

# Australasian SPARTACIST



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Saigon puppet troops surrender to NLF/DRV forces after victory.



Khmer Rouge troops enter Poipet after Phnom Penh surrendered.

## Capitalist rule smashed in Indochina

The results and consequences of the revolutionary successes in Indochina can be summarised by three facts. First, the near-complete bloodlessness of the occupation of Saigon by the South Vietnamese Liberation Army and the army of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) highlighted that the bourgeois state has been smashed, its forces disarmed, with striking quickness and ease, and the sporadic resistance which continues is almost negligible. Secondly, the brutal aggression perpetrated against Cambodia by the US in response to the seizure of the US merchant ship *Mayaguez* by the Khmer Rouge following their smashing of the Lon Nol puppet regime made plain the continuing vicious and arrogant power of the strongest imperialist power in the world. Third, the capitalist "neutralist" regime in Laos, teetering on the brink of complete dissolution and completely at the mercy of the Stalinist-led Pathet Lao, has been artificially kept alive by the Stalinists in the interests of the bureaucracies in North Vietnam, China and the USSR. It is long since time to finish off this living corpse; however impotent and paralyzed at present, and however likely its early demise, it has the potential only to harm Laotian workers and peasants. Its prolongation is a token of the anti-internationalist, counterrevolutionary nature of the Vietnamese Stalinist bureaucracy.

From the very start, the National Liberation Front (NLF) -- which set up the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) in 1969 (now called the Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, RGSVN) -- has sought a coalition government accepting the continuation of capitalism. But if a coalition with any meaning whatsoever were to emerge, it would have to have come into being prior to the NLF-DRV armed forces' seizure of Saigon. Over 150,000 refugees including South Vietnam's richest (and most corrupt) have fled. The mass flight of a significant proportion of South Vietnam's ruling class expressed graphically the class polarisation in Vietnam which has left *no significant bourgeois force* in the camp of the NLF. Early on, "Administrative committees took over factories, many of whose owners had fled. Production began returning to normal throughout the country" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 May 1975). The remnants of the ruling class in South Vietnam, deprived of their state

apparatus and the core of their class, can only exist as atomised property owners until the new government is ready to expropriate them.

The NLF forces, based on the indigenous South Vietnamese peasant resistance to exploitation and repression, and the North Vietnamese army, based on the socialist property forms established in the North after 1954, are certainly not identical. Yet the links between them are entirely natural and necessary, testifying to the reality of one nation, artificially divided in 1954, in which a nationwide social revolution has continued in the South in spite of the withdrawal of Vietminh military forces across the 17th Parallel at that time. These organic links show that a separate development for South Vietnam is impossible.

Talk in the 1973 Paris "peace" treaty of "peaceful reunification" under a coalition of "national concord" which would leave the Saigon puppet forces intact was utopian and treacherous. But by rejecting such a coalition the ruling class refused to exploit this opportunity to confuse its enemies, and committed itself to a policy of complete opposition to the NLF. In this policy there was an element of *false consciousness of the ruling class*. Certainly the revolution which overthrew capitalism in half of Vietnam in 1954, and the rural revolution on which the Stalinist leaders of the NLF were riding, were deadly threats to the ruling class. But they failed to see that the Stalinists, in the interests of the bureaucracies of the deformed workers states, including that in North Vietnam, would if possible willingly sabotage the revolution.

Now, however, *peaceful reunification is not only possible but urgent* in order to reconstruct the shattered economy of Vietnam along socialist lines on the basis of a common plan. The perspectives of the RGSVN for reunification are unclear, although the process has already begun. Reunification cannot occur overnight; but the long delays suggested are for political reasons, and it is possible for bureaucratic rivalry between northern and southern Stalinists to forestall it.

The same source of delay applies to the pace establishing the framework of social ownership of

productive forces in the South. The RGSVN has issued contradictory statements in regard to confiscation of factories (UPI report in *The Australian*, 2 May 1975). The full nationalisation of all industries is *not necessarily* (and *not* in the case of South Vietnam) decisive in determining the class character of the state. Major industries in Russia were not effectively nationalised until autumn of 1918, nearly a year after the Russian workers seized state power. In Vietnam, the class polarisation throughout the 30-year war, and the resulting social homogeneity of the NLF leave them no option but to expropriate the basic productive forces, and their victory leaves nothing to resist their doing so. But the Stalinists can be counted on to put unnecessary obstacles in the path of socialist development.

The critical obstacle is the suppression of workers' democracy, making it impossible to draw the working masses into the direction and administration of the new property forms and preventing the development of the only force that can resist bureaucratic excesses and distortions -- an active, class-conscious working class in political control of the state apparatus. No workers' and peasants' councils -- no soviet type organs of workers' power -- have been established in South Vietnam. Instead the country at present is being administered through the military apparatus (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 May 1975).

*Clearly the new workers state in South Vietnam is in the political control not of the working class but of the NLF/DRV Stalinists, an essentially petty-bourgeois stratum of intellectuals and bureaucrats which, whatever the undoubted individual qualities of self-sacrifice or heroism of many of its cadres in their forced struggle against US imperialism, must, given its political autonomy from the working class, the backwardness of Vietnam and inevitable material scarcity, develop into a privileged caste with its own material, strictly nationalist interests to defend, an extension of the bureaucratic caste already established in North Vietnam, committed to obstructing revolution internationally for the sake of a fleeting "peaceful coexistence" with imperialist capitalism.*

In Cambodia, the development of the revolution since Phnom Penh fell to the Stalinist-led Khmer

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## ... Indo-China

Rouge on 17 April is more obscure. The Khmer Rouge, much less organised than the NLF and without the advantage of an already established workers state within their nation, heads a recently recruited peasant army in a much less developed country than Vietnam, with little historical workers movement. The very small, fragmented working class; the tremendous distortions imposed on Cambodian society by the imperialist war; and the need to eliminate sources of counterrevolutionary resistance as quickly as possible, have led the Khmer Rouge to adopt a startling and grandiose manoeuvre: the forced transplantation of virtually the entire urban population of Cambodia to the countryside. Such a measure underlines the *weakness* of the revolution in Cambodia, and the great need for the joint development of all the countries of Indochina in which Vietnam must play the key role -- the need for a *Socialist Federation of Indochina*. But the evacuation of the cities and the isolationism of the Khmer Rouge leadership are anti-internationalist policies which could never be those of a revolutionary working-class party.

Beyond doubt, capitalism has suffered its death-blows in South Vietnam and Cambodia, and states established there that will defend collectivised property forms, the property forms of a workers state. This is indeed an important victory; but how could it have happened without the leadership or even direct participation of the working class? Was the coming to power of a bureaucratic caste astride the collectivised property, rather than the democratic *soviet* rule of the workers and poor peasants, inevitable? What attitude should the proletarian vanguard adopt to these states?

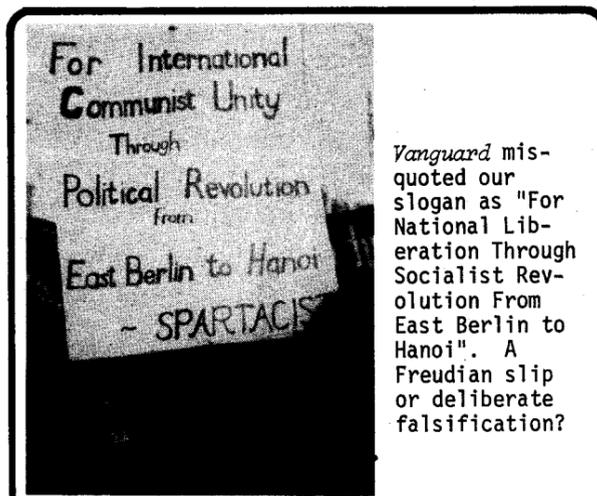
Already *before* the development of any significant bourgeois class organically from the traditional societies of the Annamite and Khmer kingdoms, the world capitalist market completely dominated the development of society in Indochina. The substantial French investments in Vietnam which reaped superprofits for French capitalism accelerated the development of a Vietnamese bourgeoisie, but only by making it the utterly dependent lackey of French imperialism. At the same time however it also created a proletariat developed far more than otherwise possible in backward Vietnam (although the vast majority (at least 90 percent) of the working population remained peasants).

The task of consolidating a cohesive national framework for the capitalist market belongs to the epoch of bourgeois revolution -- the coming to power of the national capitalist class, smashing the fetters on development of the old pre-capitalist social order. But from its very beginnings, the Vietnamese movement for national independence found itself faced with both brutal French colonial repression and the hostility of the emerging bourgeois class which had more to lose by throwing out the French than by tolerating their continued domination. Likewise, a bourgeoisie not far removed from the semi-feudal landlord class could not afford to carry out the second major task which initially confronts developing capitalism -- the reorganisation of agricultural production along capitalist lines by smashing the grip of the landlords and systematically distributing the land among the peasantry. French colonial rule was the overwhelming obstacle to any land reform and the struggle of the peasants against the landlords was intimately tied to the struggle for national independence.

