Africa, Rhodesia, Zaire and Zambia and of metropolitan Portugal, proletarian-led revolutions in Mozambique and Angola could overthrow the tottering colonial power and sweep before them the apartheid, settler "neo-colonialist" and nationalist regimes of southern Africa. The key, in Lisbon and the colonies, is the struggle to build Trotskyist parties as part of the struggle for the rebirth of the Fourth International. ■

correction

In the last issue of *ASP* (no 9) the picture of John Percy and Jim Percy were transposed by a printer's error, resulting in a mis-identification. The picture on the left is Jim Percy and that on the right is John Percy, contrary to the caption.

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Leninism and the labour parties

The greatest existing obstacle to revolution in Australia and New Zealand are the labour parties, the NZLP and the ALP. They are mass reformist workers parties with right-wing social-democratic -- that is, thoroughly bourgeois -- programs, but which the working masses look to as the parties of their class, to be supported against the open political parties of the class enemy. No mass revolutionary party in either country can be built without breaking the hold of these parties, which both rely on and perpetuate the prevalence of bourgeois ideology, over the masses. And without the revolutionary party, there will be no successful revolution.

The question of the labour parties has been a historical stumbling block for revolutionary organisations in Australia (for example, for the early CPA) and it is just one expression of a political weakness they never overcame. At bottom, the twin evils of sectarian abstention and opportunist capitulation are the product of the same flaw: an inability to translate the revolutionary program into practice, to combine a firm adherence to that program with the tactical flexibility necessary in the battle against reformism.

In order to avoid these errors revolutionaries must critically assimilate the tactical lessons of the communist movement historically. It is particularly important to understand the strengths and limitations of tactics such as the united front, critical support, and entrism, all worked out for the purpose of breaking the masses away from the reformists.

The purpose and aim of these tactics determines how they are carried out, and the way they are used implies something about the aim. Thus differences arising over these matters can indicate the most fundamental programmatic divergence. The misapplication of Leninist tactics towards the labour parties practised by the Pabloist Socialist Workers League/Socialist Youth Alliance (SWL/SYA) in Australia and the Socialist Action League (SAL) in New Zealand flows directly from their reformist program and is a glaring example of the liquidationist consequences of Pabloism.

Because they are at bottom in general strategic agreement with the social-democratic schema of revolution by gradual reforms (whatever they might say about revolution in the indefinite future), the SWL and SAL can be expected to tail the mass reformist workers parties. But it will be useful to examine the excuses they give for their work inside these parties.

To give an idea of the actual practise of the SWL-SAL in their work around the labour parties, it will suffice to cite a few examples.

The SAL has published a monument to its own Pabloist liquidationism in the form of a bulletin entitled *Socialist Election Strategy for New*

Zealand (SESZNZ). The utter obsequiousness of the SAL is revealed in its terminological contortions with the meaning of the word "party" in order to remove any suggestion of conflict between the SAL and the NZLP, its denial of any links with the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (the Pabloist body of which the SAL is now the official NZ section), and its "Socialist Opposition to 'Disruption'".

Their Australian cohorts in the SWL in addition to their frequent calls to pressure the ALP to the left, have nominated the Victorian ALP Socialist Left as "socialist" alternatives to the tops. Although supporters of the SWL have worked in this amorphous formation, the SWL has made no effort to distinguish themselves from the trade-union bureaucrats and petty Labor Party careerists who dominate the group. Thus the SWL has described the Socialist Left as the closest thing to a revolutionary vanguard grouping in the ALP ever (*Direct Action*, June 1971) and claimed that it takes a "consistent anti-capitalist position" (*Direct Action*, 29 March 1973). This makes it difficult, of course, for the SWL to explain how the Socialist Left ended up supporting a "Yes-No" vote in the prices and incomes referendum last December, a position the SWL described as a betrayal.

The attempt of opportunists to justify a liquidationist approach often leads them to depict the labour parties as something more than political parties. Perhaps the most blatant example is the British *Chartist* group, which maintains that the British Labour Party (BLP) is a politically amorphous, united-front type organisation akin to soviets or trade unions (see *Chartist*, August 1973). The SWL-SAL analysis is not all that different:

"We give the Labor Party *unconditional* support as the party of the unions and the working class. That is, we support it against the capitalist parties irrespective of its leadership, and call for its return to power in elections. This support is, however, of a critical nature as regards the program of the ALP. The Trotskyist attitude to the ALP is similar to our attitude to the unions and the workers states -- we support the basic class conquests but retain our freedom to criticise the leadership." (*Direct Action*, 30 June 1972)

Often quoted as "proof" of the supposed orthodoxy of this view is Lenin's description of the BLP in 1920, when the orientation of the fledgling Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) was fought out in the Second Congress of the Comintern (CI). At that time, Lenin described the BLP as