By 1930 the independence struggle abandoned by

the Vietnamese bourgeoisie had inevitably come under the leadership of the organised, growing and active urban proletariat -- the only class in Vietnam with the capability of organising and completing the revolution, the only class capable of consistent opposition to the pro-imperialist capitalist class. The peasantry, on the other hand, is *petty-bourgeois*, engaged in atomised, primitive agricultural production; its aspirations for land do *not* lead it to support socialist property forms as its own organic class interest. Socialism is the ideology of the proletariat; the peasantry balances between classes. It will support the socialist revolution if the revolution defends their land, but cannot play (and never has played) an *independent* class role. That is why the growing resistance to the French in the 1930s was centred in the cities (for example the 1938 strike wave in Saigon) where there were mass workers' parties.

Even though the immediate revolutionary tasks were *land reform* and *national independence*, they



*Vanguard* misquoted our slogan as "For National Liberation Through Socialist Revolution From East Berlin to Hanoi". A Freudian slip or deliberate falsification?

The 15 May issue of *Vanguard*, published by the Maoist CPA(ML), in a typical Stalinist calumny against the Spartacist League, attacked our revolutionary slogans at a 2 May Melbourne rally in response to the Vietnam victory, such as "All Indochina Must Go Communist", as "dovetail[ing] in nicely with all the media's reactionary and provocative talk about 'terror', 'massacres' by 'Communist troops' ... etc.". In other words, the Maoists agree with the reactionaries that communism means "massacres"! This gross Maoist anti-communism is "justified" by the vile slander that "Trotskyists are being used as Nazi-style provocateurs" (by daring to call for communism!) because, you see, "Many people [ie the Maoists] at the rally were tempted" to "take down their placard" -- a clear statement of intent to physically suppress communists. It is appropriate in this context to correct an unfortunate error in the last issue of *Australasian Spartacist*, which mistakenly called the Maoist Radical Student Movement (RSM) at LaTrobe University the "Revolutionary" Student Movement. It is in no way revolutionary, not even in name.

could not be accomplished without overthrowing the capitalists as well. Thus it was the task of the working class, leading and leaning on the peasantry, to take power and begin to organise society on socialist lines, *expropriating* the capitalists and landlords. And in order to prevent the *degeneration* or *counterrevolutionary overthrow* of such a workers state in such a backward country where material scarcity would still prevail, the Vietnamese workers would have to inspire their class brothers in the advanced capitalist world -- particularly France itself -- to take state power and come to their aid. This was on the agenda in France during the 1930s, and again following WWII when the European workers were armed and capitalism in chaos. Both times revolution was sabotaged by the Communist Party of France (CPF) acting in the interests of Stalin's bureaucracy in the USSR.

Thus the dynamic of the Vietnamese revolution conformed to that explained by Trotsky's theory of *permanent revolution*, and the destruction of capitalism in Vietnam is one more conclusive vindication of that theory and of the proletarian internationalist program of the Trotskyist movement for the revolution in the colonial and neo-colonial world. But not only has the Vietnamese revolution proven Trotskyism right in theory. For a time, at critical junctures, Trotskyists led the Vietnamese working class in revolutionary action.

The sudden surrender of Japan at the end of WWII left a power vacuum in both Hanoi and Saigon. In Hanoi the Vietminh, formed in 1941, simply took over the ex-colonial administrative apparatus. In the south, while the Stalinist-led Vietminh installed by a bloodless coup a new bonapartist bourgeois regime in Saigon on 25 August 1945, the Saigon workers began to form "People's Committees", organs of dual power, led primarily by the Trotskyist International Communist League (ICL). The Trotskyists, warning of imperialist attacks, called for arming the people

and "all power to the People's Committees"; Stalinist leader Tran Van Giau declared that "those who incite the people to arm themselves will be considered saboteurs, provocateurs, enemies of national independence. Our democratic liberties will be granted and guaranteed by the democratic allies" -- that is, by British, French and US imperialism!

"Democratic" imperialist forces, under British General Gracey, soon arrived to put down the developing revolution -- *welcomed* by the Vietminh -- and proceeded to establish martial law. It was in order to prevent a popular insurrection against the imperialist occupation that the Vietminh then liquidated much of the leadership of the ICL, and later murdered many more Trotskyists including the group led by Ta Thu Thau. Aided by the Stalinists, the British and French forces suppressed the insurrection. Finally, in the north, the betrayal was completed when in 1946 Ho agreed to allow French troops to re-enter Hanoi. Having served their purpose, the Vietminh themselves were deposed and driven out of the cities. (For a detailed account of these events, see the series "Stalinism and Trotskyism in Vietnam" in *Workers Vanguard*, nos 19-21.)

The murder of the Trotskyists was not motivated by petty personal rivalries; it was no accident; it was no "error". The class collaborationism of the Stalinists compelled them, despite their supposed "commitment" to national independence, to behead the revolutionary workers movement, doing the dirty work of the imperialists. It demonstrates that, in spite of the fact that the Stalinists were at length forced to resist the French as the only alternative to submitting to virtual destruction, *wherever there is a class-conscious working class able to intervene in the struggle*, deformed revolutions, carried out by a petty-bourgeois bonapartist leadership of rebellious peasant forces, are not possible. The entry of the working class onto the stage inevitably polarises these elements, forcing an accommodation either with the working class or with the exploiting class. Ho Chi Minh was not interested in, did not have the option of, could not conceive of, *actually* destroying capitalism -- *until* the proletariat had been crushed and subdued.

Yet the peasant rising which brought Ho to power in the North in 1954 could not find a third path neither capitalist nor proletarian; even without a politically active working class, its only alternative to capitalism was to model itself on the deformed workers states in China and the USSR, instituting a socialised economy.

The general, necessary conditions making possible the overthrow of capitalism without the leadership of the working class -- in Vietnam as in China, Yugoslavia, Cuba -- were a peasant-guerrilla war ending in the collapse of the established bourgeois state power; the intransigence of the bourgeoisie toward the guerrilla leaders; and the absence of the proletariat as a conscious contender for power (ie, led by the class-conscious vanguard party). The type of regime resulting from this process in Vietnam is of the same kind as that which resulted from the *degeneration* of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union. To see *why*, it is enough to compare the conditions which gave rise to Soviet bureaucracy to those pertaining in Vietnam today: material scarcity; isolation from the proletariat of the industrially advanced world; isolation and autonomy of the leading party from the ruling working class. Only in Vietnam, unlike the Soviet Union, it was not necessary for the ruling party to degenerate -- it was trained in the school of Stalinist bureaucratism and class collaboration; not necessary to smash the Soviets -- they never existed after being crushed in 1945; not necessary for the working class to become decimated and demoralised -- that was accomplished in Vietnam long before the triumph of the revolution, with the help of the Stalinists, the future core of the bureaucracy. The workers state in Vietnam was *deformed from birth*, the *only possible outcome* of revolutions such as the Vietnamese based on non-proletarian forces compelled to smash capitalism. But this deformation was *not inevitable*. The conditions for it were created by the *conscious betrayals* of the Stalinists.

Such bureaucracies cannot be reformed; that is the lesson of the Soviet bureaucracy, drawn by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed*. A *political revolution* is necessary to establish workers' democracy and internationalism, and to clear the path for socialist development. To lead this struggle and to lead the construction of socialism requires the formation of Trotskyist -- ie Marxist-Leninist -- workers parties in the deformed workers states.

Against the Stalinist bureaucracies, which promote treacherous illusions of "socialism in one country", we say that the gains represented by the workers states can be effectively defended and the preconditions for socialism fully established only through the world victory of the proletarian revolution, led by the international revolutionary party. For the rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

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# Strikes challenge Moore's indexation decision

## Wage freeze vs class struggle

On 22 May Mr Justice Moore of the Arbitration Commission adjourned the application of the Metal Trades Federation of unions (MTF) for their wage claim of \$18-20 until after the hearings on wage indexation scheduled for July. Though the decision was not final Moore effectively rejected the MTF claims. The metal union leaders have stalled all year in the hope of some token grants from the Arbitration Commission and now the campaign is no further ahead than when it began.

This metal trades claim, the traditional pacesetter for other awards, is now also the first and probably decisive test of the National Wage Case decision. Even a partially successful campaign by metal workers would, as the NSW government representative said at the metal trades hearings, mean "virtually aborting the national wage case altogether" (*Financial Review*, 15 May 1975). But for all the rhetoric of its "left" components, the MTF leadership has refused to challenge the basic tenets of the decision in the National Wage Case.

The National Wage decision of 30 April granted only a 3.6 percent increase in award rates, based on the March quarter increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and offers future wage indexation only on conditions amounting to a wage

freeze. The only grounds for wage increases outside those granted through indexation would be "genuine" cases of changes in work value and of "catch up" to community standards. The court demands "substantial compliance" with its conditions and warned that

"Violation even by a small section of industry, whether in the award or non-award area would put at risk the future of indexation for all." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May 1975)

In other words unless the trade unions accept wage restraint there will be no more wage indexation. This is simply a fraud. Metal workers must demand real indexation -- an automatic monthly cost-of-living adjustment based on the highest wage in the industry and an adequate consumer price index established by workers' committees on prices.

Of course the bourgeoisie has decided that "The new system deserves a chance to be allowed to work" (*The Australian*, 1 May 1975) and their faithful servants, the Federal Labor Government, desperate to control wages by deceiving their working-class supporters on behalf of the bosses' need for "adequate" profits, vied with each other to extol its virtues. The prize for perfidy goes to Labour Minister Clyde Cameron who after making his gesture as a "friend" of workers by opining

that the metal trades claim was a "catch up" case, hastened to show that he too was "responsible" by advising the trade unions not to miss "this golden opportunity" (*Financial Review*, 20 May 1975). And it was Cameron who first proposed the government's so-called "neutral" stand in the metal trades case, accurately labelled in a *Financial Review* headline (15 May 1975): "Government's court case no increase".

The central trade-union bureaucracy, while muttering about "reservations", was quick to fall in step. The resolution unanimously passed by the ACTU inter-state executive meeting in Perth on 20 May declared abstract support for collective bargaining and against a wage freeze (a concession to the sensibilities of the "lefts"), but accepted the Court's decision.

Prominent among those voicing token opposition were the leaders of the MTF, to whom the decision was a direct slap in the face by the Arbitration Commission. The day after the decision was announced, AMWU Commonwealth President Dick Scott told the mass meeting at Lidcombe Oval that the decision was a "straight jacket". But when he spoke as MTF advocate at 12 May opening hearing on the metal trades case, he did not challenge the decision at all, simply echoing Cameron that the metal trades was a special "catch up" case (not, as he had earlier stated, an attempt to regain real wages lost through inflation) and that "There should be no endeavour to make this a national test case" (*The Australian*, 13 May 1975).

Before the court the employers' representatives repeated their litany of industrial woes about a "profitability squeeze". How did Dick Scott reply to this? Did he restate his union's policy of a 35-hour week without loss of pay? Did he demand that this be linked to a sliding scale of hours so that available work is shared among all workers? Did he demand to see the books of the companies pleading poverty? Did he warn that closures and retrenchments would be met with factory occupations and work-ins? Did he call for nationalisation under workers' control without compensation? No -- he simply advised the court to be "farsighted" because "Industry in our opinion is taking an upward trend" which would bring an increase in employment later in the year (*Financial Review*, 16 May 1975). Such implicit faith in capitalism is clear proof that the MTF leadership has no intention of fighting unemployment and for the demand for a 35-hour week without loss of pay!

All Scott's wheedling and whining were to no avail, however, and the Honourable Mr Justice Moore has effectively thrown the MTF claims out. One response to this is likely to be an increase in demands by more militant but largely craft-conscious tradesmen around their "relativities". Some tradesmen at Plessey Meadowbank in Sydney, for example, threatened to throw Scott in the river if he did not do something about their special interests, and there is talk of a special tradesmen's mass meeting in Sydney. The bureaucrats' sellout policies will only worsen tensions between skilled and unskilled workers.

In his lofty "impartiality", Moore advised the MTF to consider replacing the present basic award system with a going or paid rate system along the lines introduced in the building industry, a standard industry-wide rate incorporating a special allowance in lieu of over-award payments. While this system would produce wage gains for many who presently receive little or no over-award payments, it is intended, like the National Wage Case decision, to strengthen the control of the Arbitration Commission over wage rates, and would in no way eliminate the need to fight for the present wage demands and for an adequate cost-of-living adjustment. Although reliance on isolated over-award gains is used by the bureaucrats to evade a real award struggle, any attempt to limit over-award struggles must be opposed.

With their old strategy in tatters, the MTF officials are compelled to propose some sort of industrial action to avoid being totally discredited. But certainly not a call for a continuing national strike; for according to Scott at the 1 May Lidcombe Oval meeting (where the officials initiated a blatantly undemocratic move to prevent a vote on a Socialist Labour League supporter's amendment requesting the bureaucrats to run an indefinite strike) there is no way "that the strike could be effectively policed", meaning that the bureaucrats fear it might get out of their control! This meeting revealed a growing section of metal workers opposed to the officials' do-nothing "campaign", and growing sympathy for proposals like that of the Plessey group of militants in Sydney and Spartacist supporters in the metal trades for a continuing

## "Left" treachery in Vic metal trades

Led by Communist Party of Australia (CPA) member John Halfpenny and the likes of Socialist Left leader Jim Roulston, the Victorian branch of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union (AMWU) maintains a popular image as the most "left", "militant" union in the Metal Trades Federation (MTF). However, this phoney image is prone to tarnish because in fact Halfpenny and company are nothing but sellout union bureaucrats like the rest of the MTF officials. During this year's metal award campaign Halfpenny has consistently opposed a national strike; has abandoned key demands in the log of claims without a fight; refuses to mobilise support for and sells out whenever possible isolated local strikes (as in recent months at Draffin-Everhot and Containers Ltd in the Melbourne area); and while mouthing opposition to the Moore "indexation" wage freeze scheme, kowtows to the Arbitration Court's chief objection to the metal trades claim -- that it would win higher wages for most workers through flow-ons and wreck their scheme -- by vigorously insisting that the metal workers' case should be treated as just another award: "This year metal workers are not prepared to fight the battle for everyone else..." (*AMWU Newsletter* no 6/75, 13 May 1975).

For its part, the CPA tries hard to cover the blemishes. Shortly after the second round of MTF mass meetings in NSW on 1 May, the CPA's *Tribune* decided that the MTF bureaucrats' tactics of "non-co-operation" and isolated job action (which Halfpenny had advocated in Victoria) were failing after all, and called for "concerted national action" (*Tribune*, 6 May 1975). This, *Tribune* made it clear, had nothing to do with either the Socialist Labour League's call for an indefinite strike run by the bureaucrats or the Spartacist League's demand for a continuing national strike run by elected shop-floor committees, proposals which, it asserted, "Metal workers are obviously fed up with". True to Halfpenny's role as a misleader of the labour movement, the CPA proclaims itself not the vanguard but the rearguard of the working class, a tail dragging behind it and holding it back.

Thankful for a chance to sound militant without doing anything, the Victorian AMWU officials denounced "the new economic penal powers" of the National Wage Case decision (*What is Indexation?*, leaflet authorised by Halfpenny). Similarly, instead of the Federal MTF recommendation adopted at the NSW meetings calling for the implementation of the "campaign of action" by individual shops and areas, Halfpenny's resolution for the second round of meetings in Victoria called for a 24-hour stoppage on 12 May and a "campaign of combined job action". Yet Halfpenny hastens to add that it would be "foolish" to just go "steamrolling along with strikes and such action" which would be "very divisive and would lead to defeat" (*Tribune*, 20 May 1975)! This is only the typical plaint of a complacent bureaucrat against the discomforts of the class struggle. Halfpenny's emphasis on "individual job action" is in fact identical with the "guerrilla tactic" approach of the Federal MTF. Its utility lies in allowing Halfpenny (subject to greater immediate pressure from the ranks than

the Federal MTF leadership is) to appear more militant, without in any way challenging them.

The proposal to "develop a campaign for combined job action" is not even a phoney attempt to fight for the log of claims. The 7 May official Victorian resolution called for job action for a \$20 over-award increase, the 35-hour week and improved sick leave -- not the full log of claims! It did not specify a 35-hour week without loss in pay and the unexplained change in the wage demand to one for over-award payments was introduced by Halfpenny on the sly to head off a real award struggle.

In spite of what Halfpenny and the CPA say, the 24-hour Victorian strike on 12 May demonstrated not only that metal workers are willing to fight, but also how the metal campaign can become a stepping-off point for a general working-class offensive. Victoria's 100,000 metal workers were joined on strike by railway workers and 4000 FEDFA members, who are due for flow-ons from the metal award. 2000 State Electricity Commission workers stopped for two hours in solidarity, and the stoppage coincided with a maritime strike protesting the refusal of ship owners to grant award demands following the National Wage Case decision. Tramway workers in Melbourne also met to plan stoppages in support of the metal campaign.

Nevertheless not only the CPA, but others in Victoria who pretend to oppose it from the left have grossly capitulated. The Communist League (CL) distributed a leaflet at the 7 May Festival Hall mass meeting in Melbourne accurately describing the guerrilla campaign as "a face-saver for doing nothing". But these opportunists -- who agree with Halfpenny, Dick Scott et al that a national strike is "unrealistic" -- then say: "The proposals for the guerrilla campaign do, however, have a chance of being adopted at other meetings, therefore temporarily we should make the best of a bad lot" (emphasis added)! According to the CL itself this means "temporarily" covering up for Halfpenny "doing nothing"! Accordingly, CL supporter and Williamstown Naval Dockyard shop steward Terry Bosely sought only to make the sellout easier to swallow and better implemented, by putting an amendment calling for regional shop stewards' meetings to "co-ordinate" Halfpenny's do-nothing campaign and for the federal unions to initiate an overtime ban and working a 35-hour week.

Like the CPA, and like the Russian Economists Lenin fought against, the CL acts as if "That struggle is desirable which is possible, and the struggle which is possible is that which is going on at the given moment. This is precisely the trend of unbounded opportunism, which passively adapts itself to spontaneity" (Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*). Adapting to defeatist false consciousness, rather than advocating the policies necessary for victory, means tailing the reformist bureaucracy which feeds on this false consciousness and reinforces the hold of bourgeois ideology on the working class. It is the job of revolutionaries not to make the bureaucrats' betrayals more palatable, but to fight for a class-struggle program which meets the objective needs of the class. ■

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# SWP in the camp of social democracy

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Over the years we have chronicled the sharp rightward motion of the Socialist Workers Party from Trotskyism to reformism. Breaking with revolutionary Marxism in the early 1960's by supporting Castroism/guerrillaism, the SWP endorsed outright class collaboration in the antiwar movement as early as 1965. Its fabled "mass movement" was built on the program of liberal antiwar Democrats and faded away as soon as withdrawals of US troops began. At meetings of its antiwar (NPAC) and pro-abortion (WONAAC) "coalitions", communists of the Spartacist League were excluded in order to make the representatives of the bourgeoisie (Senator Vance Hartke, Representative Bella Abzug [of the bourgeois Democratic Party]) comfortable.