"...in a very special position: it is a highly original type of party, or rather, it is not at all a party in the ordinary sense of the word. It is made up of members of all trade unions, and has a membership of about four million, and allows sufficient freedom to all affiliated parties. It thus includes a vast number of British workers who follow the lead of the worst bourgeois elements, the social-traitors, who are even worse than Scheidemann, Noske and similar people. At the same time, however, the Labour Party has let the British Socialist Party into its ranks, permitting it to have its own press organs, in which members of the selfsame Labour Party can freely and openly declare that the party leaders are social-traitors." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol 31, p 260)

In 1920 the BLP had not yet developed the form and organisation that it has today. But following the war came moves by social-patriotic and pacifist traitors like Henderson and Ramsay MacDonald to transform the BLP into a centralised, nationally cohesive party in order to head off a rising radicalisation of the working class. The Bolsheviks knew that the openness in the BLP which provided the CPGB with a special opportunity could not last:

"At the present moment there is a tendency of the opportunist leaders to make the Labour Party a real party with local organisations and a programme. They aim to create a large opportunist party which is to retard the revolutionary development of the masses. Were this tendency to succeed the Labour Party would never afford the Socialist organisations which form part of it the right to an individual Communist policy, nor to the propagation of the revolutionary struggle. It would bind their freedom of action hand and foot." (*The Communist International Answers the ILP*, first published 1920, reprinted by the CPGB 1932)

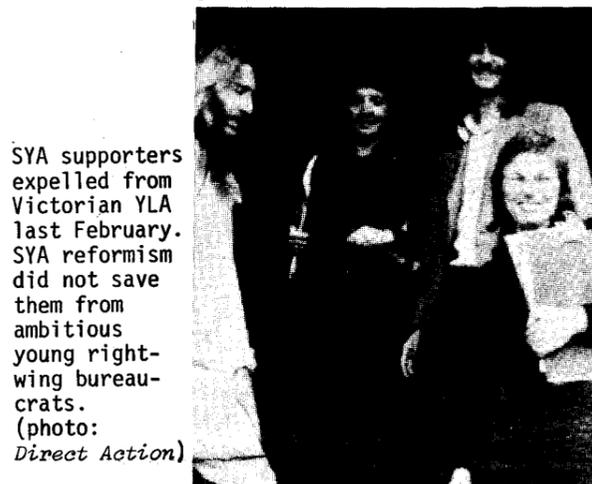
This prediction was borne out by the subsequent events.

It is clear that the tactic of CPGB affiliation to the BLP decided by the Comintern at this time was *not* based on a conception of the BLP as something more than a party but rather something *less* -- a party in the process of formation. The CI explicitly warned against the view that the BLP was simply a broad organisation of the masses.

"Affiliation should not mean a mechanical utilisation of the party for the purpose of keeping in touch with the masses, gathered under the roof of the Labour Party, but a striving to free the masses from the influence of the opportunistic leaders of the Labour Party." (*Communist International Answers the ILP*)

The early CI's experience is not the only case in which Leninists explicitly rejected conceptions such as those of the SWL that the ALP should be treated like a trade union (or a deformed workers state!). Writing on the meaning of the call for a labor party in the US, Trotsky said:

"To consider a labor party as an integrated series of united fronts signifies a misunderstanding of the notions both of the



SYA supporters expelled from Victorian YLA last February. SYA reformism did not save them from ambitious young right-wing bureaucrats. (photo: *Direct Action*)

united front and of the party. The united front is determined by concrete circumstances, for concrete aims. The party is permanent. In the united front we leave our hands free to break with our temporary allies. In a common party with these allies we are bound by discipline and even by the fact of the party itself." (*Leon Trotsky on the Labor Party in the United States*, p 8)

He added that the labor party could become an arena of successful struggle "but only on the condition that we consider the labor party not as 'our' party but as an arena in which we are acting as an absolutely independent Communist Party."

If we look at the BLP, the ALP or the NZLP today, they have in common the character of long-since hardened mass reformist parties based on direct ties to the trade unions. They are no different in essence from any other variety of mass reformist workers party. This does not mean that work within them is unprincipled for revolutionaries; on the contrary, it can also be a useful tactic in mass Stalinist or classically social-democratic parties. But as hardened reformist parties, they cannot be transformed organically into instruments of revolution and are direct obstacles to the creation of mass revolutionary parties. Therefore, work within them -- entry or affiliation -- are emphatically not a matter of principle. Furthermore they are fundamentally different from mass organisations of struggle such as the trade unions on which they are based.

The two key questions in the Comintern

Continued on page four

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