At the same time, these "best organizers" of incipient popular frontism have mounted continuous reformist electoral campaigns, complete with two-tier program ("legalize abortion" for the posters, "free abortion" in the fine print). Seeking always to project an image of bourgeois respectability, SWP campaigns have included support for open union-busting (in the 1968 New York City teachers' strike) and appeals for the intervention of the capitalist army (during the current Boston busing controversy).

Commenting on the evolution of this party which was once the strongest section of the Fourth International, we wrote four years ago that, "In the long run, the SWP's competitors are not the other erstwhile Trotskyists, nor the Maoist and semi-Maoist confrontationists, but the ghost of American social-democracy" (*Spartacist*, April-May 1971). This has been the perspective of the SWP leadership for some time, although it has naturally sought to avoid explicitly repudiating the SWP's revolutionary past and still finds bogus orthodox verbiage useful on occasion.

Recently, however, the SWP has geared up its electoral machinery for a "bigger than ever" 1976 presidential campaign, in the process resorting to ever more explicitly social-democratic rhetoric and program. Its appetites to become the mass reformist party in America were underlined in December when it explicitly renounced in court all violence and illegal action (in order to convince a sympathetic judge that FBI surveillance was not necessary). [To achieve this "big step forward", the SWP produced as a prime exhibit its 1963 telegram of condolences sent to the widow of imperialist chief Kennedy, and boasted that members of the Internationalist Tendency (supporters of the centrist majority of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International") who support the strategy of guerrilla war in Latin America, had been expelled from the SWP. The presiding judge was convinced that "there was never anything, in my view, beyond the most tenuous suggestion of a possible implication of violence in the United States. In view of the ouster of the minority faction ... that ... suggestion has been basically eliminated", and saw in SWP policies "not the slightest indication of any mass action ... to expropriate property...." (For further details see "SWP Renounces Revolution in Court", *Workers Vanguard* no 59, 3 January 1975.)] Two weeks later the SWP unveiled a "Bill of Rights for Working People", a classic reformist gimmick pretending to bring about socialism by constitutional amendment. [In step with chauvinist displays surrounding the American bicentennial, the SWP proposes to expand the "Bill of Rights in the American Constitution to include protection from the new problems created by present-day capitalist society" (*US Militant* 17 January 1975). Nowhere does the SWP make it clear that its "bill of rights for working people" cannot be implemented by the ballot (see "Socialism through

Constitutional Amendment?", *Workers Vanguard* no 61, 31 January 1975).] Simultaneously [the SWP] has undertaken an orientation toward the mainstream social democrats, particularly Michael Harrington's Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) [the "left" wing of a split of the old US Socialist Party two years ago. Harrington backed liberal George McGovern rather than hawk Henry Jackson for the Democratic Party nomination for US President (see "'Socialist' Labor Fakers Back Democrats", *Workers Vanguard* no 67, 25 April 1975)].

In explaining his party's up-to-date bill of rights (dealing with "new" problems of "present-day" capitalist society which the founding fathers evidently did not foresee), SWP presidential candidate Peter Camejo put forward a concept of a "workers government" which bears more resemblance to Fabian "sewer socialism" than to anything Lenin or Trotsky ever call for. Not only would this creature be the government of a capitalist state, but the SWP brand of workers government would behave quite moderately even within the confines of bourgeois parliamentarianism.

Take, for instance, the question of capitalist profits. Unlike the "ultra-left" Trotsky who called for the expropriation of the monopolies without compensation, the "sensible" Camejo demands that profits be reduced!

"Of course the owners of industry and big stockholders would have their profits reduced because they would be paying out more in wages." (*Militant*, 7 February 1975)

And what about mass layoffs and plant closures -- does Camejo advocate workers control of production as proposed in the Transitional Program? No need to be so ultimatic; the SWP workers government would run the plants "by a board of directors elected by the workers instead of appointed by the biggest stockholders and bankers".

Far from conceiving of a workers government as profit-reducing "labor capitalism", Trotsky insisted a workers government means "nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat" ("Conversation on the Slogan 'Workers and Farmers Government'", *Writings 1938-39*). The demand is raised in a correct revolutionary manner in the SWP's 1938 Constitution, which states that the party's purpose "shall be to educate and organize the working class for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a Workers Government to achieve socialism". But today the aspiring social democrats who lead the SWP call for taking over the capitalist state machinery.

Next came the SWP's "appeal" to the readership of New York City's artsy *Village Voice*. Pete Hamill, an occasional *Voice* contributor, stirred controversy in respectable avantgarde circles by an article raising a pale pink flag of "socialism" (*Village Voice*, 13 January). Hamill's "Manifesto", written in response to the suggestion of an ad agency that the image of socialism needs "a major *unselling*", calls for "a single bank, run like the nationalized Bank of England under the Federal Reserve system" which would become "a great symbol of trust" for depositors. And such a socialist America could institute real "protective tariffs" against Arab oil.

Mr Hamill, a socialist "due to a misunderstanding" (Trotsky's apt description of Norman Thomas [prominent earlier American Socialist Party leader]), proposed that DSOC's Michael Harrington and the liberal economist John Kenneth Galbraith should launch a third-party, democratic socialist presidential campaign for '76. After all, he remarks, Harrington has "good looks" and Galbraith has "wit". With that kind of packaging, even socialism should be marketable.

Harrington, of course, demurred, explaining to

the rash Hamill that the road to a socialist alternative runs through the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. With both the liberal DSOC and the more rabidly witchhunting Social Democrats USA (SDUSA) firmly wedded to the Democrats, as was their predecessor, the Socialist Party, the social-democratic electoral niche has been empty for some years. Sensing an upsurge in "socialist" sentiment in the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia of late and hoping to fill this void, the SWP responded with an ad in the *Voice* pertly announcing: "Pete Hamill proposes socialist ticket, Harrington declines, we're doing it. Join us!" A subsequent television interview of Hamill and the SWP's 1972 presidential candidate, Linda Jenness, revealed no notable differences between the two hucksters (*Militant*, 28 February).

The latest of the SWP's efforts to present itself as the social-democratic party of responsible reformers was an interview of Camejo by the *New York Times* (21 April). The SWP presidential candidate is quoted as summarizing his program as follows:

"First, cutting the war budget and getting an emergency public works program to put people back to work.

"Second, favoring a cost-of-living escalator clause in labor contracts to fight inflation.

"Third, ending illegal activity of C.I.A. and F.B.I. harassment.

"Fourth, enforcement of laws which protect minority groups and women, I'm for school busing in Boston.

"Fifth, opposition to the present foreign policy which we characterize as imperialist."

This statement has not been corrected, either by a published letter to the *Times* or a notice in the *Militant* (which quoted approvingly from the same article), so we must presume that it represents SWP policy or at least that version of its program which it wishes to be read by many tens of thousands more people than see the party's own press.

This sanitized "minimum program" naturally does not even hint at revolution. It does not breathe a word about a labor party, expropriation of major industry, central planning, a workers government, factory occupations and strikes against mass layoffs, a shorter workweek at no loss in pay, unlimited unconditional unemployment benefits at full union-scale wage levels, or opposition to deportations and protectionism. In short, it is not a *transitional program* pointing to the need for the working class to seize state power and overthrow bourgeois rule, but rather a reform program which could have been raised by a number of left-liberal Democratic congressmen.

The demands raised are clearly intended to be minor modifications within the framework of the capitalist system. Camejo speaks of "cutting" the military budget instead of total opposition to the government's economic program of war expenditures and social service cutbacks. In calling for an emergency public works program (even George Meany and Senator Henry Jackson support that), he fails to demand union-scale wages and trade-union control. Although mentioning a cost-of-living escalator (already contained in many union contracts), Camejo neglects to specify that a sliding scale of wages must provide full compensation for losses due to inflation.

Likewise, while advocating an end to "illegal" CIA and FBI harassment, the SWP spokesman did not mention their *legal* activities (which include assassinations). In contrast, revolutionaries demand the *abolition* of these secret police agencies. As for the reference to an "imperialist foreign policy", this is a classic Stalinist

Continued on page seven

Pete Hamill proposes socialist ticket, Harrington declines, we're doing it. Join us!

## Socialist ticket for '76



Send for the Socialist Workers '76 action program A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR WORKING PEOPLE.

Village Voice

Left: ad by SWP in New York's *Village Voice* identifies SWP election campaign with right social-democratic "socialism" of Pete Hamill. Right: SWP's George Novack has friendly meeting with colleague Dr Cairns during Novack's tour of Australia in 1973. *Direct Action* (14 June 1973) ran photo in an article under the headline, "Novack Tour Makes Big Impact".

Direct Action



SWP 20 years ago:

# "No confidence in the bosses' parties! Confidence in a workers' defence committee!"

reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 68, 9 May 1975

The 24 April issue of Direct Action, organ of the Socialist Workers League (SWL), featured a page-long article quoting heavily from Barry Sheppard, a leader of the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), claiming that incidents such as the recent Maoist gangster attacks on SWL supporters are "a violation of workers democracy, a violation of democratic rights in general" and concluding that it is perfectly principled to call on the bourgeois state to defend the "democratic rights" of the victims. (In other words, the SWL is quite prepared to demand court prosecution of the Maoist goons.) The identity of workers' democracy and "democracy in general" is the revisionist invention of social-democratic traitors like Karl Kautsky, designed to tie the working class to bourgeois democracy, a form of capitalist rule. In sharp contrast, Trotsky always insisted that workers' democracy could only be upheld by resolutely opposing any bourgeois interference in the affairs of the workers movement. The SWL and SWP also push the call for the US Army to defend the black community in Boston from racist attacks. In the opinion of these revisionists, the demand raised by our comrades of the Spartacist League of the US for labour/black defence rather than relying on the bosses' army is "unrealistic". As the following article shows, the SWP, before it degenerated into its present cringing reformism, understood the class nature of the bourgeois state is counterposed to revolutionary mobilisation of the working class, and did not think that workers' defence committees were at all "unrealistic". Nor do the workers of United Auto Workers Union (UAW) Local 6 at a large International Harvester plant in Chicago, who recently set up a volunteer union defence squad to guard a black Harvester worker's home from racist attacks, a proposal of the Labor Struggle Caucus of UAW Local 6 (a class-struggle grouping supported by the SLUS). There could be no better proof in practice of the complete fraudulence of the SWL/SWP rationale for betrayal.

The response of the Socialist Workers Party to the recent wave of fascist-inspired attacks on

black families in Chicago has been to support a call on the Aurora city council to curb the Ku Klux Klan, pointing to days past when a liberal sheriff ejected some Nazis from Cook County during an open housing campaign. In Boston, the SWP called for federal troops to protect black people threatened by reactionary anti-busing mobilizations during this past school year. The same demand was raised by the Communist Party, black Democrats and Boston mayor Kevin White.

The SWP has not always supported reformist policies of relying on the bosses' state, however. When it was still a Trotskyist party, the SWP put forward quite a different answer on how to fight reactionary lynch mobs and night riders. In 1954 it replied to racist attacks on black families in Chicago by forthrightly denouncing those who spread illusions about getting protection from the government of the landlords and capitalists, calling instead for the formation of a workers defense committee.

The story of this incident was put forward in a pamphlet, "Racial Terror at Trumbull Park, Chicago," published by the SWP in 1954. The events centered on a previously all-white housing project into which a handful of blacks had recently moved. They were met with a vicious campaign of mob violence instigated by a neighborhood "improvement association" and Klan-like white supremacy groups.

After pointing out that Chicago mayor Martin Kennelly and his cops had done nothing to stop the violence, but had instead arrested its victims, the pamphlet asks what should be done to fight Jim Crow segregation. The CP, it reported, relied on the mayor and "friends" in Washington. "Instead of action by the people, the Illinois Worker called for federal intervention. The Communist Party, looking for an alliance with the Democrats, top trade union brass and NAACP officials, talks against Jim Crow but does not support a program of mass action to stop the violence at Trumbull Park." This was no answer at all.

The SWP, in contrast, called for independent working-class mobilization:



Workers Vanguard  
UAW Local 6 volunteer defence guard in Chicago to defend home of worker (right).

"The Socialist Workers Party knows the fascist attack can be stopped at Trumbull Park. Not by depending on the bosses' representatives in City Hall but by depending on the workers.... The time has come for the unions and the NAACP to organize a mass protest demonstration....

"Every local union, every tenants' group, every NAACP branch should elect delegates to a city-wide Congress of Labor, called by the NAACP and the unions. And this Congress of Labor could constitute a permanent defense committee....

"And the Congress of Labor could set up an anti-Jim Crow flying squadron of 1,000. This flying squadron will be on call at all times to go to Trumbull Park, or any other place, to see that peace is maintained. What Big Business Kennelly's cops can't do, a workers' anti-Jim Crow flying squadron will do."

The SWP also pointed out that, "It is not enough to fight a Trumbull Park here and there.... Capitalism, the breeder of Jim Crow, must go if Jim Crow is to end." It called therefore for a break with the Democrats and Republicans and the formation of a labor party. The pamphlet concluded:

"No confidence in the bosses! No confidence in the bosses' parties! Confidence in a workers' demonstration! Confidence in a workers defense committee!"

Today, the SWP and CP both demand federal troops to Boston, and it is left to the Spartacist League to call for labor/black defense. But the reformists' confidence in the bourgeoisie cannot stop the class struggle. The recent action by UAW Local 6 in Chicago in forming a volunteer defense guard to protect the house of a black union member from attacks by night riders is an inspiring example of the power of united working-class action and a concrete step in the direction of a class-struggle program to fight racial oppression. ■

# No asylum for Indochinese reactionaries!

reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 68, 9 May 1975

## Send the anti-communist butchers to Saigon!

Seven years ago Americans sat horrified before their TV sets as they watched a Saigon police chief, General Nguyen Ngo Loan, laugh as he shot at close range a young Vietnamese prisoner as a "suspected Vietcong sympathizer". Today all the General Loans are gathering at US military bases in preparation for their government-sponsored entry into US civilian life.

Who are "our allies" recently delivered by helicopter, ship, and airplane to their asylum in the US? Of course, among the 100,000 thus far evacuated are some wives and dependents of US soldiers. Also, some of those fleeing have special training, like the seven doctors and six nurses who arrived at Fort Chaffee (they should have remained in Vietnam, and the SL would defend the right of the new government to hold them there where their skills are urgently needed). But in the main "our allies" are the despicable bourgeois collaborators with British, French and particularly American imperialism. They are the military officer corps and secret police which have for years "saved" the pay of foot soldiers in their own personal Swiss bank accounts for just this eventuality; the native capitalists, large landowners, drug traffickers and war profiteers who have, according to the Swiss government, created a glut of gold bars in that country.

To justify President Ford's demagogic "Oper-

ation Baby-Lift" -- the kidnapping of several thousand Vietnamese orphans (and some who aren't) in order to whip up anti-communist sentiment in the US -- full-page newspaper ads talked of "ferrying the children to freedom". The media in the US cannot pretend that "our allies" are poor peasants running from the "red menace" to the "land of the free": they arrive at the quonset huts with their matched patent leather luggage, wearing silk suits and dresses and gold bracelets from wrist to elbow. Among the Vietnamese heading for US shores are such notorious imperialist war criminals as Air Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, well remembered in the US for his "outspoken" praise of Hitler; he is also well remembered in the villages of Vietnam for the murderous bombing missions he flew, first for the French and then for the US.

These vicious professional anti-communist killers should not be allowed to escape punishment for their heinous crimes against the workers and peasants of Vietnam and Cambodia. The criminals must be tried and punished! The NLF and FALN have set back the defense of the Indochinese Revolution by allowing them to flee. Indochinese collaborators in high places no more deserve asylum than did the Nazi High Command after World War II. Rather than flying out that murderous crowd around Thieu and Lon Nol, they should be flown back -- together with the US war criminals from Calley to Nixon, Ford and Kissinger -- to Hanoi, Saigon and Phnom Penh so their victims could try them for their barbarous acts. Justice would demand that the defoliators would be brought before the hungry, that the napalmers be confronted by the burned and maimed.

that the terror bombers be judged by the survivors of their mass savagery, and that the architects of tiger cages now come face to face with the tigers!

It seems that the last terrible hypocrisy of an imperialist intervention which "destroyed" villages in order to save them must be Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger posing "moral" and "humanitarian" questions. The most rabid national chauvinists who scream for the scalps of the "illegal aliens" now rush to make votive offerings to the Statue of Liberty. Ford's press secretary, Ron Nessen, tells the media not to worry about the "legal niceties" of the illegal evacuation; the President, he promises, is acting out of moral commitment. And Gerald Ford lectures the Congress, which has offered only tepid opposition to his evacuation program: it "is not worthy of a nation of immigrants".

The pious responsibility felt by the bourgeoisie for "our allies" is not moral, but political. They simply want to preserve their core of anti-communist friends for future use. There is a modern tradition for the evacuation of defeated class enemies after a social revolution. The US brought Chiang Kai-shek and his nationalists to Taiwan where they have maintained an island of anti-communism ever since. Cuban gusanos have remained as a source of anti-communist terror against Cubans (the Bay of Pigs) and other CIA "enemies" (including leftists and unionists in the US).

The staggering hypocrisy of all the moralizing about "commitments" (secret or otherwise) and the "humanitarian" need to bring Indochinese "refu-

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# Crypto-Stalinism vs fake orthodoxy

## Pabloists debate Portugal

Since the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal in April 1974, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) has played a bonapartist role, seeking to balance between the competing class forces. This situation cannot last, and in the absence of a revolutionary leadership capable of transforming the seething discontent of the masses into a direct contest for state power, a counterrevolutionary crackdown, in some form or another, must surely come. The debate on Portugal held on 23 May in Sydney between Denis Freney of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and David Holmes of the Socialist Workers League (SWL) counterposed slavish adulation for the MFA to fake orthodoxy. Neither, it is absolutely clear, would be capable of providing the revolutionary leadership which is so desperately needed in Portugal.



ASP Photo

Fake Trotskyist Dave Holmes (top) versus crypto-Stalinist Denis Freney. Freney supports bourgeois armed forces in Portugal; Holmes supports them in Boston.



Freney claimed that in Portugal there exists a "workers and peasants government that is forming rapidly on the road to revolution" led by the young "revolutionaries" of the MFA. It is this "revolutionary" government which recently reaffirmed its commitment to the NATO imperialist alliance, which has introduced political censorship, which suppresses strikes, and which removes left-wing trade-union officials who it deems insufficiently obedient to its dictates -- all in

the name of the "democratic revolution"! The recent crackdown (at least 200 arrests and the ransacking of party offices) on the largest organisation to the left of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), the sectarian Maoist Movement for the Reorganisation of the Proletarian Party (MRPP), is merely the latest act in a long campaign of harassment by the MFA/Stalinist coalition. The MRPP has real working-class roots and reflects the militancy of the class. The attacks on it point to the approaching clash between the military government and the combative working class.

According to Freney the "revolutionary" role of the MFA is the result of the PCP's work in the army to develop "Marxist understanding". The PCP itself supposedly has been caught up in a "process" and is "responding" so that it no longer has a Stalinist two-stage theory of revolution. However PCP General Secretary Alvaro Cunhal (who ought to know what his party line is) disagrees. He insists that Portugal is undergoing a "national democratic revolution" in which the alliance of the people (including "definite sections of the middle bourgeoisie") and the army is vital. So vital indeed that he denounces "the idea that the working class, the masses, want to take power and prevent the army from playing any role in Portuguese life" (Alvaro Cunhal, "National-democratic revolution gains pace", *Socialist*, May 1975).

The MFA is only the latest in a long line of "progressive" and "left" military bonapartists who have posed as friends of the masses, only to repress and slaughter them on the morrow -- in China, 1926-27; Algeria, 1964; Bolivia, 1971; Chile, 1973. In China, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was made an honorary member of the Comintern Executive by Stalin not long before Chiang butchered the communists and workers of Shanghai. In Algeria Freney himself, along with Michel Pablo, actively aided the nationalist FLN to tie the fragile organs of workers' dual power, the *comités de gestion*, to the bourgeois state, leaving them politically and militarily defenceless against the eventual right-wing coup! (See *Revolutionary Communist Bulletin* no 6, *Workers Control ... for revolution or counterrevolution?*) Freney's excuse at the debate that in Algeria "our failure was only of our strength" shows that he has learnt absolutely nothing. While individual officers can be won to the revolutionary cause, to do so they must *break* from the armed bodies of the capitalist state. It is the task of the revolutionists to warn the working class against having any confidence in the leaders of the bourgeois armed forces, and to mobilise to smash this institution for the murder and control of the working masses, by demanding the arming of the workers and winning over the rank-and-file soldiers to the proletarian cause, *splitting* them from the officers.

Speaking for the SWL, Holmes kept to an abstractly orthodox Trotskyist position on the situation. Real Trotskyism, however, requires a consistent fight for the program of revolutionary Marxism in all situations. In reality, wherever the SWL or its co-thinkers internationally have a stake in events, the orthodoxy goes out

the window. In the discussion period a Spartacist supporter pointed out that the SWL's denunciation of collaboration with the bourgeois army was phoney, demanding to know "How the armed forces were reactionary in Portugal yet to be relied on in Boston". And while Holmes denounced those working-class parties in Portugal who signed the pact recognising the MFA's dominant role in Portuguese politics, the Spartacist supporter noted that such a policy was *precisely* that of the SWL's co-thinkers in Argentina, the PST (Socialist Workers Party): its most prominent leader Juan Carlos Coral was part of a delegation which presented a document to Peron promising to adhere to "the institutional process" and condemning all those who sought to change this process. (See "PST Caught Redhanded", *Workers Vanguard* no 49, 19 July 1974.)

Holmes craftily neglected to reply. He also neglected to mention the activities of his comrades of the "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (Usec) in Portugal, an omission perhaps explained in part by the fact that there are *two* groups in Portugal which claim to represent the politics of the "Fourth International". The official sympathising section and larger group, the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI) supports the Usec majority led by Ernest Mandel (represented in Australia by the Communist League). Though its activities have been uncritically reported in the press of the "orthodox" SWL, the LCI has capitulated to a two-stage program for the revolution, with its call for a "workers government within the framework of the capitalist state", its refusal to call for a break with the MFA, and its call for a vote for the PCP which ran in the elections as a part of a coalition with the MFA ("Mock Elections in Portugal", *Workers Vanguard* no 67, 25 April 1975). (The other "Trotskyist" Usec group is the Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores (PRT), aligned to the SWP/SWL/PST bloc.)

Both audience and participants in the debate had to put up with an "intervention" by Socialist Labour League (SLL) leader, Jim Mulgrew. The leader of the SLL, which like the SWL politically excludes the Spartacist League from "public" forums, carried on in a disgraceful manner, shouting repeated, noisy and apolitical interjections in a way calculated to disrupt the debate. The outrageous, contemptible cynicism of the SLL leadership was clearly exposed by Mulgrew's disruption -- exactly the kind he *falsely and slanderously* accuses, in order to justify his political exclusions, the SL of carrying out at the first and the only SLL forum SL members have been allowed to attend. (In fact on that occasion, over two years ago, two SL members simply attacked the SLL politically when called on in the discussion period!) If Mulgrew's disruption had seriously threatened the conduct of political debate at the Portugal meeting, as it nearly did, then it would have been an attack on workers' democracy and quite appropriate for the chairman, after giving him fair warning, to put it to the meeting that Mulgrew be ushered out. Instead, the CPA co-chairman David McKnight issued vague threats of physical violence.

In a particularly inane (even for *Workers News*) report of the meeting, *Workers News* (29 May 1975) denounces the SWL as being soft on Stalinism -- because it debated the "Stalinist" CPA! Only a little more than a year ago the SLL itself provided "a platform for the Stalinists" by debating the CPA at NSW University over the question of Solzhenitsyn. On that occasion, *Workers News* declared that "History was made" (*Workers News*, 11 April 1975).

Except for the Vietnamese Stalinists, with whom the SLL can find no fault at all (even the

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

### Wage freeze . . .

national strike run by elected shop floor committees to defend jobs and wages.

Metal workers are ready to take strike action. Already there have been 24-hour stoppages in Newcastle (where workers voted for a national stoppage) and Victoria (see accompanying article), and a *four day* strike in Wollongong as well as stoppages in individual factories. But the policy of encouraging unco-ordinated action at the job and district level is designed to *dissipate* militancy, to prevent the full strength of the metal unions from coming into play. It is no different with the current official MTF proposal for token 24-hour national stoppage on June 9 and a ban on (already drastically reduced) overtime. It simply exposes the lying hypocrisy of their earlier claim that a national strike was impossible. The metal trades campaign, with a leadership prepared to challenge the bosses' system, could galvanise the working class into action against the bosses' attacks. The likelihood of simultaneous stoppages by railway workers and others in support of metal workers on 9 June will be no more than a profound demonstration of the enormous *potential* strength of the united working class unless it is carried beyond simply a fight for the log of claims, unless it becomes a struggle against the capitalist class on a program which starts to challenge its rule.

The reactions of the labour bureaucracy to Whitlam/Moore's "indexation" wage freeze illustrate how the "left" reformists -- from Dick Scott and the Socialist Left to the Communist Party of Australia -- "criticise" the Labor Government only as a loyal opposition, while playing the same role as Whitlam in practice by sabotaging workers' struggles. These fake-lefts have not broken from reformism, and their purely verbal "opposition" to Whitlam's open attacks on the working class and open servitude to the bosses, only helps to keep an increasingly discontented rank and file tied to reformism. Oust the labour bureaucracy, Social-Democratic and "Communist", from Whitlam through to the Socialist Left! For a revolutionary leadership of the labour movement! For a real workers government to expropriate the capitalist class! ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE

### No asylum . . .

gees" to the US is demonstrated by the revealing fact that the US government has refused to admit even *one* persecuted Chilean after the bloody military coup of 1973.... The "humanity" of the US Congress, however, is extended only to those who should be sitting now in jails in Vietnam and Cambodia.

The Spartacist League does not base its hostility to these war criminals on the fear of communicable disease, increased competition for jobs in the US, or on the racism against Asians that has unfortunately characterized so much of the sizeable opposition to opening US borders to the evacuees. But we solidarize with the disgust expressed by millions of Americans at the idea of living with US imperialism's cowardly professional torturers. Our compassion is also class-determined -- aid the victims of right-wing repression, not the butchers who are the perpetrators of that repression!

From Bangkok to Paris to New York, wherever this fleeing pack of poisonous rats goes, they will become a center of the most dangerous and vicious anti-communist activity. Worse than the gusanos who left Cuba, "our allies" will be used by the CIA for the dirtiest of tricks against communists, labor and blacks. Socialists and the labor movement must demand: No Asylum for Indo-chinese War Criminals! ■



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SWL and CL have some criticisms), the SLL prides itself on its vigilance against Stalinism. A recent *Workers News*, after denouncing the PRT for denying like the Stalinists "the independent role of the working class", states:

"There is no basis whatever for calling on the working class to join forces with 'elements' of the AFM to put down future coup attempts. Exactly the opposite." (*Workers News*, 22 May 1975)

Unlike the SLL, Leninists do defend the policy of fighting *militarily* alongside Stalinist, social-democratic, and even bourgeois forces against a fascist or rightist military uprising, *while maintaining the complete organisational and political independence of the working-class movement*. This was the policy of the Bolsheviks when they fought alongside the forces of the Kerensky government against Kornilov in August 1917, an action which helped lay the basis for the great October revolution. Lenin and Trotsky labelled as "petty-bourgeois moralising" arguments like those of the SLL that past treachery of the likes of Kerensky and the MFA/PCP justify refusing a military bloc with them. To advocate as does the SLL that the working class stand idle while counterrevolution triumphs is as monstrous a crime as the conscious betrayals of the Stalinists. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

## ... Zionist, Arab clash

suggesting the problem is simply one of "citizens" of varying "religious, race, colour, creed and sex". The fact that this is a problem of *nationalities* is forgotten. Though normally for an oppressor nation the question of its self-determination does not arise, Marxists defend the right of *all* nations to self-determination. In the case of interpenetrated peoples, the terms of oppression can often simply be reversed (as in Cyprus recently) with the oppressor becoming the oppressed -- and within the bourgeois framework of nationalism one or the other *will* inevitably be oppressed. Revolutionists defend the Palestinians against Zionist oppression, but oppose indiscriminate terrorism and fight for the recognition of the *right* of self-determination for the Hebrew-speaking people too, necessary to help break the hold of Zionist chauvinism on the Israeli working class. However, the burden is on the Hebrew-speaking workers to break from Zionism and defend their Arab class brothers. (For a fuller discussion see *Australasian Spartacist* no 16, February 1975).

The demand for a "democratic-secular state" at the very best represents a Menshevik/Stalinist two-stage theory of revolution, contrary to the Trotskyist understanding of the *permanent revolution*: that genuine national liberation is possible only through the class-conscious proletariat immediately undertaking the tasks of the *socialist* revolution. A pamphlet widely distributed on campuses by AUS officials, the Friends of Palestine, Maoists and the SWL, *The Democratic State of Palestine: A Middle East Solution*, explicitly describes the democratic secular state as part of the stage of "national democratic revolution" (p 9) and *counterposes* it as *preferable* to the "end of exploitation through proletarian revolution" (p 8). No wonder the Maoists find it possible to distribute this pamphlet -- authorised by none other than Sol Salby, a leader of the "Trotskyist" SWL!

*Direct Action* (15 May 1975) contains a false and slanderous account of the 8 May meeting at LaTrobe University, attempting to discredit our position by identifying it with that of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In fact the SL supporters voted for only the SL motion and two others (one for AUS to publicise the plight and oppression of the Palestinians, and another reaffirming the national rights of the Palestinian Arabs), and against all the other AUS, Zionist, and CPA-sponsored motions. The motion advocated by CPAer Mark Taft, while speaking ritually about the "ultimate" need to overthrow capitalism, requested the existing governments of Israel and the Arab states, all, out of the goodness of their hearts and reverence for the UN "thieves' kitchen", to recognise the national rights of both "Jews and Arabs in the Middle East". The right of self-determination applies not to all Jews everywhere (who do not constitute a nation), but only to the Hebrew-speaking population in Palestine. To recognise "claims by the Jewish people for an independent national homeland", as Taft does, leads to the defence of the predatory state of Israel and its reactionary "law of return", and to a pacifist or "neutral" stand (at best) on the question of the absolutely necessary military defence of the Palestinian guerrilla fighters.

In its feeble attempt to imply that the SL's position is "Zionist", *Direct Action* claims "one of these three [SL speakers] so distinguished himself in his speech that he was applauded and cheered by leading Zionist John Zeleznikow." Zeleznikow in fact applauded *only* when the SL supporter made the specific point that between 1949-1968 Jordan had received *more* military aid

than Israel, a *fact* (does the SWL deny it?) at odds with the claim that Israel is in some fundamental sense more a "puppet of US imperialism" than Hussein. The SL speaker concluded with a call for revolutionary defeatism on both sides in wars such as those of 1948, 1967 and 1973 -- a conclusion which no Zionist applauded! Even more incredibly *Direct Action* asserts

"The Spartacists moved a series of motions that indicated their fence-sitting approach to the issue. While they recognised the Palestinians as oppressed they could offer no demands or way forward for the Palestinians except the general call for 'unity' and the 'overthrow of capitalism'. This sect's main role is to act as a left cover for Zionism."

A pure fantasy. *Direct Action* naturally declined to quote from the Spartacist motion, which said:

"AUS recognises that Palestinians are an oppressed nation. AUS condemns the oppression of the Palestinian nation by the Zionist ruling class of Israel and defends the struggle of Palestinians against their oppressors, so long as that struggle is not subordinated to either side in a predatory war between bourgeois states such as the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

"AUS recognises the bourgeois character of both the Zionist Israeli state and the Arab states. In predatory wars between these reactionary regimes, carried out at great expense and suffering to the masses, we can take no side -- instead calling for revolutionary defeatism and an overthrow of capitalism. "AUS further recognises the right of self-determination for the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples. Only if workers of both nations respect and defend the national rights of the other nation can revolutionary unity be achieved. We see this as necessary to the struggle to reach a way out of the morass -- the solution being a bi-national workers state, part of a socialist federation of the Near East, born out of the united class struggle of Arab and Jew against their ruling classes."

The Spartacist League does take a side -- that of workers against national oppression and the bourgeoisie, not workers against workers in defence of "their own" exploiters. But according to *Direct Action*, calling for the unity of Arab and Hebrew workers against capitalism, the destruction of the Zionist state of Israel, and a bi-national workers state is all "covering for Zionism"! Thus the "Socialist" "Workers" League openly ridicules the need for working-class unity and socialist revolution in the Middle East! ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

## SWP . . .

formulation unambiguously stating that the enemy is not the imperialist system, which must be overthrown by the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the present war-mongering administration which must simply be replaced by rational, peace-loving statesmen. This is not only a fundamental rejection of the Leninist theory of imperialism but the most dangerous of illusions in the reformability of the present system. It is precisely this view that was propagated by the SWP's popular-frontist antiwar coalitions which, not surprisingly, largely liquidated into the campaigns of Democratic Party "peace" candidates every election year (Eugene McCarthy in 1968, George McGovern in 1972).

The SWP uses the excuse that it runs independently of the bourgeois parties (unlike the DSOC, SDUSA and CP, all of whom support one or another wing of the Democratic Party) to excuse its openly reformist program, whose aim is to tie the masses to the capitalist system. We cannot object if these renegades from Marxism state ever more clearly their social-democratic appetites. But it is a slander to try to pass this off as Trotskyism. ■

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## ... abortion reformism

leads to competition with other equally valid reform demands for money and effort, at best winning some crumbs from the ruling class (on the condition that no one goes too far). It is to this reformist dead-end which WAAC, which successfully applied for a \$10,000 grant from the official Federal Government IWY committee (so innocuous it is), descends:

"The denial of women's right to abortion is central to the oppression of women in a whole number of ways. The fact that our child bearing functions are not under our complete control means that it is easier to be discriminated against in other areas of our lives. Gains in this sphere, however, will give impetus to women to fight for our rights in all areas." (WAAC pamphlet, *Women's Guide to Abortion -- Why, How, Where*)

"Child Care" could be substituted with equal validity, and would be just as gross a reduction of the tasks of women's liberation to a matter of a single reform (no matter how great) under capitalism.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with concrete action for a legitimate need -- such as repeal of abortion laws -- together with elements of the bourgeoisie who join such action claiming agreement with its aims -- but *never* at the expense of making it more difficult to mobilise the proletariat as a class against the bourgeoisie as a whole, and *never* if it means subordinating the needs of the proletariat and abandoning the struggle for its political independence from the bourgeoisie. WAAC as an organisation does not seek to mobilise a united front of the *working class* even to defend the right to abortion; instead, it consciously seeks a *political* alliance with *bourgeois* elements.

All reforms, whether really valuable or relatively minor, are fragile and reversible under capitalism. But the SWL, which pretends to be revolutionary, openly builds illusions in capitalist "reform":

"... growth in influence of anti-abortion groups must be countered by a strong active campaign by women to safeguard the concessions already won and to fight for the *only* real guarantee of our rights -- the repeal of all abortion laws." (*Direct Action*, 21 March 1975) (emphasis added)

The bourgeois state's legality: some guarantee! In Britain and the US, the anti-abortionists have already had some success in their fight to reverse legalisation of abortion.

That WAAC is anything but a "united front" is proven by its resort to feminist male exclusion. While bourgeois women are eagerly sought after, all working-class men who support its demands are automatically barred! That is, WAAC is based on a *sex* and not a *class* line -- criminally seeking to divide the working class along sexual lines, and to tie working-class women to their class enemies.

The SWL "reconciles" this class collaboration with its claim to be Trotskyist by reference to the "dynamic" of the struggle for consistent bourgeois democracy, which supposedly guarantees the development of socialist consciousness out of that struggle. At bottom, this is just another way of saying that revolution is made by reforms. Not so! It is the task of revolutionaries to prepare the working class for the seizure of state power and the forcible suppression of the exploiters. The gap between the immediate felt needs of the working class and this necessity must be bridged by a program of transitional demands. The sexual divisions within the working class must be overcome through a struggle for united working-class opposition to the oppression of women and for a non-exclusionist communist women's movement, aiming to mobilise working class women in the fight not just for bourgeois "rights" but for socialism, under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party. ■

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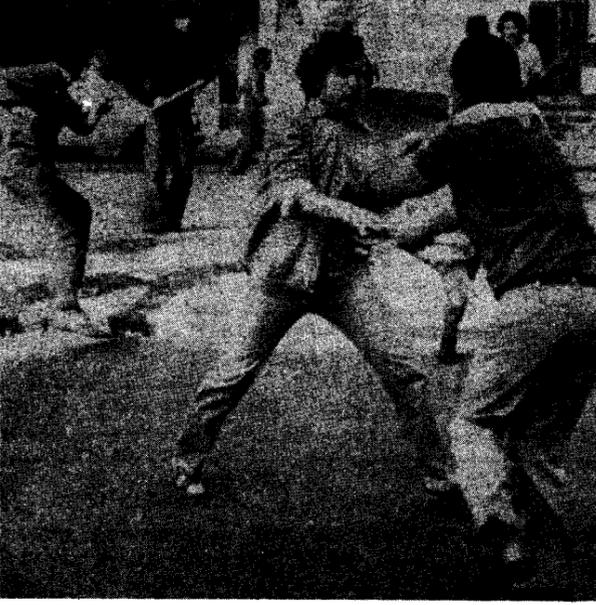
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## Zionist provocations, Maoist adventurism, SWL slanders

# Zionists, Arab nationalists clash



Palestinians, Maoists clash with Zionist demonstrators outside AUS offices on 4 May.

The recent tour by two representatives of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS), Eddie Zananiri and Samir Cheikh, prompted a barrage of hysterical Zionist "anti-terrorist" propaganda and organised attempts to disrupt their public meetings. Meetings at Melbourne University and Prahran College in Melbourne were severely disrupted by Zionists shrieking provocative and racist epithets and hurling pies and rotten fruit at the speakers. At LaTrobe University a gang of Zionists were refused admission to the meeting when they turned up armed with metal-tipped sticks. In Sydney, the meeting at NSW Institute of Technology was disrupted and at Macquarie University Zionist attempts to disrupt the meeting resulted in a brawl with a group of Palestinians. These outrageous acts follow the prevention of a visit by a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) delegation earlier this year, and are equally an attack on the democratic rights of the Australian labour movement. In both Sydney and Melbourne, Spartacist members and supporters took part in the defence guards at the GUPS delegation's meetings.

The most publicised incident occurred outside the AUS offices in Melbourne on Sunday 4 May when

a demonstration of about 60 Zionists was dispersed following a violent brawl with a larger group of Palestinians and pro-Palestinians, including Maoists from LaTrobe University. Having been led to the incorrect belief that the Zionists were attacking Palestinians they left the May Day parade, and although finding the Zionists at the AUS offices being no more than threatening, launched a tactically unnecessary and stupid attack. The Maoists' political justification for it as teaching "the fascist mob a lesson" is simply wrong, as Zionism is not a variant of fascism but a bourgeois nationalist ideology embracing (unfortunately) a broad political and social spectrum.

The visit by the GUPS delegation coincided with campus meetings to decide on a series of motions from the AUS Council, supported by the Socialist Workers League (SWL), the Maoists and most of the AUS bureaucracy, and calling for the establishment of a "democratic secular State of Palestine", a concept which fails to recognise the existence of two nations, the Palestinian Arab and the Hebrew-speaking nation (not the present (or "pre-1967") state of Israel),

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## SWL nurtures embryonic popular front

# Single-issue abortion reformism

In pursuit of short-term reformist success, the Socialist Workers League (SWL) has spread much confusion about abortion. Perhaps most damaging is the claim that abortion reform strikes a mortal blow at capitalism and the nuclear family, a claim designed to give a "revolutionary" tinge to the SWL's reform activities. What is the meaning of the abortion question?

The denial of the democratic right of women to have an abortion is a glaring expression of the special oppression of women through the nuclear family. Designed to force women against their will into responsibility for the raising and care of unwanted children, perhaps the most repulsive feature of the ban on abortion is that it subjects women who for economic or other reasons have no choice to barbarous treatment by unqualified and unscrupulous illegal quacks. For the bulk of the largely petty-bourgeois social base of the existing women's liberation movement, it is one of the most immediate aspects of sex oppression, one which imposes restrictions on life style, employment, education, etc. The intolerable laws prohibiting or restricting the right to abortion must be abolished.

But this right is not different in essence from any other bourgeois-democratic right, such as the vote for women or equal pay; whilst important, the denial of this right is neither fundamental to women's oppression nor essential to capitalism. The prohibition of abortion, an age-old means of birth control, became widespread in Western class society only relatively recently. Because granting the right to abortion weakens the traditional moral bulwarks of capitalist society, it often clashes with the ruling-class need to maintain the status quo; and opposition to abortion often serves as a powerful ideological tool of bourgeois reaction. However, a clear proof that the right to abortion is in essence compatible both with capitalism and with women's oppression is Japan, where excessive growth of the dense population would pose a threat to the stability of capitalism. There the bourgeoisie has legalised abortion without materially altering the general status or condition of women. Japanese culture remains among the most tradition-bound and male-chauvinist in the advanced capitalist world, one in which, for example, there is public approval for corporal punishment of wives.

Far from attacking the central material basis of the family, the demand for legalised abortion does not even challenge the bourgeois family at the ideological level when supported on the bourgeois grounds advanced by the SWL and their creation, the Women's Abortion Action Coalition (WAAC), who see it as simply "the right to choose". The abstract, formal equality embodied

in WAAC's slogan is far from the full social equality of women. Only the overthrow of capitalism will create the material conditions for the replacement of the family: the socialisation of household duties and the development of equal participation of women in all areas of productive social life. Only the working class has the power and the material interest to smash class society. For communists, the fight for partial reforms is always subordinate to the goal of socialist revolution; and for that reason communists seek to use every such struggle to mobilise the working class against capitalism. The abortion struggle can have revolutionary significance only to the extent that this is done.

It is a fact that the various campaigns internationally for repeal of abortion laws have remained almost entirely limited to the middle classes. These campaigns have proven incapable of mobilising working-class women because legal abortion is nearly worthless to them unless they can easily afford abortions, that is, unless it is free. But free abortion only raises a broader issue with a powerful class thrust: free quality medical care. The feminist abortion movements have ignored these issues. The limitation of the struggle to the issue of bourgeois-democratic reforms only helps maintain the hold of reactionary ideology on the working class, leaving the reformist misleaders of the labour movement unchallenged.

The SWL's WAAC, like the SWP's WONAAC (Women's National Abortion Action Coalition) in the US, rigidly adheres to the repeal of abortion laws as its maximum demand. The SWP/SWL's principal argument for this "single issue-ism" is simple: to demand anything more would reduce the number of women that can be induced to support it. (One might wonder what this kind of argument -- borrowing from bourgeois electoral politics the idea of a classless "populace/majority" -- has to do with Marxism. The answer is nothing; and indeed, not even SWL members in WAAC ever talk about socialism, the working class or Marxism.) By tailoring its demands to the minimum acceptable to women of all classes, WAAC gives an automatic veto to the liberal wing of the ruling class over its goals.

The practical consequences of this approach -- essentially that of the Stalinist "popular front" -- is to subordinate the needs of the working-class masses to the requirements of a bloc with a section of the bourgeoisie. And there is in fact a section of ruling-class opinion, expressed by the Women's Electoral Lobby and the Australia Party, in favour of legalising abortion. The SWL hopes to forge an alliance with the likes of Bridget Gilling.

Rather than "alienate" bourgeois women from



SWL, WAAC push liberal bourgeois illusions: "control of our lives" under capitalism!

WAAC, the SWL argues against WAAC raising the demand for free abortion, and itself mentions this demand only on special occasions and in "theoretical" articles (eg, *International Socialist Review*, November 1971). WAAC has never even mentioned the need for free quality medical care. Here the argument about alienating the masses is especially ridiculous in light of the imminent introduction of the ALP's grossly deficient, but widely supported, Medibank scheme. The majority of the Australian working class would clearly welcome adequate, free medical care; but WAAC has said nothing whatsoever about Medibank. On this question WAAC lags behind even the ALP reformists!

Under Medibank simple abortions, if legal, will apparently be comparatively inexpensive -- no thanks to WAAC -- but contraceptives (the only other issue raised in WAAC's program) will cost the same as they do now, and hospitalisation will remain expensive for the bulk of Australia's population. Medibank will not eliminate the need to struggle for free abortion on demand, free contraceptives (WAAC vacillates even on this point, demanding only "freely available" contraceptives, whatever that means), free quality medical care and free 24-hour child care.

Many disgruntled women within the feminist movement have come to realise that "single issue-ism", raising one reform demand is the key to liberation to the exclusion of all others, only

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